

# France inches toward new lockdown

January 27 2021

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The French government admitted on Wednesday that current restrictions designed to contain the spread of coronavirus were not enough, raising the prospect of a third nationwide lockdown.

"Maintaining the current regime looks very unlikely", spokesman Gabriel Attal said after a cabinet meeting, amid concern about the

spread of the more contagious UK variant of COVID-19.

A nationwide night curfew, which was introduced on January 14, is "not sufficient at this stage", Attal added, leaving the government to study new options.

President Emmanuel Macron was reported at the weekend to favour a new lockdown, but the government decided to hold off for several days to analyse the data on new infections and [hospital admissions](#).

The president of the government's [scientific advisory board](#), Jean-Francois Delfraissy, pleaded on Sunday for a swift decision.

"It will probably be necessary to move towards a lockdown," he said. "There is an emergency... The faster you take a decision, the more effective it is and can be of limited duration."

The [government](#) has said it aims to keep schools open even under a new [lockdown](#), unlike in neighbouring Germany and Britain where children are at home.

France on Tuesday reported 22,000 new COVID cases in the past 24 hours, while 3,071 people are in [intensive care](#) in hospital, up nine percent over a week, according to the COVIDtracker.fr website.

A total of 74,106 people have died in France, health ministry data showed on Tuesday, including 352 in the previous 24 hours.

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Citation: France inches toward new lockdown (2021, January 27) retrieved 20 November 2023 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-01-france-inches-lockdown.html>

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