

# COVID-19 Lockdown Exit Analysis

## 12th Mar 2021

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### Overnight News Roundup

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#### **Nobel Prize economists call for vaccine equity and debt relief**

[Proposals in a new interim report from the Institute for New Economic Thinking's Commission on Global Economic Transformation, co-chaired by Joseph Stiglitz and Michael Spence call for](#)

- Urgent help for poorer countries to recover from the economic ravages of the pandemic
- Vaccine equity and measures to promote vaccine equity
- Debt relief
- Bolstering fiscal resources for cash-strapped nations

The report urges nations to suspend or modify intellectual property protections for COVID-19 jabs, treatments, tests and products to accelerate vaccine production, get more people inoculated sooner and stay ahead of COVID-19 mutations.

'The world is not going to be safe from the pandemic itself until the pandemic is controlled everywhere in the world, so in that sense, it's even in our own self-interest that there be a rapid dissemination of the vaccines and other medications, the mass tests that help control the pandemic,' Joseph Stiglitz added.

To help give poorer countries more 'fiscal space' to combat COVID19 and its fallout, the report advocates a large issuance of Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) as a low-cost way of bolstering the international reserves of states during a time of extreme fiscal stress. This will enable developing countries to engage in much-needed public expenditure with less concern for the effects on the external balance. It would be a deep and timely debt restructuring

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Nobel Prize-winning economists Joseph Stiglitz and Michael Spence are spearheading calls for urgent action to help poorer countries recover from the economic ravages of the coronavirus pandemic, including measures to advance vaccine equity, debt relief, and bolstering fiscal resources for cash-strapped nations. The proposals were outlined in a new interim report released on Thursday - the one-year anniversary of the global pandemic - by the Institute for New Economic Thinking's Commission on Global Economic Transformation, co-chaired by Stiglitz and Spence.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/economy/2021/3/11/nobel-prize-economists-call-for-vaccine-equity-and-debt-relief>

#### **Hospital beds running out in Papua New Guinea as COVID-19 surges**

Experts fear minimal testing is disguising true scale of the outbreak and worry this weekend's funeral for former Prime Minister Michael Somare could be a super-spreader event. Papua New Guinea (PNG) is facing an exponential increase in the spread of COVID-19, with country-wide reports of community transmission and large numbers of hospital workers and patients being diagnosed with the virus. PNG's Joint Agency Task Force reported 1,741 cases and 21 deaths as of March 9 - nearly double the number of cases reported one month earlier and more than double the deaths reported two weeks earlier.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/12/papua-new-guinea-facing-covid-19-surge>

## **World marks 1 year since pandemic declared**

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### **World marks 1 year since pandemic declared**

A year ago today when the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 spread a pandemic, there were more than 118,000 cases. Today, the global total topped 118 million, with levels rising again in some countries, but retreating in others. And across the globe, countries are rushing to vaccinate their people in attempts to get ahead of the spread of new more transmissible SARS-CoV-2 variants and others that could evade immunity from natural infection or the vaccine.

<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2021/03/world-marks-1-year-pandemic-declared>

### **As pandemic enters 2nd year, voices of resilience emerge**

One year into the COVID-19 pandemic, the world has seen death, economic hardship and anxiety on an unprecedented scale. But it has also witnessed self-sacrifice, courage and perseverance. In India, Brazil, South Africa and other places around the globe, people are helping others and reinventing themselves. "I've been adaptable, like water," said a woman whose dream of becoming a U.S. boxing champion was dealt a blow by the crisis, though not necessarily a knockout punch. Their voices and images can inspire, even though the future is as uncertain for them as it is for everyone else.

<https://apnews.com/article/pandemics-india-coronavirus-pandemic-africa-south-africa-4be7213a9354675df6c88235a59bb989>

### **A year on, WHO still struggling to manage pandemic response**

When the World Health Organization declared the coronavirus a pandemic one year ago Thursday, it did so only after weeks of resisting the term and maintaining that the highly infectious virus could still be stopped. A year later, the U.N. agency is still struggling to keep on top of the evolving science of COVID-19, to persuade countries to abandon their nationalistic tendencies and help get vaccines where they're needed most. The agency made some costly missteps along the way: It advised people against wearing masks for months and asserted that COVID-19 wasn't widely spread in the air. It also declined to publicly call out countries — particularly China — for mistakes that senior WHO officials grumbled about privately.

<https://apnews.com/article/1-year-who-struggling-coronavirus-pandemic-response-2c173926c95ed3769107c7eaa043fa86>

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<https://apnews.com/article/pandemics-india-coronavirus-pandemic-africa-south-africa-4be7213a9354675df6c88235a59bb989>

## **Biden says well ahead of goal of delivering 100 million vaccine shots in 100 days**

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### **Biden to urge vigilance and offer hope on anniversary of lockdown**

President Joe Biden will mark the one-year anniversary of the U.S. coronavirus lockdown on Thursday with a prime-time speech commemorating losses from the pandemic while expressing hope for the future as vaccinations increase. The Democratic president, who campaigned on a promise to curb the coronavirus more effectively than his Republican predecessor, Donald Trump,

has warned Americans since his January inauguration that more deaths and pain were coming from the deadly virus. But with the vaccinated population slowly increasing, Biden is conveying fresh hope even as he urges people to continue to be cautious against further flare-ups.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-biden/biden-to-urge-vigilance-and-offer-hope-on-anniversary-of-lockdown-idUSL1N2L83C5>

### **Biden says well ahead of goal of delivering 100 million vaccine shots in 100 days**

U.S. President Joe Biden said on Thursday that his administration is on track to reach his goal of delivering 100 million COVID-19 vaccination shots well ahead of schedule. Biden had promised to deliver 100 million shots in his first 100 days in office, but said he now thinks the U.S. will hit that mark on his 60th day in office. Biden made the remarks in a national address on Thursday.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-biden-coronavirus/biden-says-well-ahead-of-goal-of-delivering-100-million-vaccine-shots-in-100-days-idUSKBN2B4057>

### **Biden aims for quicker shots, 'independence from this virus'**

One year after the nation was brought to a near-standstill by the coronavirus, President Joe Biden pledged in his first prime-time address Thursday night to make all adults eligible for vaccines by May 1 and raised the possibility of beginning to “mark our independence from this virus” by the Fourth of July. He offered Americans fresh hope and appealed anew for their help. Speaking in the White House East Room, Biden honored the “collective suffering” of Americans over the past year in his 24-minute address and then offered them a vision for a return to a modicum of normalcy this summer. “We are bound together by the loss and the pain of the days that have gone by,” he said. “We are also bound together by the hope and the possibilities in the days in front of us.”

<https://apnews.com/85d1ae52bc61abffd3ae91c324e58308>

### **Former U.S. presidents to urge Americans to get coronavirus vaccine in new ads**

Former U.S. Presidents Barack Obama, George W. Bush, Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter will star in two new public service announcements (PSA) for the coronavirus vaccine alongside former First Ladies Michelle Obama, Laura Bush, Hillary Clinton and Rosalynn Carter, the Ad Council announced on Thursday. “The science is clear. These vaccines will protect you and those you love from this dangerous and deadly disease,” said President Bush in one of the PSAs with Obama and Clinton, urging Americans to get vaccinated. “That’s the first step to ending the pandemic and moving our country forward,” said Obama.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/7689972/coronavirus-vaccine-presidents-ads/>

### **1 in 5 in US lost someone close in pandemic**

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#### **AP-NORC poll: 1 in 5 in US lost someone close in pandemic**

About 1 in 5 Americans say they lost a relative or close friend to the coronavirus, highlighting the division between heartache and hope as the country itches to get back to normal a year into the pandemic. A new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research illustrates how the stage is set for a two-tiered recovery. The public’s worry about the virus has dropped to its lowest point since the fall, before the holidays brought skyrocketing cases into the new year. But people still in mourning express frustration at the continued struggle to stay safe.

<https://apnews.com/article/ap-norc-poll-1-in-5-us-lost-someone-pandemic-211cc9f31d859fb3a7c7c4d487ba65a9>

### **Malta, Norway - Rates of COVID-19 cases among children rising**

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#### **12 per cent of active COVID-19 cases are children**

Over one in 10 current COVID-19 cases are children, with the highest number in the 11-17 age group, prompting Church and independent schools to hold out while monitoring the situation closely. Among the active cases, 83 children are aged up to five years, 85 are between six and 10 and 175 are in the 11-17 age group, adding up to around 12 per cent, according to the Superintendent of

Public Health, Charmaine Gauci, who was on Tuesday taking questions from Times of Malta readers.  
<https://timesofmalta.com/articles/view/12-per-cent-of-covid-19-cases-are-children.857032>

### **Norway - rates of infection in children and young people rising**

Infection has suddenly been spreading most among children and youth, especially those aged 10 to 19. With most elementary schools open, teachers have been exposed to the virus on a whole new scale. Even children under the age of six have been testing positive after new strains of the virus have spread at local day care centers. That also boosts the risk of infection spreading to their parents and grandparents. "The teachers and other school employees have been uneasy for a long time, and this is all very demanding," Andersen said. "They're at high risk (especially from the new virus mutations causing the most trouble at present) and they're also afraid they'll infect others."

<https://www.newsinenglish.no/2021/03/10/many-relieved-by-oslos-stricter-rules/>

### **COVID-19 Infection rates rising**

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#### **India sees worst COVID-19 increase since Christmas as western state battles surge**

India reported its worst single-day increase in COVID-19 cases since late December on Thursday, as the western state of Maharashtra battled a fresh wave of infections and imposed a lockdown in one of its most densely populated cities. A total of 22,854 new coronavirus cases were reported in the last 24 hours, the health ministry said. It was the highest daily rise since Dec. 25, according to a Reuters tally. Deaths rose by 126 to reach 158,129. Fatalities have been rising by a daily average of roughly 100 since early February.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-india/india-sees-worst-covid-19-increase-since-christmas-as-western-state-battles-surge-idUSKBN2B31MC?il=0>

#### **Hungary hails Sinopharm COVID-19 shot as new infections hit a record high**

Hungary said on Thursday it was paying the equivalent of about \$37.50 per dose for Chinese company Sinopharm's COVID-19 vaccine and \$9.95 per dose for the Russian Sputnik-V vaccine, adding it was publishing the purchase contracts to push for more transparency. "Hungary's government stands for making vaccine contracts public," Prime Minister Viktor Orban's chief of staff Gergely Gulyas wrote on Facebook, attaching 30 pages of documents that appeared to be the vaccine contracts. "We ask the European Commission that it also publish the contracts signed by Brussels," Gulyas added.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-hungary/hungary-hails-sinopharm-covid-19-shot-as-new-infections-hit-a-record-high-idUSKBN2B30YP>

#### **Covid-19: Brazil experts issue warning as hospitals 'close to collapse'**

Health systems in most of Brazil's largest cities are close to collapse because of Covid-19 cases, its leading health institute warns. More than 80% of intensive care unit beds are occupied in the capitals of 25 of Brazil's 27 states, Fiocruz said. Experts warn that the highly contagious variant in Brazil may have knock-on effects in the region and beyond. "Brazil is a threat to humanity," Fiocruz epidemiologist Jesem Orellana told the AFP news agency.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-latin-america-56342303?fbclid=IwAR23fFTzTomS9k-gLYK2c8QzOd7e7IgUthrFx-OA49NT8OgWIFvUW6ILIQ>

#### **Cambodia reports first COVID death amid new outbreak**

Cambodia has reported its first death from the coronavirus amid its biggest COVID-19 outbreak so far, after a 50-year-old man succumbed to the virus after testing positive less than two weeks ago. With just 1,124 coronavirus infections recorded in total, Cambodia has among the fewest cases in Asia - although a sharp rise in infections since February 20 has seen its overall tally more than double.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/11/cambodia-reports-first-covid-death-amid-new-outbreak>

## **Brazil's hospitals buckle in absence of national virus plan**

Brazil's hospitals are faltering as a highly contagious coronavirus variant tears through the country and the only attempt to create a national plan to contain COVID-19 has fallen short. For the last week, Brazilian governors sought to do something President Jair Bolsonaro obstinately rejects: cobble together a proposal for states to help curb the nation's deadliest COVID-19 outbreak yet. The effort was expected to include a curfew, prohibition of crowded events and limits on the hours non-essential services can operate. The final product, presented on Wednesday, was a one-page document that included general support for restricting activity but without any specific measures. Six governors, evidently still wary of antagonising Bolsonaro, declined to sign on. Piaui state's Governor Wellington Dias told The Associated Press news agency that, unless pressure on hospitals is eased, growing numbers of patients will have to endure the disease without a hospital bed or any hope of treatment in an intensive care unit. "We have reached the limit across Brazil; rare are the exceptions," Dias, who leads the governors' forum, said. "The chance of dying without assistance is real."

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/11/brazils-hospitals-buckle-in-absence-of-national-virus-plan>

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## **Latest vaccine news**

### **AstraZeneca further cuts target for supply to EU in first quarter to 30 million vaccines: document**

AstraZeneca cut its supply forecast of COVID-19 vaccines to the European Union in the first quarter to about 30 million doses, a third of its contractual obligations and a 25% drop from pledges made last month, a document seen by Reuters shows.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-eu-astrazeneca/astrazeneca-further-cuts-target-for-supply-to-eu-in-first-quarter-to-30-million-vaccines-document-idUSKBN2B402Y?il=0>

### **Denmark, Norway suspend AstraZeneca vaccine over blood clot fears**

Denmark will not use AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine for two weeks after reports that some recipients had developed serious blood clots, and in one case may have died as a result, the country's authorities said on Thursday. They did not say how many reports of blood clots there had been, but Austria has stopped using a batch of AstraZeneca shots while investigating a death from coagulation disorders and an illness from a pulmonary embolism.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/11/denmark-suspends-use-ofastrazeneca-vaccine-after-blood-clot-repor>

### **Oxford-AstraZeneca: EU regulator says 'no indication' vaccine linked to blood clots**

There is no indication that the Oxford-AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine is linked to an increased risk of blood clots, the EU's medicines regulator says. It said the number of cases in vaccinated people was no higher than in the general population. The statement came after a number of countries, including Denmark and Norway, suspended the use of the jab. The suspension followed reports that a small number of people had developed clots after receiving the vaccine. There were also reports that a 50-year-old man had died in Italy after developing deep vein thrombosis (DVT) following a dose of the jab. "There is currently no indication that vaccination has caused these conditions, which are not listed as side effects with this vaccine," the European Medicines Agency (EMA) said on Thursday.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-56357760>

### **Seven European countries clamp down on AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine as safety worries threaten rollout**

AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine rollout has gotten off to a rocky start in Europe—to put it mildly. First, a supply shortfall triggered a public back-and-forth between executives and government officials. Then several countries expressed doubts about how well the vaccine works in people over 65. Now seven countries are raising safety concerns. Denmark, Norway, Austria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Luxembourg have halted some or all of their AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccinations over

fears of blood clots, France24 reports. Previously, Austria had stopped using a single batch of the vaccine after a clotting issue turned up in one recipient. In the wake of the news, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Luxembourg stopped using vaccines from the same batch, France24 reports. Denmark and Norway temporarily stopped all vaccinations with AZ shots, according to the report.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/another-european-country-has-halted-its-astrazeneca-covid-19-vaccine-usage-what-s-going>

### **AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine faces distrust in Europe, even as it gets rave reviews in neighboring UK, survey finds**

AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine is facing a wave of mistrust in Europe—but that's a striking difference from its stellar reputation in the U.K. A recent survey from YouGov found that 81% of Britons believe the AZ vaccine is safe, on par with a similar 79% of U.K. citizens who trust the Pfizer vaccine. However, in Germany only 43% think the AZ vaccine is safe, and in France, just 33% consider it safe. The YouGov study pointed to an initial problematic German media report that pegged the AZ vaccine at only 8% effective among people aged 65 and older. The claim was later disproved, but the public relations crisis had already begun. It was further exacerbated by supply issues.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/marketing/yougov-poll-finds-distrust-astrazeneca-vaccine-europe>

### **Europe OKs Johnson & Johnson's COVID-19 vaccine, but deliveries won't start till April**

Europe's COVID-19 immunization campaign has been challenged by early supply problems and now safety concerns for AstraZeneca's shot. A fourth vaccine is now on its way—though it's not going to fix the supply shortfall immediately. European Commission officials on Thursday endorsed J&J's coronavirus shot for use in member countries, making the vaccine the first one-dose option to score an approval there. The vaccine won't be available now, though; J&J said it expects to begin European deliveries in the second half of April. Meanwhile, J&J is scaling up its EU supply chain with aims to deliver 200 million doses to the continent this year. Worldwide, the company is pushing to produce 1 billion doses in 2021.

<https://www.fiercepharma.com/pharma/europe-approves-johnson-johnson-s-covid-19-vaccine-first-one-dose-option>

### **AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine doses have better efficacy when given 12 weeks apart, study finds**

Waiting three months between the first and second dose of the AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine results in high efficacy, backing current recommendations from Australian authorities, new research shows. The study, which involved more than 17,000 participants and was published recently in *The Lancet*, found the vaccine — which most people in Australia will receive — had an 81 per cent efficacy rate when a second dose was given three months after the first.

<https://www.abc.net.au/news/health/2021-03-11/covid-19-vaccines-astrazeneca-doses-efficacy-rate/13202050>

### **EU drugs regulator clears J&J's single-shot COVID-19 vaccine**

Europe approved Johnson & Johnson's single dose COVID-19 vaccine on Thursday, paving the way for the first shots to be delivered in a month as the bloc seeks to speed up a stuttering inoculation campaign and boost its supplies. The COVID-19 shot is the fourth to be endorsed for use in the European Union after vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech, AstraZeneca-Oxford University and Moderna, and is recommended for those over 18 years of age, the European Medicines agency (EMA) said. It's the first single-dose COVID-19 vaccine.

[https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-eu-johnson-johnson-idUSKBN2B31SW?taid=604a2396b7d77200018e38c2&utm\\_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm\\_medium=trueAnthem&utm\\_source=twitter](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-eu-johnson-johnson-idUSKBN2B31SW?taid=604a2396b7d77200018e38c2&utm_campaign=trueAnthem:+Trending+Content&utm_medium=trueAnthem&utm_source=twitter)

### **Novavax vaccine 96% effective against original coronavirus, 86% vs British variant in UK trial**

Novavax Inc's COVID-19 vaccine was 96% effective in preventing cases caused by the original

version of the coronavirus in a late-stage trial conducted in the United Kingdom, the company said on Thursday, moving it a step closer to regulatory approval. There were no cases of severe illness or deaths among those who got the vaccine, the company said, in a sign that it could stop the worse effects of new variants that have cropped up. The vaccine was 86% effective in protecting against the more contagious virus variant first discovered and now prevalent in the United Kingdom, for a combined 90% effectiveness rate overall based on data from infections of both versions of the coronavirus.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-vaccines-novavax/novavax-vaccine-96-effective-against-original-coronavirus-86-vs-british-variant-in-uk-trial-idUSKBN2B32ZO>

### **Pfizer says COVID-19 vaccine 97% effective against asymptomatic infection**

Data suggest Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine prevents asymptomatic Covid-19 infection. Lower COVID-19 disease incidence rates observed in individuals fully vaccinated with the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine. Pfizer Inc and BioNTech SE said on Wednesday that real-world data from Israel suggests that their COVID-19 vaccine is 94% effective in preventing asymptomatic infections, meaning the vaccine could significantly reduce transmission. According to the analysis, unvaccinated individuals were 44 times more likely to develop symptomatic COVID-19 and 29 times more likely to die from COVID-19 than those who had received the vaccine.

<https://www.livemint.com/science/health/pfizer-jab-97-effective-against-symptomatic-covid-study-11615464854591.html>

### **EU Drug Regulator Approves J&J Single-Dose Covid-19 Vaccine**

The European Union expanded its list of approved Covid-19 vaccines to four options, but the addition of Johnson & Johnson 's single-shot vaccine Thursday appears unlikely soon to accelerate Europe's lagging rollout. The European Medicines Agency said that the J&J vaccine is safe and effective against Covid-19, and hours later EU authorities formally authorized its use. Distribution is set to begin in the second quarter. The EMA's decision to recommend authorization of the J&J vaccine follows U.S. approval late last month. The J&J vaccine has the potential to significantly bolster vaccination drives over time. It can be kept in refrigerators instead of freezers, making it easier to store and distribute than some vaccines already approved, and recipients need only one dose rather than the two administered for other vaccines, often many weeks apart. Trials found J&J's vaccine had a high impact in preventing serious illness but was 67% effective overall when moderate cases were included. Side effects were usually mild or moderate, the EMA said.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/eu-drug-regulator-approves-j-j-single-dose-covid-19-vaccine-11615470095>

### **German coronavirus vaccine inventor being investigated**

The German magazine Der Spiegel gave Winfried Stöcker, a physician and entrepreneur from the northern city of Lübeck, quite a lot of publicity in early April 2020. The report tells the story of an ingenious inventor who developed an effective vaccine against the coronavirus in his private laboratory. He had already vaccinated about 100 volunteers with it, he told the magazine. The vaccine showed no side effects, the report claimed. It was also apparently 97% effective in those vaccinated. This, the report stated, had been proven in serological tests. The vaccine could, reportedly, easily be produced in large quantities and it would soon be possible to vaccinate everyone in Germany. But instead of receiving the necessary support from German regulatory authorities, they filed formal criminal charges against him. And that's how they "thwarted him," according to the Spiegel report.

<https://www.dw.com/en/german-coronavirus-vaccine-inventor-being-investigated/a-56828943>

### **Single Covid vaccine dose less effective for cancer patients, study finds**

Cancer patients given a single coronavirus vaccine develop significantly inferior protection against the illness than those who receive a booster shot, according to a UK study that called for a

reassessment of the gap between jabs for vulnerable individuals. Three weeks after receiving a first dose of the BioNTech/Pfizer vaccine, sufficient antibody levels to combat the virus were detected in 39 per cent of patients with organ cancer and 13 per cent of those with blood cancer, found researchers at King's College London and the Francis Crick Institute. This compared with 97 per cent of those who were cancer free. When a second shot was given, however, the effectiveness of the vaccine jumped to about 95 per cent after two weeks in organ cancers patients, the study found. There was insufficient data to reach a conclusion on blood cancer patients. The researchers did not test the effectiveness of any other coronavirus vaccine.

<https://www.ft.com/content/6db6daa5-650a-411d-a8e4-5b7967a54a4b>

### **Investigation: Drugmaker 'bullied' Latin American nations**

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Drugmaker Pfizer employed "high-level bullying" against at least two Latin American countries during negotiations to acquire vaccines according to a recent investigation, including requesting the nations put sovereign assets as collateral for payments. The Bureau of Investigative Journalism (TBIJ), a UK-based nonprofit media organisation in an investigation unveiled in February said the pharmaceutical company's negotiation technique led to a months-long delay in reaching a deal in one country, and the total failure to reach an agreement with two others, Argentina and Brazil. According to the yearlong investigation, which relied on unnamed officials, Pfizer "bullied" nations during talks.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/3/11/investigation-pfizer-bullied-latin-american-nations>