France coronavirus deaths near 15,000

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France reported 574 new deaths from COVID-19 in the past 24 hours, the health ministry said Monday, bringing the total to 14,967 since the coronavirus outbreak began.

A total of 335 of the deaths occurred in hospitals, up from 315 the previous day, while 239 deaths were recorded in nursing homes.

For the fifth day in a row, the number of patients in intensive care fell, with 24 fewer people, leaving 6,821 in a serious condition. The figure is seen as a key indicator of the outbreak's spread across the country.

The report came just ahead of a televised address by President Emmanuel Macron, who announced another extension of the stay-at-home orders and business closures in place since March 17, until May 11.

The ministry confirmed that the epidemic had reached a "high plateau," with more than 98,000 infections recorded across the country so far.

The actual number is likely higher since only the most serious cases are tested.

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