

Turkey not considering lockdowns despite rise in virus cases

June 24 2020



Women wearing face masks to protect against the spread of coronavirus, walk in the city centre, in Ankara, Turkey, Wednesday, June 24, 2020. Turkish authorities have made the wearing of masks mandatory in three major cities to curb the spread of COVID-19 following an uptick in confirmed cases since the reopening of many businesses.(AP Photo/Burhan Ozbilici)

Turkey isn't considering tightening its lockdown restrictions even though

the number of daily coronavirus infections registered since they were eased is "higher than anticipated," the health minister said Wednesday.

Speaking to reporters following the weekly meeting of the country's scientific advisory council, Fahrettin Koca blamed the uptick in cases on widespread complacency and failure to comply with social distancing.

"We can say that the numbers are higher than what we anticipated," Koca said. "We see that many people are under the perception that we have returned to normal. This perception must rapidly be deactivated."

Turkey has witnessed an increase in the daily number of infections after the government authorized cafes, restaurants, gyms, parks, beaches and museums to reopen and eased stay-at-home orders for the elderly and young at the start of June.

The country has been registering average daily infections of around 1,260 since June 12, up from around 800 to 900 previously.

Koca on Wednesday reported 1,492 new confirmed cases in the past 24 hours, bringing the total infections registered in the country since March to 191,657. He also said there were 24 new COVID-19 deaths, taking the total to 5,025.

Last week, Koca said the resurgence of cases following the easing of restrictions were within expected limits.

Also Wednesday, the Interior Ministry said more than 7,000 people were fined for failing to wear masks on Monday and Tuesday—the first two days that Turkey started imposing fines in 62 provinces where the wearing of masks has been made mandatory in [public spaces](#).



Turkish teenagers wearing face masks to protect against the spread of coronavirus, and a maskless man walk in the city centre, in Ankara, Turkey, Wednesday, June 24, 2020. Turkish authorities have made the wearing of masks mandatory in three major cities to curb the spread of COVID-19 following an uptick in confirmed cases since the reopening of many businesses.(AP Photo/Burhan Ozbilici)

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Citation: Turkey not considering lockdowns despite rise in virus cases (2020, June 24) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-06-turkey-lockdowns-virus-cases.html>

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