

COVID-19 Delta variant detected in 98 countries

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UNICEF is distributing critical supplies to families in Côte d'Ivoire during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Photo: © UNICEF/Frank Dejongh)

Geneva, July 3 (RHC)--The head of the World Health Organization (WHO) has urged world leaders to push back against daunting new COVID surges through increased vaccination efforts and public health measures, warning that with Delta quickly becoming the dominant strain in many countries "we are in a very dangerous period of the pandemic."

"In those countries with low COVID-19 vaccination coverage, terrible scenes of hospitals overflowing are again becoming the norm. But no country is out of the woods yet," said Dr. Tedros Adhanom Gebreyesus, during his biweekly press conference.

Dr. Tedros explained that the Delta variant is "dangerous" and continues to evolve and mutate, and this requires constant evaluation and "careful adjustment of the public health response."

“Delta has been detected in at least 98 countries and is spreading quickly in countries with low and high vaccination coverage”, he warned. During journalists’ questions, WHO’s technical leader for COVID-19 response, Dr. Maria Van Kerkhove, reminded that the virus has been evolving since it first emerged.

“It is what viruses do. The variants of concern that we are tracking are currently four: Alpha, Beta, Gama and Delta. They will continue to evolve: there will be more mutations, there will be more variants detected, and some of those will be variants of concern,” she predicted.

Dr. Van Kerkhove said there were ‘sub lineages’ of the Delta variant that experts are currently tracking and urged countries to expand their genomic sequencing efforts.

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