

# Morocco opens field hospital after spike in virus cases

June 21 2020

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Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

A new field hospital in eastern Morocco will from Sunday receive around 700 COVID-19 patients following a sharp spike in infections in the kingdom, the government said.

Morocco reported a record single-day rise in novel [coronavirus](#) cases on Friday after an outbreak was detected in fruit packing plants in eastern

Kenitra province, prompting Rabat to tighten restrictions in the region.

The North African kingdom reported more than 500 cases on Friday, mainly in Kenitra, having recorded on average fewer than 100 new COVID-19 infections daily since confirming its first cases in early March.

Authorities closed facilities, tested workers and launched an investigation to "establish responsibility" for the outbreak, Interior Minister Abdelouafi Laftit said, as cited by official news agency MAP.

The field hospital will receive from Sunday "around 700 registered cases", he added.

Strawberry fields in Kenitra—usually busy with workers harvesting at this time of year—were deserted at the weekend, an AFP photographer said.

Several towns in the region were placed under quarantine and screenings were carried out among residents, who were asked to go out only in cases of "extreme necessity".

A dozen ambulances were stationed in Moulay Bousselham, one of the quarantined towns, ready to be dispatched to pick up confirmed cases.

Morocco, with a population of 34 million, has reported just over 9,800 cases and 213 deaths from the novel coronavirus.

On June 9, authorities announced a gradual lifting of restrictions in force since mid-March, though measures remain in place in major cities and a public health state of emergency has been extended until July 10.

Wearing masks in public is obligatory, gatherings are prohibited and

mosques, cinemas and theatres are closed, while restaurants and cafes are open but limited to take-away orders.

The kingdom's borders remain closed "until further notice".

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Citation: Morocco opens field hospital after spike in virus cases (2020, June 21) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-06-morocco-field-hospital-spike-virus.html>

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