

# Norway lifts its lockdown after coronavirus death toll reached just 209 - while neighboring Sweden admits it made a 'big failure' as its total hits 3,000 COVID-19 fatalities after shunning strict social distancing

- Norway was one of the first European countries to go into lockdown on March 12
- Government now plans to have almost all restrictions lifted by mid-June
- Country has suffered just 8,034 cases and reported 209 deaths from the virus
- Sweden, which shunned lockdown, has 24,623 cases and 3,040 deaths - which officials now admit is a 'big failure'
- [Here's how to help people impacted by Covid-19](#)

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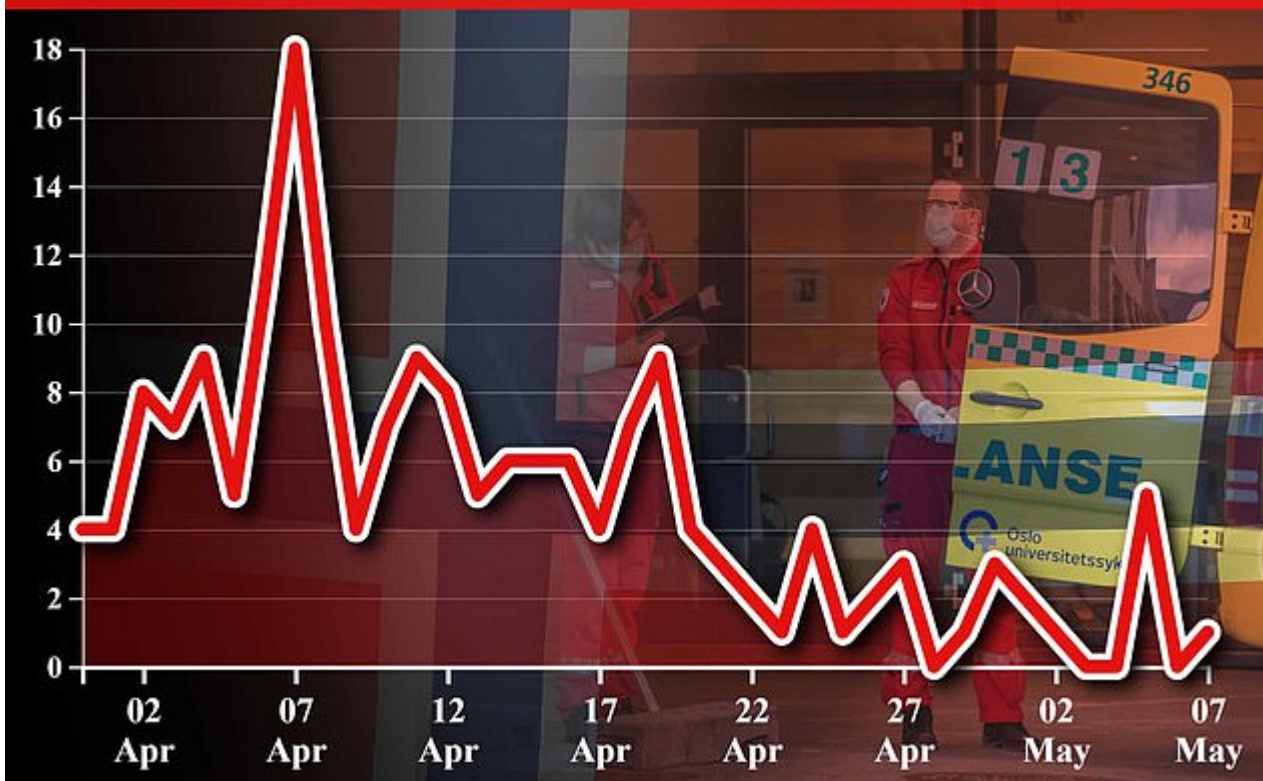
Norway has announced plans to fully lift its coronavirus lockdown by mid-June after suffering just 209 deaths from the virus.

The country was among the first European nations to go into full lockdown on March 12 and now plans to have almost all restrictions lifted by June 15 after successfully flattening the curve of infection, with just 8,034 cases reported.

By comparison, neighbouring Sweden - which shunned a full lockdown in favour of more relaxed social distancing measures - has suffered treble that number of cases, with 24,623 people falling ill.

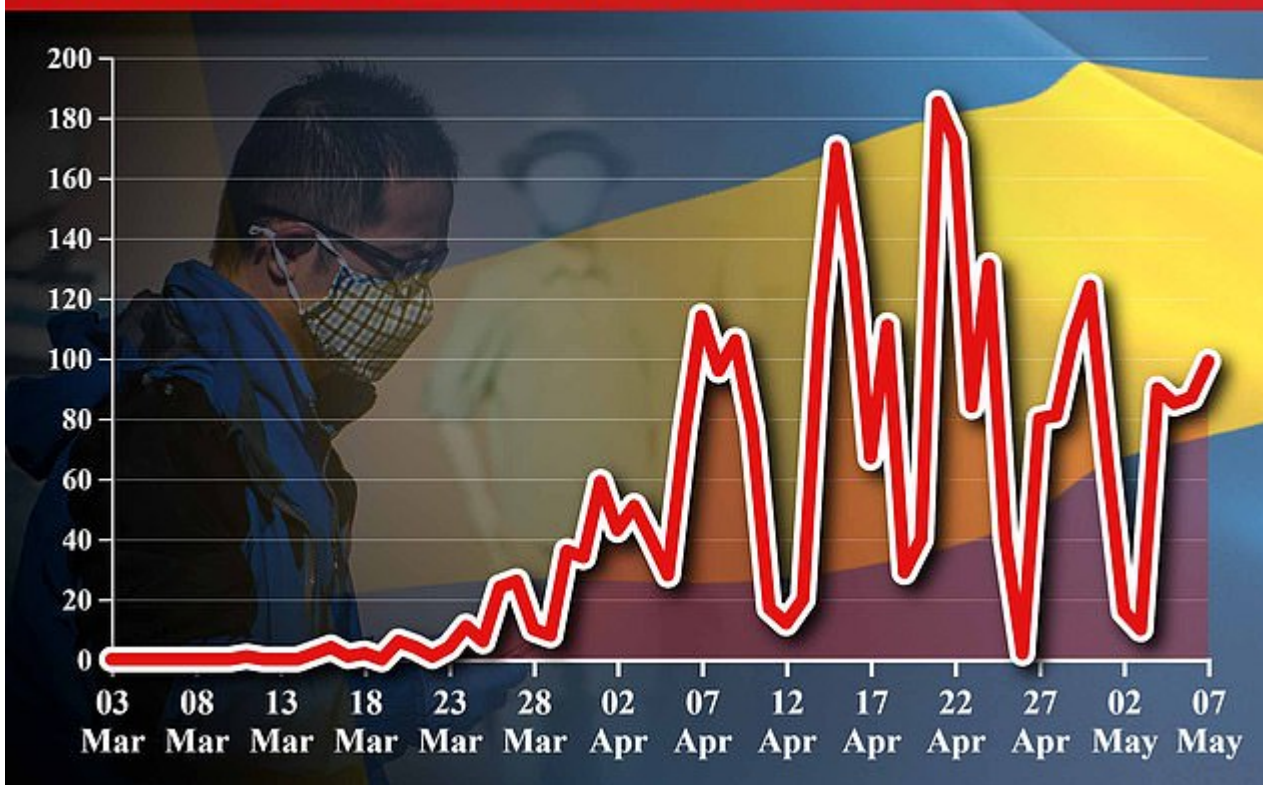
It has also seen more than 14 times Norway's death toll with 3,040 fatalities, forcing state officials to admit a 'big failure' over the 'horrifyingly large number'.

### NUMBER OF NEW CORONAVIRUS DEATHS PER DAY IN NORWAY



Norway has revealed it plans to lift almost all of its lockdown restrictions by mid-June after flattening the curve of its coronavirus outbreak and suffering just 209 deaths (pictured, a graph charting the daily death toll in Norway)

### NUMBER OF NEW CORONAVIRUS DEATHS PER DAY IN SWEDEN



## Neighbouring Sweden, which avoided a lockdown altogether, has admitted a 'big failure' after its death toll hit 3,040 - more than 14 times that of Norway

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Even accounting for differences in population size and density - Sweden has twice Norway's population and a population density that is one and a half times higher - the Swedes have fared worse.

Now, as Norway plots a route to the 'new normal', Sweden faces having to keep its lighter restrictions in place for longer to keep infections down.

Norwegian Prime Minister Erna Solberg announced Thursday that restrictions will start being eased from Monday next week.

Private gatherings of 20 people will be allowed provided social distancing can be maintained, while public gatherings of up to 50 will be permitted.

Workplaces will also reopen with strict social distancing, sports halls will be allowed to reopen, and sports involving less than 20 people can resume.

May 11 will see schools and colleges reopen across the country provided infection rates stay down, while bars and amusement parks will follow suit on June 1.

Final restrictions will then be lifted on June 15, with gatherings of up to 200 people allowed, gyms and fitness centres reopened and the football league restarted.

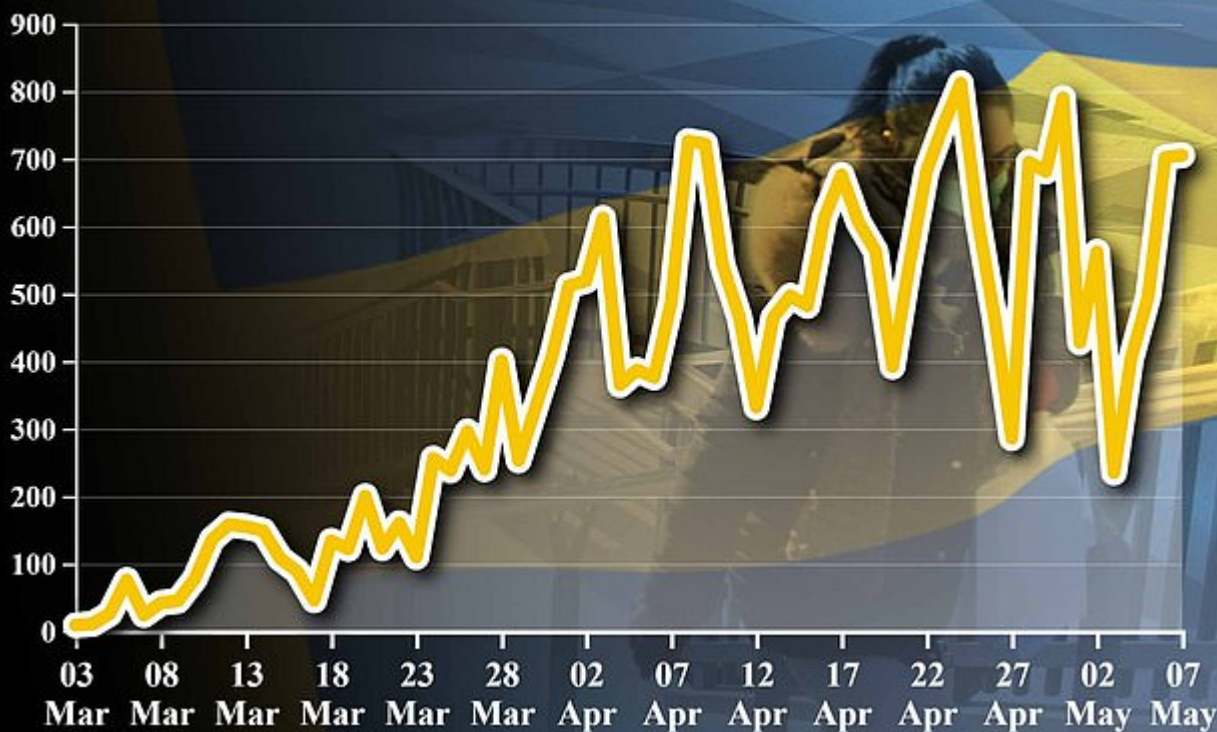
'You have shown us patience, now it is our turn to give back. That is why we are presenting a plan to reopen Norway, a plan to take back everyday life,' Solberg said.

### NUMBER OF NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES PER DAY IN NORWAY



A graph showing the number of daily new cases of coronavirus reported in Norway, which has been in steady decline after its 'R' figure dropped to 0.49, meaning the curve of infection has been effectively flattened

### NUMBER OF NEW CORONAVIRUS CASES PER DAY IN SWEDEN



**A graph showing the number of daily cases of coronavirus reported in Sweden which has been steadily increasing after the government shunned a full lockdown**



© EPA

**Norway's health minister Bent Hoie (pictured) was among those to take advantage after hairdressers were allowed to re-open on 27 April**



© VIA REUTERS

## A child washes his hands at a school in Oslo, Norway on 27 April 2020. Kindergartens have already opened in the Scandinavian country and primary schools are set to open on Monday

It comes after Norway squashed its 'R' figure - or the number of people each virus carrier infects on average - to just 0.49, meaning the disease is in decline.

Having an 'R' figure of less than 1.0 is considered a milestone in beating the disease.

Having kept their numbers down, Norway's PM Solberg said today at a press conference: 'Our goal is that by June 15 we will have reopened most of the things that were closed.'

'But there is an important condition. We will only end confinement on these dates if we manage to keep the epidemic under control,' she added.

The Swedish government has faced strong criticism that it was too slow to react to the virus, and did not do enough to protect the elderly in care homes.

Around 90 per cent of virus deaths in Sweden are in those aged over 70.

One of the few measures Sweden did adopt was to ban all visits to care homes, but that did not stop the virus running rampant.

Speaking to Fox News, Sweden's ambassador to the US Karin Ulrika Olofsdotter admitted: 'That's of course a big failure we have and it's something that we're working on.'



**Sweden's ambassador to the United States, Karin Ulrika Olofsdotter (pictured), said 90 per cent of people who have died of coronavirus in Sweden were over 70**



**Sweden's health minister Lena Hallengren (centre) watches health worker Gun Bjorling (right) carry out a coronavirus test at a drive-in centre in Stockholm yesterday**



**People socialise in a park in Stockholm last week in an outdoor gathering which has been out of the question in Britain since March 23**

State epidemiologist Anders Tegnell, who is leading Sweden's response, described a death toll of 3,000 as a 'horrifyingly large number' before the country passed it.

Bars and restaurants have remained open even in worst-hit Stockholm while primary schools have continued teaching without interruption.

That put it out of line with the rest of Europe and particularly its Nordic neighbours, including Denmark and Finland which both went into full lockdown early.

Denmark has reported 10,083 cases and 514 deaths, while Finland has 5,673 cases and 255 deaths.

The comparison is unfavourable to Sweden even taking into account the differences in population size and density between the three countries.

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The 22-year-old billionaire sported a striking two-piece skirt and bandeau set from Charlotte Knowles, which she first posted to social media last Friday.

**TV&Showbiz**

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