

South Africa keeps most COVID curbs to battle third wave

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COVID-19 restrictions imposed in South Africa to limit the devastating effects of the Delta variant will stay in place until the end of the month, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced on Sunday.

Infections for the worst-hit country on the continent "remain extremely

high", the president said in a televised address to the nation.

Bars and schools remain closed, while the 9pm to 4am curfew stays in place. Political and religious gatherings continue to be banned.

Restaurants and gyms, however, can now reopen subject to strict protocols.

The country has seen an average of around 20,000 cases per day over the past two weeks and more than 4,200 deaths, Ramaphosa said.

These measures, first taken on June 27, "were urgent and ... absolutely necessary to contain the third wave, which is being fuelled by the new Delta variant", Ramaphosa said.

South Africa counted 16,302 new COVID-19 cases on Sunday, bringing the total number to 2,195,599.

The COVID-19 [death](#) toll stands at 64,289 after another 151 deaths were registered on Sunday.

Gauteng, the [economic hub](#) and most populous province, including Johannesburg, continues to account for more than half of the new cases, but other provinces are seeing a rise in numbers.

"By next week, daily hospital admissions across the country are likely to reach the levels observed during the peak of the first two waves," Ramaphosa added.

The country's vaccination drive has been slow with around 4.2 million people receiving at their least their first jab out of the 59 million population.

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