

Macron says France has scored its 'first victory' against virus

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President Emmanuel Macron said Sunday that France has marked its first victory in the fight against the coronavirus, even if the struggle to contain the outbreak is not over.

"The fight against the epidemic is not finished but I am happy about this

first victory against the [virus](#)," Macron said in an address to the nation.

He said that all of mainland France, including Paris, would go into a "green zone" of a lower state of alert starting Monday, meaning that cafes and restaurants in the French capital can open in full and not just on terraces.

The announcement will be a relief for restaurants in Paris and its suburbs, after officials signalled last week that their reopening might not come before June 22.

Only the overseas territories of Mayotte and French Guiana will remain at the "orange" alert level, with high number of cases still posing a threat to strained hospital systems.

Macron also said that all French schools, except high schools, would fully reopen from June 22, a move that will allow more parents to return to work and give students at least a few days with their teachers before the summer break.

Family visits will also be allowed from Monday at [retirement homes](#), which have been hit especially hard by the COVID-19 outbreak that has killed more than 29,000 people in France, though the number of new infections has slowed markedly in recent days.

"As soon as tomorrow we will be able to turn the page on this first chapter across all our territory," Macron said.

The president also confirmed that the second round of municipal elections originally set for March, when the government imposed the lockdown against the virus, would go ahead as planned on June 28.

But mass gatherings will remain "tightly controlled" for now, since "they

are the main occasions for spreading the virus," he said.

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