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Italy virus situation 'out of control': expert

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A leading health expert warned Monday that the coronavirus situation in Italy is "largely out of control", as doctors called for a new national lockdown to counter a surge in cases.

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte's government last week imposed a countrywide night curfew as well as tougher measures in four regions,

where most shops, bars and restaurants were closed and residents' movements restricted.

But a surge in cases and growing numbers of hospitalisations across the country—the first in Europe to be hit by coronavirus earlier this year—are straining health services and have prompted demands for tougher action.

"I am afraid there is no doubt that the situation is largely out of control," Massimo Galli, the head of the infectious diseases department at Milan's renowned Sacco hospital, told RAI television.

"Other illnesses don't go on strike because COVID exists and we have to get organised... otherwise the pandemic will end up doing damage that goes beyond the already very sad number of deaths," he added.

An economically-punishing national lockdown helped stop the spread of the virus earlier this year, but as in other parts of Europe, cases are rapidly rising once again.

More than 41,000 people have died so far in Italy, with more than 935,000 cases.

At the end of last week, around 450 virus deaths were recorded each day, with more than 30,000 new daily cases.

Galli backed a call by the national federation of medical associations for a "total lockdown throughout the country".

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