

Gabon starts virus confinement in capital

April 13 2020



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Gabon on Monday began confinement measures in the capital and three nearby municipalities in restrictions enforced by security forces to contain the spread of coronavirus.

Libreville on Monday was mostly idle, with shops and markets empty and police roadblocks set up at many crossroads as the measures came into force.

Prime Minister Julien Nkoghe Bekale on Friday asked residents of the capital and three surrounding areas to stay at home after Gabon, with two million inhabitants, reported 57 cases and one death from the virus.

Under the restrictions, drivers cannot leave their neighbourhoods without being able to prove that they are exercising a profession deemed essential by the government.

While food stores are authorized to operate, many of them did not open on Monday, leaving some residents without stocks.

"To see them closed is tough. There are moms who can't get out, it's complicated," said Levy, a 22-year-old student.

Traders of the largest market in the capital, Mont-Bouet, claim they are struggling to get supplies as Gabon depends heavily on food imports, especially from Cameroon. Already last month, Gabon restricted [international flights](#), closed schools and banned gatherings of more than 30 people in a bid to slow the spread of the virus.

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