

Italy shuts some beaches after crowds defy lockdown

March 16 2020

Some Italian Riviera beaches and promenades around the northern city of Genoa were closed Monday after crowds filled them over the weekend in violation of coronavirus lockdown rules.

Italy has imposed a nationwide ban on public gatherings to slow a pandemic that has killed more than 2,100 people in the Mediterranean nation since last month.

But many Italians have second homes in holiday hotspots across the country, such as the mountainside port of La Spezia.

A local decree published Monday closed access to La Spezia's historic walkways and staircases until April 3—the same day Italy's overall ban on public gatherings is due to end.

Italy's ANSA news agency said similar bans were imposed for the beaches in the nearby towns of Lerici and Porto Venere.

The nearby Rapallo beach was also cordoned off on Sunday.

The number of reported deaths in Genoa's Liguria region nearly doubled from 27 to 50 between Saturday and Monday.

Numerous Italians took to [social media](#) to criticise their compatriots for walking around and risking the health of those who are particularly vulnerable to the new disease, which is sweeping across Europe.

Italian senate member Stefano Bertacco—a 57-year-old who has cancer and has isolated himself in his home in the northeastern city of Verona—posted an especially poignant message for the weekend [beach](#) strollers.

"I too would like to take a walk," Bertacco said in a video message.

"But it might be my last."

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