

WHO says no return to normality for 'foreseeable future'

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The World Health Organization warned Monday that there could be no return to normality any time soon as too many countries were bungling their response to the coronavirus pandemic.

After a daily record of 230,000 new cases of COVID-19 were reported to the WHO on Sunday, the UN health agency said the [pandemic](#) was only going to get worse unless people stuck to the basics of physical distancing, handwashing and wearing masks.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus warned that countries that were easing their way out of lockdowns were now witnessing a resurgence of the virus because they were not following proven methods to reduce risk.

"I want to be straight with you: there will be no return to the 'old normal' for the foreseeable future," Tedros told a virtual news briefing.

"Let me blunt: too many countries are headed in the wrong direction.

"The virus remains public enemy number one, but the actions of many governments and people do not reflect this."

He said mixed messages from leaders were undermining trust.

If governments do not roll out a comprehensive strategy to suppress transmission of the virus, and if populations do not follow basic public

[health](#) principles, "there is only one way this pandemic is going to go," he said.

"It's going to get worse and worse and worse."

The novel coronavirus has killed nearly 570,000 people and infected more than 12.9 million since the outbreak emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP.

"Although the number of daily deaths remains relatively stable, there is a lot to be concerned about," said Tedros.

He said there were four scenarios playing out around the world.

They were: countries that were alert and avoided large outbreaks, those that got a major [outbreak](#) under control, those that eased restrictions but are now backsliding, and those that are in an intense transmission phase.

Tedros said the epicentre of the [virus](#) remains the Americas.

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