

# Too many countries in 'exponential' virus surge: WHO

October 23 2020

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The northern hemisphere is facing a crucial moment in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, the World Health Organization said Friday, with too many countries witnessing an exponential increase in coronavirus

cases.

"The next few months are going to be very tough and some countries are on a dangerous track," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a virtual press conference.

"Too many countries are seeing an exponential increase in COVID-19 cases and that is now leading to hospitals and intensive care units running close to or above capacity—and we're still only in October.

"We urge leaders to take immediate action to prevent further unnecessary deaths."

The novel [coronavirus](#) has infected nearly 42 million people and killed at least 1.1 million since the outbreak emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP.

Maria Van Kerkhove, the WHO's COVID-19 technical lead, said the situation was "very worrying" in Europe, which clocked up more than half the new cases registered in the world over the last 24 hours.

"We're not only seeing increases in case numbers in many cities across Europe; the capacity for ICU (intensive care units) is going to be reached in the coming weeks," she said.

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Citation: Too many countries in 'exponential' virus surge: WHO (2020, October 23) retrieved 20 June 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-10-countries-exponential-virus-surge.html>

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