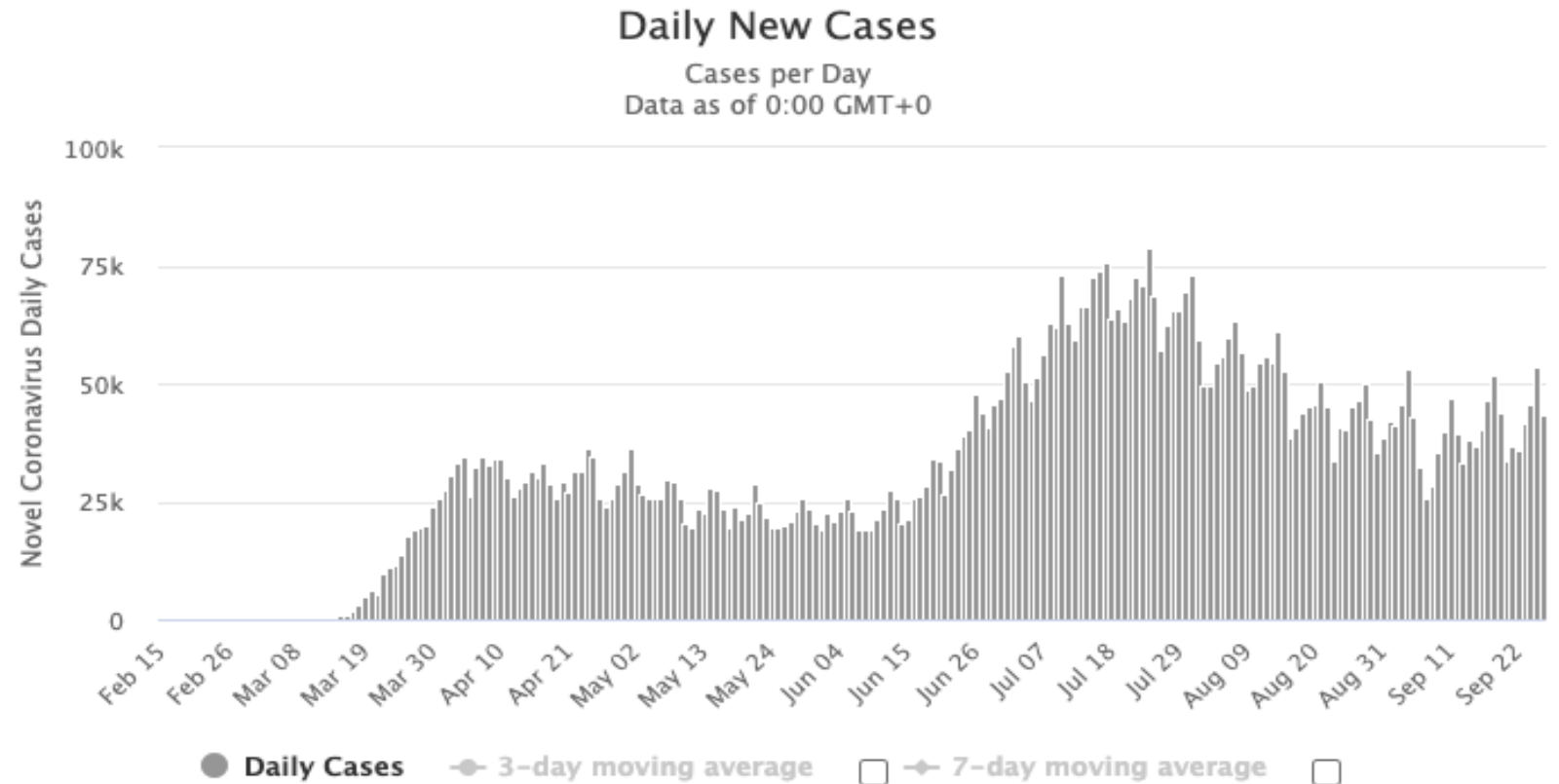


# Political Regime, Government, and Epidemics Part 1

# The Government Failure as a Cause of Covid-19

- The USA has had a higher number of Covid-19 cases
- There have been more than 7.6 million cases in the USA
- And the government mismanagement contributed to this

Daily New Cases in the United States



# The Government Failure as a Cause of Covid-19



**Donald J. Trump** ✓  
@realDonaldTrump

The Coronavirus is very much under control in the USA. We are in contact with everyone and all relevant countries. CDC & World Health have been working hard and very smart. Stock Market starting to look very good to me!

4:42 PM · Feb 24, 2020 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

- It just fails to communicate accurate and useful information with people

- PS. CDC is the Center for Disease Control and Prevention  
<https://www.cdc.gov/>

# The Government Failure as a Cause of Covid-19



- <https://www.charlotteobserver.com/latest-news/article240824476.html>
- President Trump claimed that Covid-19 was no worse than the common flu and vaccines were coming “relatively soon,”

# The Government Failure as a Cause of Covid-19

- March 11, 2020, Trump announced several official actions.
  - <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2020/03/11/trump-coronavirus-address-transcript/>
- Trump and the officials quickly walked back his nationally televised statements his that 1) the administration would ban all travel from Europe to the US, 2) the ban would also apply to trade and cargo between the US and Europe, and 3) major health insurers would waive co-pays on coronavirus treatment.
- Shortly after Trump's speech, however, the Department of Homeland Security issued major clarifications to Trump's remarks, announcing that the travel ban **would not apply to US citizens or permanent residents** abroad.
- Also, Trump hadn't mentioned Ireland's exemption in his announcement, prompting Dublin Airport to make clear that it was not part of the new ban.

# The Government Failure as a Cause of Covid-19

- About an hour after his speech ended, Trump sent out a tweet announcing that "trade will in no way be affected by the 30-day restriction on travel from Europe,"



# The Government Failure as a Cause of Covid-19

- Not long after his speech, however, a representative for the insurance-industry group America's Health Insurance Plans told Politico that major health insurers had agreed to waive co-pays only for coronavirus testing, not the far more costly coronavirus treatments.
- <https://www.businessinsider.com/white-house-scrambles-to-clarify-details-on-coronavirus-response-2020-3>

# Trump on face mask

- Trump has been so confusing about a face mask
  - **April 3, at the White House:** “So it’s voluntary. You don’t have to do it. They suggested for a period of time, but this is voluntary. I don’t think I’m going to be doing it.”
  - **July 19, to the Fox News host Chris Wallace:** “I don’t agree with the statement that if everybody wears a mask, everything disappears.”
  - **Aug. 13, at the White House:** “My administration has a different approach: We have urged Americans to wear masks, and I emphasized this is a patriotic thing to do. Maybe they’re great, and maybe they’re just good. Maybe they’re not so good.”
  - **Sept. 29 at a presidential debate:** “When needed, I wear masks. I don’t wear masks like him,” he said of Mr. Biden. “Every time you see him, he’s got a mask. He could be speaking 200 feet away from them, and he shows up with the biggest mask I’ve ever seen.”

# Trump on face mask

- <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/02/us/politics/donald-trump-masks.html>
- And Biden argued in the clip that the face mask policy at the beginning of the outbreak might have save thousands of lives

# The problem may be about the constitution



**Donald J. Trump**  @realDonaldTrump · Apr 13

For the purpose of creating conflict and confusion, some in the Fake News Media are saying that it is the Governors decision to open up the states, not that of the President of the United States & the Federal Government. Let it be fully understood that this is incorrect....

 45.5K

 41.5K

 149.6K



- Critics said that the Trump administration, at the beginning of the outbreak, did not have a plan for school closures, and left this for the state. This led to some conflicts between federal and state government.
- However, this could be a problem about the US constitution.

# The problem escalated to be about if the US democracy failed?

- For example, in this news <https://time.com/5839195/coronavirus-democracy-failure/>
- The author argues that the US “political map” in which the Republican gains votes from rural area and the Democrat gains votes from cities caused a problem at the beginning of the outbreak.
  - The majority of the congress is the Republican
  - The outbreak started in the cities, so the congress responded slowly to the crisis.
- Also, the expansion of corporate power has pushed our government into acting more slowly and reopening more quickly than the American people believe is safe.
  - So the news argues that policies from the Trump administration gave benefits to business prior to American people

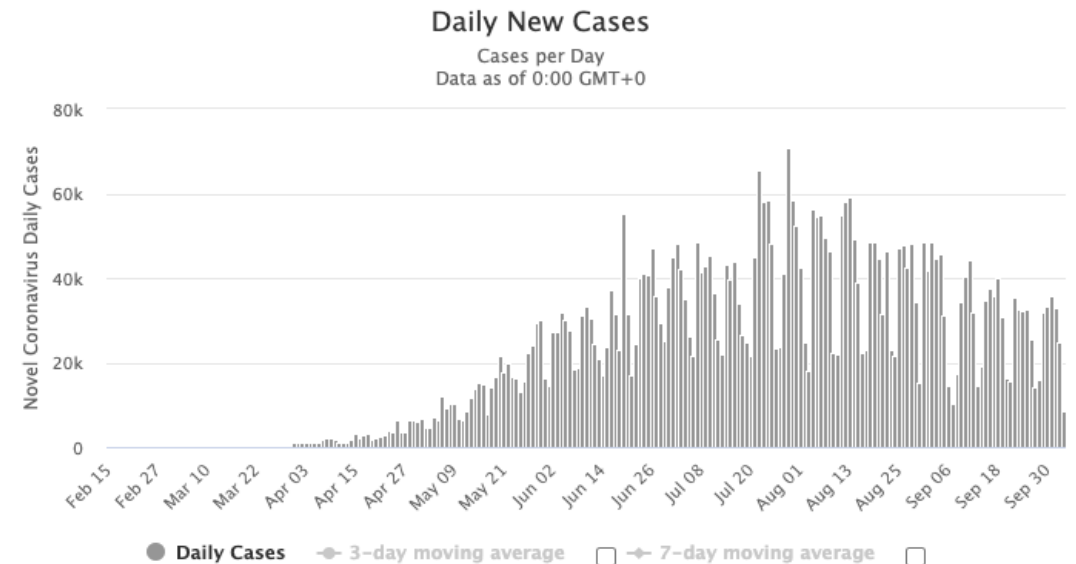
# Government Failure in Brazil



Jair Bolsonaro, President of Brazil

- The case of Brazil is comparable to that of the USA
- There have been almost 5 million cases in Brazil

Daily New Cases in Brazil



# Government Failure in Brazil

- He has referred to COVID-19 as a “little flu” and refused to comply with WHO guidelines
- He ignored some scientific findings and showed that the disease was under control.
- He said “the people will soon see that they were tricked by these governors and by the large part of the media when it comes to coronavirus,”

## Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro says coronavirus crisis is a media trick

Far-right president has resisted strong measures to stop spread of what he calls a 'little flu'

- [Coronavirus - latest updates](#)
- [See all our coronavirus coverage](#)



▲ Bolsonaro says given his 'athletic history' Covid-19 'would not necessarily concern me' - video

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/mar/23/brazils-jair-bolsonaro-says-coronavirus-crisis-is-a-media-trick>

# Government Failure in Brazil

- These words tell us that there are some conflicts between the state and the federal government
- Resisting the minimal COVID-19 guidelines propagated by the Bolsonaro Administration, the state governors decided not to comply with federal regulations and guidelines. As a result, public health measures became regionalized, with an ongoing dispute for needed health care resources taking place across the country.
- Although governors and mayors became essential leaders in the fight to contain the impact of the pandemic, the lack of federal regulation has jeopardized the effective monitoring and control of the population to contain the spread of the virus.
- <https://www.theregreview.org/2020/06/22/urban-saad-diniz-brazil-covid-19-response-failing/>

# They are alike



- Before the pandemic, he was called “Trump of the Tropics.”
- They’ve both resisted social distancing, lashed out against lockdowns, and compared the coronavirus to the flu. They’ve each played down the severity of their countries’ outbreaks, attacked experts (including within their own government), attended large political events often without wearing masks, and hyped the unproven benefits of hydroxychloroquine.
- They both got coronavirus.

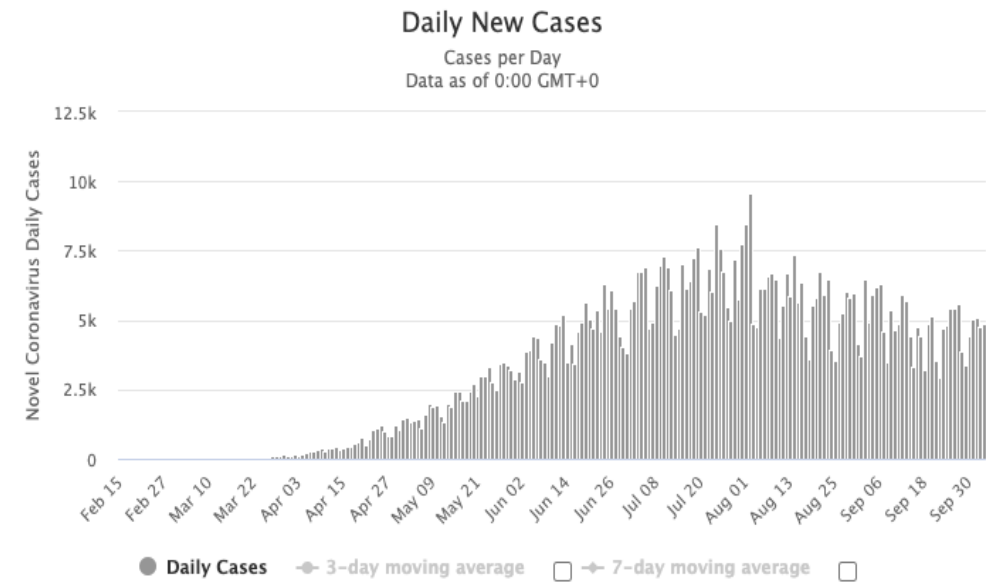
<https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2020/10/donald-trump-jair-bolsonaro-coronavirus/616602/>

# What about in Mexico?

- There have been 760,000 Covid cases in Mexico



Daily New Cases in Mexico



Andrés Manuel López Obrador, President of Mexico  
He is from a left-wing party, Party of Democratic Revolution (PDR)

# What about in Mexico?

- It took him more than 50 days after WHO declared the outbreak of the Coronavirus to call for an assembly of the General Health Council
- Many of the measures implemented after the declaration of emergency were not as effective as they could have been if they had been implemented earlier. For example, after the emergency was declared, it took the government a few days to issue the rules and permits for the fast-tracked importation of medical supplies necessary to treat COVID-19 patients.
- <https://www.theregreview.org/2020/05/27/guim-mexico-untimely-fight-against-coronavirus/>

# What about in Mexico?



▶ 0:53

(Alexa Juliana Ard/The Washington Post)

## World

### Mexican president hugs, kisses supporters amid global coronavirus outbreak

March 17, 2020 | 3:15 AM EDT

Mexican president Andrés Manuel López Obrador shook hands and kissed supporters on the cheek while visiting towns in the southwestern state of Guerrero on March 14, as the health ministry urged people to maintain a “healthy distance” to avoid coronavirus spread.

## Related

Live updates: Trump says gatherings should be limited to 10 people to stop spread of coronavirus

- He even joined the political rally and kissed his supporters while WHO urged social distancing.

- [https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/world/mexican-president-hugs-kisses-supporters-amid-global-coronavirus-outbreak/2020/03/16/2d63538a-3019-4bb5-8a21-5e90058de34e\\_video.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/world/mexican-president-hugs-kisses-supporters-amid-global-coronavirus-outbreak/2020/03/16/2d63538a-3019-4bb5-8a21-5e90058de34e_video.html)

Some might argue that people are too free to act



Demonstrators march during a protest against the government's restrictions amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, in Berlin, Germany, August 1, 2020. /Reuters

Some might argue that people are too free to act



# Is Covid-19 bringing us towards authoritarianism?

- On April 2020, Stella Levantasi asked Frank Snowden, the author of *Epidemics and Society*, as follows:
  - **Emergency circumstances like this pandemic have, in some cases, shifted the war on the virus to a war on democracy. Emergency circumstances are, in fact, in some instances, being exploited by some to allow an extension of state powers and a control over the economy and, in extreme cases, downright sweeping powers and the rise of authoritarian regimes like in Hungary for example. Has this happened in the past? Have epidemics “legitimized” authoritarianism?**

# Is Covid-19 bringing us towards authoritarianism?

- So Snowden answered
  - “Pandemics do have the possibility of strengthening authoritarianism, you’re absolutely right. What’s happening with Viktor Orbán in Hungary but also in Poland, are two very clear examples of the way in which the pandemic is a cover and a legitimation for far right authoritarian steps to destroy democracy and institute nationalist, pseudo populist governance. So that is a danger.



# What happened in Hungary?

- The current prime minister is Viktor Orbán who has been in office since 2010 (This is his second term)
- Mr. Orbán was the first to coin the phrase “illiberal democracy” when describing his vision for Hungary, a democracy in which civil liberties are disdained.



# What happened in Hungary?

- In his speech,
  - “Christian democracy is, by definition, not liberal: it is, if you like, illiberal. And we can specifically say this in connection with a few important issues — say, three great issues. Liberal democracy is in favor of multiculturalism, while Christian democracy gives priority to Christian culture; this is an illiberal concept. Liberal democracy is pro-immigration, while Christian democracy is anti-immigration; this is again a genuinely illiberal concept. And liberal democracy sides with adaptable family models, while Christian democracy rests on the foundations of the Christian family model; once more, this is an illiberal concept.”

# What happened in Hungary?

- In his 2010 campaign Orbán fanned the flames of Hungarian discontent by attacking outsiders as oppressors.
  - The European Union was his initial target. He depicted [Brussels, the site of EU headquarters, as “the new Moscow,”](#) and he [smeared his opponents as stooges](#) of foreign interests.
  - He anticipated the flow of migrants into Europe and made them a target by [stimulating anti-Muslim sentiment and fears of terrorism](#) long before the mass migration began in 2015.
  - <https://thewire.in/world/how-viktor-orban-degraded-hungarys-weak-democracy>

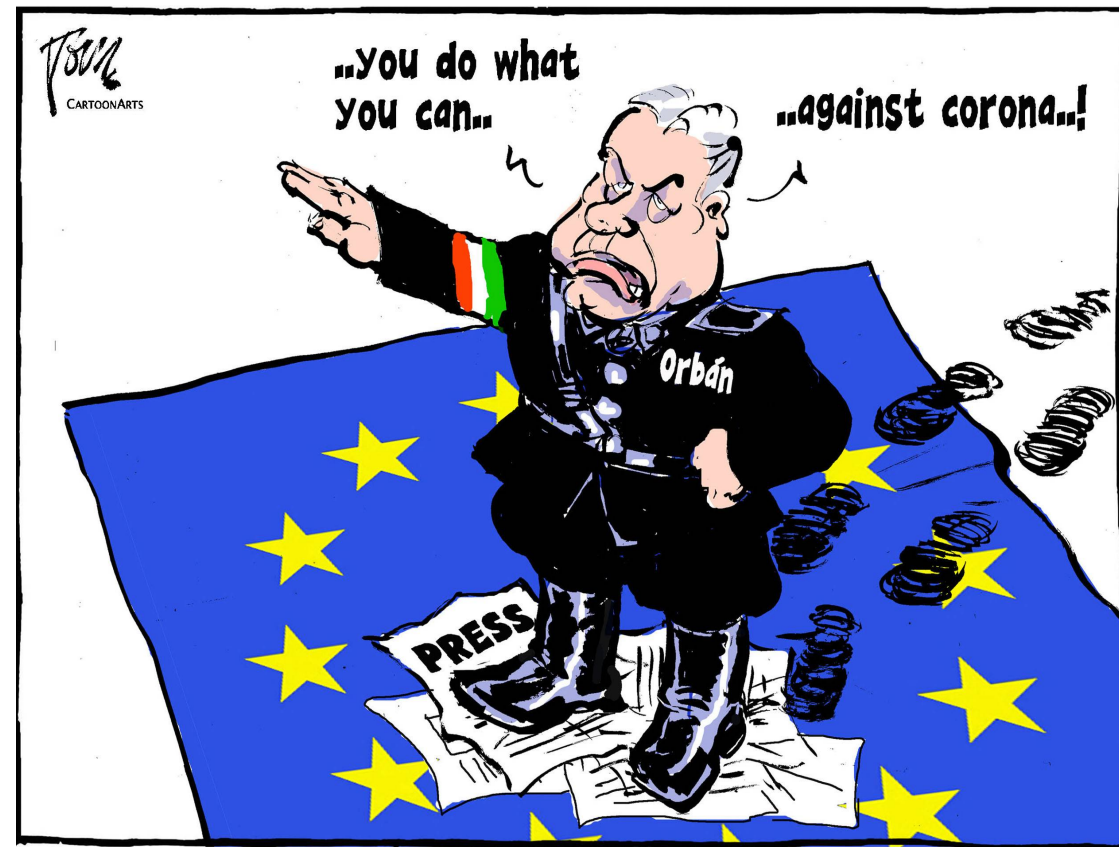
# What happened in Hungary?

- After his 2010 election, Orbán set out to centralize power.
  - [He took over the media](#) through a combination of [political and financial pressure](#), regulation, censorship and disinformation.
  - By 2017, [90 percent of all media](#) in Hungary was owned by either the state or a Fidesz ally, according to a count by Budapest-based scholar Marius Dragomir. This media empire includes every single regional newspaper in the country.
  - [Then he went after the judiciary](#). He weakened the rule of law by stacking Hungary's Constitutional Court with allies, limiting its jurisdiction and forcing the early retirement of judges.
  - Today, anti-migrant demagoguery has become the very core of Fidesz's political ideology. This is a key reason the party remains popular with so many ordinary Hungarians: It has created a sense of perpetual crisis, warning Hungarians that Viktor Orbán is the only person standing between them and a hostile Muslim invasion.
  - In 2015, Orbán built a fence to keep out migrants

# What happened in Hungary?

- Nobody, from ordinary business people all the way up to the top oligarchs like Simicska, can survive without Orbán's favor.
- This is done by several tactics. For example,
  - The Orbán regime had just shaken business owners, using mafia-like tactics to seize control of the corporation.
  - "Anybody who has a conflict with any of [Orbán's] boys, they will get the tax agency within weeks — for many weeks," he says. "We weren't *forced* to sell; we just weren't allowed to win."
  - The state's economic policies are cleverly designed both to enrich Orbán's allies and to neutralize potential threats to their hold on power.
- <https://www.vox.com/policy-and-politics/2018/9/13/17823488/hungary-democracy-authoritarianism-trump>

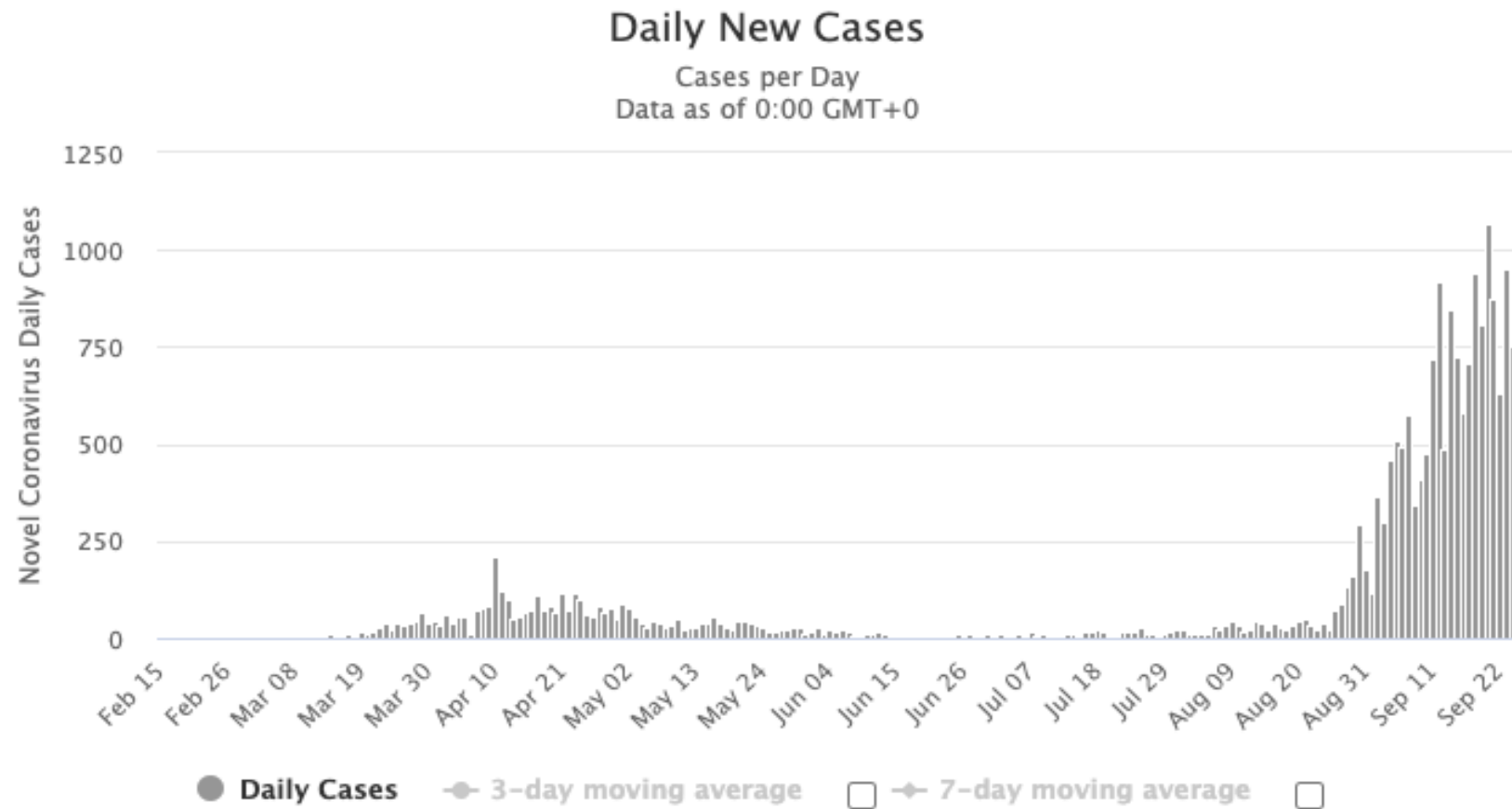
- He was granted to rule by decree and emergency powers to fight Covid-19
- Under the emergency measures,
  - municipalities have been stripped of valuable tax receipts
  - some critics of the government have been detained and then released for Facebook posts critical of the government, while others have been issued large fines for protesting
  - parliamentary parties have seen their state subsidies cut in half
  - the military has been dispatched to shore up businesses deemed to be of strategic importance



<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2020/06/23/commentary/world-commentary/hungarys-orban-uses-covid-19-crisis-another-power-grab/>

# What happened in Hungary?

## Daily New Cases in Hungary



- And it worked!!
- The Rule by Decree was ended in June 2020.

Does this sound familiar?



# What happened in Thailand?

## Deputy Agriculture Minister Thammanat in trouble over face mask controversy

March 9, 2020 views 1,457

Share Post



Corruption Scandal

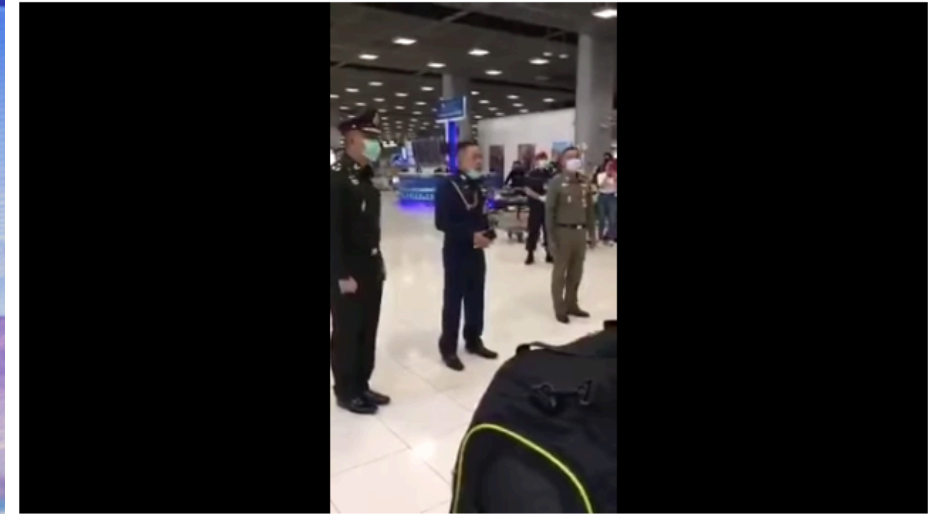


ภาพจาก รัฐบาลไทย

วันที่ 3 เมษายน 2563 นายวิษณุ เครืองาม รองนายกรัฐมนตรี ร่วมแถลงข่าวศูนย์บริหารสถานการณ์โควิด-19 (ศบค.) ระบุว่า ขณะนี้ "ประเทศไทยยังไม่ได้ปิดประเทศ" ฉะนั้น สายการบินสามารถบินเข้า-ออก ประเทศไทยได้

Slow Actions

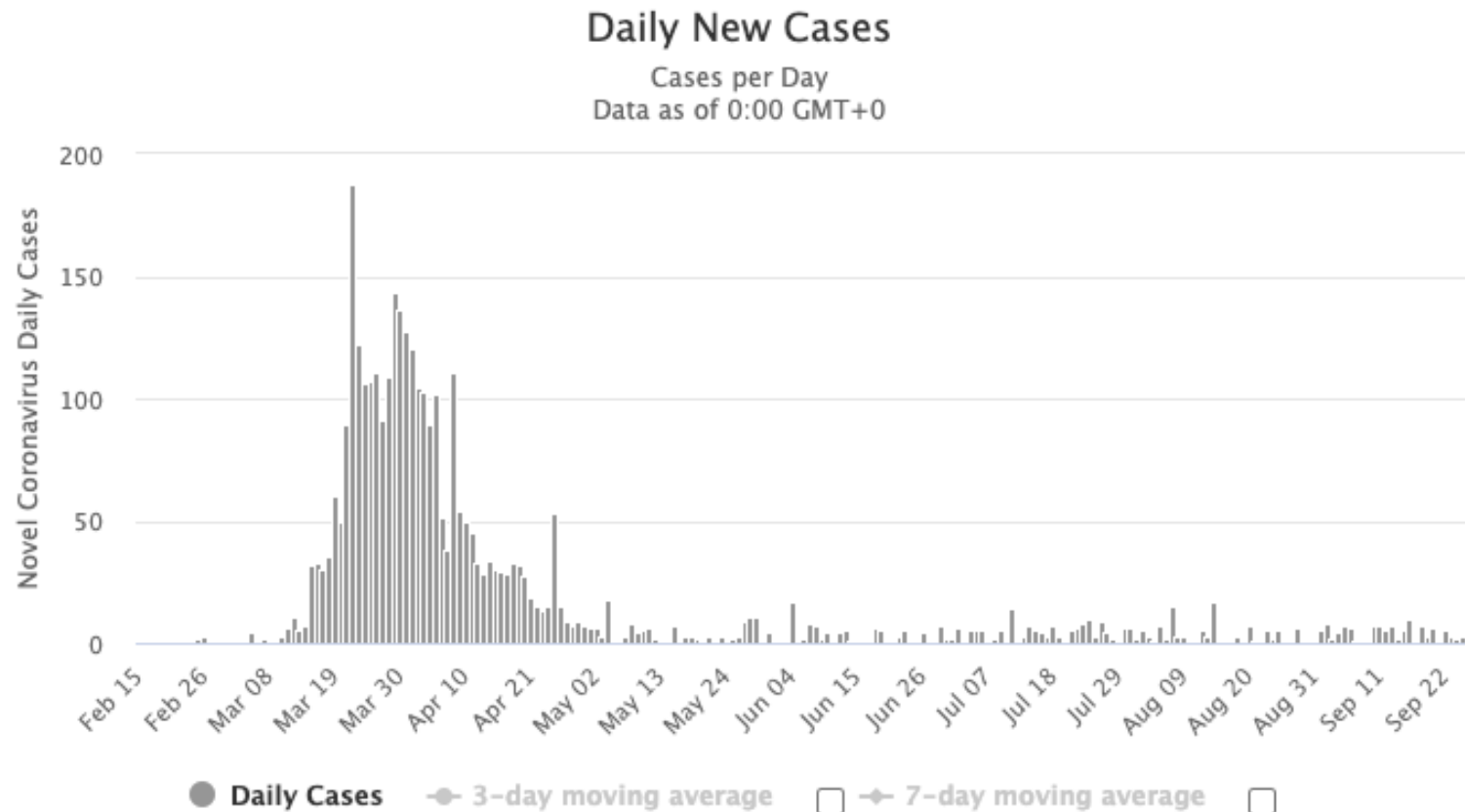
วันนี้ (4 เม.ย.) ในโลกออนไลน์ ได้มีการเผยแพร่คลิปวิดีโอ ความยาวประมาณ 2 นาที เป็นเหตุการณ์ที่ นายทหารรายหนึ่ง ที่ปฏิบัติหน้าที่สนับสนุนเจ้าหน้าที่กระทรวงสาธารณสุขร่วมกันคัดกรองผู้โดยสาร กลับมาจากต่างประเทศ ที่สนามบินสุวรรณภูมิ แจ้งต่อกลุ่มผู้โดยสารอนุญาตให้ 152 คนไทย เดินทางออกจากสนามบินได้ โดยไม่ถูกกักตัวเมื่อวันที่ 3 เมษายนที่ผ่านมา



Confusing policy implementation

# What happened in Thailand?

## Daily New Cases in Thailand



- Despite these mistakes
- The authoritarian method arguably worked in Thailand!!
- But, as of today, Thailand's emergency decree is still in use.

# Is Covid-19 bringing us towards authoritarianism?

- So Snowden further answers
- “So I do believe that it is possible for authoritarians to exploit these possibilities created by pandemic diseases. But it is worth always remembering that this is not a law of the history of pandemics. The effect can also be the opposite. We can remember that the end of plantation slavery in a modern Haiti, for example, was promoted by the destruction of Napoleon’s Armada through yellow fever. And that was a major impact that was a liberating one: the first black Republic free, the first major slave rebellion in history, in part rooted in differential mortality and immunity between Europeans and African descendants: Napoleon’s troops and Europeans had no herd immunity to yellow fever, whereas the African slaves did.”
- Okay! Let’s look further at the history