

# *U.S. factories in Mexico remain open despite surge in COVID-19 cases*

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Mexico City, April 23 (RHC)-- Mexican officials say the country has entered its most severe stage in the spread of the coronavirus — what they refer to as Phase 3 — as cases surge, with the death toll topping 2,600.

Meanwhile, hundreds of factory workers in Ciudad Juárez protested earlier this week, demanding a closure of maquiladora assembly plants along the U.S.-Mexico border.

One organizer of the protest said: “They say we are under quarantine and we should be in our homes, but the company has not closed because this company is essential — as if people are desperate to buy refrigerators, stoves or washing machines, as if they’re very important. Of course they aren’t. Now the most important thing is to be safe at home. We have children and we are risking our children’s health by coming to work.”

Chihuahua state officials say COVID-19 deaths have increased nearly sixfold within 10 days in Ciudad Juárez. At least 13 of those deaths were of employees working at U.S.-run maquiladoras.

Meanwhile, the Pentagon is urging Mexico to reopen factories that were shuttered amid the pandemic, as many U.S. weapons manufacturers rely on Mexican labor.

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