

Slovakia proposes lockdown amid record infection surge

November 23 2021



Medical staff attend to a patient at the COVID-19 ICU unit of the hospital in Bratislava, Slovakia, Tuesday, Nov. 23, 2021. Slovakia's leaders have been proposing a national lockdown as hospitals across the European Union country are hitting their limits amid a record surge of coronavirus infections. Inspired by neighboring Austria, the government is set to discuss a lockdown plan for all, the vaccinated and unvaccinated, on its session on Wednesday. Credit: Martin Baumann/TASR via AP

Slovakia's leaders have proposed a national lockdown as hospitals across the European Union country are hitting their limits amid a record surge of coronavirus infections.

Inspired by neighboring Austria, the Slovak government is set to discuss a lockdown for all—vaccinated and unvaccinated alike—at its session Wednesday. Prime Minister Eduard Heger said it's necessary to act "immediately." His four-party coalition government was mulling a two or three-week lockdown.

"It's an unpopular measure, but absolutely unavoidable," President Zuzana Caputova said Tuesday after visiting a major medical facility in the capital of Bratislava.

Caputova said what she saw at Bratislava University Hospital "was tragic, was horrible."

"Experts are clear," she said. "It's necessary to restrict people's mobility, we need a lockdown ... unfortunately, it's a measure that has to affect everyone."

Slovakia reported 9,171 new virus cases on Friday, surpassing the previous record of 8,342 set only a few days earlier.

On Monday, Slovakia imposed new restrictions targeting the unvaccinated, who are banned from all nonessential stores and shopping malls. They're also not allowed to attend any public events or gatherings and are required to test twice a week to go to work.



Slovak President Zuzana Caputova wears a face mask to protect from Coronavirus at the President palace in Bratislava, on Nov. 9, 2021. Slovakia's leaders have been proposing a national lockdown as hospitals across the European Union country are hitting their limits amid a record surge of coronavirus infections and the government is set to discuss a lockdown plan for all, the vaccinated and unvaccinated, on its session on Wednesday. "It's an unpopular measure, but absolutely unavoidable," President Zuzana Caputova said after visiting a major clinic in the capital on Tuesday. Caputova said what she could see in Bratislava University Hospital "was tragic, was horrible." "Experts are clear," she said. "It's necessary to restrict people's mobility, we need a lockdown." Credit: Martin Baumann/TASR via AP

The number of hospitalized COVID-19 patients rose by 161 to 3,182 on Monday, well above the 3,000-bed level considered critical by Slovakia's

Health Ministry. It said more than 82% of the patients have not been fully vaccinated.

At 45.3%, Slovakia's vaccination rate is one of the lowest in the EU, well below the 27-nation bloc's average of 65.5%.

Overall, the nation of 5.5 million has registered 621,423 virus cases with 13,985 deaths.

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