Paris spared as France expands local lockdowns

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France placed the northern Pas-de-Calais region under weekend lockdown over the spread of COVID-19, the third area to be singled out for tighter restrictions as the government battles to avoid a third national

lockdown.

Announcing the measure, Prime Minister Jean Castex said that with more than 400 confirmed cases per 100,000 people the Pas-de-Calais had nearly twice the national average.

The lockdown will start at 8:00 am on Saturday and end at 6:00 pm on Sundays.

A nightly curfew beginning at 6:00 pm remains in place nationwide.

Since January, President Emmanuel Macron's [government](link) has been trying to tamp down surges in the virus on a region-by-region basis, in contrast with some of France's neighbours, including Britain, which imposed a third lockdown.

The French Riviera and the northern city of Dunkirk have already been placed under weekend [lockdown](link).

But Parisians, who had been bracing for something similar, were spared further restrictions, with Mayor Anne Hidalgo warning that such a move would be "inhuman" in one of Europe's most densely populated cities.

COVID-19 has killed 87,568 people in France since the pandemic began, figures published Wednesday showed.

The country's vaccination drive has been widely criticized as too slow compared with many other European countries.

So far 3.2 million people have received at least one dose, compared with nearly 21 million in Britain.

Castex said that the government aimed to have offered a jab to 30

million people by the summer.

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