

After only 11 cases, Seychelles comes out of confinement

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Life in the Seychelles began returning to normal on Monday as authorities relaxed confinement measures, with no new coronavirus cases recorded in almost a month and only 11 people infected in the island nation.

The archipelago went into lockdown on April 8, two days after the last case of the virus was recorded, shutting non-essential services and banning all movement aside from grocery shopping.

A few days later a nighttime curfew was added to the measures.

The restrictions were applied to Mahe, the [main island](#) as well as the second and third most-populated [islands](#) Praslin and La Digue.

On Monday most businesses were allowed to re-open and people were once again moving freely and going to work—few of whom wore a mask.

Authorities have called on citizens to nevertheless maintain social distancing measures and remain vigilant.

"We have won the battle but we have not won the war. We must remain vigilant and prevent the spread of the virus in the Seychelles at all cost," said Public Health Commissioner Jude Gedeon.

Only three of the original patients remain ill.

Some restrictions will remain in place. Schools will not open until mid-May and bars and restaurants in June. Gatherings of more than four people are still banned.

The Indian Ocean archipelago of 115 islands is a paradise for luxury tourism, and welcomed more than 360,000 visitors in 2018—a figure four times its population.

The impact of the [coronavirus](#) pandemic on global tourism has hit the islands hard. The government banned [cruise ships](#) and shut its international airport when the first cases were announced on March 14.

The airport is due to re-open on June 1, although borders will remain closed to countries which still count active cases of the virus.

Authorities do not expect tourists to return until September.

The absence of tourists has led the Seychellois rupee to drop 30 percent to the US dollar and the euro in recent weeks.

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