

# Italy on the first day of blockade: Many people bypass the law by all means, despite the urgent call from the government

Many fear that the Italian government will not be able to implement effective blockade measures, because the people may be circumventing the law.

2:15 am 8/3 local time, Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte ended the emergency press conference by announcing a large blockade of the whole of Northern Italy.



"We must understand that it is necessary to comply with the blockade regulations, and not to oppose these measures. Do not try to circumvent the law or to escape," - said Conte, in the morning of the blockade announcement. Lombardy - where the disease broke out most strongly in the country.

Conte issued an order to apply a series of methods to prevent the world's largest outbreak of the Covid-19 epidemic outside of Asia. The methods will limit the movement of at least a quarter of Italy, and obviously cause significant harm to the economy.

However, the blockade considered to be necessary is causing a mixed wave in the Italian community. In particular, the most prominent question is: "Does the public really comply with the regulations?"



The last passengers waited to leave Milan moments before the official blockade took effect

## **"We are another Wuhan"**

That's the comment of 39-year-old Elano Lofina, an employee at a shopping center in the middle of Lombardy. She linked the incident to a blockade that China had applied to Wuhan, where a new strain of the corona virus is causing fear in the world.

When saying these words, Lofino is hanging out with friends. She said the blockade order was perfectly reasonable: *"It was a huge sacrifice, but we accept it."*

Hours after Prime Minister Conte issued a blockade, the number of deaths from corona virus in Italy has increased by 50% in just one day - from 233 on 7/3 to 366, becoming the nation where the number of deaths due to The world's largest virus outside of China. Italy itself overtook South Korea at this time, becoming the second largest outbreak in the world.

But indeed, not many people have the same thoughts as Lofino.



A citizen bought additional water before the blockade

Authorities - including Conte - called on people to leave aside the extremely characteristic Italian personality, known as "furbizia". This is an Italian word that can be roughly translated as "cunning", to bypass the loophole of the law being enacted. A type of behavior, personality that Italians must admit.

The character "furbizia" was clearly shown on March 8, just after news of Lombardy blockade was released. Before the blockade took effect, many people in Lombardy hurried aboard to flee the land, despite the authorities' call for all to act in compliance with the law and to be responsible to the community.

Italian media that day was filled with calls, from famous singers to influential figures, to fight the "shameful" wave of escape.

*"Everyone needs to stay indoors!"* - quoted in the video of Barbara Balanzoni, an Italian physician. Balanzoni said hospitals currently do not have enough ventilators to accommodate the growing number of patients infected with the virus.

*"There are still too many people walking around on the street,"*

Mr. Dario Franceschini - Minister of Culture of Italy thanked many celebrities in the entertainment industry for helping spread the message "I'm Staying Home" to the public. *"It is an important message for today's young generation,"* - he said.

## **Those who break the law**

On the afternoon of March 8, the blockade order in the North was issued with relatively strict sanctions, with a fine of up to 3 months in prison for those who violate the regulations. Basic rules include restricting movement to those who are positive for the corona virus, and banning crowds.

The Italian government has taken the most drastic measures to prevent the disease from spreading. They canceled all flights from China in January, quarantining many towns in February, all of Lombardy and even the

whole of Italy with 60 million people recently.

But is that enough? A few days before the blockade order was issued, an elderly man in Zorlesco - one of the quarantined towns said a few jokes to his friends, that he often circumvented the law, dodging checkpoints with old roads. Reason? Because he wanted to go to drink, but alcohol was only outside the quarantine area.



Checkpoint in the town of Zorlesco

Of course, the Italian authorities did not find this person's joke funny. They just feel impatient because the "furbizia" habit has been ingrained in a part of the people.

Giuseppe Ippolito, director of the National Institute of Infectious Diseases Lazzaro Spallanzani in Rome, said on television, describing those who fled Lombardy that afternoon as "a potential threat to the nation." He called on them to quickly contact the health facility, inform the situation, and prepare a spirit of isolation.

However, many people think that leaving Milan to go south is the right decision. Like Giorgia Caredda, on the afternoon of March 8, he waited for a train in Milan to go to Rome, with the aim of caring for his father with heart disease.

*"On the one hand, I find it very stupid to leave. But on the other hand, I feel imprisoned, and need to escape,"* - Caredda said.

In "The Italians" - the classic Luigi Barzini study in 1964 describes the "furbizia" of the Italians. Barzini said the "cunning" personality and behavior were formed during Italy's rule by foreign powers, such as the French and Germans.



*"In response to oppression, the Italians have quietly invented many ways. When unable to defend the country on the battlefield, they fight in their own way to protect the freedom of their families and themselves. . "*

Barzini also said that the law at the time had become a "crime" that all were happy to circumvent the law. And this is exactly what Prime Minister Conte does not want his people to think like that.

*"We must protect for ourselves, and for those cherished around."*

Anyway, somewhere, the message of Conte still brings positive effects. Antonio Ponti - a DJ in Milan was planning a party despite the city's ban. In order to meet the need for people to stand at least 1m apart, Ponti cleverly circumvented the law by hosting an outdoor party.

But as the epidemic spread, along with the fierce backlash in Milan, Ponti said he did not want to be considered a "pandemic". He decided to comply, withdraw all advertising and cancel the party.

*"That's wiser, if it helps things better."*

Reference: NY Times

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