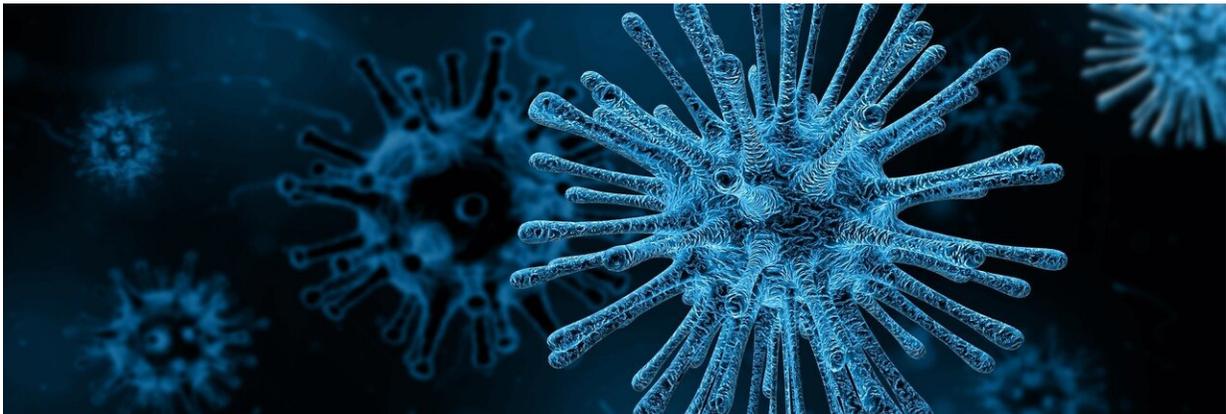


Trump warns 'toughest week' ahead as global virus deaths top 60,000

April 5 2020



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US President Donald Trump warned Americans to brace for a "very horrendous" number of coronavirus deaths in the coming days, ahead of a rare speech by Queen Elizabeth II on Sunday aimed at rallying hard-hit Britain.

Global deaths from the COVID-19 pandemic have soared past 60,000, with Europe continuing to bear the brunt of the virus which has left roughly half the planet confined at home.

There are now more than 1.2 million confirmed cases across the globe, and around 65,000 people have died since the virus first emerged in

China late last year, according to a Johns Hopkins University tally.

Trump said the United States was entering "a time that's going to be very horrendous" with "some really bad numbers."

"This will probably be the toughest week," he said at the White House. "There will be a lot of [death](#)."

At the same time, the president stressed the US—where infections have surpassed 300,000—cannot remain shut down forever.

"Mitigation does work but again, we're not going to destroy our country," he said. "I've said it from the beginning—the cure cannot be worse than the problem."

Over 45,000 global deaths have been in Europe, with Britain reporting a new daily high in fatalities, taking the overall toll to 4,300 out of nearly 42,000 cases.

Queen Elizabeth II is to make a rare, "deeply personal" speech on Sunday to urge people to rise to the challenge posed by the coronavirus, and personally thank frontline healthcare workers.

"I hope in the years to come everyone will be able to take pride in how they responded to this challenge," she will say, according to extracts released Saturday.

The pandemic has hammered the global economy, with businesses hit hard as people are forced to stay indoors to help curb the spread of the coronavirus.

Governments have rolled out massive, unprecedented stimulus programs to ease the pain, but economists have warned that the crisis could worsen

poverty levels with millions of jobs lost.

Poor economies, such as Iraq, are struggling, with charities and volunteers rallying to provide food to the needy.

"This is more dangerous than Daesh," said Iraqi volunteer Mustafa Issa, referring to the Islamic State jihadist group that swept through a third of the country in 2014.

Tide turning in Italy?

At the Vatican, Pope Francis is expected to livestream his Palm Sunday Mass. St. Peter's Square is usually packed by Catholic faithful for the occasion, but this year, it will be empty because of coronavirus containment measures.

There was, however, some encouraging news from Europe over the weekend.

Worst-hit Italy cheered after seeing its number of intensive care virus cases drop for the first time—from 4,068 on Friday to 3,994 on Saturday.

Even some of the most cautious Italian health officials seized on the figures as evidence that the tide may be turning in the deadliest disaster the country has faced since World War II.

"This is a very important data point," said civil protection service chief Angelo Borrelli, adding that it "allows our hospitals to breathe."

The daily rise in new infections across Italy has also slowed. It reported 681 new deaths on Saturday, down from a peak of almost 1,000 just over a week ago.

Spain, which is under a near-total lockdown, saw a second successive daily fall in coronavirus-related deaths with 809 fatalities.

The total number of deaths in Spain now stands at 11,947, second only to Italy.

Although the number of new cases also slowed, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez announced an extension of the country's lockdown until April 25.

At a [field hospital](#) in Madrid set up at a conference centre, staff applauded whenever a patient was healthy enough to be discharged.

One of them was 59-year-old builder Eduardo Lopez who gave a "10/10" rating to the staff who cared for him "with tenderness and a great dose of humanity."

'We need you'

New York state, the US epicenter, saw a record 630 deaths in a single day and Governor Andrew Cuomo warned the worst was yet to come. The state has recorded a total of 3,565 deaths.

Cuomo also cautioned that already strained hospitals were not prepared.

New York City appealed for licensed medical personnel to volunteer their services.

"Anyone who's not already in this fight, we need you," Mayor Bill de Blasio said.

Trump said 1,000 military personnel, mostly doctors and nurses, would be deployed to help in the city, which he described as "the hottest of all

the hot spots."

U-turn on masks

Several Western countries including the US, Germany and France have in recent days encouraged the use of masks in public despite earlier saying that only carers needed to cover their faces.

The U-turn has angered and confused some citizens, and spurred a flurry of online tutorials for DIY masks.

The advice came after some studies suggested the new [coronavirus](#) can be spread through speaking and breathing, not just coughing and sneezing.

US authorities said wearing a simple homemade mask or scarf could help stem rocketing infection rates.

The World Health Organization is reviewing its guidance but has said it worries that masks could give "a false sense of security," leading people to be more casual about hand washing and social distancing.

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