

WEEKLY COVID-19 PANDEMIC UPDATE (REPORT #9)

CONTEXT

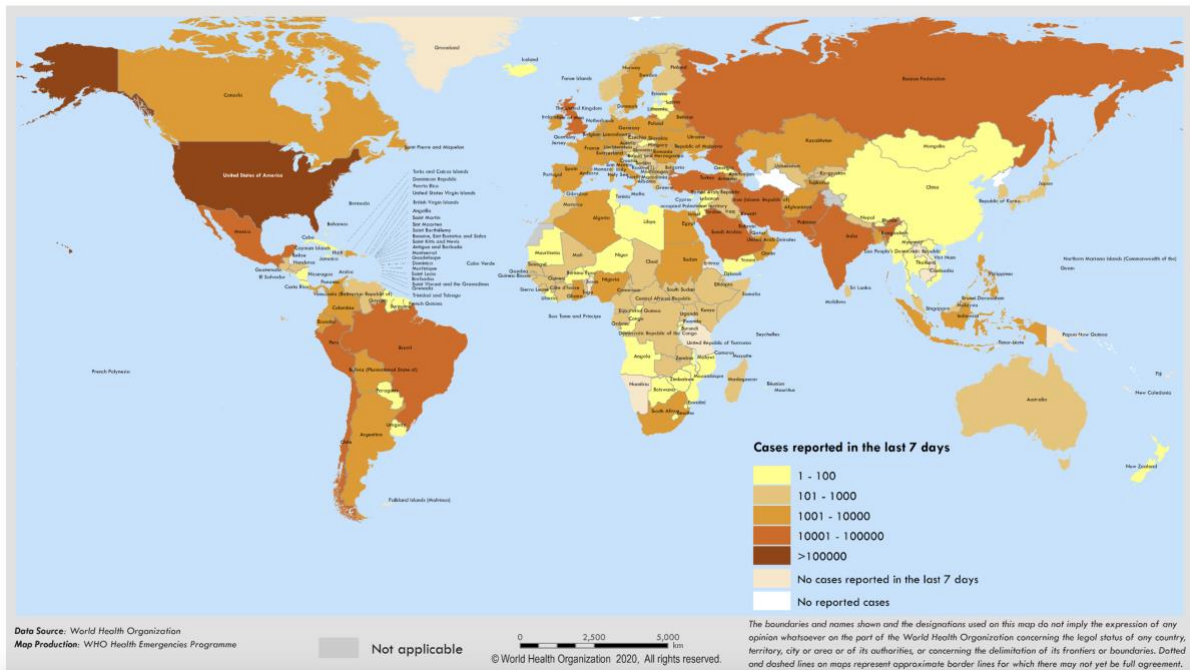
Since the COVID-19 outbreak in December 2019 and subsequent pandemic, specialists around the world have been grappling to find solutions for detection, treatment and prevention. Since the pandemic was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March, 4,088,848 cases have been officially logged around the world, with many other cases suspected not to have been logged, mis-diagnosed or masked by other conditions. **As of 19 May 4,731,458 cases have been confirmed globally (112,637 new cases in last 24 hours) with 316,169 deaths reported (4,322 deaths reported in last 24 hours).** The WHO notes however that “the number of confirmed cases reported by countries reflects the national laboratory testing capacity and strategy, thus the interpretation of the number of cases reported should take this into account.”

Global COVID-19 Cases and Deaths: As of 19 May 2020 (WHO)

4,731,458 confirmed cases

316,169 deaths

Countries, territories or areas with confirmed cases of COVID-19 (19 May 2020):



Source: World Health Organization (WHO)

HIGHLIGHTS

- Over the past week (13 - 19 May) one new country/territory/region has reported its first COVID-19 case - Lesotho reported its first case of COVID-19, effectively becoming the last country on the African continent to confirm an outbreak.

REGIONAL BREAKDOWN

*****note that the figures below are confirmed cases of COVID-19, due to undertesting, actual COVID-19 case figures are likely to be significantly higher*****

WESTERN PACIFIC REGION

China (84,500 total cases confirmed), Singapore (28,343), Japan (16,365), Philippines (12,718), Republic of Korea (11,078), Australia (7,060), Malaysia (6,941), New Zealand (1,153), Vietnam (324), Guam (149), Brunei (141),

Mongolia (140), Cambodia (122), French Polynesia (60), Northern Mariana Islands (21), Lao (19), Fiji (18), New Caledonia (18), Papua New Guinea (8)

- 169,178 total confirmed cases (663 new cases reported in past 24 hrs)
- 6,765 deaths (22 new deaths reported in past 24 hrs)

EUROPEAN REGION

Russia (299,941 total cases confirmed), United Kingdom (246,410), Spain (231,606), Italy (225,886), Germany (175,210), Turkey (150,593), France (140,497), Belgium (55,559), the Netherlands (44,141), Belarus (30,572), Switzerland (30,514), Sweden (30,377), Portugal (29,209), Ireland (24,200), Poland (18,885), Ukraine (18,876), Romania (17,036), Israel (16,621), Austria (16,179), Denmark (10,968), Serbia (10,699), Czech Republic (8,586), Norway (8,249), Kazakhstan (6,751), Finland (6,380), Moldova (6,138), Armenia (5,041), Luxembourg (3,947), Hungary (3,556), Azerbaijan (3,387), Greece (2,836), Uzbekistan (2,802), Bosnia and Herzegovina (2,303), Bulgaria (2,259), Croatia (2,228), North Macedonia (1,817), Iceland (1,802), Estonia (1,784), Tajikistan (1,729), Lithuania (1,547), Slovakia (1,495), Slovenia (1,466), Kyrgyzstan (1,243), Latvia (1,009), Kosovo (955), Albania (948), Cyprus (917), Andorra (761), Georgia (702), San Marino (668), Malta (558), Isle of Man (335), Montenegro (324), Jersey (302), Guernsey (252), Faroe Islands (187), Gibraltar (147), Monaco (96), Liechtenstein (83), Holy See (12), Greenland (11)

- 1,909,592 total confirmed cases (19,125 new cases reported in past 24 hrs)
- 167,998 deaths (825 new deaths reported in past 24 hrs)

SOUTH-EAST ASIA REGION

India (101,139 total cases confirmed), Bangladesh (23,870), Indonesia (18,010), Thailand (3,033), Maldives (1,106), Sri Lanka (992), Nepal (375), Myanmar (191), Timor-Leste (24), Bhutan (21)

- 148,761 total confirmed cases (7,168 new cases reported in past 24 hrs)
- 4,780 deaths (198 new deaths reported in past 24 hrs)

EASTERN MEDITERRANEAN REGION

Iran (122,492 total cases confirmed), Saudi Arabia (59,854), Pakistan (43,966), Qatar (35,606), United Arab Emirates (25,063), Kuwait (16,764), Egypt (12,764), Afghanistan (7,655), Bahrain (7,374), Morocco (6,972), Oman (5,671), Iraq (3,554), Sudan (2,591), Djibouti (1,518), Somalia (1,455), Tunisia (1,043), Lebanon (954), Jordan (629), Palestine (567), Yemen (134), Libya (65), Syria (58)

- 356,749 total confirmed cases (18,189 new cases reported in past 24 hrs)
- 10,149 deaths (170 new deaths reported in past 24 hrs)

REGION OF THE AMERICAS

United States (1,477,516 total cases confirmed), Brazil (241,080), Peru (92,273), Canada (77,306), Mexico (49,219), Chile (46,059), Ecuador (33,182), Colombia (15,574), Dominican Republic (12,725), Panamá (9,606), Argentina (8,068), Bolivia (4,088), Puerto Rico (2,710), Honduras (2,646), Guatemala (1,912), Cuba (1,881), El Salvador (1,413), Costa Rica (863), Paraguay (788), Uruguay (734), Venezuela (618), Jamaica (520), Haiti (456), French Guiana (197), Martinique (192), Guadeloupe (155), Bermuda (123), Guyana (117), Trinidad and Tobago (116), Aruba (101), Bahamas (96), Cayman Islands (94), Barbados (88), Sint Maarten (78), United States Virgin Islands (69), Saint Martin (39), Antigua and Barbuda (25), Nicaragua (25), Grenada (22), Belize (18), Saint Lucia (18), Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (17), Curaçao (16), Dominica (16), Saint Kitts and Nevis (15), Falkland Islands (13), Turks and Caicos Islands (12), Montserrat (11), Suriname (11), British Virgin Islands (8), Bonaire, Sint Eustatius and Saba (6), Saint Barthélemy (6), Anguilla (3), Saint Pierre and Miquelon (1)

- 2,082,945 total confirmed cases (65,134 new cases reported in past 24 hrs)
- 124,668 deaths (3,059 new deaths reported in past 24 hrs)

AFRICAN REGION

South Africa (16,433 total cases confirmed), Algeria (7,201), Nigeria (6,175), Ghana (5,735), Cameroon (3,529), Guinea (2,796), Senegal (2,544), Ivory Coast (2,119), Democratic Republic of Congo (1,537), Gabon (1,432), Mayotte (1,370), Guinea-Bissau (1,038), Kenya (912), Niger (909), Mali (874), Equatorial Guinea (825), Burkina Faso (796), Zambia (761), Chad (519), Sierra Leone (519), Tanzania (509), Réunion (446), Republic of Congo (414), Ethiopia (352), Central African Republic (336), Mauritius (332), Togo (330), Cabo Verde (328), Madagascar (322), Rwanda (297), South Sudan (282), Uganda (260), Liberia (229), Eswatini (205), São Tomé and Príncipe (165), Mozambique (145), Benin (129), Mauritania (981), Malawi (70), Angola (50), Zimbabwe (46), Burundi (42), Eritrea (39), Botswana (25), Gambia (24), Namibia (16), Comoros (11), Seychelles (11), Lesotho (1)

- 63,521 confirmed cases (2,358 new cases reported in past 24 hrs)
- 1,796 deaths (48 new deaths reported in past 24 hrs)

UPDATES AND TRAVEL ADVISORIES

Measures adopted by the local governments are evolving quickly and are typically effective immediately. Depending on the further evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic globally, local authorities are likely to modify the list of countries whose travellers are subject to border control measures or entry restrictions upon their arrival to the territory in question, and such modifications are likely to occur at very short notice. At this time, MS Risk advises individuals to postpone non-essential travel due to the risk that travellers may be refused entry or be subject to quarantine upon their arrival or during their stay.

AFRICA

Angola

15 May - The government has reported that an Angolan soldier shot and killed a teenager during an operation to enforce the wearing of face masks to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The home affairs ministry has reported that a 17-year-old boy “was a victim of a gunshot” fired by a soldier on Friday while “allegedly” protesting against a military-led awareness campaign on the use of face masks. In a statement late on Friday, the ministry described the case as “homicide” and stated that it was investigating the incident.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

13 May - On Wednesday, police forces deployed tear gas to disperse approximately 100 motorcycle taxi drivers demonstration in downtown Mbandaka, Équateur province. The drivers were protesting police enforcement of restriction measures imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. According to reports, the demonstrators began their protest in Mbandaka II, before moving to Bonsomi Avenue. No injuries were reported though several protesters were arrested.

East Africa

12 May - East African heads of state have agreed to use digital trackers for cargo lorry drivers as part of measures to help curb the spread of COVID-19 in the region. The decision comes at a time of increasing concerns in the region over high numbers of long-distance drivers testing positive for COVID-19 at countries’ borders. A statement released by officials disclosed that “the heads of state noted that information sharing is key during a crisis such as the COVID-19 pandemic.” So far, drivers’ movements have not been restricted in the region since they are considered essential workers as they transport goods including food and medication across East Africa. The video conference meeting was attended by four member countries - Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda and South Sudan. Their counterparts from Tanzania and Burundi were not present. Tanzania has been criticised for not taking stricter measures to fight the spread of COVID-19 in the country, allegations that have been denied by the government. Meanwhile in Burundi, concerns have been raised over large political rallies, as the country is due to hold presidential elections on 20 May.

Egypt

17 May - Egypt is going to strengthen its COVID-19 restrictions and stop all public transport during the Eid holiday. The current curfew will start four hours earlier, at 17:00 local time, while shops, restaurants and parks will be closed during the end of Ramadan celebrations.

Guinea

15 May - The Guinean government announced Friday that the existing state of health emergency, as well as the nationwide curfew between 21:00 - 05:00 have been extended until 14 June. Other restrictive measures, including mandatory use of face masks in public spaces, closure of schools and non-essential shops, and a ban on public gatherings of more than 20 people, remains in place. Additionally, border closures will also remain in effect until at least 14 June.

Kenya

16 May - President Kenyatta announced Saturday that he has ordered the closure of Kenya's borders with Tanzania and Somali in response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Exceptions will be made for freight traffic, with drivers being tested for COVID-19 at the border before being allowed to continue their journeys. A Similar policy has been implemented at the northern border with Uganda however this measure has led to long delays, with trucks being stuck at crossing points for up to a day as drivers wait for tests results to be delivered from Nairobi. Saturday's announcement also saw the nationwide 19:00 - 05:00 curfew, as well as lockdowns in Nairobi and Mombasa, Kilifi, Kwale and Mandera counties, extended until 6 June. The move comes as the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the country rose above 800, with 49 new positive tests bringing the total to 830.

Lesotho

13 May - The government of Lesotho confirmed on Wednesday its first COVID-19 case after carrying out 81 tests on travellers from South Africa and Saudi Arabia. Officials have warned that there is a likelihood that more cases could be recorded before the end of the week after the ministry disclosed that it was awaiting results for 301 cases. The first confirmed COVID-19 case comes a week after the country lifted its national lockdown, which was lifted against the advice of the inter-ministerial committee, which stated that the country was not prepared to deal with a possible outbreak since its quarantine facilities comprised just 148 beds.

Madagascar

17 May - On Sunday, Malagasy authorities confirmed the country's first COVID-19 related death. The patient was a 57-year-old hospital worker with underlying health conditions. As a precautionary measure, the government has advised the public to strictly observe containment measures, particularly in the regions of Analamanga, Atsinanana and Haut Matsiatra.

17 May - A state of emergency, due to expire on Sunday, will be extended through 31 May due to a rise in infections. Under the state of emergency, air traffic is suspended until further notice, face mask use in public places is mandatory, and travel is allowed between 06:00 and 13:00 except within the cities of Tananarive and Tamatave. Professional activities are allowed from 04:00 - 13:00 nationwide.

Mauritius

14 May - Mauritius has declared victory in the battle against COVID-19, but says that it has not yet won the war. Health Minister Kailesh Jagutpal is quoted as stating that there are zero active COVID-19 cases in the country and that no new cases have been reported in 17 days. He further disclosed, "we have won the battle thanks to the cooperation of the public, who understood that the government needed to take extreme measures, including complete confinement, and the closure of supermarkets and our borders," warning "but we have not yet won the war. Let's remain vigilant." In total, the country has reported 332 confirmed cases and 10 related deaths. It was amongst the first in Africa to impose a total lockdown. The government now is urging people to continue to take precautions even as it maintains some of the restrictive measures. A few essential stores will be allowed to reopen from 15 May however markets will stay shut. Schools will also remain closed until August while beaches will remain off limits and weddings and funerals can only be attended by 10 people. The country's parliament is currently debating two pieces of legislation, the COVID-19 Bill and the Quarantine Bill, which are designed to help the country get back on track.

Morocco

18 May - Prime Minister Saad Dine El Otmani announced on Monday that Morocco is to extend its national lockdown until 10 June. As of Monday morning, Morocco has confirmed 6,930 COVID-19 cases, including 192 related deaths, as the rise of hotspots within families and factories complicates efforts to curb infections.

Namibia

15 May - On Friday, aviation authorities announced that routine air traffic will remain suspended in Namibia until at least 30 June. Additionally all borders remain closed as of 15 May.

Nigeria

19 May - The Nigerian government has stated that it is still too risky to further relax restrictions aimed at halting the spreading of COVID-19 in the country. The head of the country's task force on the pandemic told a daily media briefing that the country is not yet ready for the full re-opening of the economy. He stated that any further relaxation of the restrictions would only portend "grave danger" to citizens, and the "tough" decision has been made in the interest of the "majority" of citizens. Monday was when the first phase of the gradual lockdown easing was due to end in the cities of Abuja, Lagos and in Ogun state, with officials now saying that they will maintain the measures in place for a further two weeks.

18 May - President Buhari has approved an extension of movement restrictions on Monday through to 1 June. The government stated that the phased reopening of lockdown measures in Abuja, Lagos and Ogun states would proceed more quickly and would not be lifted until 1 June at the earliest. Authorities also stated that targeted lockdown measures would be introduced in areas where reported COVID-19 cases rapidly increase. A nationwide overnight curfew between 20:00 - 06:00 remains in place, with businesses, including gyms, clubs, bars and spas, remaining closed. The government also extended the lockdown in Kano state through to 2 June due to a high number of COVID-19 cases reported there. Additionally, the Katagum, Giade, and Zaki local government areas of Bauchi state remain under lockdown until 22 June. Authorities have called on security personnel to oversee the lockdown, and will reportedly enhance contact tracing, quarantine infected individuals, decontaminate areas, and carry out mass testing of residents.

14 May - Authorities in the north-eastern state of Yobe have disclosed that 471 people have died in the past five weeks, adding it is an unusually high number of deaths from health issues. It currently remains unclear whether the deaths are linked to COVID-19. Yobe State Commissioner for Health Muhammad Lawan Gana disclosed that an initial investigation found that most deaths were of elderly people with pre-existing medical conditions such as hypertension and diabetes, but that some had shown symptoms of COVID-19. He further disclosed that the deaths occurred in just four areas of the state. There have been reports of hundreds of unexplained deaths across northern Nigeria in recent weeks including in the populous state of Kano. Authorities are however cautious to link them directly to the COVID-19 pandemic, saying that investigations are being carried out. However low testing rates across the country have risen fears that many people might be carrying the virus undetected. Nigeria has so far confirmed nearly 5,000 cases of the virus and 164 deaths.

Republic of Congo

16 May - On Saturday, Congolese authorities announced that the current overnight curfew (20:00 - 05:00) and border closures, except for cargo flights and vessels, will be extended until 31 May. Only individuals who provide essential goods and services will be exempt from the curfew. The country has been divided into two geographic zones that will gradually reduce COVID-19 restrictions at different rates. Zone 1 is called the active circulation zone and comprises of Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, while Zone 2 is described as a non-active circulation zone and comprises of the remaining ten departments. Non-essential travel in and out of both Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire is restricted, while in Zone 2, travel between other departments can resume from 18 May. In addition, the resumption of normal economic activity will be allowed in Zone 2 as long as social-distancing rules are followed. Other restrictive measures will remain in place until at least 31 May. Domestic flights remain suspended, masks are compulsory for people in public places, and local public transportation may be allowed to operate in Zone 2 at a limited capacity.

South Africa

13 May - President Ramaphosa has stated that in the coming days the COVID-19 lockdown will be eased slightly, with more businesses and shops allowed to operate and fewer restrictions on exercise. During a live broadcast on Wednesday, the president admitted that his government had made mistakes, however he said that the country was in uncharted territory. He further urged caution, stating that if the restrictions were lifted too abruptly, there would be a risk of a rapid and unmanageable surge in infections.

South Sudan

18 May - South Sudan's Vice President Riek Machar and his wife Angelina Teny, who serves as defence minister, have tested positive for coronavirus, his office announced on Monday. It stated that "a number of his office staff and bodyguards" had also tested positive for COVID-19. Machar disclosed on state television that he would be in self-isolation for 14 days in his residence. To date, South Sudan has recorded 347 COVID-19 cases and six deaths. Last week, authorities reported two COVID-19 cases in a camp outside the capital, raising concerns amongst humanitarians that the infection could devastate the crowded settlement.

12 May - On Tuesday, the South Sudan Civil Aviation Authority (SSCAA) announced the reopening of airspace amidst the COVID-19 outbreak. The announcement follows a presidential directive from 7 May to further ease COVID-19 lockdown restrictions. Under the new measures, the SSCAA has declared that travellers and airline operators will be required to present medical certificates confirming a negative COVID-19 test and will be subject to a 14 day quarantine upon arrival into the country.

12 May - The UN reported on Tuesday that COVID-19 cases have been confirmed in a camp for people displaced by the conflict in the South Sudanese capital. A spokeswoman for the UN mission in South Sudan disclosed that the UN is aware that the health ministry and World Health Organization have confirmed the two cases in the camp in Juba. Health experts have been warning of the potential danger if the virus were to spread in the overcrowded camps, which are home to close to 200,000 people across the country.

Sudan

18 May - Sudanese authorities announced on Monday that lockdown measures in Khartoum state will be extended through 2 June. Under lockdown measures, individuals are allowed limited movement within their neighbourhoods to purchase necessities. Only essential services will remain open, while employees will be granted a paid leave of absence. Supermarkets and pharmacies are also operated on limited hours. The ban on travel between Khartoum and other parts of the country has also been extended. Authorities also extended the ban on communal prayers at mosques until 24 May.

17 May - Local media reports have indicated that as of Sunday, all airports in Sudan will remain closed for international and domestic commercial passenger flights until 31 May. Flights transporting humanitarian aid, cargo and oil industry employees, as well as those evacuating foreigners, will be exempt from the restriction.

Tanzania

18 May - Tanzania's civil aviation authority has lifted all restrictions on passenger flights operating in the country, stating that the development follows a "decrease of COVID-19 cases." On Monday, the Ministry of Health disclosed that arriving international travellers would be screened for COVID-19 symptoms at entry points before being granted entry. Foreigners visiting the country will no longer be subject to a mandatory 14-day quarantine on arrival.

18 May - A Tanzanian opposition party, ACT, has accused the president of "broadcasting a select few statistics" to falsely claim that there has been a big drop in the number of COVID-19 patients in hospital. On Sunday, President Magufuli told a church congregation that there had been a "sharp decline" in case numbers. This comes despite a report just days before by the US embassy in Tanzania saying that many hospitals had been "overwhelmed." On Monday, the ACT disclosed in a statement that it "will not simply assume that the president is right in saying we are winning the battle against coronavirus, just because he says so." The party wants the government to release "the full set of data" on infection and death rates, adding that the last such report was made more than a fortnight ago.

13 May - The US Embassy in Tanzania, claiming that many hospitals in the main city Dar es Salaam have been overwhelmed in recent weeks, contends that the risk of contracting COVID-19 there is "extremely high." Wednesday's health alert notes that the Tanzanian government has not released any date on COVID-19 since 29 April, adding that "despite limited official reports, all evidence points to exponential growth of the epidemic in Dar and other locations in Tanzania." The Embassy alert did not provide sources for its assessment. **Update (14 May)** - Tanzania has dismissed allegations that it is not doing enough in the fight against COVID-19. Government spokesman Dr Hassan Abbas disclosed that the national laboratory remains closed and testing halted due to investigations into testing kits, noting however that patients with COVID-19 symptoms continue to be treated in hospitals across the country. The government spokesman further disclosed, "we want to satisfy ourselves with many different tests that have been used for this disease - so we're making improvements. And Tanzanians continue with their lives. If someone has symptoms, we have already said that they should report to different health centres," adding "so it's not true that we are not fighting COVID-19 in the country, no. Many Tanzanians continue with their daily lives as normal."

Tunisia

16 May - After five days in a row of no new COVID-19 cases, Tunisia reported three new confirmed cases on Saturday, bringing the country's total to 1,035. Speaking at a press briefing in Tunisia, Nissaf Ben Alaya, director general of the National Observatory of New and Emerging Diseases, disclosed that "two COVID-19 cases were detected in Gafsa in southwestern Tunisia and only one case in Grand Tunis." He noted that Tunisia has not won the war against COVID-19, and that "the risk of triggering a second epidemiological wave still exists," adding "no return to normal life is expected soon, especially since the situation in Tunisia depends on that in the world."

According to Ben Alaya, the gradual opening of the economy remains dependent on people's compliance with preventative measures, namely the wearing of masks, social distancing and hand hygiene, noting that "the authorities are still counting on the conscience of the Tunisian people to continue to curb the spread of the virus."

13 May - Tunisia on Wednesday shortened its nightly curfew after three consecutive days without recording any new COVID-19 cases and as the government relaxes a general lockdown. President Saied has cut the curfew hours from 23:00 - 05:00 instead of 20:00 - 06:00, 10 days after the start of a gradual reopening of the bureaucracy and economy. The move follows the government's announcement that no new COVID-19 cases have been recorded for three days in a row, with 1,032 confirmed cases in total and 45 related deaths. However, Jalila Ben Kelil, a member of the government's advisory committee on the COVID-19 crisis, has stated that though the restrictions have been eased, they could be brought back if necessary, adding "we are afraid of a new wave if there is a slackness and people continue to disregard and disrespect social distancing by crowding public places."

Uganda

19 May - On Tuesday, President Museveni announced that lockdown measures will be further eased. All individuals aged over the six will be issued a face mask, which must be worn in public spaces as a precautionary measure. Members of the public will be permitted to use private vehicles from 26 May as long as no more than three people are in the vehicle at one time. Following the issuance of face masks, public transport will be permitted to resume at half capacity from 4 June, except in districts located along the border crossings with South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya and Tanzania. Shops, hotels, and restaurants will resume operations from 26 May in accordance with social distancing guidelines. Gyms, bars and salons will remain closed through 8 June. Schools will also reopen for students scheduled to sit national examinations in 2020. Meanwhile the current nationwide curfew will remain in place from 19:00 - 06:30 through 8 June.

Zimbabwe

16 May - President Mnangagwa addressed the nation on Saturday to announce that COVID-19 lockdown measures will be extended indefinitely. The country will remain under Level 2 lockdown, which was implemented on 30 March, and the government will assess the situation at two-week intervals. Alongside the extension, the president did announce some slight relaxation of measures, including the extension of shop opening hours to between 08:00 - 16:30 from 09:00 - 15:00 previously. Most other measures however will remain in place.

ASIA

China

18 May - Chinese authorities on Monday introduced lockdown measures in Shulan, Jilin province due to an increase in COVID-19 cases. Under these measures, only one person from each household is permitted to leave their home for two hours every two days to purchase essential supplies. Emergency vehicles may only enter and exit residential areas and non-residents are not permitted to enter these areas. In residential areas where cases are confirmed, residents are prohibited from leaving. Non-essential travel within the city has also been banned.

13 May - On Wednesday, authorities in the northern city of Jilin, Jilin province, imposed travel restrictions intended to combat the spread of COVID-19 following the confirmation of six new cases on 12 May. Train service departing the city has been suspended and schools have been ordered to send students home, resuming online classes. The neighbouring city of Shulan has also reported a cluster of COVID-19 cases and has as of 12 May banned all non-essential transport, closed schools, and implemented a lockdown of residential compounds.

India

17 May - India has extended its lockdown for another two weeks as it attempts to curb the spread of COVID-19. The government's disaster response authority disclosed that new guidelines would be issued, "keeping in view the need to open up economic activities." Most restrictions remain in place - flights, trains, educational institutions, metro services, restaurants, bars, cinemas and shopping complexes will remain closed. Restaurants however are now allowed to operate takeaway services, while sports complexes and stadiums can host events without spectators. For the first time since the lockdown was announced, private cars and buses can now operate across cities and towns, as well as crossing state borders if they have permission.

Japan

14 May - Japan has lifted a state of emergency imposed due to the COVID-19 outbreak in 39 out of 47 prefectures after a sharp fall in new infections. The order still applies in Tokyo, Osaka and on the northern island of Hokkaido, where new cases continue to emerge daily. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has stated that Japan's rate of infection had reduced to one seventh of the country's peak, urging the public to remain vigilant, wear masks and to keep following distancing guidance. He further disclosed that "if possible, before 31 May, we would like to lift the state of emergency for the other regions as well."

Myanmar

13 May - The Central Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment announced on Wednesday that ongoing curfews in select areas will be reduced effective 15 May as measures to combat COVID-10 are eased. Curfew hours currently run from 22:00 - 04:00 and will be reduced to 00:00 - 04:00. Curfews remain in place in Yangon, Ayeyawaddy, Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory, and Sagaing regions as well as in seven townships in Kayah State. In Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory, the restrictions are in place in all townships of the territory, including the capital, Nay Pyi Taw. All express bus services in Nay Pyi Taw remain suspended. A curfew from 21:00 to 04:00 has been in place in Mandalay since 16 April. In Sagaing, residents are not allowed to leave their homes during the curfew except to purchase food or seek medical attention. Loikaw, Demoso, Phayuso, Shataw, Bawlakhe, Phasaung and Maese in Kayah State will remain under curfew until 20 May.

Nepal

17 May - On Sunday, the Nepalese government announced that lockdown measures will be extended through 2 June. Under the current restrictions, all individuals must stay at home and all non-essential businesses are to remain closed. Citizens can leave their homes to seek medical attention and to purchase food.

16 May - Nepalese authorities on Saturday confirmed the country's first COVID-19 related death. As of Saturday, the country has confirmed 281 COVID-19 cases.

New Zealand

14 May - As of Thursday, thousands of businesses in New Zealand have reopened as the country relaxes its COVID-19 curbs. Shops, cafes and public parks are all open as the country moves into Level 2 of its restrictions, described as a "safer new normal." New Zealand has reported no new cases of the virus in the past three days, with authorities saying that the chance of community transmission is now very low. People are also allowed to start seeing their friends and families again, with a limit of 10 people.

Pakistan

15 May - On Friday, Pakistani authorities announced that domestic flights would resume in a limited capacity from 16 May after being suspended. Flights will be limited to a capacity of 50 passengers and international flights will remain suspended until 31 May, at the earliest. Only Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and SereneAir will be permitted to operate between Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Peshawar and Quetta, though private and cargo flights can operate from airports throughout the country.

Thailand

16 May - On Saturday, the Civil Aviation Authority of Thailand (CCAT) announced an extension of the temporary ban on all international commercial flights into the country until 30 June.

15 May - On Friday, Thai aviation authorities announced that Bangkok Airways has resumed domestic flight service on its Bangkok to Ko Samui route with immediate effect. Additionally, the airline has announced that it will be adding an additional four domestic services from 1 June from Bangkok to Sukhothai, Lampang, Chiang Mai and Phuket. The resumption of flight operations will include the mandatory wearing of face masks and screening of body temperatures.

15 May - On Friday, authorities announced plans to ease COVID-19 restrictions. Shopping malls and restaurants within them, fitness centres, swimming pools, convention centres, and wholesale markets will be permitted to reopen from 17 May and the curfew will be shortening, lasting from 23:00 - 04:00. However, cinemas, amusement parks, boxing stadiums, and gymnasiums will remain closed and a state of emergency will remain in effect until 31 May.

EUROPE**France**

15 May - On Friday, French authorities stated that they will impose a 14-day quarantine on arrivals from Spain as a reciprocal measure following an announcement by Spanish authorities that Spain will impose the same measure on all Schengen Area arrivals from Friday. According to French officials, the precise date that the measures would go into effect is yet to be decided, though officials have stated that France will enact the measure simultaneously with Spain.

Italy

16 May - Italian authorities announced on Saturday that they will lift restrictions for inter-regional travel as well as travel to and from EU countries from 3 June amidst a fall in the number of new COVID-19 cases. Furthermore, individuals will also be allowed to travel to and from the independent states of San Marino and Vatican City. Individuals travelling to Italy from 3 June will not be required to self-quarantine upon entry. Intra-regional movement restrictions will be lifted on 18 May. Churches, shops and restaurants will also be allowed to reopen from that date, provided social distancing measures and hygiene rules are adhered to.

Romania

15 May - Romanian authorities announced on Friday the ending of the current state of emergency and the beginning of a 30-day state of alert amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. The state of alert represents the gradual lifting of previous COVID-19 restrictions, however limitations on public gatherings and movement remain in place. Under the state of alert, individuals will be permitted to move around their respective localities of residence freely and without a declaration form, however gatherings of more than three people will remain banned. Individuals are only permitted to travel outside of their locality of residence under a new declaration form and for certain purposes, including farming, professional reasons, medical treatment, family death, or caring for family or an elderly person. The wearing of face masks, covering the nose and mouth, on public transport, in stores, and public closed spaces remains mandatory. The suspension of flights to and from Austria, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, France, Germany, the UK, the Netherlands, Spain, the US, Turkey and Iran remains in place as well as the suspension of ground transportation to and from many of these countries until 1 June. All travellers arriving in Romania are required to undergo a 14-day self-quarantine.

Spain

16 May - The Spanish government announced Saturday that five major airports would reopen from 18 May in addition to the five airports announced on 15 May, in the easing of COVID-19 restrictions. Airports in Tenerife, Alicante, Seville, Menorca and Ibiza will all reopen from 18 May in addition to El Prat in Barcelona, Gran Canaria in the Canaries, Barajas in Madrid and Málaga-Costa del Sol and Palma de Mallorca in the Balearics. While the airports have been permitted to reopen to international traffic from Monday, restrictions regarding who is allowed to fly will remain in place.

16 May - Prime Minister Sanchez has announced that the government will seek to extend its COVID-19 state of emergency for the last time until late June, as the country's daily death toll has reached a near eight-week low. On Saturday, the prime minister disclosed in a televised address that "the Spanish government will ask parliament to approve a new extension of the state of emergency ... it would be the last state of emergency and would continue until the end of the rollback," adding, "for that reason...instead of being a 15-day (extension), it will be for about a month." Officials have indicated that the outbreak has been brought largely under control, though restrictions must remain in place longer as the lockdown is gradually phased out.

Turkey

18 May - President Erdogan announced on Monday that a four-day nationwide lockdown will be implemented to prevent gatherings during the Eid al-Fitr religious holiday. The lockdown will be in effect for four days from 23 May primarily to prevent the public from leaving their homes. The president has disclosed that mosques will only be allowed to reopen for midday and afternoon prayers from 29 May. Additionally, authorities have extended the existing travel restrictions imposed on 15 main cities, including Istanbul, for an additional 15 days from 18 May.

United Kingdom

18 May - Northern Irish authorities have implemented a partial relaxation of restrictions. As of Monday, members of the public will be permitted to meet in groups of up to six people in outdoor areas and can pray alone in churches. Golf courses have also reopened.

MIDDLE EAST**Lebanon**

17 May - Prime Minister Diab announced on Sunday that the economy will gradually reopen as of 18 May following a four-day lockdown due to a rise in COVID-19 cases. The country already began reopening some businesses in late April, however operations were paused after authorities ordered a four-day complete shutdown due to a surge in infections. The PM has urged the public to adhere to the guidelines in place, which many had previously flouted.

THE AMERICAS (NORTH, CENTRAL AND SOUTH)**Bahamas**

19 May - The Bahamas Government says that it is looking at the possibility of allowing commercial travel into the archipelago on or before 1 July, insisting however that the date was not final and that it would depend on the current state of COVID-19. The Bahamas has so far recorded 96 confirmed cases and 11 deaths, though over the past four days the chain of islands has not recorded any new cases.

Brazil

17 May – Brazil has overtaken Spain and Italy to become the country with the fourth-largest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the world. On Saturday, officials reported 14,919 new cases in the past 24 hours, taking the total to 233,142. Only the US, Russia and the UK have higher numbers. The death toll in Brazil over 24 hours was 816, bringing the total to 15,633 - the world's fifth-highest figure. Experts however have warned that the real figure may be higher due to a lack of testing. The mayor of the country's populous city of São Paulo has warned that the city's health system could collapse, stating that public hospitals in the city have reached 90% capacity for emergency beds, with demand still growing. He went on to say that he was in crisis talks with the state governor over introducing a strict lockdown to try to slow contagion before hospitals run out of space in an estimated two weeks' time. Brazilian President Bolsonaro has been strongly criticised both at home and abroad for his handling of the country's escalating COVID-19 crisis. He continues to oppose lockdown measures and has downplayed the virus as "a little flu."

Colombia

19 May - On Tuesday, President Duque announced that the ongoing nationwide quarantine orders will be extended until 31 May. Children between the ages of 6 - 17 are still allowed to participate in outdoor activities for 30 minutes, three days a week, as long as they are accompanied by an adult and social distancing measures are followed. However individuals above the age of 70 are to remain under self-quarantine. The measures for those under 18 will be lifted on 31 May. Additionally, the president has disclosed that the government is planning to gradually relax lockdown measures, with the first phase of lifting measures set to take place throughout the month of June. During this period, authorities are likely to allow museums and libraries to reopen and household workers to go back to work. However, the president has warned that all land and sea borders will remain closed, including for domestic inter-regional travel, and all commercial passenger flights will remain grounded. Plans also include the gradual reopening of schools in August.

Mexico

19 May - On Tuesday, Mexican authorities confirmed a 30-day extension on land-border restrictions between Mexico and the US until 22 June. Travel restrictions through ports of entry on the US-Mexico border applies to recreational travel, while cargo, trade and healthcare workers will still be allowed to cross the border. The ban does not apply to air travel.

13 May - On Wednesday, President Obrador announced a three phase-plan to ease nationwide lockdown measures as part of plans to reopen the country's economy. In the first phase, economic activity will resume in 269 municipalities with low numbers of COVID-19 cases from 18 May. During the second phase, which will last from 18 - 31 May, the country will prepare for national social distancing measures to be lifted on 1 June by training businesses and workers on hygiene measures. The government will subsequently assess the readiness of individual states to reopen in phase 3, which will begin in June, by using the following color-coded system: Red - only essential activities, as well as work in the mining, construction and automotive industries, are allowed; Orange - limited non-essential activities may resume. Individuals vulnerable to COVID-19, such as the elderly and those with underlying health conditions, may return to work with strict social distancing measures in place; Yellow - All essential and non-essential activities may resume. Restaurants, churches, museums and theatres may reopen but at a reduced level; Green - all restrictions will be lifted, and schools may reopen though sanitary measures must be adhered to. Mexico's shared border with the US will remain closed until 29 May.

Panamá

15 May - On Friday, Panamanian aviation authorities announced that international passenger flights will remain suspended until 22 June. Domestic flights also remain suspended with no confirmed date of resumption. Humanitarian, medical and repatriation flights are exempt from the suspension.

HOW TO STAY SAFE

The following symptoms may appear 2 – 14 days after exposure:

- A cough
- A high temperature
- Shortness of breath

These symptoms however do not necessarily mean that you have the illness as they are similar to other illnesses that are much more common, such as cold and flu. As the coronavirus is a new illness, medical officials do not know exactly how it spreads from person to person though similar viruses are spread in cough droplets. Currently there is no specific treatment for coronavirus and no vaccine is available.

To avoid catching/spreading coronavirus, it is advised that you:

- wash your hands with soap and water often – do this for at least 20 seconds
- always wash your hands when you get home or into work
- use hand sanitizer gel if soap and water are not available
- cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) when you cough or sneeze
- put used tissues in the bin straight away and wash your hands afterwards
- try to avoid close contact with people who are unwell
- do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean

If you are experiencing fever, cough and difficulty breathing, seek medical care urgently and share your previous travel history with your health care provider.

SELF-ISOLATION

If there is a chance that you have coronavirus, you will be asked to stay away from other people (self-isolate). This means that you should remain at home; not go to work, school or public places; not use public transport or taxis; ask friends, family members or delivery services to do errands for you; try to avoid visitors at home. The self-isolation period lasts up to 14 days and aims to help reduce the possible spread of infection.

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- Due diligence and investigations

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- Interim security
- Training
- Special assignments

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- Business continuity management
- Hostile operations support to commercial interests

VIRTUAL SECURITY DIRECTOR SERVICE

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References are always available.

More information is found at www.msrisk.com

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