France says coronavirus situation 'deteriorating very fast'

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The coronavirus outbreak in France is "very worrying" and "deteriorating very fast", the head of the country's health service said Monday.

"The number of cases double every three days," Jerome Salomon said on France Inter.

"I want our citizens to realise that there are people who are sick, who are in [intensive care](link) and that (their number) runs into hundreds," he said.

According to the latest official figures published on Sunday, France has had 127 coronavirus deaths and 5,423 confirmed cases.

That was a jump of 36 deaths and over 900 cases in 24 hours. More than 400 people have been hospitalised in a serious condition.

"There is a real worry that the speed of the outbreak could saturate hospitals and this is something we absolutely want to avoid," Salomon said, singling out the badly affected eastern region of Alsace near Germany and the greater Paris area.

"This is why we must do everything to slow down the [outbreak](link)," he said.

"Each Frenchman and Frenchwoman must tell themselves every morning: how can I reduce by a third or fourth the number of people I approach?

"Remain at home, it's as simple as that."

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