

Germany bans export of medical protective gear over coronavirus

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Germany's interior ministry on Wednesday said it had banned exports of medical protection gear such as masks and gloves to ensure that health workers in the country have enough to deal with the coronavirus outbreak.

The move comes as governments around the world are scrambling to protect supplies as fears over the [deadly virus](#) have sparked panic buying, hoarding and even theft.

In a statement, Germany's interior ministry said it had published a decree in the Federal Gazette outlawing "the export abroad of medical protective gear (masks, gloves, protective suits, etc.)".

Exceptions can be made, it added, for instance as part of "international aid missions".

Germany has recorded 240 cases of the novel coronavirus so far, the bulk of them in North Rhine-Westphalia state where an infected couple attended carnival celebrations last month.

The state's health minister Karl-Josef Laumann told reporters on Wednesday that North Rhine-Westphalia would buy one million masks to help keep [medical staff](#) safe.

Like other countries, Germany has also cancelled a string of major events to contain the spread of the virus.

The Hannover Messe, one of the world's largest industrial trade fairs drawing in some 200,000 visitors a year, joined the list when it announced Wednesday that next month's event would be moved to July.

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