

More Countries Take Steps to Ease COVID-19 Lockdowns as Global Cases Exceed Three Million



Authors: *Stephanie Kiefer, Senior Regional Analyst – Europe, the Caucasus, & Central Asia*
Samson Sampson, Senior Regional Analyst – Middle East & North Africa
Kimberly Doyle, Senior Regional Analyst – Sub-Saharan Africa
Zachary Nelson, Senior Regional Analyst – Latin America & the Caribbean
Josh Strongin, Lead Intelligence Analyst – North America
Zachary Huffman, Senior Lead Intelligence Analyst

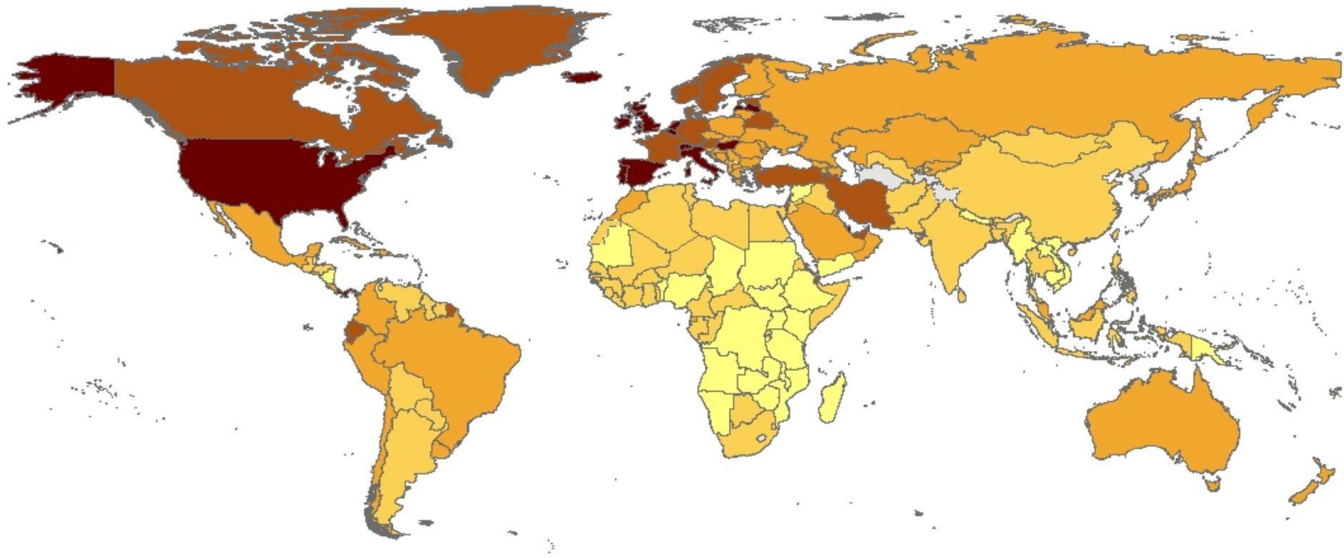
Contact: Stephanie.Kiefer@everbridge.com

OVERVIEW

The global number of confirmed cases of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has exceeded 3.1 million people and more than 216,000 associated deaths have been reported, according to Johns Hopkins University. COVID-19 continues to spread across the world, though many countries report stabilized or declining outbreak curves and are taking steps toward easing extensive lockdowns. Europe has been the epicenter of the global outbreak for weeks, but many countries within the region are now undertaking or will soon be walking back restrictions in phased steps. The United States has varying degrees of reopening efforts getting under way on a state-by-state basis while the country has exceeded one million confirmed COVID-19 cases. Multiple sub-Saharan African countries are also planning to ease restrictions, though Eswatini reinstated restrictions after a partial rollback resulted in an uptick in infection levels. A growing number of countries in the Middle East and North Africa are easing restrictions on businesses, also with varied but generally phased measures.

The World Health Organization has maintained its cautionary remarks about easing restrictions too abruptly, potentially spurring a second wave of outbreaks. The WHO has also noted that there is not currently sufficient evidence that people who have had the virus before cannot be reinfected and potentially become unwell. Research continues as many unknowns remain and most estimates do not foresee a vaccine being ready at least before 2021. The International Labor Organization called on April 28 for governments that are scaling back restrictions to undertake measures to mitigate and control the presence of COVID-19 in workplaces, including having strong protections for frontline workers. Tensions over lockdowns continue, as do concerns for those people around the world who are most vulnerable to economic downturns and restrictions.

Cumulative COVID-19 Cases per 100,000, as of Tuesday, April 28



Cumulative number of reported
COVID-19 cases per 100 000

< 1.0

1.0 - 9.9

10.0 - 99.9

100.0 - 199.9

≥ 200.0

Countries and territories without cases reported



Date of production: 28/04/2020

The boundaries and names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the European Union.

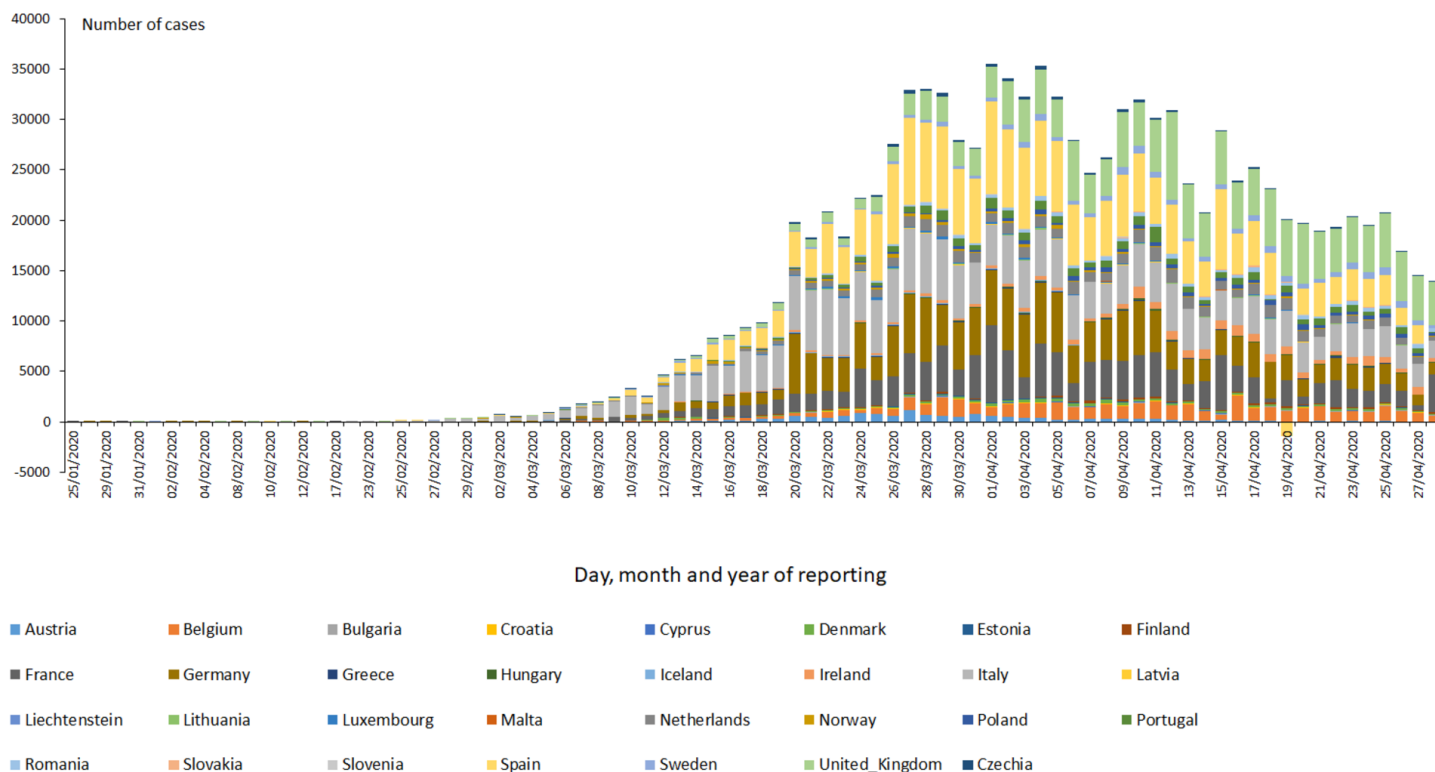
Source: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

SPREAD OF COVID-19: EUROPE

Stabilization and declining outbreak levels continue to drive recent and forthcoming relaxations of lockdown measures around Europe. Limited exceptions remain, including the United Kingdom moving through its peak with early signs suggesting its curve could be declining and Russia reporting its highest daily case count yet as COVID-19 continues to spread across the country.

- Several European airlines have announced planned job cuts and solicited government funds to prop up the companies. British Airways plans to cut some 12,000 jobs, another 2,000 staff at Icelandair are facing layoffs, SAS is laying off up to 5,000 staff, and Norwegian Air is cutting some 4,700 staff.
- Airbus has warned that it may have to take extensive staff cuts and has called for support from countries such as France and the UK.

Distribution of New Confirmed COVID-19 Cases Per Day in EU/EEA and UK



Source: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC)

- Belgium's trade association for the country's potato sector has encouraged the population to eat more fries at home due to a heavy drop in demand during the lockdown.
- The Oil & Gas UK (OGUK) trade association has warned that up to 30,000 jobs in the North Sea region may be cut by oil and gas companies operating there, due to energy price collapses.
- Europe's five largest economies (Germany, France, United Kingdom, Italy, and Spain) have more than 30 million furloughed workers in total, according to recent reports, highlighting the extensive hit to the labor market and pressure on governments to provide support through the crisis.
- The German Retail Association (HDE) warned that as many as 50,000 retailers could be forced into bankruptcy as a result of the pandemic and associated restrictions. Germany's economic institute (IFO) has forecast a 6.6 percent contraction of the country's economy for 2020.
- The European Central Bank said on April 28 that testing indicated that there was no significant risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 from euro banknotes.

- Later this week or next week, the European Commission is expected to publicize proposals for common rules and protocols related to the potential facilitation of summer travel and border control measures for member states.
- A widespread internet outage hit Virgin Media broadband customers in the UK on April 27, though a repair for the vast majority of customers was quickly implemented and services restored. The company said the outage was not tied to capacity or usage demands.
- Russia is suspending exports of wheat, corn, rye, barley, and meslin up to July 1 to guard its own supplies and domestic market, saying it had already exhausted an export quota that ran through June.
- The European Union has been accused of watering down a recent report on disinformation linked to COVID-19, including disinformation emanating from China and Russia.

Updates Around the Region

The **Austrian** health minister announced that the general lockdown restrictions will conclude on April 30, though people will still be required to practice physical distancing behaviors and gatherings will be capped at ten people. All stores are allowed to reopen from the start of May, restaurants and bars from May 15, and hotels can reopen from May 29. The country's virus reproduction factor, the rate of average transmission within the population, was 0.59 as of April 28.

Last Friday, the **Belgian** government announced a phased relaxation of restrictions. From May 4, some companies as well as stores selling fabric are being allowed to reopen with certain conditions. Those able to telework are encouraged to continue doing so. Outdoor exercise free of physical contact with others will be permitted from May 4. All stores are allowed to open from May 11, and the government was developing details on the measures that must be observed to facilitate physical distancing. From May 18, a gradual reopening of schools is planned. From June 8, the government may permit restaurants to gradually reopen, with bars to follow at a later unspecified date. Face masks are required on all public transport. The initiation of another phase is planned to be announced one week before commencing and will be contingent upon hospital capacity and the pace of the outbreak at that point.

The lower house of the **Czech Republic's** parliament approved on April 28 an extension of the state of emergency to May 17, a week shorter than the extension to May 25 that the government wanted. Prime Minister Andrej Babis remains wary of rolling back restrictions in the country that could result in another rise in infections. The government had previously said it would start reopening the economy earlier than initially planned, with steps in the past week permitting free movement in public areas as well as some services and stores of up to of up to 2,500 square meters, excluding shopping centers, to resume operations, though the shorter deadline approved by parliament on Tuesday could require a further acceleration of the government's timetable.

On April 28, **French** Prime Minister Edouard Phillipe announced plans for the phased easing of restrictions in the country, with a focus on "protection, testing, and isolation." From May 11, certain markets and stores will be allowed to reopen, with daycare and primary schools starting gradual reopenings. Workers able to telework are encouraged to continue doing so. On May 7, departments will be classified as green or red, with departments labeled green potentially eligible to ease restrictions from May 11. The classification will be based on the volume of new local cases and

hospital capacity for testing and treatment. The Paris metro and buses will run at 70 percent of capacity, while long-distance travel will continue to be intended solely for urgent family or business matters. Anyone using public transport will be required to wear a face mask and authorities are working to procure and provide cloth masks to the public. Professional sports leagues have been prohibited from resuming before September. The government will conduct a further assessment at the end of next month as to whether additional or accelerated rollbacks of restrictions can be introduced.

Last week, **Germany** permitted shops of up to 800 square meters (8,600 square feet) to reopen as an initial easing of national restrictions. People using public transport across the country and visiting shops are required to wear masks. State-level restrictions may vary, but with the initial general easing, concerns have increased that the level of activity may start a second wave of infection. On April 28, the country's health institute cautioned that the virus transmission rate, commonly referred to as the R rate, is 0.96, up from 0.7 in mid-April. As Chancellor Angela Merkel explained last week, once the rate exceeds 1.0, that indicates that the virus is expanding at an exponential pace in the population. German politicians and health authorities have strongly encouraged the public to maintain strong practices to again slow the spread of the virus, including avoiding nonessential outings; otherwise, restrictions to press the rate of infection back down may be reintroduced.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said on April 28 that **Greece** had controlled "the first wave of the virus" and that national restrictions will begin to be rolled back starting on May 4. Local movement will be permitted from next week, and restaurants, tavernas, and hotels will be able to reopen from the start of June, though physical distancing requirements at such establishments will remain in effect.

Italy is taking cautious measures to ease restrictions, with some variance by region. The Italian government said that visits to relatives and outdoor exercise could resume from next week, though masks are required and people are still discouraged from physical contact. Though restrictions remain on moving between regions, movement within one's region is generally being relaxed from May 4. Strategic industries have been permitted to resume production this week. While schools will be closed until September, retail stores can reopen from May 18 and restaurants and bars will be able to reopen the following month.

On April 28, the **Luxembourgish** government announced that it plans to test the entire population of the country within a month, beginning on May 19. The country has about 600,000 people; there will be 17 test stations that can conduct 20,000 tests in total daily.

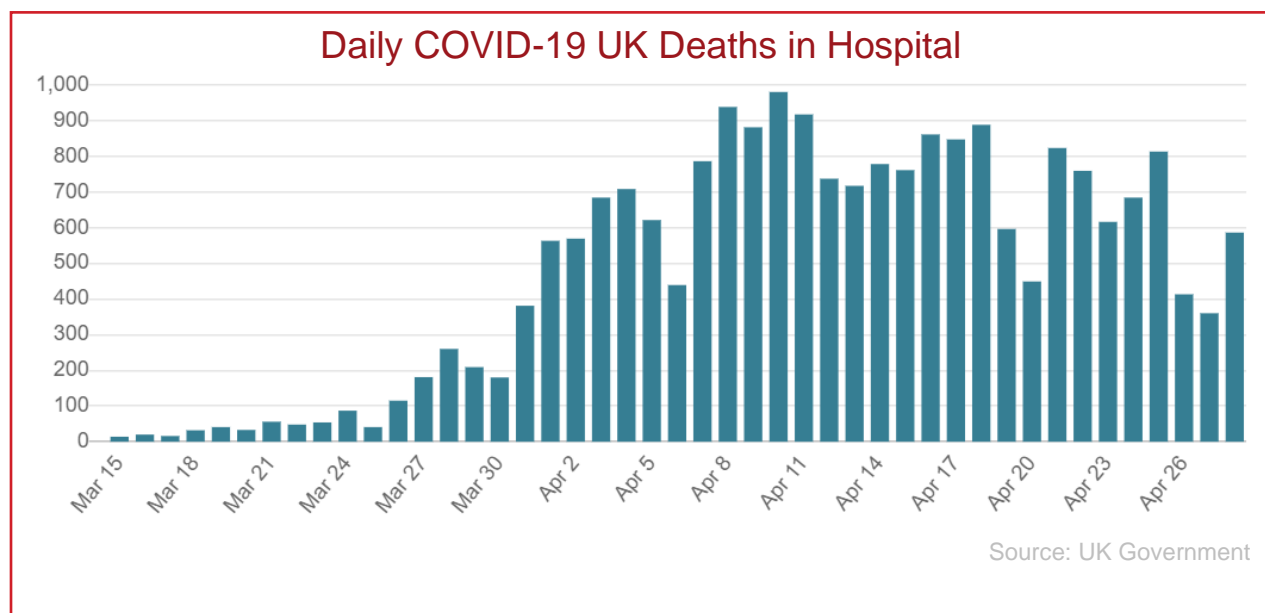
Monaco plans to ease restrictions from May 4, though restaurants/cafes, beaches, and casinos will remain closed up to June and the government is encouraging people to telework when possible.

Portuguese President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa announced on April 28 that the national state of emergency would conclude on May 3. However, Prime Minister Antonio Costa said that protective measures, including social distancing stipulations, would continue to be in effect when the state of emergency concludes and that the country's drawdown would occur in stages. On April 30, Costa plans to announce what will be allowed to resume from May 4.

President Vladimir Putin said that **Russia** may begin a gradual drawdown of restrictions from May 12 and directed the government to prepare a phased reopening plan. While he said that confirmed new case levels are stabilizing, Putin cautioned that the most severe stretch of the outbreak is yet to be reached. Russia's confirmed total case count is nearing 94,000, though recorded COVID-19 deaths have not yet breached 1,000. Putin also recognized that there have been shortages of personal protective equipment (PPE) for healthcare workers, but said domestic production of PPE has been accelerated.

Announced on April 28, **Spain's** progressive withdrawal of restrictions is currently slated to extend to the end of June. The plan comprises four roughly two-week phases. The restrictions will be adjusted based on the situation in different regions, with those areas not as hard-hit able to have restrictions eased at a swifter pace. Freedom of movement is planned to be normalized by the end of June. With the observation of physical distancing practices, smaller businesses will reopen ahead of larger sites such as shopping centers. Hotels will be able to open 30 percent of their rooms, while bars and restaurants with outdoor spaces can operate the outdoor space at 30 percent of capacity. Schools will not resume until September.

The **United Kingdom** has been moving through the peak of its outbreak, according to officials, though restrictions are being maintained as clear, sustained data has yet to emerge of the outbreak progression getting onto a steady downward trajectory. Official statistics for England and Wales indicate that COVID-19 is claiming more than twice as many lives in total as those deaths being recorded within hospitals, suggesting that more than half of COVID-19 deaths are occurring outside of hospitals – predominantly in care homes. The current lockdown is in effect up to May 7. The government has been coming under increasing criticism over its reticence to publicly outline what its plan may look when it does start a phased rollback of restrictions. Businesses also continue to experience uncertainty over the planned end of the post-Brexit transition period at the end of this year, with the UK government insisting there will not be an extension despite the EU warning of a lack of progress in negotiations on the future relationship.



Confirmed Cases Worldwide as of Tuesday Morning, April 28

Country/Region	April 28	April 21
United States	988,451	787,752
Spain	209,465	200,210
Italy	199,414	181,228
United Kingdom	157,149	124,743
Germany	156,337	143,457
France	128,339	114,657
Turkey	112,261	90,980
Iran	91,472	83,505
Russia	87,147	47,121
Mainland China	83,938	83,849
Brazil	66,501	40,581
Canada	48,489	36,823
Belgium	46,687	39,983
Netherlands	38,245	33,405
India	29,435	18,600
Switzerland	29,081	27,826
Peru	28,699	16,325
Portugal	24,027	20,863
Ecuador	23,240	10,128
Ireland	19,648	15,652
Sweden	18,926	14,777
Saudi Arabia	18,811	10,484
Mexico	15,529	8,772
Israel	15,466	13,713
Austria	15,256	14,783
Singapore	14,423	6,588
Pakistan	14,079	9,216
Chile	13,813	10,507
Japan	13,576	11,118
Poland	11,902	9,593
Romania	11,339	8,936
Belarus	11,289	6,264
Qatar	11,244	6,015
United Arab Emirates	10,839	7,265
South Korea	10,752	10,683

Country/Region	April 28	April 21
Indonesia	9,096	6,760
Ukraine	9,009	6,125
Denmark	8,698	7,515
Serbia	8,275	6,630
Philippines	7,777	6,459
Norway	7,533	7,113
Czech Republic	7,449	6,914
Australia	6,725	6,625
Dominican Republic	6,135	4,964
Panama	6,021	4,658
Bangladesh	5,913	2,948
Malaysia	5,820	5,425
Colombia	5,597	3,977
South Africa	4,793	3,300
Egypt	4,782	3,333
Finland	4,695	3,868
Morocco	4,120	3,046
Argentina	3,990	3,020
Luxembourg	3,729	3,558
Algeria	3,517	2,718
Moldova	3,481	2,548
Kuwait	3,288	1,995
Thailand	2,938	2,792
Kazakhstan	2,860	1,949
Bahrain	2,723	1,907
Hungary	2,649	2,098
Greece	2,534	2,245
Oman	2,049	1,508
Croatia	2,039	1,881
Uzbekistan	1,904	1,657
Armenia	1,867	1,401
Iraq	1,847	1,574
Iceland	1,792	1,773
Afghanistan	1,703	1,031
Azerbaijan	1,678	1,436

Source: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), and various media outlets

Confirmed Cases Worldwide as of Tuesday Morning, April 28

Country/Region	April 28	April 21
Estonia	1,647	1,535
Cameroon	1,621	1,017
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1,564	1,485
Ghana	1,550	1,042
Lithuania	1,449	1,350
Slovenia	1,407	1,335
North Macedonia	1,399	1,225
Puerto Rico	1,389	1,252
Cuba	1,389	1,087
Slovakia	1,381	1,173
Bulgaria	1,363	929
Nigeria	1,337	665
Cote d'Ivoire	1,164	879
Guinea	1,163	622
New Zealand	1,124	1,107
Hong Kong	1,037	1,025
Djibouti	1,035	846
Bolivia	1,014	598
Tunisia	967	884
Cyprus	822	772
Latvia	818	739
Kosovo	780	598
Andorra	743	717
Albania	736	584
Senegal	735	377
Lebanon	710	677
Kyrgyzstan	708	590
Niger	701	655
Costa Rica	697	662
Diamond Princess Cruise Ship	696	696
Honduras	693	494
Burkina Faso	635	581
Uruguay	620	602
Sri Lanka	588	304
San Marino	538	462

Country/Region	April 28	April 21
Guatemala	530	294
Georgia	497	402
Palestine	495	329
Somalia	480	237
Democratic Republic of the Congo	471	350
Malta	450	431
Jordan	449	425
Taiwan	429	422
Mali	408	246
Jamaica	364	223
Kenya	363	281
Mauritius	334	328
Venezuela	329	256
El Salvador	323	218
Montenegro	321	312
Isle of Man	308	300
United Republic of Tanzania	300	170
Jersey	283	249
Sudan	275	92
Vietnam	270	276
Equatorial Guinea	258	79
Guernsey	247	239
Paraguay	230	208
Maldives	214	69
Gabon	211	120
Congo	207	160
Rwanda	207	147
Faroe Islands	187	185
Myanmar	146	119
Guam	144	136
Gibraltar	141	133
Brunei Darussalam	138	138
Liberia	133	99
Madagascar	128	121
Ethiopia	124	111

Source: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), and various media outlets

Confirmed Cases Worldwide as of Tuesday Morning, April 28

Country/Region	April 28	April 21
Cambodia	122	122
Trinidad and Tobago	116	114
Bermuda	110	86
Cape Verde	109	67
Aruba	100	97
Togo	99	84
Sierra Leone	99	43
Monaco	95	98
Zambia	89	65
Liechtenstein	83	82
Barbados	80	75
Bahamas	80	64
Uganda	79	56
Haiti	76	57
Mozambique	76	39
Sint Maarten	75	68
Guyana	74	66
Guinea Bissau	73	50
Cayman Islands	70	66
Eswatini	65	24
Benin	64	54
Libya	61	51
United States Virgin Islands	59	54
French Polynesia	58	56
Nepal	52	31
Central African Republic	50	12
Chad	46	33
Macau	45	45
Syria	43	39
Eritrea	39	39
Mongolia	38	34
Malawi	36	17
Zimbabwe	32	25
Angola	27	24
Antigua and Barbuda	24	23

Country/Region	April 28	April 21
Timor Leste	24	22
Botswana	22	20
Laos	19	19
New Caledonia	18	18
Belize	18	18
Fiji	18	18
Grenada	18	14
Namibia	16	16
Dominica	16	16
Curaçao	16	14
Saint Lucia	15	15
Saint Kitts and Nevis	15	15
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	15	12
Burundi	15	6
Northern Mariana Islands	14	14
Nicaragua	13	13
Falkland Islands (Malvinas)	13	11
Turks and Caicos islands	12	11
Greenland	11	11
Montserrat	11	11
Seychelles	11	11
Suriname	10	10
Gambia	10	10
Holy See	9	9
Papua New Guinea	8	7
Sao Tome and Principe	8	4
Mauritania	7	7
Bhutan	7	6
Bonaire, Saint Eustatius and Saba	6	5
British Virgin Islands	6	5
South Sudan	6	4
Western Sahara	6	0
Anguilla	3	3
Yemen	1	1

Source: European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), and various media outlets

SPREAD OF COVID-19: ASIA/PACIFIC

The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the Asia-Pacific region has grown to more than 194,000, while the death toll is at more than 7,900. School, business, and travel restrictions are beginning to be eased in multiple countries in the region where the situation has improved, including China, Australia, and New Zealand. Some specific restrictions are even being relaxed in other countries where the outbreak continues to represent a more severe ongoing challenge, such as smaller retail shops in India, and garment factories in Bangladesh. Several governments have announced tentative timelines to begin reopening their economies, although dates are likely to change depending on the developing situations in individual countries. Low rates of testing remain a concern in Japan and in multiple countries in South and Southeast Asia, where many governments are working to increase the number of COVID-19 tests being performed.

Japan

- Testing for COVID-19 in Japan remains low at around 9,000 tests being performed daily and around 130,000 having been carried out in all. The government is working to increase this number to 20,000 daily, and the health ministry on April 26 approved a plan to allow dentists to assist with collecting patient samples for testing.
 - A concerning 14 percent of confirmed cases in Tokyo are medical personnel or patients who had been hospitalized for other reasons and were infected while at medical facilities.
- Although the government hopes to lift its lockdown regulations in some areas, including Tokyo, by early May, there have been widespread reports of people not adhering to stay-at-home recommendations, and a number of businesses have controversially remained open, notably pachinko parlors.
- Beginning on April 29, Japan will extend its travel ban to 14 additional countries, barring entry to travelers who have been in the following countries in the previous two weeks:
 - Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Belarus, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Kuwait, Oman, Peru, Qatar, Russia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saudi Arabia, Ukraine, and United Arab Emirates.
- Governors of multiple prefectures have requested that people restrict inter-prefectural travel to only essential purposes, but the government lacks the authority to enforce such travel regulations.

China

- The focus of the outbreak in China remains along the Russian border, particularly in the northeastern Heilongjiang Province, although only six new cases were reported there on April 27, three of them imported and three from local community spread.
- The government reports that all patients who had COVID-19 in Wuhan have been discharged from hospitals. A special hospital that had been established in Beijing in response to the virus is also being closed.
- Schools in multiple cities have begun to reopen, including in Beijing and Shanghai. Schools in Wuhan are expected to begin to reopen on May 6.

- Sales of construction equipment jumped in March as infrastructure construction projects that had been halted resumed.

Singapore

- Singapore continues to experience new daily cases in the high triple digits. The vast majority of new cases are still among migrant workers living in dormitories, with 781 of the 799 new confirmed cases on April 28 being such workers. The rate of infection of Singaporean nationals and permanent residents has been falling.
- Singapore now has the highest number of confirmed cases in Asia after China and India, although the city-state's higher rate of testing than many other countries in the region makes comparisons of numbers imperfect.
 - The government is examining plans to increase testing further, which may include tests for the entire population. Testing among migrant workers is already being increased.
- The government currently plans to begin reopening the economy in stages starting around late May. Specific details of a reopening have not been immediately made available.
- Tens of thousands of additional hospital beds are being made available, both at medical facilities and at temporary locations like exhibition centers.

Philippines

- The lockdown on the island of Luzon, where Manila is located, has been extended until at least May 15, although restrictions were relaxed in some areas.
 - Lockdown restrictions were also expanded to the cities of Cebu, Davao, and Iloilo.
- The number of healthcare personnel infected with COVID-19 remains high at 1,245 people, which is about 16 percent of total cases.
 - Health infrastructure in Metro Manila is being stretched, with the number of available ICU beds approaching capacity, according to the Department of Health. Most confirmed cases in the country are located in Metro Manila.
- Only around 85,000 people have been tested for the virus out of a population of more than 104 million.
 - Some 6,320 tests are now being completed daily, with the government intending to ramp up testing to 20,000 daily by May 15.

Indonesia

- Indonesia continues to experience a high number of new confirmed cases, with a daily record of 436 new cases on April 24.
- Jakarta, which has implemented more restrictive response measures than the rest of the country and accounts for the majority of confirmed cases, has begun to see a decline in new cases, according to the government. New cases have been increasing outside Jakarta, however.
 - Jakarta's restrictions on businesses and travel will remain in effect until at least May 22. Restrictions continue to be expanded to additional locations in the greater Jakarta area.
- Testing for COVID-19 in Indonesia remains very low, with only around 60,000 total tests carried out for a population of more than 260 million people. The government is seeking to increase testing by importing around 479,000 additional test kits from China and South Korea, and boosting the number of labs in Indonesia capable of carrying out tests.

- As testing becomes more widespread, it is likely that the number of confirmed positive cases will increase further.
- Government officials have stated that they expect the number of new cases across the country to begin to decline in June, with a lessening of restrictions and a return to some level of normality taking place by July.

India

- Despite continued high numbers of daily confirmed cases, the national government has allowed some smaller retail locations to reopen provided that they comply with social distancing and health requirements. The national lockdown is set to expire on May 3, although several state-level officials have pushed the national government to extend it beyond that date.
- Testing rates in India remain very low. The government is working to develop a domestic test kit, which it expects to begin using in May in an effort to increase testing capacity to 100,000 per day by May 31.
 - The country canceled orders for as many as 500,000 COVID-19 test kits from China after they were reported to have extremely low accuracy rates.

Bangladesh

- Bangladesh reported a daily record of 549 new confirmed cases on April 28, with several other days over the past week seeing new cases of around 500.
 - These numbers are likely low given that the country has tested only around 24,000 people out of its population of approximately 165 million.
- Around 500 garment factories were allowed to reopen on April 27, most of them in Dhaka and Chittagong. Nearly 200 factories have also reopened in Narayanganj, including garment factories, steel mills, packaging factories, and chemical plants.
 - Factory workers returning to work are supposed to comply with social distancing and disinfectant guidelines, although the reopenings still represent a danger for further virus spread.
- Some restrictions were relaxed in Dhaka on April 28, with additional vehicle traffic allowed in the city and opening hours for shops extended.

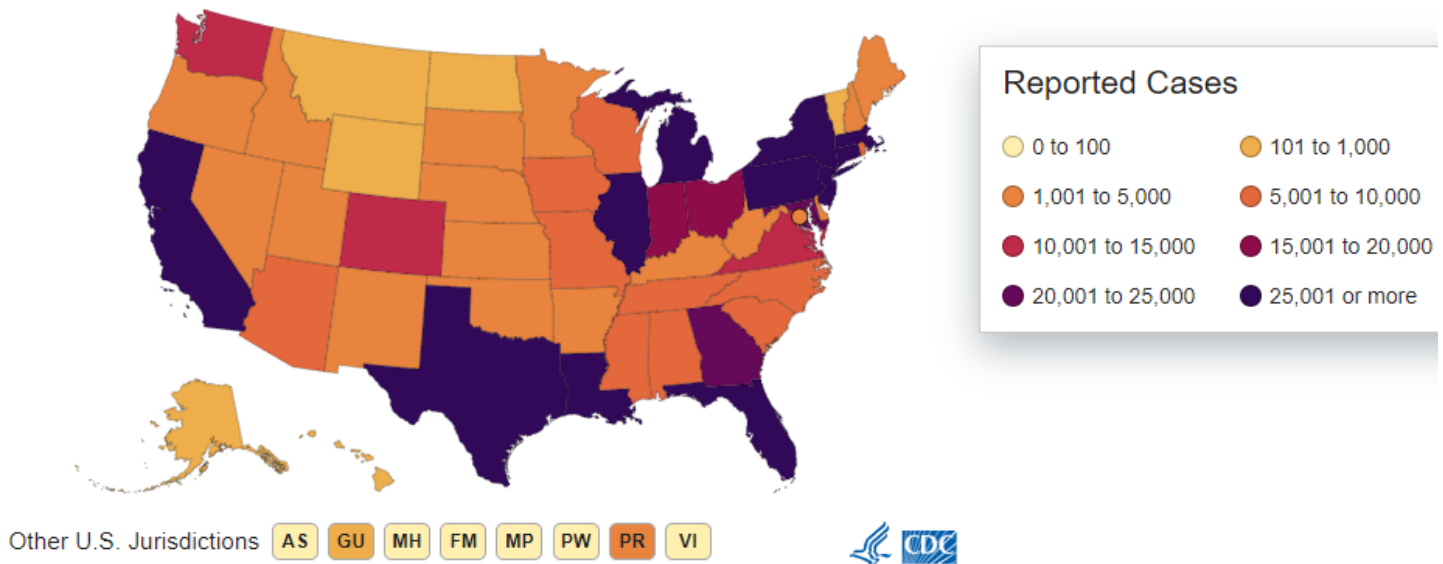
Maldives

- The country has experienced a significant spike in confirmed cases, with 245 in total on April 28, up from 85 on April 23. The largest number of confirmed cases are among Bangladeshi migrant workers living in dormitories in the capital Male.

Australia and New Zealand

- The outbreak seems to remain under control in both countries and the governments have been in talks over a potential reopening of travel between Australia and New Zealand, although no final plan has yet been announced.
- New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced on April 27 that the country has managed to stop community transmission of COVID-19.
- New Zealand has relaxed some of its restrictions on business and travel, as have several Australian states.
- OceanaGold resumed work at its Macraes and Waihi, New Zealand, gold mines on April 28.

States Reporting COVID-19 Cases as of Tuesday, April 28



Source: U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

SPREAD OF COVID-19: NORTH AMERICA

United States

The COVID-19 outbreak continues to show signs of plateauing in the United States both in terms of overall cases and deaths. With a potential peak reached, states have begun to ease some restrictions allowing for nonessential businesses to begin limited reopenings and stay-at-home orders to expire. Montana, Colorado, Minnesota, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Mississippi, Georgia, South Carolina, Texas, and Alaska have all eased restrictions to various extents. Several other states, including Idaho, Nevada, and Arizona, are expected to lift restrictions or stay-at-home orders beginning April 30. Public health officials continue to caution that additional outbreaks may occur in the coming weeks due to reopening, particularly as many states are still not able to complete adequate testing or tracing of COVID-19 infections. As of Tuesday, at least 1,004,908 cases and 57,812 deaths have been reported. The U.S. became the first country to report over a million cases and is now reporting over a third of all cases worldwide. Last week over 812,000 cases and 44,900 were reported making this the first week-to-week to period that saw both the percentage increase of cases and deaths decrease since March.

Canada

Though Canadian officials do not believe the country has hit a peak yet, cases and deaths appear to have begun plateauing. Quebec and Ontario, the two provinces that have seen 80 percent of both cases and deaths, continue to see increases, as does Alberta, the third-worst hit province thus far. The lifting of restrictions in Canada are not expected to begin until after May 1 and will vary by province, similar to the variance in U.S. states. As of Tuesday, at least 49,025 cases and 2,766 deaths have been reported.

Recent Developments

- Over the weekend the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) expanded the list of possible symptoms of COVID-19 to include chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, and loss of taste or smell. The CDC has a dedicated page on COVID-19 symptoms, which can be found at the following link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>.
- On Friday, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) issued a Drug Safety Communication about the negative side effects from the use of hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine, which have been used as experimental treatments against COVID-19. The FDA warns that use of the drugs when treating COVID-19 can lead to potentially life-threatening heart rhythm issues. The full FDA release can be found at the following link: <https://www.fda.gov/news-events/press-announcements/coronavirus-covid-19-update-fda-reiterates-importance-close-patient-supervision-label-use>.
- The Canadian province of Saskatchewan has limited all nonessential travel to and between the northern portions of the province. Checkpoints have been set up along highways in the region to enforce the restrictions. Northern Saskatchewan has reported almost half of current cases in the province.
- The U.S. Labor Department, in conjunction with the CDC, issued new non-mandatory guidelines for meatpacking and meat processing plants due to the continued outbreaks at such facilities. At least 5,000 workers in the U.S. have tested positive and 13 have died. Additional outbreaks have also occurred at such facilities in Canada. There have yet to be major shortages of meat products; however, The full CDC guidance can be found at the following link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/meat-poultry-processing-workers-employers.html>.
- On Tuesday, U.S. President Donald Trump is expected to sign an executive order that will compel meat processing plants to stay open by declaring them critical infrastructure.
- Major U.S. airlines have begun requiring flight attendants to wear face coverings. They are also encouraging passengers to wear coverings while JetBlue will become the first U.S. airline to make coverings mandatory beginning May 4. Last week, Canada began requiring all passengers and crewmembers to wear face coverings in order to board aircraft regardless of airline.
- General Motors, Ford Motor Company, and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles have agreed to continue shutdowns of U.S. factories through May 18 after concerns were made by the United Auto Workers (UAW) union about restarting May 4, the initial projected reopening date.
- The U.S. Postal Service (USPS) has reported at least 10,000 presumed cases and 45 deaths. The 10,000 cases represent approximately 1.5 percent of the total USPS workforce. No major operational disruptions have been reported in relation to the outbreak.
- Officials have warned of a risk of Legionnaires' disease when larger commercial buildings begin reopening. With so many buildings shut down, there has been a lack of chlorinated water flowing through pipes and when buildings reopen, there is a much higher chance of bacteria forming, such as the type that causes Legionnaires'. Legionnaires' causes pneumonia-type symptoms, much like COVID-19, meaning a misdiagnosis of either disease could be elevated.

SPREAD OF COVID-19: MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

As of this writing, 305,778 cases of COVID-19 have been reported across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) since the virus first appeared in the region in the United Arab Emirates on January 29. Of these, 10,733 have been fatal. Turkey remains the MENA nation most affected by the coronavirus after surpassing Iran on April 18, though official data suggests that daily jumps in new infections and deaths have begun to decline in recent days, while daily recoveries have increased, raising the possibility that the COVID-19 outbreak in the country may be reaching a peak. The same appears to be true of most of Ankara's regional counterparts, as while a handful of nations continue to witness an acceleration of their respective epidemics, infection rates appear to be slowing and/or close to leveling off in most other MENA countries. As a result, a growing number of governments have begun easing restrictions on travel and social interactions, both in light of Ramadan and in order to restore economic activities damaged by coronavirus lockdowns. That said, concerns persist over a potential resurgence of the virus, leading to some countries adopting a somewhat uneven approach vis-à-vis restoring normalcy to local economies and daily lives, allowing some businesses to resume operations, while at the same extending curbs on personal movement and other prevention measures. Thus, it stands to reason that the process of phasing out coronavirus restrictions will be gradual and potentially lengthy. This could aggravate socioeconomic tensions among populations grappling with mounting financial hardship stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic, possibly manifesting in security incidents.

The number of confirmed coronavirus cases in the Middle East and North Africa continues a general upward trajectory, though the pace of new infections varies widely, and the bulk of the region appears close to plateauing.

- COVID-19 cases in the MENA have increased by roughly 25 percent since April 21. However, this represents a decline compared to the period between April 14-21, when the region witnessed an approximately 35-percent increase in new infections.
- The number of new infections continues to rise slowly in Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, and the Palestinian territories, while official data suggests that additional countries could be approaching the apex of their respective outbreaks as well, including Tunisia and possibly Morocco.
- Likewise, Turkey, which boasted one of the world's fastest infection rates for several weeks beginning in late March, could be reaching its peak after registering a drop in new infections and deaths attributed to COVID-19. Similarly, Iran, the epicenter of the coronavirus outbreak in the MENA, continues to report improving figures.
- Conversely, a handful of countries continue to witness spikes/acceleration of their COVID-19 outbreaks, notably Pakistan, along with Afghanistan, Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.
- Case tallies remain paltry in Libya, Syria, and Yemen; however, conflict and poor testing regimes are widely perceived to be hampering data completeness.

MENA governments are taking uneven steps to lift coronavirus restrictions in a bid to restore economic activities while also mitigating the risk of a second wave of contagion.

- Countries that have purportedly stabilized the spread of the coronavirus sufficiently are increasingly easing lockdown measures and other COVID-19 containment efforts.
- The governments in Algeria, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, and the United Arab Emirates have relaxed mandatory curfews and restrictions on personal movement, in addition to allowing certain retail and service businesses to reopen, provided they adhere to health and social distancing protocols.
- Iran continues to loosen coronavirus prevention measures, announcing on Monday that all but one of its international borders have reopened for trade and unveiling a plan to reopen mosques in parts of the country experiencing minimal COVID-19 impacts.
- In most cases, the businesses and sectors involved in the initial wave of re-openings thus far have been designated by local authorities as low-risk—that is, entailing a low potential for physical contact between customers and patrons, or one that could be managed through social distancing and hygiene measures. Most establishments or institutions classified as high and medium risk, such as schools, places of worship, eat-in restaurants, and airports, remain closed.
- This strategy points to what will likely be a gradual, incremental return to normalcy, though there is room for inconsistency as local governments debate when and how quickly to roll back anti-virus efforts.
- Conversely, other countries, including some that have allowed some economic activities to resume, have extended restrictions on travel and social interactions, including Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Pakistan, Tunisia, and Turkey.
- Because the lifting of anti-virus efforts in many MENA nations has coincided with Ramadan, a busy shopping period in the region, it is possible that restrictions could be re-tightened following the conclusion of the Islamic holy month around May 23-24.
- Meanwhile, multiple governments and airlines in the Middle East have recently extended suspensions on commercial flights through at least mid-May as part of efforts to combat COVID-19, including Iraq, Jordan, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia, along with Israel's El Al airline and the UAE-based Etihad Airways.
- With coronavirus-induced travel restrictions and anxiety over travel during the outbreak in general having already halted nearly all international flights, such moves stand to exacerbate the already-heavy impact of COVID-19 on the aviation industry in the MENA; air traffic in the region is forecast to fall by more than 50 percent in 2020 compared to last year.

Increased protest activity should be expected as the piecemeal reopening of MENA economies aggravates tensions among populations affected by growing unemployment and financial hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The financial and emotional impact of the coronavirus outbreak will increase pressure on local governments to ease COVID-19 restrictions.
- However, what appears likely to be a slow process in this regard could fuel anger and frustration over some governments' handling of the situation, especially among those who are out of work and/or dealing with poverty.
- A protest over the Israeli government's anti-virus measures and their corresponding impact on small businesses took place in Eilat on April 23.
- Near-daily protests have been reported in cities and towns across Lebanon over the past week over the government's fiscal policies and deteriorating economic conditions, notably a new

plunge in the country's currency, rising prices, and cost-cutting measures by local businesses. Many have turned violent and banks and ATMs have increasingly been the target of low-level attacks over informal capital control measures that have limited individuals' access to and reduced the value of their savings.

- Previously overshadowed by regional developments and, more recently, the coronavirus, anti-government protests have resurged in Baghdad and some provinces in southern Iraq over the past week. Similar to Lebanon, some have devolved into clashes.
- It stands to reason that protest activity will increase in size and intensity as tensions and desperation escalate, though with restrictions on personal movement and bans on public gatherings still in place across much of the region, any gatherings that materialize could be subject to harsh repression and dispersal by local security forces.

The easing of lockdown measures and social distancing rules, along with Ramadan, could lead to a coronavirus resurgence.

- By nature, the easing of restrictions on personal movement and social interactions risk prompting a new surge in COVID-19 infections, especially in countries such as the UAE and Pakistan, where reported cases continue to rise.
- Approaching the end of its first week, the holy month of Ramadan could also provide a vector for the spread of the coronavirus, as the roughly 30-day period has traditionally included involved large communal prayers and social gatherings at mosques, homes, and restaurants.
- Although many government and religious leaders have called for Muslims to perform Ramadan rituals at home, and despite reports indicating that worshippers have generally adhered to social distancing measures thus far, there have been incidents in which Ramadan-related gatherings have materialized in defiance of restrictions on large groups.
- In Egypt, dozens of people staged a Ramadan procession through Alexandria on April 23, while a group of men performed prayers shoulder to shoulder in Cairo's Zamalek district the following day.
- In Pakistan, after pressuring the government to lift restrictions on prayer gatherings, residents have flocked to markets and mosques in several cities.
- The shunning of advice to remain at home and to practice social distancing could lead to an uptick in COVID-19 cases in the coming weeks.

SPREAD OF COVID-19: LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

COVID-19 has spread through all countries and territories across Latin America and the Caribbean. As of Tuesday morning, the region-wide caseload has risen to 179,900. This amounts to an increase of 63 percent over the last week, marking a slight decrease in the infection rate. This likely indicates that the travel restrictions that have been put in place throughout the region are producing the desired effect. Still, the prevalence of underreporting makes it difficult to accurately gauge the spread of the disease. With a caseload of 67,446, Brazil remains the epicenter of the outbreak in Latin America, accounting for 37 percent of all confirmed cases in the region. Peru has the second-highest caseload at 28,699, followed by Ecuador (23,340), Mexico (15,529), Chile (13,813), and the Dominican Republic (6,293). The region-wide death toll has climbed to 9,016.

Several countries across Latin America have announced plans to begin gradually lifting restrictions on business operations. Colombia rolled out the first phase of its “economic reactivation plan” on Monday, allowing a number of manufacturing subsectors to resume operations, provided they introduce certain biosafety measures and acquire proper permits from municipal authorities. In Brazil, the southern state of Santa Catarina has allowed shopping malls and all businesses apart from gymnasiums to resume limited operations. More governments are expected make similar announcements in the coming weeks. Still, such efforts have not been without resistance. A number of public health officials and policymakers across the region have cautioned that prematurely lifting such restrictions will cause the infection rate to rebound, and place dangerous further strain upon the region’s already fragile healthcare systems.

Brazil

President Jair Bolsonaro’s handling of the pandemic has given rise to a political crisis. He has continuously downplayed the severity of the disease since it first appeared in the country, and has attended rallies of his supporters calling on governors and mayors to lift lockdown measures. Meanwhile, Brazil’s caseload has climbed much more sharply than any other country in the region, and Bolsonaro’s approval ratings have plummeted. Multiple cabinet ministers have either resigned or been sacked following disputes with the president over the response to the disease. The political crisis deepened even further over the weekend, after Justice Minister Sérgio Moro resigned, and accused Bolsonaro of meddling in police investigations that could potentially implicate the president’s sons. Bolsonaro has denied all allegations of wrongdoing, although, the Brazilian Supreme Court has ordered an investigation, and a number of local commentators have raised doubts about his long-term political survival.

Policymakers from the southern state of Santa Catarina have been some of the most outspoken critics of movement restrictions in the country. Beginning last week, Governor Carlos Moises authorized religious institutions, shopping malls, and all other commercial establishments apart from gymnasiums to reopen. Businesses are required to observe shortened hours and limit the number of patrons that are allowed inside their premises. However, video footage that has circulated on social media in recent days purportedly shows the regulations being widely ignored.

On April 27th, a senior official from the Brazilian Economy Ministry reported that federal lawmakers were drafting a plan for the broader, gradual reopening of businesses across the country, although no timetable has yet been made public. Productivity and Competition Secretary Carlos da Costa stated that soccer matches, bars, and restaurants would likely be among the first to reopen.

Peru

President Martín Vizcarra continues to enjoy high approval ratings, despite the fact that COVID-19 cases have continued to sharply climb in Peru in recent weeks. Over the weekend, the president announced that quarantine measures and border closures have been extended to last through May 10th. However, Vizcarra stated that starting on May 4th, some restrictions will begin to be gradually scaled back. Mining and textile industries will be permitted to resume operations. Additionally, children will be authorized to leave their residences once per day, and restaurants will be permitted to deliver to food directly to customers’ homes (as opposed to takeout only).

Mexico

Following pressure from the U.S., the Mexican government announced on Friday that it plans to allow automotive plants in the country to reopen in May, through a joint plan with the United States and Canada. Toyota issued a statement claiming that it intends to begin gradually resuming operations at facilities throughout North America on May 4th. Volkswagen has stated that it is tentatively planning to reopen its plant in Puebla by May 18th. U.S. automakers such as Ford, Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, and General Motors have likewise indicated that they intend to resume production at their facilities in Mexico at some point in May.

Colombia

The administration of President Iván Duque has launched an “economic reactivation plan,” which aims to gradually scale back restrictions on businesses. Beginning on Monday, the following nine manufacturing subsectors were authorized to resume operations: textiles, clothing, leather goods, wood products (excluding furniture), paper/cardboard, chemical substances/products, fabricated metal products, appliances, and electronic devices. To qualify, a business must first implement a series of biosafety protocols, and then pass an inspection by municipal authorities. Additionally, as of Monday, construction companies have been authorized to resume infrastructure and private construction works, apart from remodeling. However, media sources report that some mayors and city councils are taking measures to delay business reopenings, arguing that such a move is premature. In some cases, municipal authorities have reportedly pushed back the deadlines for the requisite permits.

Dominican Republic

Dominican President Danilo Medina has continued to caution against reopening the economy too prematurely. Nevertheless, on Tuesday, local media outlets reported that a number of businesses throughout Santo Domingo began to defy the government-mandated lockdown measures and illegally reopen. Companies that did so purportedly included coffee shops, convenience stores, and auto repair shops. President Medina has stated that his administration will reevaluate the current state of emergency on April 30th. The measure could potentially be extended, and the restrictions it entails could be modified.

SPREAD OF COVID-19: SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

The number of COVID-19 cases in sub-Saharan Africa has risen to over 20,000 cases and 500 deaths. This marks a 45 percent increase in cases over the last week, as well as a 48 percent increase in fatalities. While this suggests that the pandemic is continuing to grow across the region, sub-Saharan Africa remains significantly less affected than many other regions. The cause for this low number of cases remains under investigation, but there has been speculation that it could be linked to a number of factors, including underreporting, climate, lower population density, a greater amount of time spent outdoors in ultraviolet light, and/or the relatively youthful population. Many of those factors are believed to contribute to lower rates of droplet-spread diseases, such as flu and severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS). There is also growing evidence that the swift adoption of lockdowns, curfews, and other public health measures could be helping to reduce the number of new cases, particularly in countries such as South Africa. As authorities begin to lift the restrictions, mostly gradually, it remains to be seen whether this trend will continue. Additionally, public resistance to the public health measures has grown in recent weeks, sparking growing protests, riots, looting, clashes,

and unrest. While the lifting of public health measures could help ease this resistance, the risk of further unrest is likely to remain high as long as the economic and social impacts continue to be felt by the local populace.

Regional Overview and Trends

- As of the morning of Tuesday, April 28, the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Sub-Saharan Africa has reached over 20,600. This marks a 45 percent increase compared to last Tuesday, April 14. While the percentage increase is significant and suggests the pandemic is growing, it remains lower than previous weeks.
- The number of fatalities has also risen by 48 percent to 501. This gives the region an overall case fatality ratio of approximately two percent.
- South Africa remains the worst-affected country in the region, recording 4,793 cases and 90 deaths. However, the positive test rate has fallen to as low as 2.5 percent. This suggests that the lockdown and increase in testing could be proving effective.
- The next worst-affected countries include Cameroon (1,621 cases), Ghana (1,550 cases), Nigeria (1,337 cases), and Cote d'Ivoire (1,164 cases). The top five worst-affected countries continue to account for around half of all cases in the region.
- Over the last week, exponential increases in cases were recorded in a number of countries, including the Central African Republic (250%), Equatorial Guinea (227%), Somalia (222%), eSwatini (171%), Sudan (157%), Burundi (150%), Sierra Leone (130%), Mozambique (117%), Malawi (112%), Nigeria (101%), and Sao Tome and Principe (100%).
- No new cases were reported in Eritrea, Mauritania, Namibia, Seychelles, and The Gambia.
- Of the countries that have recorded over 100 confirmed cases, significantly higher-than-average case fatality ratios have occurred in Liberia (12%), Sudan (8%), Burkina Faso (7%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (6%), Mali (6%), and Somalia (5%).
- South Africa has conducted the highest number of tests at nearly 180,000, followed by Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, and Ethiopia. Djibouti has conducted just over 12,000 tests, but has conducted the highest number of cases per capita.

Update on Public Health Measures

As the pandemic continues to grow, a majority of countries in the region have extended their public health measures, including flight suspensions, lockdowns, confinements, and curfews into at least early May. However, some countries have announced plans to begin gradually lifting the restrictions. South Africa plans to move from Level 5 to Level 4 restrictions beginning on May 1, allowing some businesses to resume operations; however, it has warned that the alert level could be adjusted at any time based on the rate of transmission and capacity of health systems, and that provinces could operate under different levels. Nigeria similarly plans to begin a phased gradual easing of the lockdowns on May 4, but has provided few details. Other countries that have adopted a similar strategy include Botswana and Gabon. Eswatini also attempted to gradually lift its restrictions last week, allowing some low-risk businesses to resume operations, but reversed its decision just days later after the number of cases nearly doubled. Only one country, Ghana, has thus far fully lifted its lockdown restrictions.

The gradual lifting of restrictions has allowed some businesses to resume operations, including mines. In South Africa, authorities have announced that opencast mines can resume full operations beginning on May 1, but underground mines remain limited to 50 percent production capacity. However, unions have raised concerns that lifting the restrictions could endanger workers and the risk of labor actions cannot be ruled out as mines reopen. As more countries begin to lift their restrictions, the supply chain disruptions are likely to gradually ease, though aid groups have warned that they could exacerbate food insecurity through the end of the year.

As the pandemic and associated public health measures have worn on, lockdown fatigue appears to have set in in a number of countries, prompting residents to increasingly defy the measures and return to their normal lives. This has resulted in an uptick in protests, looting, riots, and clashes with security forces in several countries, including Nigeria, South Africa, and Burkina Faso. The beginning of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan on April 23 has exacerbated the growing resistance to the public health measures, particularly in Muslim-majority countries, resulting in localized protests and clashes in several locations, such as Somalia and Comoros. While the gradual lifting of the restrictions in some countries could help ease this lockdown fatigue and growing resistance to the public health measures, the risk of further protests, riots, and unrest is likely to remain high as long as the economic and social impacts continue to be felt.

ASSESSMENT

While numerous countries in regions around the world have reported stabilization of outbreaks and enacted or announced plans for the relaxation of restrictions, COVID-19 continues to spread around the world and the risk continues for new, serious outbreaks, in addition to second waves in areas already hit by the virus. Countries such as Germany and the United States will be closely watched around the world in the coming weeks due to the juxtaposition of pressures to roll back restrictions amidst ongoing concerns for preventing resurgent or more severe growth of infection levels, in addition to the variance within those countries with a state-by-state approach. Although the easing of restrictions can help businesses get closer to some level of normalization, challenges (including supply chain disruptions) may persist in countries with broad variation of regulations in different regions or sub-regions as companies navigate post-lockdown operations.

Economic contractions, instability, and supply chain disruptions for essentials such as food and medical supplies continue to pose risks to populations in developing countries, and governments may face greater pressure to allow most work to continue despite potentially greater public health risks. The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre recently reported that a record high of 50.8 million people worldwide are considered internally displaced due to conflict or natural disasters; the pandemic crisis merging with ongoing crises around the globe risks exacerbating hardships for affected regions and peoples. It is advised to continue monitoring the shifting pandemic and associated lockdown measures, to abide by national and sub-national restrictions, and to follow guidance from personal healthcare providers as well as national and international health organizations.