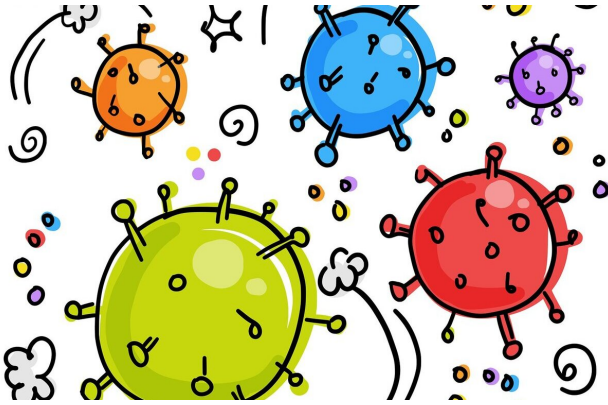


Italy PM says virus state of emergency may be extended

10 July 2020



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Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said Friday it was possible a state of emergency triggered by the coronavirus crisis could be extended beyond the end of the month.

In Italy, the procedure—which has been used in the past after floods and earthquakes—helps to cut red tape and hands regional authorities special powers.

Conte first called the state of emergency on January 31, after two cases of [coronavirus](#) were confirmed in Rome, but before Italy's first COVID-19-related deaths.

"Reasonably, the conditions exist to extend the state of emergency due to the coronavirus after July 31," Conte told reporters in Venice.

"The [state of emergency](#) serves to keep the virus under control. We have not yet decided, but we are reasonably moving in that direction," he added.

"A possible extension means that we will be able to continue to take the necessary measures, even if they are of limited scope."

Nearly 35,000 people have died from coronavirus in Italy, the first country hit by the [global health crisis](#) after China, and more than 242,000 people have been infected.

In May, as rates of infection began to decline, Italy started easing a strict two-month lockdown that shuttered most shops and businesses and restricted the movement of people.

Health officials caution that although the [crisis](#) has subsided, the virus is still circulating.

On Thursday, Italy banned travellers from 13 countries, including Bangladesh and Brazil, that it deems risky for COVID-19 transmission.

It took the measure after discovering an alarming rate of coronavirus infections among Bangladeshis arriving in Rome from flights originated in Dhaka.

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APA citation: Italy PM says virus state of emergency may be extended (2020, July 10) retrieved 30 April 2021 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-07-italy-pm-virus-state-emergency.html>

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