

Malaysia to deploy army to enforce virus restrictions

March 20 2020

Malaysia will deploy the army to support police in enforcing tough restrictions to halt the spread of the coronavirus because many people are flouting isolation rules, a minister said Friday.

People have been told to stay at home and all schools and most businesses have closed, while Malaysians are barred from travelling overseas and foreigners from entering the country.

But some are ignoring the measures introduced this week, with people still going for walks in parks and eating out.

Police had originally been tasked with enforcing the restrictions, but Defence Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob said the army would be brought in from Sunday.

"We are confident that with the [army](#)'s help, stricter enforcement can be carried out," he told a press conference.

"There are still many who don't care about the orders from the government."

Malaysia has so far reported 900 virus cases, the highest figure of any Southeast Asian country.

Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin previously appealed to Malaysians to abide by the restrictions, saying they are not an excuse to take a holiday

or hang out with friends.

The measures were imposed after a surge in new infections—most linked to a mass Islamic gathering near Kuala Lumpur at the start of the month. Two people have so far died.

Globally, the [death toll](#) from the virus has risen to almost 10,000 with more than 232,000 cases in 158 countries and territories, according to an AFP tally.

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