

Ghana's virus cases spike 10 days after lockdown is lifted

April 30 2020, by Francis Kokutse and Krista Larson



Young boys play soccer on a dusty field at Ramaphosa informal settlement, east of Johannesburg, South Africa, Tuesday, April 28, 2020. South Africa will begin a phased easing of its strict lockdown measures on May 1, although confirmed cases of coronavirus continue to increase. (AP Photo/Themba Hadebe)

Confirmed coronavirus cases in Ghana have surged above 2,000,

increasing 24% in a matter of days, health officials announced Thursday, reflecting mostly test taken during a recent three-week lockdown in the West African country's two largest cities.

And Indian Ocean island nation of Comoros announced its first confirmed case, making it the 53rd of Africa's 54 countries to report COVID-19. Only the small southern African kingdom of Lesotho has not reported a case of the disease.

African nations have now reported more than 37,400 cases, including 1,598 deaths, the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Thursday.

In South Africa, which has the continent's highest number of reported cases at 5,350, community health workers continued testing in Johannesburg.

The Ghana Health Service reported 403 new cases, bringing the total to 2,074. The spike was announced 10 days after President Nana Akufo-Addo eased a three-week lockdown in the capital of Accra and in the city of Kumasi.

The president had warned over the weekend that there was a backlog of some 18,000 tests.

"The overwhelming majority of these contacts have been established in the last three weeks of the partial lockdown in Accra and Kumasi," he had said.

Ghana's updates are being closely watched by leaders of other African countries that have pledged to lift their own restrictions on economic activity and social gathering as soon as possible. Nigeria, Africa's most populous nation, has said that on Monday it will lift its lockdowns in the

capital of Abuja and Lagos, the country's largest city with 21 million people.



Women carrying their children lineup to receive vegetables from the Jan Hofmeyer community services in the Vrededorp neighborhood of Johannesburg Thursday, April 30, 2020. South Africa will began a phased easing of its strict lockdown measures on May 1, although its confirmed cases of coronavirus continue to increase. (AP Photo/Jerome Delay)



Health officials check the listings of people who are to be tested for COVID-19 as well as HIV and Tuberculosis, in downtown Johannesburg Thursday, April 30, 2020. Thousands are being tested in an effort to derail the spread of coronavirus. South Africa will begin a phased easing of its strict lockdown measures on May 1, although its confirmed cases of coronavirus continue to increase. (AP Photo/Jerome Delay)



Three women carrying grocery bags walk past residents lining up to be tested for COVID-19 as well as HIV and Tuberculosis, in downtown Johannesburg Thursday, April 30, 2020. Thousands are being tested in an effort to derail the spread of coronavirus. South Africa will began a phased easing of its strict lockdown measures on May 1, although its confirmed cases of coronavirus continue to increase. (AP Photo/Jerome Delay)



Residents lineup to be tested for COVID-19 as well as HIV and Tuberculosis in downtown Johannesburg Thursday, April 30, 2020. Thousands are being tested in an effort to derail the spread of coronavirus. South Africa will began a phased easing of its strict lockdown measures on May 1, although its confirmed cases of coronavirus continue to increase. (AP Photo/Jerome Delay)



A Johannesburg health official records residents who have been lining up to be tested for COVID-19 as well as HIV and Tuberculosis, in downtown Johannesburg Thursday, April 30, 2020. Thousands are being tested in an effort to derail the spread of coronavirus. South Africa will began a phased easing of its strict lockdown measures on May 1, although its confirmed cases of coronavirus continue to increase. (AP Photo/Jerome Delay)



A volunteer directs two men towards a medical tent where they will be tested for COVID-19 as well as HIV and Tuberculosis, in downtown Johannesburg Thursday, April 30, 2020. Thousands are being tested in an effort to derail the spread of coronavirus. South Africa will began a phased easing of its strict lockdown measures on May 1, although its confirmed cases of coronavirus continue to increase. (AP Photo/Jerome Delay)



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Young men watch residents lining up to be tested for COVID-19 as well as HIV and Tuberculosis, in downtown Johannesburg Thursday, April 30, 2020. Thousands are being tested in an effort to derail the spread of coronavirus. South Africa will began a phased easing of its strict lockdown measures on May 1, although its confirmed cases of coronavirus continue to increase. (AP Photo/Jerome Delay)

Some questioned whether it was too soon to begin reopening in Ghana, but the president insisted that early and aggressive contact tracing gave [health officials](#) the upper hand. In announcing the lifting on April 20, the president emphasized that Ghana would "adapt as the situation changes."

"We will tailor our solutions to our unique social, economic and cultural conditions," he said. "There is no one-size-fits-all approach."

While many in Ghana welcomed the easing of social distancing measures, saying it would increase consumer confidence and prevent layoffs, others now say the stigma of COVID-19 is still negatively affecting the economy.

Adwoa Nyarku said she used to earn about \$100 a week cleaning houses in the capital of Accra, where 89% of the country's confirmed cases have been reported. More than a week after the reopening, though, she still isn't back at work.

"All the people I work for do not even want me around their homes," she lamented. "They want to be safe and I understand it, but it also means, I have nothing to feed myself and children with."

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Citation: Ghana's virus cases spike 10 days after lockdown is lifted (2020, April 30) retrieved 19 September 2024 from

<https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-04-ghana-virus-cases-spike-days.html>

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