

Russia's Top Five Myths about NATO & COVID-19

Myth 1: COVID-19 will break up NATO

Fact: For over 70 years, NATO has kept our countries and our people safe by continuously adapting to new challenges. NATO was created to deal with crises, and we are working to ensure that this health crisis does not become a security crisis. As in our societies, some of our civilian and military personnel have tested positive for COVID-19, but NATO's core political and military work continues. Our ability to conduct operations has not been undermined. Our forces remain ready, and our crucial activities carry on, including in our multinational [battlegroups](#) in the east of the Alliance, our maritime [deployments](#) and our missions from [Afghanistan](#) to [Kosovo](#). We continue to deliver credible and effective deterrence and defence, while supporting national and international efforts to deal with the pandemic. NATO Allies continue to [support](#) each other in responding to COVID-19 and stand together in solidarity.

Myth 2: NATO is failing to support Allies in the fight against COVID-19

Fact: NATO is playing its part to support Allies in the fight against COVID-19. This includes facilitating the airlift of crucial medical supplies and equipment, matching requests for support with offers from Allies and partners, and delivering innovative responses. Many Allies, including the Czech Republic, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Romania, Slovakia, and Spain have benefited from this [support](#). At the request of Allies, NATO's top commander, General Wolters, is now coordinating the necessary military support to combat the crisis and using fast-track paths through Europe's airspace for military flights carrying medical supplies. Across the Alliance, our professional and highly trained armed forces are playing a vital role in supporting national civilian responses. This includes logistics and planning, field hospitals, the transport of patients, disinfection of public areas, and at border crossings. As we support Allies, NATO continues to deliver on its core mission: providing security and defence for almost 1 billion people.



Turkish medical supplies arrive in Spain, following a request through NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre

Myth 3: COVID-19 is a weapon created by NATO

Fact: NATO is a defensive Alliance and serves to protect our almost 1 billion citizens. COVID-19 is a zoonotic disease. As [confirmed](#) by the World Health Organization (WHO), all available evidence suggests that SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus causing COVID-19, has a natural origin in animals and is not a constructed virus. As the WHO makes [clear](#), this new virus and disease were unknown before the outbreak began in Wuhan, China, in December 2019. A recent [analysis](#) of the genome sequence of SARS-CoV-2 found no evidence that the virus was made in a laboratory, or otherwise engineered.

Myth 4: NATO exercises spread COVID-19 virus

Fact: From the start of the outbreak, NATO has implemented robust measures to limit the spread of the virus and minimise risks to our personnel and the communities they serve. As we have communicated publicly, some NATO and Allied exercises have been [modified](#) or cancelled. These are sensible precautions, because the safety of our personnel is a top priority. NATO military medical staff remain vigilant. They are monitoring any potential impact for NATO troops deployed on operations. NATO continues to assess the situation and take all necessary measures to mitigate the spread of the virus.

Myth 5: NATO encourages defence spending at the expense of healthcare

Fact: [NATO Foreign Ministers](#) and the NATO Secretary General have expressed their sympathy and solidarity with all those affected by COVID-19, with the health care workers and others on the frontline, and with all those who are experiencing financial uncertainty or hardship. In democratic countries, setting the state budget is a complex political process reflecting social needs, as well as national political priorities. In times of crisis, our troops can play a vital public role. As we are now seeing, Allied armed forces are a crucial part of national responses to COVID-19, helping to support civilian efforts with logistics and planning, field hospitals, the transport of patients, disinfection of public areas, and at border crossings. [Their](#) health and safety is also essential to maintaining our readiness to deter threats and defend our nations. It is important that we continue to invest in our armed forces, not at the expense of public health, but to keep our people and our nations safe.

Public Diplomacy Division (PDD) – Press & Media Section

Tel.: +32(0)2 707 5041

E-mail: moc@hq.nato.int

Follow us @NATOPress

www.nato.int