

# World virus infections top 800,000; Spain sees record deaths

March 31 2020, by Aritz Parra, David Rising and Nick Perry

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A health worker wearing a face mask to protect from coronavirus, looks out of from a window at a nursing home in Madrid, Spain, Tuesday, March 31, 2020. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (AP Photo/Manu Fernandez)

Spain's coronavirus deaths jumped by a record number Tuesday as the country's medical system strained to care for its tens of thousands of infected patients and the world total climbed to more than 800,000 case.

In the United States, where the spread of the coronavirus has been accelerating, New York's governor begged for health care reinforcements, saying up to 1 million more workers were needed.

Spain and Italy are still struggling to avoid the collapse of their health systems, with Spain saying hospitals in at least half of its 17 regions are at or very near their ICU bed limits and more than 13,000 medical workers are among the country's reported 94,417 infections.

Dozens of hotels across Spain have been converted into recovery rooms for patients in less-serious condition, and authorities are building makeshift field hospitals in sports centers, libraries and exhibition halls. So far they have added 23,000 beds.

Overnight, Spain recorded 849 new deaths, the highest daily toll since the pandemic hit the southern European country. It has now claimed the lives of 8,189 people in Spain, forcing Madrid to open a second temporary morgue this week after an ice rink pressed into service last week become overwhelmed.

Authorities are shifting ventilating machines to regions with the highest number of ICU patients, and moving the patients themselves between regions "has not been ruled out," said Dr. María José Sierra of Spain's health emergencies center.



An ultra-Orthodox Jewish boy receives a COVID-19 test by a medical personnel wearing protective gear as part of the government's measures to stop the spread of the coronavirus in the orthodox city of Bnei Brak, a Tel Aviv suburb, Israel, Tuesday, March 31, 2020. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)

Deaths climbed rapidly in the United States, which was poised to overtake China's reported virus death toll of 3,300. But experts say all numbers reported by governments and states in this pandemic are faulty in different ways, due to the lack of testing, mild virus cases that are missed or the determination of some governments to try to shape their pandemic narrative.

"This is going to be a long-term battle and we cannot let down our guard," cautioned Dr. Takeshi Kasai, the World Health Organization's

regional director for the Western Pacific. "We need every country to keep responding according to their local situation."

Hard-hit Italy and Spain now account for more than half of the 38,714 COVID-19 deaths reported worldwide and the U.S. has the most confirmed cases at 164,610, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University.



Health officials spray disinfectant in a Kampung Baru, traditional Malay village, in Kuala Lumpur city center as a safety precaution against the new coronavirus, Tuesday, March 31, 2020. The Malaysian government issued a restricted movement order to the public for the rest of the month to help curb the spread of the coronavirus. (AP Photo/Vincent Thian)



Italy's death toll rose to nearly 11,600—the highest in the world by far—but its rates of new infections were slowing.

A 12-year-old girl became the youngest person to die in Belgium, which has counted 705 deaths so far, including 98 in the last day. It was not disclosed whether she suffered from any underlying condition. The country of about 11.5 million people has reported more than 12,705 infections.

National crisis-center coronavirus spokesman Emmanuel Andre said Belgian authorities expect the disease to reach its peak in coming days, and that "we will arrive at a point where we're close to saturation point at our hospitals."

To the east, Russia registered 500 new confirmed cases in the biggest spike since the beginning of the outbreak, bringing its total to 2,337. Moscow, the capital, has been on lockdown since Monday and the government is edging toward to declaring a national state of emergency.



A man wearing a face mask to stop the spread of the coronavirus walks past a window display of rainbows in the windows of the famous London department store Harrods in London, Tuesday, March 31, 2020. Rainbows in windows are being used to show hope in the fight against Covid-19, they were first used in Italy with the message 'Tutto andra' bene,' or "Everything will turn out OK," the Harrods version reads 'We'llGet Through This Together- Sunnier Days Ahead. (AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth)

In New York, the epicenter of the U.S. outbreak, Gov. Andrew Cuomo and [health officials](#) warned that the crisis unfolding there is just a preview of what other U.S. cities and towns will soon face. New York state's death toll climbed by more than 250 people in a day to over 1,200.

"We've lost over 1,000 New Yorkers," Cuomo said. "To me, we're

beyond staggering already."

Even before the governor's appeal, close to 80,000 former nurses, doctors and other professionals were volunteering in New York, and a Navy hospital ship arrived with 1,000 beds to relieve pressure on the city's overwhelmed hospitals.

In California, officials put out a similar call for volunteers as coronavirus hospitalizations doubled over the last four days and the number of patients in [intensive care](#) tripled.

Experts maintain the pandemic will be defeated only by social distancing measures that have put billions of people on lockdown and upended the world's economy.





Health official spray disinfectant on Kampung Baru, a traditional Malay village in Kuala Lumpur city center as a safety precaution against the new coronavirus, Tuesday, March 31, 2020. The Malaysian government issued a restricted movement order to the public for the rest of the month to help curb the spread of the new coronavirus. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (AP Photo/Vincent Thian)

Dr. Chiara Lepora in the virus hotspot of Lodi in northern Italy said the pandemic had revealed critical health care problems in developed countries.

"Outbreaks cannot be fought in hospitals," she said. "Hospitals can only deal with the consequences."

In the southern state of Florida, officials were meeting later Tuesday to decide whether to let the infection-plagued cruise ship Zaandam dock after more than two weeks at sea.

In a South American dream trip that turned into a nightmare, dozens on the ship have reported flu-like symptoms and four people have died. The company said eight people have tested positive but 2,300 other passengers and crew are in good health.

Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis has said the state's health care resources are stretched too thin to allow the ship to dock.

More than 235 million people—about two of every three Americans—live in the 33 states where governors have ordered or recommended that residents stay home.





A member of the judiciary at the regional court measures the temperature of a visitor at the entrance in Nuremberg, Germany, Tuesday, March 31, 2020. Because of the coronavirus, employees of the judiciary measure the temperature of every visitor at the entrance to the court building. In order to slow down the spread of the coronavirus, the German government has considerably restricted public life and asked the citizens to stay at home. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (Daniel Karmann/dpa via AP)

Worldwide, 800,049 people have been infected and 166,768 have recovered, according to Johns Hopkins University.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough. But for others, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause severe symptoms like pneumonia and even death.

China on Tuesday reported just one new death from the [coronavirus](#) and 48 new cases, claiming that all new infections came from overseas. In Wuhan, people were ready to jump, cry and "revenge shop" as the Chinese city once at the center of the outbreak reopened.

About 75% of the shops reopened at the Chuhe Hanjie pedestrian mall. Shopkeepers limited the number of people allowed in, dispensing hand sanitizer and checking customers for signs of fever.

In Serbia, Hungary and other nations, concerns were rising that populist leaders were using the situation to try to seize more power and silence critics.



Security guard stands besides a sign reading 'Don't forget to disinfect your hands' at the entrance area of the regional court in Nuremberg, Germany, Tuesday, March 31, 2020. Because of the coronavirus, employees of the judiciary measure the temperature of every visitor at the entrance to the court building. In order to slow down the spread of the coronavirus, the German government has considerably restricted public life and asked the citizens to stay at home. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (Daniel Karmann/dpa via AP)



Police officers walk across an empty Red Square in Moscow, Russia, Tuesday, March 31, 2020. The Russian capital has woken up to a lockdown obliging most people in the city of 13 million to stay home. The government ordered other regions of the vast country to quickly prepare for the same as Moscow, to stem the spread of the new coronavirus. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (AP Photo/Pavel Golovkin)





In this March 27, 2020, file photo, a health worker in the intensive care ward observes a COVID-19 patient at a hospital in Belgium. Experts say Europe has some of the world's best health systems, but many hospitals have been overwhelmed with coronavirus patients and are ill-equipped to handle the pandemic. (AP Photo/Francisco Seco, File)



Personal protective equipment and protective clothes are delivered to a Pulmonary Institute in Farkasgyepu, Hungary, Tuesday, March 31, 2020. The delivery includes surgical and FFP2 masks, medical rubber gloves, protective suits, protective glasses and other equipment. (Tamas Vasvari/MTI via AP)



Quarantined returnees queue up for a COVID-19 test at a quarantine hotel in Wuhan in central China's Hubei province on Tuesday, March 31, 2020. China on Tuesday reported just one new death from the coronavirus and dozens of new cases, claiming that all new cases came from overseas. (AP Photo/Ng Han Guan)





Flags fly at half-staff during a minute of silence commemorating the Covid-19 virus victims, at Rome's monument to the Unknown Soldier, Tuesday, March 31, 2020. Italy has observed a minute of silence and flown its flags at half-staff in a nationwide gesture to honor the victims of the coronavirus and their families. The new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms for most people, but for some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness or death. (AP Photo/Andrew Medichini)

A human rights expert said while she understands the need to act swiftly to protect lives, the new states of emergency must include time limits and parliamentary oversight.

"A state of emergency—wherever it is declared and for whatever reason—must be proportionate to its aim, and only remain in place for as



long as absolutely necessary," said Ingibjörg Sólrún Gísladóttir of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

The economic devastation continued, with British Airways suspending all its flights at Gatwick Airport amid a collapse in demand as nations close borders and airlines slash flights.

In Japan, the countdown clocks were reset and ticking again for the Tokyo Olympics. The clocks now read 479 days to go, with the games scheduled to begin on July 23, 2021.

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