

Virus cases surge in Americas as IMF warns of economic carnage

June 25 2020, by Heather Scott With Afp Bureaus



The sculpture of Prometheus adorned with a face mask is pictured at Rockefeller Center in Manhattan on June 24 in New York City

More than 78,000 people were diagnosed with COVID-19 in the US and in Brazil alone Wednesday, as the IMF laid out the unprecedented

economic devastation caused by the global pandemic and the WHO warned the number of infections could reach 10 million worldwide within the next week.

As many countries emerged from lockdown hoping to resurrect their economies, US states were reimposing virus restrictions and Brazilian experts were warning the country was sending people "to the slaughterhouse."

The International Monetary Fund said that this "crisis like no other" would send the global GDP plunging by 4.9 percent this year and wipe out an astonishing \$12 trillion over two years.

It said that many countries will face a recession more than double that which they suffered during the [global financial crisis](#) in 2008-2009.

The IMF forecast that China, where the virus emerged late last year, would be the only economy that grows this year, by just one percent.

The United States is forecast to shrink by eight percent, Germany slightly less, while France, Italy, Spain and Britain would all suffer double-digit contractions.

'Slaughterhouse'

The United States has recorded more deaths than any other nation, with more than 121,000 from nearly 2.4 million cases.

The number of new cases has been on a clear upward trend in recent days, especially in the south and west of the country. On Wednesday the US recorded more than 35,900 cases in 24 hours, according to a tally by the Johns Hopkins University, a figure which approaches previous record daily levels.



Health workers desinfect the body of a 75-year-old man who died - allegedly victim of COVID-19 - at the door of his home while asking for help in the La Fosa Community in San Salvador

White House advisor Anthony Fauci warned the next two weeks would be "critical to our ability to address... surgings" in Florida, Texas and other states.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott said the state, which was one of the most aggressive about reopening, could see new restrictions.

"If it's not contained in the next couple of weeks, it will be completely

out of control, and Texas will have to ratchet back," the Trump ally said in televised comments.

Latin America has been one of the world's worst hotspots for weeks, and the number of deaths in Latin America and the Caribbean surpassed 100,000 on Wednesday.

Brazil was the hardest-hit country, with its new cases surpassing even the US—over 42,700 recorded Wednesday.

"The curve in Brazil is still rising sharply. We're still in the first wave," said Domingos Alves, a professor of medicine at the University of Sao Paulo and member of a scientific committee monitoring the crisis.

"We're sending people to the slaughterhouse" with moves to exit lockdown too soon, he added.



A heatwave has hit much of Europe, with experts warning it could lead to a surge in infections

'Urgent responsibility'

World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the global number of cases would reach 10 million within the next week, after four million cases were recorded just in the last month.

The global figure currently stands at over 9.3 million.

"We have an urgent responsibility to do everything we can with the tools we have now to suppress transmission and save lives," he said.

WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan warned that the pandemic had not yet reached its peak in the Americas.

He said it was "particularly intense in Central and South America" where many countries saw "between a 25 and 50 percent rise in cases over the last week," and added that "the spectre of further lockdowns cannot be excluded."

Globally, the number of COVID-19 deaths surged past 480,000 after doubling in less than two months, according to an AFP tally.



People wear protective suits while attending the burial of a loved one at the annex of the Jardin de Los Angeles cemetery where the COVID-19 victims are buried in Honduras

Eiffel Tower to reopen

China said a new outbreak that has infected 256 people in Beijing since early June is "under control," but fears remain over the risk of community transmission.

Hard-hit Europe is reopening from lockdown—but in Britain, medical experts warned of the "real risk" of a second wave and called for a swift review into the government's handling of the outbreak.

Experts have also warned that an early summer heatwave across the continent could lead to a surge in infections as people hit beaches and parks while ignoring social distancing measures.

No masks were worn by participants—and few by spectators—at a huge parade in Moscow during World War II commemorations on Wednesday.

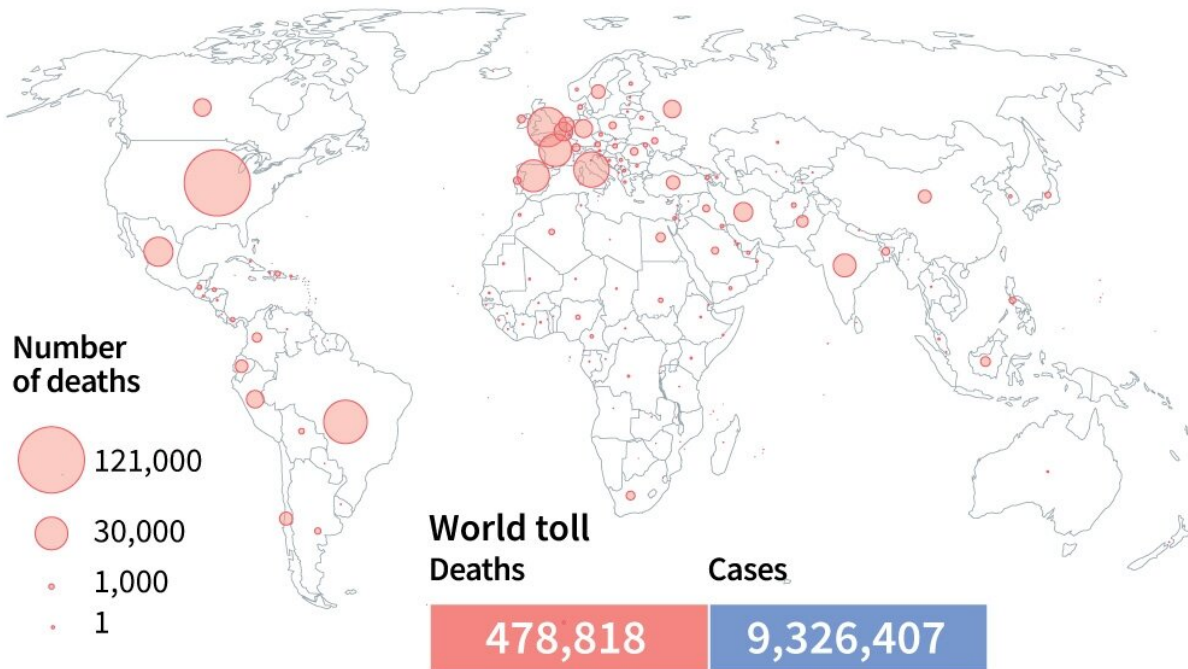
The pandemic also continues to cause havoc in global sports, with New York cancelling its famed marathon which had been planned for November 1.



A driver drops off her coronavirus test at a COVID-19 testing site in Los Angeles, California

Spread of the coronavirus

As of June 24 at 1900 GMT



Source: AFP count based on official tolls



World map showing official number of coronavirus deaths per country, as of June 24 at 1900 GMT



Mass testing for the COVID-19 coronavirus is held in Beijing



The Eiffel Tower is due to reopen Thursday—but visitors can only take the stairs due to social distancing



The medical team of the Brazilian Armed Forces arrives at the Cruzeirinho village, near Palmeiras do Javari, Amazonas state, to assist the indigenous population amid the COVID-19 pandemic

But there was one bright spot: Tourists and Parisians will beginning Thursday again be able to admire the view of the French capital from the Eiffel Tower after a three-month closure due to the [coronavirus](#)—but only if they take the stairs, with the lifts deemed too small for safe social distancing.

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