

Japan planning for one-month virus emergency extension: PM

May 1 2020



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said Friday the government would plan for an approximately month-long extension of a state of emergency declared over the coronavirus pandemic.

Abe put in place an initial month-long state of emergency for seven regions on April 7, later expanding it to cover the entire country.

But with the measures due to expire on May 6, Abe said he had instructed his minister for the virus outbreak Yasutoshi Nishimura to plan for an extension.

"After receiving this report from the panel of experts, I asked Minister Nishimura to use extending the current framework of the state of emergency by about one month as the base scenario for swiftly drafting plans that will fit the needs of the regions," Abe said.

An expert panel advising the government is reviewing the situation in different parts of the country, he added.

"We will listen to their opinions and we hope to make a decision on May 4th."

Abe said Japan had so far managed to avoid the sharp increase in infections seen in some other parts of the world, but cautioned that vigilance was still needed.

"The view of experts is that we will continue to need cooperation of the Japanese people for the foreseeable future."

An extension of the state of emergency had been widely expected, despite the comparatively small scale of the outbreak in Japan, with nearly 14,300 infections recorded and 432 deaths so far.

The state of emergency is significantly less restrictive than measures seen in parts of Europe and the United States. It allows governors to urge people stay at home and call on businesses to stay shut.

But officials cannot compel citizens to comply, and there are no punishments for those who fail to do so.

Despite the relatively small scale of Japan's outbreak, there have been persistent fears about a spike in infections that could quickly overwhelm the country's healthcare system

Doctors' associations have warned that hospitals are already stretched thin, with officials in Osaka even calling for donations of raincoats to serve as [protective equipment](#) for [health workers](#) stuck using trash bags.

Measures have been implemented to try to ease the pressure, including sending [coronavirus](#) patients with mild symptoms to hotels for quarantine, rather than keeping them in overcrowded hospitals.

The government has also said it is increasing testing capacity, but continues to face criticism for the relatively low numbers of tests being carried out, in part because of stringent criteria.

© 2020 AFP

Citation: Japan planning for one-month virus emergency extension: PM (2020, May 1) retrieved 3 May 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-05-japan-one-month-virus-emergency-extension.html>

<p>This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.</p>
--