

# *WHO warns COVID-19 spread speeds up in Africa*

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Geneva, July 21 (RHC)-- African countries need urgent help to build up their health systems as coronavirus continues to spread rapidly, a senior World Health Organization (WHO) official warned.

Although the number of cases in several countries is still low, the rate of increase has been very high last week, WHO emergency operations chief Mike Ryan said.

"I am very concerned right now that we are beginning to see an acceleration of disease in Africa, and we need to take that very seriously," Ryan told a press briefing from Geneva. "Many of those countries exist in the midst of fragility and conflict."

With more than 360,000 COVID-19 cases and more than 5,000 related deaths, South Africa has been hit the hardest and accounts for 61 per cent of Africa's pandemic burden. "South Africa may unfortunately be a precursor," he said. "It may be a warning for what will happen in the rest of Africa."

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