

# Europe's cases subside as deaths surge; world's infections pass 63 Million



A couple pass coronavirus advice and a Christmas tree in Covent Garden in London on Monday. Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced non-essential shops in all parts of England will be allowed to reopen when lockdown ends Wednesday. Photo by Neil Hall/EPA-EFE

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Nov. 29 (UPI) — Coronavirus deaths have been surging throughout Europe but cases have been subsiding after reaching record levels recently with nations implementing restrictions, including lockdowns.

The continent, which became the epicenter of the outbreak after starting in Mainland China early this year, has recorded the most cases at 17,083,259 and second most deaths at 389,885, close behind North America at 407,344, according to tracking by Worldometers.info.

On Sunday, the total world death toll was 1,464,845 with cases at 63,059,356, growing by 1 million every two days, mainly in Europe and the United States, which is No. 1 with more than 266,000 deaths and in excess of 13 million cases, according to data from Johns Hopkins. The daily cases record was set on Nov. 13 at 662,564 but the deaths mark was reached later on Wednesday at 12,243.

Cases hit a peak about one month ago in Europe but later for deaths.

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Over the past four weeks, cases in Europe have diminished from four Saturdays ago of 306,623 to 242,779 to 222,980 to 193,986. Meanwhile, the death toll has spiked from 3,773 one month ago to 3,898 and most recently 4,278.

On Sunday, the total rose by 3,181 deaths and 162,183 cases.

In specific countries, record deaths have lagged behind cases.

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Five European nations are in the top 10 for most deaths with Russia joining the ranks for the first time in 10th place with 39,527. Others are No. 5 Britain at 58,425, No. 6 Italy at 54,904, No. 7 France at 52,325, and No. 9 Spain at 44,668.

On Sunday, Britain reported 211 deaths one day after 479 deaths, behind the record 1,166 April 21, as well 12,155 cases, far from the record 33,470 on Nov. 12.

Italy, which at one time was the world's epicenter, announced 541 deaths Sunday and 686 Saturday, which is behind a record 921 on March 28, and 20,648 cases Sunday after a record 40,896 on Nov. 13.

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France reported 198 deaths Sunday after 213 Saturday and 932 on Nov. 13 that was the most since a record of 1,437 in April. But its 9,784 cases Sunday were far below a record 86,852 on Oct. 31. Spain reported no data one day after 294 deaths and 8,348 cases.

Russia's deaths and cases have been at a record level. On Sunday, Russia reported 459 deaths, three days after a record 524. Its 26,683 cases are two days after a record 27,543.

Also in the top 20 for deaths are No. 15 Poland with 283 Sunday, No. 17 Germany with 156, and No. 18 Belgium with 122.

Poland has been surging with the previous high before October at 44 on April 24. The record was 674 Wednesday.

Germany, which at one time was in the top 10 for most deaths, recorded a record 416 on Wednesday. Until mid-November, the record was 333 on April 8 with deaths going into single digits subsequently. Cases peaked at 23,676 on Nov. 19 with Sunday's total of 14,645. On Saturday, the nation passed 1 million cases.

Last Wednesday, Chancellor Angela Merkel announced restrictions will be in place through at least Dec. 20 and an extension into next year is likely.

"We're in for a tough winter, but it will come to an end," she said in an address to Germany's parliament. "And right now, as people start to think about Christmas and the New Year, my wish for us all is that we act responsibly and stand up for each other."

Most European nations have been in some form of lockdown.

Britain's lockdown is scheduled to end Wednesday, but most of the country will remain under tough restrictions.

On Saturday, London police arrested more than 150 people on Saturday during anti-lockdown and anti-vaccine protests. Metropolitan police said causes for the arrests included breaching coronavirus restrictions and assaulting police officers.

"This year, Christmas will be different," Prime Minister Boris Johnson said last week. "Many of us are longing to spend time with family and friends, irrespective of our faith or background, and yet we cannot throw caution to the wind. The virus doesn't know that it's Christmas."

Certain regions in Italy eased restrictions starting Sunday, with red-zone regions of Calabria, Lombardy, and Piedmont becoming orange. Remaining in the highest zone are Tuscany, Abruzzo, Campania, Valle d'Aosta, province of Bolzano, meaning residents stay within their municipality, and are only allowed to leave for

work, study, health, or other essential reasons.

In France, the lockdown is due to end Dec. 15 though bars and restaurants will remain closed through Christmas, President Emmanuel Macron said Tuesday evening in a televised address.

“If we do not want to undergo a third confinement tomorrow, we must redouble our vigilance: protect our loved ones, especially the most vulnerable, by wearing a mask, including at home when we are with friends or with relatives who do not live with us on a daily basis,” Macron said.

On Thursday, Prime Minister Jean Castex (France) warned against complacency.

“Your efforts are paying dividends,” Castex said. “Pressure from the pandemic is easing and it is easing more in France than in other European nations.

“We cannot lower our guard. Our objective is to allow a gradual return to a more normal life, to allow you to spend the holiday season with your loved ones while minimizing the risk of a resurgence of the virus,” Castex added.

In Spain, regional authorities have the power to restrict movement but don’t allow a full lockdown.

In Russia, 60,296 medical students outside Moscow will receive \$260 in payouts before the end of the year.

The eastern Siberian republic of Buryatia became the first Russian region to impose a second coronavirus lockdown for two weeks through the end of the month.

Asia has the second-most cases with 16,637,088, as well as 290,168 deaths, which is fourth among the continents.

Most of the deaths and cases have been in India and Iran.

India has the second-most cases in the world with 9,392,919 including 41,810 Sunday and a record 97,894 several months. The Asian nation is third in deaths with 1,36,696, including 494 Sunday and national-record 1,299.

Iran has been setting cases and deaths records. Iran reported 389 deaths after a record 486 on Nov. 16 in eighth. Cases were 12,950 two days after a record

14,051.

In the Far East, Mainland China has not reported a death since April 26 and has dropped to 38th place, behind Switzerland with 4,634. It added 11 cases Sunday.

But Hong Kong has been experiencing a surge in cases, reporting 115 new ones, the largest single-day increase since the same total Aug. 2. Of those, 109 were locally transmitted.

Hong Kong will suspend all in-person classes at kindergartens, primary and secondary schools starting Wednesday. Hong Kong has reported 109 deaths.

Japan reported 2,066 cases one day after a record 2,684 cases, as well as 13 deaths, to rise to 2,139, including 13 on a ship.

Suicide is a bigger problem in the nation. According to government statistics, the monthly number of suicides was 2,153 in October.

“We didn’t even have a lockdown, and the impact of COVID is very minimal compared to other countries ... but still we see this big increase in the number of suicides,” said Michiko Ueda, an associate professor at Waseda University in Tokyo, and an expert on suicides told CNN.

South Korea, which reported 520 new cases Sunday for a total of 33,824, last Tuesday increased social distancing measures to level 2 in the Seoul Metropolitan area for two weeks. Masks are mandatory in all indoor facilities, entertainment facilities are prohibited, gatherings will be limited to less than 100 people, and schools are at one-third capacity.

“Contact between people increased through travels, events, and gatherings after the social distancing regulations eased in October while infected patients with no symptoms or mild symptoms have been piling up,” Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency Commissioner Jeong Eun-kyeong told reporters last week.

In South America, nations hold five spots in the top 20 for most deaths: Brazil in second with 172,637, Argentina in 11th with 38,322, Colombia 12th with 36,401, Peru 13th with 35,879, and Chile 19th with 15,322.

On Saturday, the continent reported 1,049 deaths and 73,553 cases.

Brazil reported most of them: 639 cases and 51,922 cases, which was the most since mid-August. The record was 70,869 on July 29. The death record was 1,554 on July 29 with fatalities not exceeding 1,000 since mid-September.

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has downplayed the outbreak though he contracted the virus himself in July. On Thursday, he said he won't take the vaccine himself though he said they will be free to everyone. He also has disdained the use of masks.

North America has the most deaths at 407,344 and cases are 16,013,672. All but around 16,000 of the deaths in North America are in the U.S., Mexico, and Canada. The three nations have extended their travel ban through Dec. 21.

No. 4 Mexico announced 586 deaths compared with a high of 1,092 on June 4 for a total of 105,459. Cases were 10,008 one day after a record 12,081.

No. 24 Canada reported 56 deaths on Sunday for a total of 12,032 and 5,468 cases. Between May 26 and Aug. 30 cases were never more than 1,000.

Last week, Mexico reported 61% of the hospital beds with ventilators were filled, which rose 53% in a week.

"If we continue on the current pace, our longer-range models continue to forecast significant increases in daily case counts and estimate that there could be up to 10,000 cases reported daily by mid-December," Dr. Theresa Tam, who is Canada's top doctor, said in a written statement Saturday. "Right now, we have a window of opportunity to act collectively together with public health authorities to bring the infection rate down to a safer trajectory."

Despite soaring data in Canada, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has a 60% approval rating in his handling of the crisis in a poll by Ipsos for Global News.

In Oceania, New Zealand's deaths have remained at 25 since Sept. 16 and Australia at 907, including none since two on Oct. 28.

New Zealand last reported three cases Saturday for a total of 2,050, which is 31 in one week, and Australia up 8 for 27,893, an increase of 72 in seven days.

Most of Australia's cases and deaths have been in the state of Victoria — 819 fatalities and 20,345 infections. But the state had gone 30 days through Sunday

without reporting a case.

Melbourne's second lockdown began in July and ended this month.

Starting Monday, Melbourne office workers will be allowed back to work. But many businesses will continue to have their employees work from home.

"We don't know how long the pandemic's going to go on for and it's not impacting our business. And people were happier working from home," Digital First managing director Grant McWhirter told Australian Broadcasting Corporation News. "The whole team was happier working from home."

In Africa, there have been 51,796 deaths and 3,275,980 cases.

South Africa leads the continent with 21,477 deaths, including 38 more Sunday followed by Egypt at 6,636 after 15 on Sunday and 13 on Saturday. South Africa has the 16th-most cases in the world at 787,702, including 2,563 more Sunday.

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