

China says 200 million treated, pandemic 'decisively' beaten

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Commuters wearing face masks walk along a street during the morning rush hour in the central business district in Beijing, Thursday, Feb. 16, 2023. Credit: AP Photo/Mark Schiefelbein

China says more than 200 million of its citizens have been diagnosed and

treated for COVID-19 since it lifted strict containment measures beginning in November.

With 800,000 of the most critically ill patients having recovered, China has "decisively beaten" the pandemic, according to notes from a meeting of the ruling Communist Party's all-powerful Politburo Standing Committee presided over by President and party leader Xi Jinping.

China enforced some of the world's most draconian lockdowns, quarantines and [travel restrictions](#) and still faces questions about the origins of the virus that was first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in late 2019. Heavy-handed enforcement prompted rare anti-government protests and took a heavy toll on the world's second-largest economy.

The official Xinhua News Agency quoted Xi as saying that policies to control the outbreak had been "entirely correct." The abrupt lifting in November and December of the "zero COVID" [policy](#) that had sought to eliminate all cases of the virus led to a surge in infections that temporarily overwhelmed hospitals.

Case numbers have since peaked and life has largely returned to normal, although international travel in and out of China has yet to return to pre-pandemic levels.



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China is now transitioning to a post-pandemic stage after a fight against the [outbreak](#) that was "extraordinary in the extreme," Xinhua said.

The government will continue to "optimize and adjust prevention and control policies and measures according to the times and situations with a strong historical responsibility and strong strategic determination," Xinhua said.

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