

# Madrid readies for partial lockdown, files legal challenge

October 2 2020, by Aritz Parra and Barry Hatton

---



Two customers wearing face masks to prevent the spread of the coronavirus inside a food market in the southern neighbourhood of Vallecas in Madrid, Spain, Friday, Oct. 2, 2020. Madrid and its suburbs are the hardest hit parts of Spain and are preparing to enter a soft lockdown that restricts trips in and out of the capital. (AP Photo/Bernat Armangue)

Madrid was set to go into partial lockdown on Friday night, complying with an order from the Spanish government but determined to fight it in the courts.

Measures that ban all nonessential trips in and out of the capital and nine of its suburbs—covering around 4.8 million people—were set to be enacted at 10 p.m. (2000 GMT).

Spain's Socialist [prime minister](#), Pedro Sánchez, said there was a "critical" need to take the new steps in the European [coronavirus](#) hot spot.

But officials in Madrid, whose regional government is managed by the conservative Popular Party, balked at the order, saying it would bring chaos and further sap the economy's health. It filed an appeal at the National Court against the new measures.

Under the national order, travelers will need to prove that they are going to or from work, to see a doctor or to conduct essential administrative or legal errands in order to leave Madrid or the town where they live.

Restaurants must close at 11 p.m. and shops at 10 p.m., with a restriction of 50% capacity.

Similar measures already apply to more than 1 million residents, and the region has limited social gatherings to a maximum of six people.

Madrid's [legal challenge](#) argues that restrictions violate regional self-rule laws.



A woman gets a rapid antigen test for COVID-19 in the southern neighbourhood of Vallecas in Madrid, Spain, Friday, Oct. 2, 2020. Madrid and its suburbs are the hardest hit parts of Spain and are preparing to enter a soft lockdown that restricts trips in and out of the capital. (AP Photo/Bernat Armangue)

Madrid is leading the resurgence of the virus in Spain, which has Europe's highest cumulative caseload—770,000 since the onset of the pandemic.

The capital had a two-week infection rate of 695 cases per 100,000 residents Thursday, more than twice the national average of 274 cases and seven times the European average, which stood at 94 per 100,000 residents last week, according to the European Center for Disease Control and Prevention.

But Madrid regional health chief Enrique Ruiz Escudero said the situation is improving, with the infection rate falling to 607 per 100,000 Friday and four consecutive days of fewer people being admitted to hospitals.

"The numbers give us reason for hope," he told a news conference.

Madrid continued to report the highest number of new daily cases Friday, with 814 in the previous 24 hours, according to Health Ministry statistics. The second-highest was the Basque region, with 393. Nationally, Spain added 11,325 new cases, more than 3,700 of them over the previous 24 hours.



Madrid Emergency Service (SUMMA) health workers conduct rapid antigen tests for COVID-19 in the southern neighbourhood of Vallecas in Madrid, Spain,



Friday, Oct. 2, 2020. Madrid and its suburbs are the hardest hit parts of Spain and are preparing to enter a soft lockdown that restricts trips in and out of the capital. (AP Photo/Bernat Armangué)

Madrid legal chief Enrique López said authorities will comply with the national government's order, deploying more police, even though they believe it will "create chaos." He estimated the order will cost the Madrid economy 8 billion euros (\$9.4 billion). He did not provide details of how the amount was calculated.

Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez has refused to budge, saying Friday that Madrid faces "a moment of extraordinary seriousness."

"The situation in Madrid is critical because (the region) has 33% of (COVID-19) deaths," he said in Brussels, where he was attending a European Union summit.

Some passengers at Madrid's main train station, Atocha, welcomed the new steps.

"I think they need to take strong measures to control the epidemic here in Madrid," said Vicente Mira, a 62-year-old retired teacher.



People take part in a protest to demand more resources for public health system and against social inequality in the southern neighbourhood of Vallecas in Madrid, Spain, Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020. Residents in a lockdown district of Madrid protested outside the Madrid Regional Government that local health services needed to be reinforced during the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. (AP Photo/Manu Fernandez)



Madrid Emergency Service (SUMMA) health workers conduct rapid antigen tests for COVID-19 in the southern neighbourhood of Vallecas in Madrid, Spain, Friday, Oct. 2, 2020. Madrid and its suburbs are the hardest hit parts of Spain and are preparing to enter a soft lockdown that restricts trips in and out of the capital. (AP Photo/Bernat Armangue)



People take part in a protest to demand more resources for public health system and against social inequality in the southern neighbourhood of Vallecas in Madrid, Spain, Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020. Residents in a lockdown district of Madrid protested outside the Madrid Regional Government that local health services needed to be reinforced during the ongoing COVID-19 outbreak. (AP Photo/Manu Fernandez)





A man wearing a face mask to prevent the spread of the coronavirus walks in the southern neighbourhood of Vallecas in Madrid, Spain, Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020. Madrid and its suburbs are preparing to enter a soft lockdown that restricts trips and out of the Spanish capital following a weeks-long political turf fight over Europe's latest infection hot spot. (AP Photo/Bernat Armangue)



People queue for a rapid antigen test for COVID-19 in the southern neighbourhood of Vallecas in Madrid, Spain, Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020. Madrid and its suburbs are preparing to enter a soft lockdown that restricts trips and out of the Spanish capital following a weeks-long political turf fight over Europe's latest infection hot spot. (AP Photo/Bernat Armangué)





People queue for a rapid antigen test for COVID-19 in the southern neighbourhood of Vallecas in Madrid, Spain, Thursday, Oct. 1, 2020. Madrid and its suburbs are preparing to enter a soft lockdown that restricts trips and out of the Spanish capital following a weeks-long political turf fight over Europe's latest infection hot spot. (AP Photo/Bernat Armangué)

Communication manager Pablo Torres, 36, wanted officials to get tough, saying the current measures are "nonsense and a sticking plaster on something that is a lot bigger problem."

It wasn't immediately clear how the new measures might affect the few tourists arriving in Madrid, but regional authorities can't ban foreign visitors unless Spain closes its borders.

© 2020 The Associated Press. All rights reserved. This material may not be published, broadcast, rewritten or redistributed without permission.

Citation: Madrid readies for partial lockdown, files legal challenge (2020, October 2) retrieved 26 June 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-10-madrid-readies-partial-lockdown-legal.html>

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.