Airbus closes China plant due to coronavirus

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Airbus has closed its aircraft production facility in Tianjin, near the Chinese capital Beijing, due to the coronavirus outbreak, the aviation giant said Wednesday.

"China domestic and worldwide travel restrictions are posing some logistical challenges. The Tianjin Final Assembly Line facility is currently closed," Airbus said in a statement.

The Tianjin facility, the first of its kind for Airbus outside Europe, is a completion centre for single-aisle A320 aircraft and can also handle the larger A330.

Tianjin is a port city 150 kilometres (93 miles) from Beijing. Airbus did not indicate when the centre might reopen.

"Airbus is constantly evaluating the situation and monitoring any potential knock-on effects to production and deliveries and will try to mitigate via alternative plans where necessary."

French aeronautics and defence contractor Safran has also closed its production facilities in China over the coronavirus crisis, a spokeswoman told AFP.

Safran employs 2,500 people across some 20 different Chinese sites, which will remain closed until February 10, the company said.

More than 20 countries have confirmed cases of the virus, which has

infected more than 24,000 people in mainland China.

The outbreak has prompted the World Health Organization to declare a global health emergency, several governments to impose travel restrictions and airlines to suspend flights to and from the country.

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