

Nigeria extends virus lockdown on key cities for 2 weeks

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Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari on Monday ordered a two-week extension to a lockdown in largest city Lagos, neighbouring Ogun state and capital Abuja, aimed at halting the spread of the coronavirus.

Buhari said in a televised address that "it has become necessary to extend

the current restriction of movement" that was set to expire later Monday.

"This is a difficult decision to take, but I am convinced that this is the right decision. The evidence is clear," Buhari said.

"We must not lose the gains achieved thus far. We must not allow a rapid increase in community transmission. We must endure a little longer."

Millions of residents in Africa's biggest city Lagos, Abuja and Ogun have been under orders to remain in their homes since March 30.

The continent's most populous nation has so far reported 323 confirmed infections and 10 deaths from the novel [coronavirus](#), but testing has been limited to just some 5,000 samples.

The confinement measures have proved extremely difficult for many in a country where almost half of the 200 million population live in dire poverty.

Buhari said he was "fully aware of the great difficulties experienced especially by those who earn a daily wage".

"But despite these realities we must not change the restrictions," he said.

The government has pledged a raft of support measures to ease the financial pain but there have been widespread complaints that not enough is being done for those facing hunger.

Police said Monday that they were bolstering forces in Lagos and Ogun after almost 200 suspects were arrested amid fears of a spike in crime during the lockdown.

Buhari said compliance with the stay-at-home order and other

restrictions introduced by state governors across the country had been "generally good".

But he cautioned that "a large proportion of new infections are now occurring in our communities".

Nigeria is seen as highly vulnerable to the spread of the virus due to its weak healthcare system and [high population density](#).

Africa's biggest oil producer has seen its state revenues battered by the drop in crude prices sparked by the global pandemic.

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