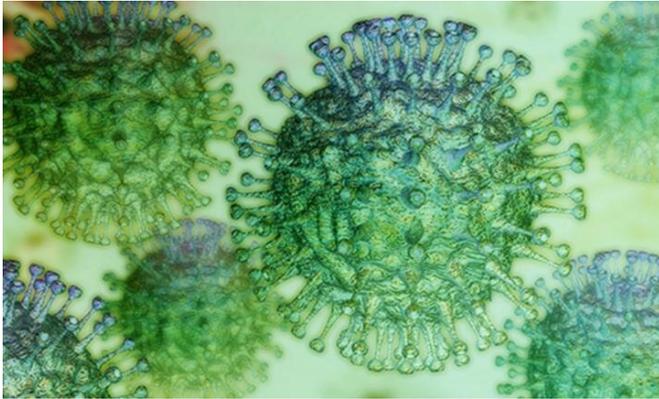


WHO says coronavirus situation 'worsening' worldwide

8 June 2020



Coronavirus. Credit: European Centers for Disease Control

The World Health Organization said Monday that the coronavirus pandemic situation was worsening around the globe, as it warned against complacency.

The WHO said it had recorded its highest daily tally of new infections, with COVID-19 raging in the Americas.

And as [mass protests](#) for racial justice sweep across the United States and beyond, the United Nations' health agency urged anyone demonstrating to do so safely.

The novel [coronavirus](#) has killed more than 403,000 people out of at least seven million infected since the outbreak emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP.

After East Asia, Europe became the epicentre of the disease, but has now been overtaken by the Americas.

"Although the situation in Europe is improving,

globally it is worsening," WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a virtual news conference in Geneva.

"More than 100,000 cases have been reported on nine of the past 10 days. Yesterday, more than 136,000 cases were reported—the most in a single day so far.

He said that almost 75 percent of Sunday's cases came from 10 countries—mostly in the Americas and South Asia.

Protest 'safely'

Tedros said that in countries where the situation was improving, "the biggest threat is now complacency", adding that "most people globally are still susceptible to infection".

"More than six months into this pandemic, this is not the time for any country to take its foot off the pedal," he said.

Turning to the wave of protests sparked by killing of George Floyd on May 25, Tedros encouraged active surveillance of the virus to ensure it does not rebound, especially in the context of mass gatherings.

"WHO fully supports equality and the global movement against racism. We reject discrimination of all kinds," he said.

"We encourage all those protesting around the world to do so safely.

"As much as possible, keep at least one metre from others, clean your hands, cover your cough and wear a mask if you attend a protest."

"Stay home if you are sick and contact a [health care provider](#)," he added.

Quarantine protesters?

The WHO has continually stressed the importance of tracing those who may have come into sustained, close contact with an infected person.

The WHO's emergencies director Michael Ryan said someone who had been at a mass protest did not necessarily meet the technical definition of a contact.

"It comes back down to local public health analysis and local risk management," he said.

"There may be situations with mass gatherings where local public health officials, on the basis of an abundance of caution, could advise people either to quarantine or to get tested."

Ryan added: "We would hope that in any mass gathering now... people who have had now four to five months to really internalise, that someone who is unwell... should really be at home and not engaged in any public activity.

"But we would always defer to national and sub-national authorities if they wish and need to take necessary public health actions that are based on risk assessment, that are based on scientific evidence."

Tedros meanwhile said that the WHO had so far shipped more than five million items of personal protective equipment to 110 countries.

The global health body aims to ship more than 129 million items of PPE to 126 nations.

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