

Tunisia reimposes night-time curfew against virus surge

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Tunisia on Wednesday announced a new night-time stay-at-home order for the next two weeks in order to tamp down surging coronavirus cases.

There will be "a curfew from 10:00 PM until 5:00 AM", following recommendations by the government's [scientific committee](#), the presidency said in a statement.

A similar measure had been in place since 2020 but President Kais Saied ended it in September.

The presidency also ordered "the postponement or cancellation of all public gatherings or demonstrations, in closed or open spaces."

The new measures take effect on Thursday, the day before the 11th anniversary of former dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's flight into exile in a revolution that sparked the 2011 Arab uprisings.

The presidency also vowed to accelerate its vaccination campaign and urged the public to respect social distancing measures and wear masks.

It added that it would step up checks for health passes, which since December 22 have been required for entry to [public buildings](#), transport and shopping centres—rules often flouted by smaller establishments.

Tunisia, whose 12 million population registered new daily COVID infections in the low hundreds throughout December, has seen an explosion of cases in January, topping 4,800 a day on Monday—along with 11 deaths.

Tunisia in early December announced its first case of the highly-infectious Omicron coronavirus strain, which has swept around the world, forcing governments to impose fresh measures.

The situation is a reminder of a catastrophic wave of infections in Tunisia last July, when the North African country registered about 200 deaths a day from the virus. Images of overwhelmed intensive care units

sparked outrage, and the country suffered the region's highest number of deaths per capita.

That wave receded partly thanks to a mass [vaccination campaign](#).

Roughly six million Tunisians—around half the population—are now fully inoculated, according to Johns Hopkins University.

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