

Cyprus to impose partial lockdown to stem virus surge

Author:

AFP

ID:

1619191135024329900

Fri, 2021-04-23 15:08

NICOSIA: Cyprus on Friday announced a two-week partial lockdown as hospitals struggle to cope with surging coronavirus cases, with restrictions covering the key Orthodox Easter holidays.

"The growing number of infections, combined with intense pressure on the health system, cannot leave us indifferent and requires difficult decisions, drastic measures," Health Minister Constantinos Ioannou told reporters.

The new restrictions, running from April 26 to May 9, mean that people are encouraged to work from home and must seek authorization for only one non-work-related trip daily.

Non-essential shops will close, and a 9:00 p.m. to 5:00 am curfew will be imposed, tightening the start time from 11:00 pm.

Restrictions will be slightly eased for Orthodox Easter at the start of May. After May 9, people wanting to gather – such as in a restaurant – must provide either a negative Covid-19 test result with 72 hours or proof they have either had their first vaccine jab or have contracted the virus within the past three months.

Ioannou said the measures would help the Mediterranean island's vaccination rollout play catch up and ease pressure on hospitals, witnessing record patient admissions.

Local daily the Cyprus Mail reported Friday a record high number of coronavirus patients in state hospitals, with the western town of Paphos opening a second Covid-19 ward to cope.

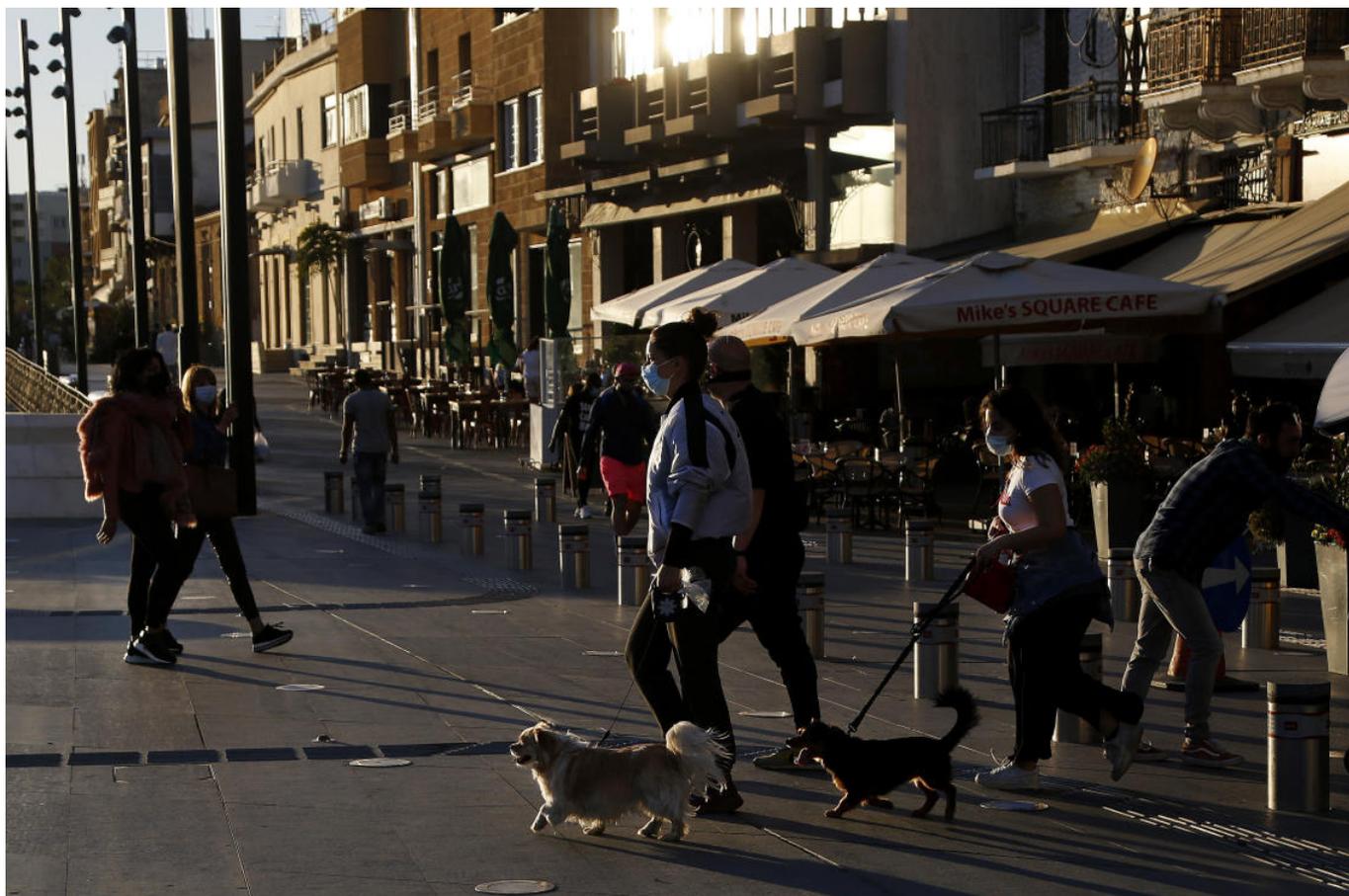
"We are in a very difficult phase of the pandemic," Ioannou said.

Cyprus is facing a third wave of Covid-19 infections fueled by the more contagious British variant, with daily cases peaking at a record 941 on Tuesday.

The situation marks a stark deterioration from September last year, when reported cases were often close to or at zero per day.

Cyprus detected 668 new cases per 100,000 people over the seven days to April 22 – the highest population-adjusted rate of any country in the world, AFP's database shows.

Uruguay was second highest worldwide on this measure, with 558 detected infections per 100,000 people.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Cyprus](#)

[lockdowns](#)

[Coronaviirus](#)

Half of Cyprus passports in cash scheme were illegal – inquiry
Cyprus gives Saudi Arabia ‘most favorable’ COVID-19 travel status

[King Abdullah II declares Jordan's 'strong' as defendants in 'sedition' case released](#)

Fri, 2021-04-23 15:24

AMMAN: Jordan's King Abdullah II said in a meeting this week that in honor of Ramadan 16 defendants involved in a "sedition" case would be released.

"As a father and a brother to all Jordanians, and in this holy month of tolerance and solidarity, when we all wish to be with our families, I ask the relevant officials to look into the proper mechanism to have those who were

misled into following the sedition, return to their families soon,” he said during the meeting with officials from Jordan’s various governorates at Al-Husseiniya Palace.

The king said the “sedition” would not shake Jordan and that his country was “strong.”

King Abdullah II said although “what took place was painful,” recent events in the kingdom “won’t shake us.”

Several people have been arrested since the beginning of April following events that threatened to undermine the kingdom’s security and stability.

Reaffirming his commitment to the Jordanian people, the king said: “My duty, goal, and the pledge I have made is to serve and protect our people and country, and this is the standard that defines how we deal with everything.”



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Jordan](#)

[Jordan King Abdullah II](#)

Jordan’s public prosecution ends investigation into ‘recent events threatening security’ Jordan releases 16 defendants in ‘sedition’ case

Libyan FM calls for 'stability, peace, security'

Fri, 2021-04-23 16:03

ROME: "Stability, peace and security" are Libya's major priorities ahead of the country's next elections, Foreign Minister Najla El-Mangoush told a meeting of Italian MPs.

Speaking in a hearing of the Italian Chamber of Deputies' foreign affairs committee attended by Arab News, El-Mangoush said that Libya's transitional government intends to "talk to everyone the same way and put a new agenda on the table."

"Peace and security will not be possible without regional and international support," she said.

Libya's first woman foreign minister addressed Italian MPs for more than an hour, and was quizzed on her Cabinet's views on issues ranging from Libya's relationship with Italy to tackling illegal immigration.

She said that Libya takes responsibility for violations of migrants' rights in its territory, but urged the global community to adopt a "different and alternative approach" to stop the flow of illegal immigrants crossing the country's southern borders.

"Illegal immigration is a broad and thorny topic. However, it is not only a Libyan issue, but a regional and an international one," El-Mangoush said.

"I ask the international community to be practical and proactive: You need a strategy that is consistent with the current phase. Blaming the coast guard is useless. We have an uninterrupted flow of migrants coming from African states. We do not know who is coming: They could be criminals or sick.

"We are against the violation of human rights and we are sad for the condition of these migrants, but Libya is a transit country for migratory flows and our resources are limited."

She added that "in southern Libya, we have a famine in progress. What can you ask to a people on the edge of famine? How can these people help somebody arriving from the south if they need help themselves? Please, don't blame us, but try to understand the difficult situation we are facing. We have limited resources and outdated policies to deal with this."

Discussing the withdrawal of foreign forces from Libya, the minister said she believes this will not happen in a day, but will be the result of long negotiations. However, she believes that the dialogue with several states involved "gives us hope."

"For us, sovereignty is the top priority, so stability and security are in order to be able to hold democratic, clean and legal elections," she said.

“We asked everyone, including Turkey, for cooperation to get all foreign forces off Libyan soil. Our safe future depends on the withdrawal of foreign forces.”

El-Mangoush said that the Libyan government “wishes for an even bigger role for Italy to solve Libya’s crisis, to put an end to foreign interference and help us to release all foreign forces.”

She called for Italian help in economic, medical and cultural areas, including the restoration of Tripoli’s old town and ancient buildings in the center of Benghazi damaged by war.

“Only the Italians can do a good job,” she said.





Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Middle East](#)

[Libya](#)

[Italy](#)

Italian leaders consider Libya a 'strategic priority'Libyan factions face international call to step up peace process

[Gunmen kill two Guard members in Iran's Kurdish area](#)

Author:

Associated Press

ID:

1619113358515761100

Thu, 2021-04-22 20:52

TEHRAN: Unknown gunmen suspected of terrorism killed two members of Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, the official IRNA news agency reported on Thursday.

The Guard members also killed two gunmen and wounded several of their accomplices in the Wednesday night shootout near Kurdish town of Marivan, near the border of Iraq.

It said other several other members of the terrorist group fled the site of

the clash.

The report identified the fallen Guard members as Osman Jahani and Nasser Amini without giving their rank. It said they were buried on Thursday in Marvian cemetery, which suggested they were local forces of the Guard. Iran's Kurdish area has seen occasional fighting between Iranian forces and Kurdish separatists, as well as militants linked to the extremist Daesh group.

In December, unknown gunmen killed three Iranian border guards in the Kurdish area near the country's northwestern border with Turkey. In July, Iran said "terrorists" killed two people and wounded a third person in an attack in a Kurdish area. In June, Iran attacked bases of Iranian Kurdish rebels in northern Iraq.



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Iran Revolutionary Guard](#)

[Kurdish](#)

[shootout](#)

Iran's Revolutionary Guard begins ground forces drill near Iraqi border

New definition of anti-Semitism that accepts criticism of Israel gathers support

Thu, 2021-04-22 18:55

ATLANTA: More than 200 Jewish-studies scholars and academics have endorsed a definition of anti-Semitism that accepts criticism of Israel.

The Jewish Declaration on Anti-Semitism (JDA) challenges the definition proposed by the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and adopted by the US government.

The IHRA's definition treats criticism of Israel, including calls to boycott the country or its products, as anti-Semitic.

The JDA, however, considers valid criticism of Israel and Zionism as a legitimate form of protected speech, and does not consider the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement against the country as anti-Semitic.

Pro-Palestinian rights activists say equating criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism is an attempt to muzzle discussion about Palestinian suffering.

Prof. Barry Trachtenberg, a scholar of Jewish studies and anti-Semitism at Wake Forest University in North Carolina, told Arab News that he signed the JDA because he thinks enacting a law to protect Jews specifically reinforces the perception of Jewish exceptionalism.

"The pro-Israel crowd wants to prevent any criticism of Israel as entirely anti-Semitic. Obviously this isn't correct because Israel is a political entity, and just like every other state it needs to be subject to criticism," he said.

"Israel doesn't represent the entire Jewish people, but even if it did, because it's a political entity it should be subjected to valid criticism."

Joshua Cooper – a mathematics professor at the University of South Carolina, and a member of the US-based group Jewish Voice for Peace – told Arab News that the JDA is "mostly a positive development in countering the harmful definition of the IHRA."

However, he expressed concern about the JDA's "vague" Article 10, which opposes "denying the right of Jews in the State of Israel to exist and flourish, collectively and individually, as Jews, in accordance with the principle of equality."

Cooper said: "If someone believes that the radical Jewish settlers living in stolen homes and terrorizing Arabs ... should leave, is this an anti-Semitic stance? Surely not."

Iymen Chehade, a history professor and pro-Palestinian human rights activist in Chicago, told Arab News that the JDA's definition is a step up from the IHRA's.

However, he said the JDA "reinforces the false and misleading idea that Israel and the Palestinians live on the same moral plain."

He added: "It's ironic that while the signatories rightfully seek to protect one group, they ignore the rights as well as the suffering of the Palestinians in the process."



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Israel](#)

[Jewish Declaration on Anti-Semitism \(JDA\)](#)

[Barry Trachtenberg](#)

New US lawmakers' criticism of Israel pressures Democrats
Criticism of Israel in UK is open and loud