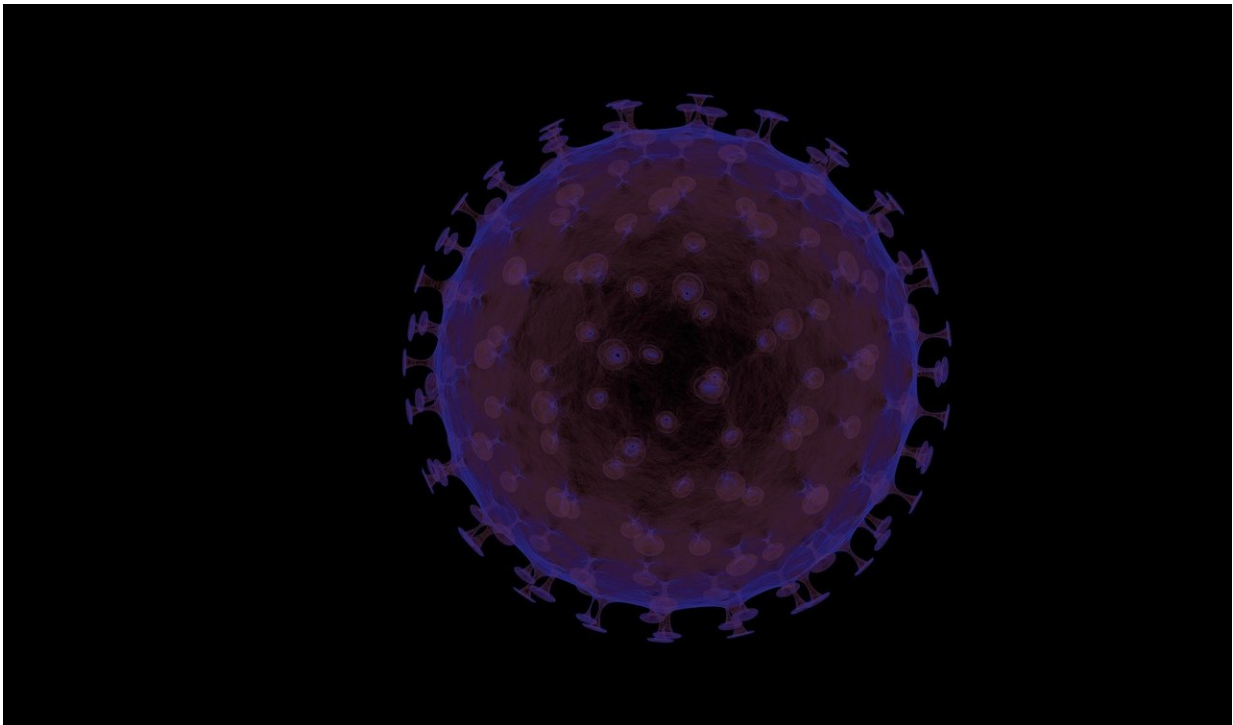


France 'far' off target for lifting Covid lockdown

December 7 2020



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France is 'far' from its goal of reducing the number of new COVID-19 infections to under 5,000 a day, the level at which the government has promised to lift a lockdown, a top health official said Monday.

President Emmanuel Macron has promised to end the lockdown on

December 15 if the second wave of coronavirus infections is brought within the 5,000 cases mark.

But his goal of lifting the restrictions on travel in time for the year-end holidays appeared in jeopardy on Monday, with senior health official Jerome Salomon saying the government's targets would be "very hard" to meet.

"Despite all our efforts, we are still faced with a high risk of a rebound in the epidemic," Salomon told a press conference, noting that the [number](#) of new infections had not fallen for several days.

From a high of 50,000-60,000 cases a day in late October the number of infections has fallen to on average 10,000 a day over the past week.

But the fall has tapered off in recent days.

On Sunday, France recorded 11,022 new infections over the previous 24 hours.

And the number of patients in [intensive care](#) stood at 3,210, above a target of 3,000 maximum.

France entered a second [lockdown](#) on October 30.

The restrictions were eased on November 28, when businesses selling what are listed as "non-essential" goods and services, such as bookshops and hairdressers, were allowed to reopen.

But bars and restaurants remain closed and people still need to fill out permission forms to leave their homes.

The total death toll in France since the beginning of the pandemic stands

at 55,521.

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