

# Some countries and US states move to ease virus lockdowns

April 27 2020, by Nick Perry and Joseph Wilson

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Protesters stand along Mission Blvd. during A Day of Liberty rally in Pacific Beach in San Diego, Sunday, April 26, 2020. The protesters were rallying against the government shutdown due to the coronavirus outbreak. (K.C. Alfred/The San Diego Union-Tribune via AP)

Some countries and U.S. states are starting to ease coronavirus lockdown

restrictions and focus on fixing their battered economies.

In Spain, the streets echoed again with joyful cries on Sunday as the nation let children go outside for the first time in six weeks. Many European countries are reopening factories and construction sites. In New Zealand, people will be able to buy takeout restaurant food again starting midnight Monday.

But some worry that prematurely lifting measures that were imposed to halt the spread of the coronavirus could spark a resurgence in infections.

In the U.S., governors in states including hard-hit New York and Michigan are keeping stay-at-home restrictions in place until at least mid-May, while their counterparts in places such as Georgia, Oklahoma and Alaska are allowing certain businesses to reopen.

White House strategists are planning to shift President Donald Trump's public focus from the pandemic toward fixing the economy. This comes after he was sharply criticized in recent days for publicly musing that scientists should explore injecting toxic disinfectants as a potential virus cure.

In China, state-run media said that hospitals in Wuhan, the original epicenter of the pandemic, no longer have any COVID-19 patients. And in Japan, the [central bank](#) eased [monetary policy](#), prompting a surge in the [stock market](#).



A man lies on a bench in front of the Mediterranean sea in Barcelona, Spain, Sunday, April 26, 2020 as the lockdown to combat the spread of coronavirus continues. From Sunday, children under 14 years old will be allowed to take walks with a parent for up to one hour and within one kilometer from home, ending six weeks of complete seclusion. (AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti)

The official death toll from the virus topped 205,000 worldwide, with nearly 3 million confirmed infections, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University, though the real figures are believed to be much higher, in part because of inadequate testing and differences in counting the dead.

Italy, Britain, Spain and France accounted for more than 20,000 deaths each. In the U.S., the death toll was nearly 55,000—close to the 58,000 U.S. troops who were killed during the Vietnam War.

Some encouraging signs were seen, as Italy recorded its lowest 24-hour number of deaths since mid-March, with 260. New York state registered its fewest since late last month, with 367.

Seven weeks into Italy's strict lockdown, Premier Giuseppe Conte laid out a long-awaited timetable for getting back to normal, announcing that factories, construction sites and wholesale supply businesses can resume activity as soon as they put safety measures in place against the virus.



People wearing face masks to protect against the spread of the new coronavirus enjoy shopping in an outdoor area in Yokohama near Tokyo, Monday, April 27, 2020. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expanded a state of emergency to all of Japan from just Tokyo and other urban areas as the virus continues to spread. (AP Photo/Koji Sasahara)

Conte also said that starting May 4, parks and gardens will reopen, funerals will be allowed, athletes can resume training, and people will be able to visit relatives living in the same region. If all goes well, stores and museums will reopen May 18, and restaurants, cafes and salons on June 1, he said.

Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez will present a detailed plan Tuesday for the "de-escalation" of Spain's lockdown, but said it would be cautious. His French counterpart will do the same on Tuesday.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson planned to be back at his desk Monday at 10 Downing St. after a bout with the virus put him in intensive care. He faces calls for more clarity on when his government will ease the lockdown, now set to run until at least May 7.

Other European nations are further along in relaxing their restrictions. Germany allowed nonessential shops and other facilities to open last week, and Denmark has reopened schools for children up to fifth grade.



A man sits with his dog on a bench as they watch the Mediterranean sea in Barcelona, Spain, Sunday, April 26, 2020 as the lockdown to combat the spread of coronavirus continues. From Sunday, children under 14 years old will be allowed to take walks with a parent for up to one hour and within one kilometer from home, ending six weeks of complete seclusion. (AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti)



People look at the Mediterranean sea in Barcelona, Spain, Sunday, April 26, 2020 as the lockdown to combat the spread of coronavirus continues. From Sunday, children under 14 years old will be allowed to take walks with a parent for up to one hour and within one kilometer from home, ending six weeks of complete seclusion. (AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti)



A father with his children wearing face mask to prevent the coronavirus go for a walk at Carlos III promenade, in Pamplona, northern Spain, Sunday, April 27, 2020. On Sunday, children under 14 years old will be allowed to take walks with a parent for up to one hour and within one kilometer from home, ending six weeks of complete seclusion. (AP Photo/Alvaro Barrientos)





Protesters stand along Mission Blvd. during A Day of Liberty rally as police officers look on in Pacific Beach in San Diego, Sunday, April 26, 2020. The protesters were rallying against the government shutdown due to the coronavirus outbreak. (K.C. Alfred/The San Diego Union-Tribune via AP)



A family wearing face mask to protect of the coronavirus go for a walk, in Pamplona, northern Spain, Sunday, April 27, 2020. On Sunday, children under 14 years old will be allowed to take walks with a parent for up to one hour and within one kilometer from home, ending six weeks of complete seclusion. (AP Photo/Alvaro Barrientos)



A goose named Goosey crosses the street to get to the other side with owners Psyche Lynch, left, and Tom, center, in a crowded downtown Huntington Beach, Calif., Sunday, April 26, 2020. (Mindy Schauer/The Orange County Register via AP)



A bicyclist wears an animal mask while riding on a path at the Marina Green in San Francisco, Sunday, April 26, 2020, during the coronavirus outbreak. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)



People wearing face masks to protect against the spread of the new coronavirus walk around open public areas in Yokohama near Tokyo, Monday, April 27, 2020. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expanded a state of emergency to all of Japan from just Tokyo and other urban areas as the virus continues to spread. (AP Photo/Koji Sasahara)



A health worker wearing a protective suit raises her hands as she disinfects inside a portable tent beside a street at the Gat Andres Bonifacio Memorial Medical Center during an enhanced community quarantine to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus in Manila, Philippines on Monday April 27, 2020. (AP Photo/Aaron Favila)



People wearing face masks to protect against the spread of the new coronavirus enjoy shopping in an outdoor market area in Yokohama near Tokyo, Monday, April 27, 2020. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expanded a state of emergency to all of Japan from just Tokyo and other urban areas as the virus continues to spread. (AP Photo/Koji Sasahara)

In the U.S., the split in approaches to reopening states has often been along partisan lines.

Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt, a Republican, told "Fox News Sunday" that with hospitalizations dropping in his state, he will reopen churches and restaurant dining on Friday, with social-distancing guidelines in place.

"We believe it's the time to have a measured reopening," he said.

But Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, a Democrat, told ABC that her state is not ready and needs more robust testing, community tracing and a plan for isolating people who get sick.

"We've got to be nimble and we have to follow the science and be really smart about how we reengage," she said.

In a sign that it could get harder to enforce restrictions as the weather improves, a lingering heat wave in California lured people to beaches, rivers and trails Sunday, prompting warnings that defiance of stay-at-home orders could reverse progress.

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Citation: Some countries and US states move to ease virus lockdowns (2020, April 27) retrieved 27 April 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-04-countries-states-ease-virus-lockdowns.html>

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