

# Peruvians fill streets as lockdown ends despite infections

July 2 2020, by Franklin Briceno

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People wearing protective face masks walk on a pedestrian walkway in downtown Lima, Peru, Wednesday, July 1, 2020. Major cities in Peru including the capital, will begin allowing for public transportation and certain businesses to reopen, but will still restrict the movement of the elderly and young children. (AP Photo/Martin Mejia)

Blocks-long lines formed at bus stops, food markets and shopping centers in Peru's capital Wednesday as people left their homes en masse to go to work or shop as a 106-day coronavirus lockdown ended in many parts of the country.

For the first time in months, food vendors offered breakfasts for 50 cents from street carts covered in clear plastic in Lima's historic center. Vendors hawked face shields and disinfectants outside crowded public markets. City workers cleaned statues with jets of water.

"God always accompanies me," said 73-year-old newspaper deliverer Segundina Lolo when asked if she feared the virus with [infection rates](#) in the country still high and scientists warning against ending three months of strict stay-at-home orders too soon.

Peru has been hit hard by the coronavirus and is still reporting 400 new confirmed cases a day. Until recently it had been following international advice on dealing with the pandemic but the measures didn't stop one of the world's worst outbreaks.

The Andean country is also facing one of the worst economic forecasts, with the World Bank projecting a 12% drop in GDP in 2020. The 106-day [lockdown](#) devastated Peru's economy, causing thousands of businesses to go under and unemployment to soar. Many of the jobless and poor turned to selling goods in the street to survive despite the stay-at-home orders. An estimated 70% of Peru's [work force](#) is employed in the informal economy.



People wait in line for some businesses to reopen in downtown Lima, Peru, Wednesday, July 1, 2020. Major cities including the capital, will begin allowing for public transportation and certain businesses to reopen, but will still restrict the movement of the elderly and young children. (AP Photo/Martin Mejia)





Graves dot the Cristo el Salvador cemetery at Villa el Salvador on the outskirts of Lima, Peru, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Tuesday, June 30, 2020. (AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd)



Tombs fill the Cristo el Salvador cemetery at Villa el Salvador on the outskirts of Lima, Peru, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Tuesday, June 30, 2020. (AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd)



Giseli del Pilar, 29, listens to Doctor Jose Pimentel during a house-to-house coronavirus testing drive in Villa el Salvador, on the outskirts of Lima, Peru, Tuesday, June 30, 2020. (AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd)





A man eats lunch in a motorcycle taxi outside a cemetery at Villa el Salvador on the outskirts of Lima, Peru, Tuesday, June 30, 2020. (AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd)



Laboratory worker Adriana Morales takes a blood sample from Luis Arana during a house-to-house coronavirus testing drive in Villa el Salvador, on the outskirts of Lima, Peru, Tuesday, June 30, 2020. (AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd)





Escorted by soldiers, Doctor Jose Pimentel, left, and laboratory worker Adriana Morales, talk to a neighbor during a house-to-house coronavirus testing drive in Villa el Salvador on the outskirts of Lima, Peru, Tuesday, June 30, 2020. (AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd)



Graves dot the Cristo el Salvador cemetery at Villa el Salvador on the outskirts of Lima, Peru, amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Tuesday, June 30, 2020. (AP Photo/Rodrigo Abd)

President Martin Vizcarra said the goal of easing the lockdown is to "reactivate the economy" and generate jobs. Shopping centers reopened a week ago.

Vizcarra said if the virus returns in force "the most severe measure would be to resume quarantine, but it would be the last option."

Lockdown measures have been lifted in Lima and other parts of the country where authorities say the rate of virus transmission is decreasing. But tough measures will remain in place in seven regions in central Peru where infections are on the rise.

Health Minister Víctor Zamora told the newspaper La República the lockdown that began March 16 saved 145,000 lives and prevented more than a million hospitalizations.

"It would have been a real massacre without quarantine," Zamora said.

With more than 285,000 confirmed infections, Peru has the seventh highest case count in the world. It has reported 9,677 deaths from COVID-19, the disease that can be caused by the [coronavirus](#).

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