



Ukraine

National lockdown unlikely in next two months; regional lockdowns to sustain HIGH operational risks

 OPERATIONAL

COVID-19

The government has extended nationwide restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic until 30 April.

A strict national lockdown is unlikely in the next two months at least because a recent national lockdown helped stabilise infection rates. However, regions with a rapid increase in new cases and limited hospital capacity will likely impose strict localised lockdowns in the coming months. There is considerable uncertainty over when a mass vaccination programme will begin and the rollout of any programme is likely to be slow. Our operational risk rating will remain HIGH.

New national rules

In addition to extending existing restrictions on the size of indoor and outdoor gatherings, capacity limits, and social distancing and public hygiene guidelines, the government announced the return to an “adaptive quarantine” from 24 February. As in 2020, all regions will be divided into four risk zones based on local epidemiological conditions: green (lowest risk), yellow, orange and red (highest risk). The entire country is currently in the orange zone, which corresponds to having more than 60 hospitalisations per 100,000 people in the past seven days, among other indicators.

Strict national lockdown unlikely

A strict national lockdown is unlikely in the next two months at least because a recent national lockdown helped stabilise infection rates. The authorities imposed the strict national lockdown between 8 and 24 January in response to a rapid increase in COVID-19 cases after the holiday period in late December 2020 and early January 2021. This was the first strict national lockdown since the first half of 2020; despite high infection rates between August and December 2020, the government did not reinstate a strict lockdown due to overwhelming public opposition to drastic measures. Most regions and local businesses have openly defied moderate business restrictions throughout the pandemic, citing the right to work and a lack of economic relief measures. About 1,000 people in the capital Kyiv on 28 January protested against quarantine restrictions.

Regional lockdowns likely

However, regions with a rapid increase in new cases and limited hospital capacity will likely impose strict localised lockdowns in the coming months as part of the adaptive quarantine. Western regions in particular are likely to impose lockdowns following a recent spike in new cases. Hotspots were detected over the past week in the Chernivtsi, Zakarpattia and Ivano-Frankivsk regions, leading the latter region to announce a strict lockdown between 22 and 28 February. Restrictions in regions in the highest red zone will temporarily close most non-essential businesses and venues, as well as secondary schools and universities. Kindergartens and elementary schools will be allowed to remain open.

HIGH operational risks

Extended quarantine measures and regional lockdowns will sustain our HIGH operational risk rating in Ukraine.

Furthermore, there is considerable uncertainty over when a mass vaccination programme will begin. The government has twice postponed the vaccine rollout due to shipping delays; it previously planned to begin inoculating high-risk groups and essential workers on 15 February with the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. Unlike most other countries in the post-Soviet region, Ukraine does not plan to use Russia's Sputnik V vaccine and will instead procure vaccines from Oxford/AstraZeneca and the [COVAX Facility](#). The rollout of any vaccination programme is likely to be slow, sustaining elevated operational risks.

Finally, the introduction of regional lockdowns and additional business restrictions in response to fluctuating case numbers will likely trigger more protests. Although most demonstrations have been peaceful, occasional clashes are possible when demonstrators attempt to set up tents or block major roads.

Thank you
Online Solutions, Control Risks

For more information contact onlinesolutions@controlrisks.com



[Click here to unsubscribe or change your subscription preferences.](#)

www.controlrisks.com