

Portugal to extend state of emergency to May

10 April 2020



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Portugal will extend the state of emergency imposed to combat coronavirus until May 1, President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa said on Friday.

"At this decisive moment, we cannot lower our guard," he told reporters.

The [state of emergency](#), which began on March 19 and currently runs to April 19, will be formally extended at the end of next week, he said.

Prime Minister Antonio Costa told the TVI channel that lifting emergency measures now would "send the wrong message to the country".

The government has also tightened restrictions for the Easter weekend, when many people traditionally travel.

All airports are to be completely shut until Monday, and citizens are only allowed to leave their home towns to go to work in business sectors still operating.

According to a tally published Friday, Portugal has 15,472 declared [coronavirus](#) cases and 435 deaths from the virus.

As early as mid-March, when Portugal still had only 300 declared cases and no virus deaths, it closed schools and the border with Spain, one of the most affected countries in the world.

On Thursday the [prime minister](#) said schools would remain closed for the rest of the academic year, although high [school](#) students may be allowed to take exams.

Medical experts agreed Portugal should remain vigilant. "There is an impression that the situation is stabilising and that protective measures could be loosened, but that must not be allowed to happen," Anabela Oliveira, head of the emergency room at the Santa Maria hospital in Lisbon, told AFPTV.

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APA citation: Portugal to extend state of emergency to May (2020, April 10) retrieved 4 September 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2020-04-portugal-state-emergency.html>

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