

## Scientists challenge China-WHO story of COVID emergence

The controversy over the investigation organized by the [World Health Organization](#) and China about the origins of Covid-19 heated up as a group of scientists called for an independent probe to consider all hypotheses and nail down whether the virus came from an animal.

A group of more than 20 signatories said in an [open letter published by the Wall Street Journal](#) that the existing mission isn't independent enough and demanded a new probe to consider all possibilities over the origin. Half of the joint team are Chinese citizens whose scientific independence may be limited, they said.

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Last month, the mission rejected speculation that the coronavirus could have leaked from a lab and said instead that it may have jumped to humans through an animal host or frozen wildlife products. WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus later said the United Nations agency hasn't ruled out any hypotheses.

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The mission followed months of negotiation with China. Stung by criticism that they initially covered up the extent of the crisis, Chinese state media and officials have promoted the theory that the virus didn't start in the country, but was brought in.

The scientists who signed the open letter included the lab scenario among the possibilities.

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