

# Portugal set to extend virus emergency

November 18 2020

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Portugal's government acknowledged Wednesday that it is struggling to withstand a second wave of the coronavirus, preparing to extend infection control measures and a state of emergency for two more weeks.

The country's most-affected regions will see emergency regulations prolonged beyond Monday, including an overnight and weekend curfew.

"We predict that in the two to three weeks ahead, this [second wave](#) will remain high and cause serious concern," Health Minister Marta Temido told reporters.

Parliament is expected to approve the extension on Friday.

Local media said Lisbon could move to a three-tiered system depending on the infection risk in each municipality.

More than 80 percent of Portugal's population has been under partial lockdown since Monday, although it is less strict than in spring.

"We can't let [infection rates](#) stabilise at the present level of 5,000 to 6,000 new cases per day," the [health ministry](#) warned.

Adjusted for population, Portugal's infection rate has vaulted past France, Italy and Belgium, almost doubling every two weeks since late September, according to national data gathered by AFP.

"The situation has got worse before our very eyes," said doctor Antonio Panarra, head of the internal medicine department at Lisbon's Curry Cabral hospital, pointing to around 100 patients currently being treated for COVID-19.

Panarra forecast that "we'll have to take still stricter measures" to limit infections, worrying for his "exhausted" medical teams more than about the pressure to find more beds.

Health ministry data showed that 2,619 of Portugal's 3,159 beds reserved for COVID-19 were occupied on Wednesday.

On top of those, 432 coronavirus patients were in intensive care.

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