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# Coronavirus: Italy's COVID-19 situation is dire but a photo of coffins is not from the coronavirus pandemic

It's an arresting image, shared tens of thousands of times on Facebook, showing coffins of virus victims in Italy - there's just one problem.

AAP FactCheck

AAP 🕒 APRIL 1, 2020 5:56AM

[Video](#) [Image](#)

Mayors across Italy on Tuesday drew their flags to half mast and stood in silence to honour those who have died due to coronavirus. Emer McCarthy reports.

While cases of COVID-19 continue to spread worldwide, Italy remains among the countries recording the most new cases per day, with the death toll in excess of 6000.

As countries go into lockdown to [stem infection](#) rates, a [Facebook post](#) has highlighted Italy to emphasise the importance of staying home, using a photo of multiple coffins to reinforce the message.

The March 22 post from a Queensland-based Facebook user reads: "In case you're still not convinced to stay home for you & ur beloved ones ... Here's a picture from Italy!"

The post has been viewed more than 21,000 times and shared at least 200 times.

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A post has pointed to the COVID-19 crisis in Italy to emphasise the importance of staying home. *Source: Facebook*

## THE ANALYSIS

The first cases of COVID-19 emerged in December 2019, when a [mysterious illness](#)

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The post urges people to stay home, which is in line with official advice in [Australia](#) and [New Zealand](#) on minimising social interactions to limit the spread of the coronavirus.

However, the problem is the photograph of an aircraft hangar filled with coffins is unrelated to COVID-19. The picture by news agency AFP was first published on [October 5, 2013](#), following the sinking [two days earlier](#) of a boat carrying hundreds of African asylum-seekers off the Italian island of Lampedusa. The boat had left [Libya](#) 13 days before, carrying up to 500 people, according to survivors.

A [UNHCR report](#) on the tragedy says that when the boat's engine stopped off the Italian coast, asylum seekers set fire to clothing in their attempts to be seen, but "fishing boats passed without helping". Only [155 people survived and 366 were killed](#). The AFP photo shows the coffins of some of the victims in a hangar of Lampedusa airport.

Coffins of children are pictured among Coffins of victims in an hangar of Lampedusa airport on October 5, 2013 after a boat with migrants sank killing more than 300 people. Picture: Alberto Pizzoli/AFP Source:AFP

### THE VERDICT

Based on the evidence, AAP FactCheck found the post to be partly false. Italy continues to record one of the highest rates of new COVID-19 cases per day and many countries are in lockdown in an attempt to make people stay at home to stem infection rates.

However, the photo is unrelated to COVID-19. It shows some of the coffins of migrants who died after a boat sank off the southern Italian island of Lampedusa in 2013.

**Partly False** – The claims of the content are a mixture of accurate and inaccurate or the primary claim is misleading or incomplete.



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