

# Italy mulls further crackdown with no virus peak in sight

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Italy's government said Friday it is considering even further restrictions on its already locked-down population as the country reels under the continued spread of the coronavirus.

The country now has the most [coronavirus](#) fatalities in the world, after it surpassed China on Thursday with a rise of 427 deaths to an overall toll of 3,405.

"In the next 24 to 48 hours, new restrictions are possible," Italy's minister of regional affairs Francesco Boccia said Friday, citing the possibility of banning open-air activities.

The presidents of regions in the north—Italy's richest and the most devastated by the virus—have been pressing Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte to clamp down even harder on the movement of people, calling for the deployment of the army to help enforce the measures.

"Unfortunately, even today the statistics aren't going in the right direction, neither in terms of new infections or in terms of deaths," Lombardy's president Attilio Fontana told a press conference on Friday.

A list of requests by mayors throughout Lombardy would be submitted to Conte on Friday, he added.

Fontana has asked Conte to close all private and public offices, other than essential ones, as well as construction sites, and to crack down harder on people who continue to flout the quarantine.

"I tried to convince him that we have to take more rigorous measures," Fontana told La7 television on Thursday, referring to a conversation with Conte.

"We can't joke around anymore."

Members of the Chinese Red Cross currently in Lombardy to help with the crisis have observed that the measures taken in Italy fall short of what is needed to contain the pandemic, Fontana said.

All of Italy has been on lockdown since March 10, but although restaurants, bars, and non-essential stores are shuttered, people are still allowed to leave their homes to travel back and forth to work, shop for food, or seek medical care.

Maurizio Casasco, president of the European Federation of Sports Doctors, said [outdoor activities](#), even if performed alone, should be banned.

"Running in the street is a way of shirking your civic duties and represents an eventual risk," Casasco told the Corriere della Sera newspaper, adding that there should be no "grey zones" in people's behaviour.

Stefano Bonaccini, president of the Emilia Romagna region which is the country's second hardest-hit after Lombardy, banned running and most other open-air activities on Thursday.

"If someone wants to tell me that he can't give up running, I'll take him with me on a tour of the hospital," Bonaccini wrote on Facebook.

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