

# *Trump could have prevented 40% of deaths from COVID-19*

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**Vaccinated seniors are seated in a waiting area before departure during a distribution of COVID-19 vaccines at the Los Angeles Mission, California. (Photo: AFP)**

Washington, February 12 (RHC)-- The United States could have prevented almost half of the total number of the coronavirus deaths in the country, if mortality rates matched other high-income nations, said a commission assessing the Donald Trump era.

The commission of health experts, The Lancet, released a report on Thursday, saying that 40% of the victims of COVID-19 pandemic could have still been alive, had the U.S. death rates corresponded with the rates in Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United Kingdom. The panel denounced Trump's "inept and insufficient" response to the health crisis, saying that he "brought misfortune to the USA and the planet during his four years in office."

The US has confirmed 471,000 deaths from the pandemic, according to Johns Hopkins University that keeps data on COVID-19. The number is widely expected to go above half a million in the next few weeks. More than 27,287,173 Americans have been infected with the virus, so far.

The Lancet report confirmed that the pandemic has disproportionately affected people of color with the death rates among African-Americans – increasing 50% compared to whites. Coronavirus deaths for people of color are 1.2 to 3.6 times higher than for whites, it said.

Trump has been widely condemned for not taking the COVID-19 pandemic seriously soon enough, spreading conspiracy theories, not encouraging mask wearing and undermining scientists and others seeking to combat the virus' spread.

The commission underscores decades of U.S. health, economic and social policies that have accelerated the nation's disparities, saying that Americans' life expectancy began trailing other industrialized nations four decades ago. The panel said that the United States entered the pandemic with a degraded public health infrastructure.

Between 2002 and 2019, U.S. public health spending fell from 3.21% to 2.45% – approximately half the share of spending in Canada and the UK. A commission member, Mary Bassett, not only blamed Trump, but also tied his actions to the historical conditions which made his presidency possible. "The disturbing truth," the report said, is that many of Trump's policies "do not represent a radical break with the past but have merely accelerated the decades-long trend."

Trump "was sort of a crowning achievement of a certain period but he's not the only architect," she said. "And so, we decided it's important to put him in context, not to minimize how destructive his policy agenda has been and his personal fanning the flames of white supremacy, but to put it in context," Bassett added.

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