

Norway suspends virus-tracing app after privacy concerns

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New infections in Norway are down to a trickle

Norway's health authorities said on Monday they had suspended an app designed to help trace the spread of the new coronavirus after the national data protection agency said it was too invasive of privacy.

Launched in April, the smartphone app Smittestopp ("Infection stop") was set up to collect movement data to help authorities trace the spread of COVID-19, and inform users if they had been exposed to someone carrying the novel coronavirus.

On Friday, the data agency, Datatilsynet, issued a warning that it would stop the Norwegian Institute of Public Health from handling data collected via Smittestopp.

Datatilsynet said the limited spread of coronavirus in Norway, as well the app's limited effectiveness due to the small number of people actually using it, meant the invasion of privacy resulting from its use was disproportionate.

Camilla Stoltenberg, the public health institute's director, said she did not agree with that assessment, but the institute would now delete all the app's data and suspend its work.

Stoltenberg said this weakened Norway's response to the spread of coronavirus. "The pandemic is not over," she said.

Some 600,000 of Norway's 5.4 million inhabitants had been using the app.

Developed in Norway and downloadable on a voluntary basis, the application used centralised [data storage](#), as is planned in France and the UK.

Norway, where the coronavirus deaths totalled 242 as of last week, is now seeing only a handful of new infection cases a day.

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