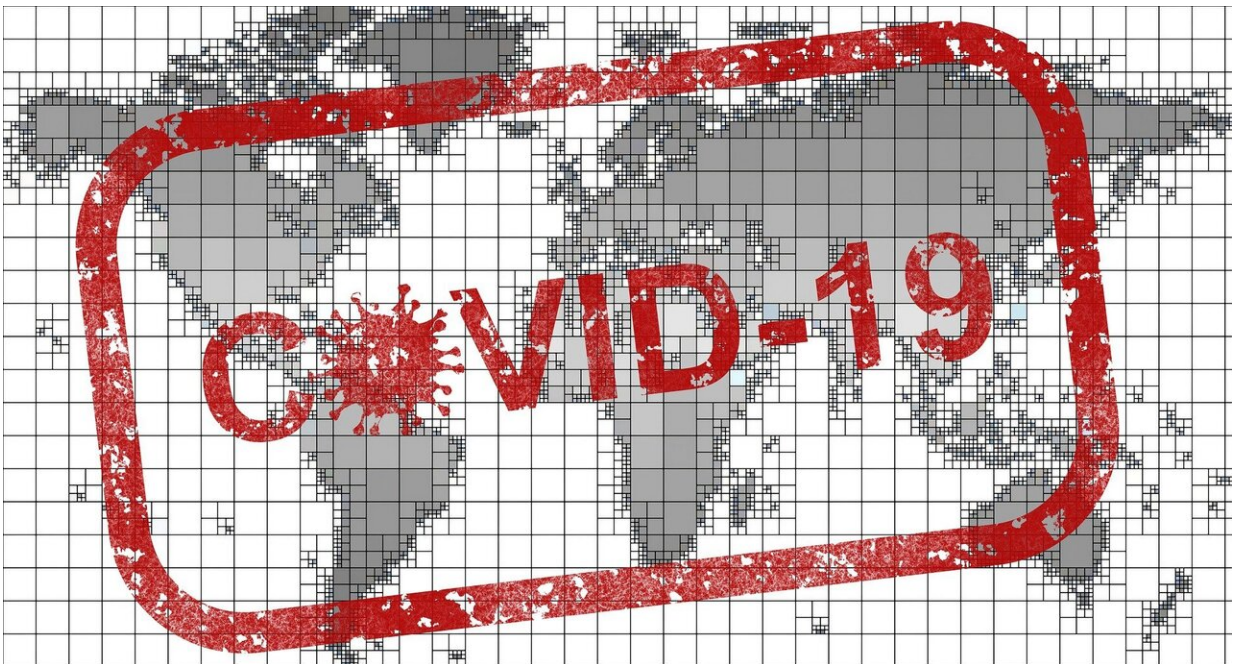


South Africa steps up virus curbs against third wave

May 31 2021



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President Cyril Ramaphosa announced Sunday that South Africa would re-impose stricter measures against COVID-19 fearing the whole country will soon face a third wave of the pandemic.

Four of the nation's nine provinces, including Gauteng which boasts Johannesburg and Pretoria and has the biggest population, are already

battling a third wave of infections, Ramaphosa said.

"It may only be a matter of time before the country as a whole will have entered a third wave," he said.

South Africa is officially the worst-hit country on the continent with more than 1.65 million cases and 56,363 deaths.

"The number of infections has begun to rise sharply in several parts of the country," the president said as hospital entries also climb.

"Delaying the spread of the virus is especially important now to allow as many people as possible to be vaccinated before the third wave reaches its peak," he said.

From Monday, the night curfew will start an hour earlier from 11 pm while non-essential shops, bars, restaurants and gyms will have to shut at 10 pm.

Gatherings, including political and faith events, will be limited to 250 people outdoors and 100 indoors.

Only a little more than one percent of the population has been vaccinated so far and the campaign to jab [elderly people](#) started just last week.

The government, under fire for failing to buy vaccines quickly, says it has paid for doses to cover 40 million of the 59 million South Africans—or enough to reach herd immunity.

Ramaphosa has repeatedly condemned "[vaccine](#) apartheid" with [rich countries](#) buying up most of the vaccine doses.

"As the African continent we are pushing ahead with efforts to expand

our vaccine manufacturing capacity with a view to be self-sufficient in vaccine production," he said.

South Africa and India are campaigning for an end to patent rights on coronavirus vaccines to help every country to manufacture its own supplies.

The G7 summit of rich nations will discuss the issue at a summit in Britain next month.

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