

PAHO warns of pandemic situation in countries of the region

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?PAHO has urged countries with surplus Covid-19 vaccines to donate immunizations to nations in the Americas. | Photo: Prensa Latina?

Washington, May 6 (RHC)-- The director of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), Carissa Etienne, warned at a press conference that the region is going through a health crisis due to COVID-19 and that hospitals are "dangerously full."

Etienne indicated that 40 percent of COVID-19 deaths in the world occurred in the region of the Americas and that more and more countries are reporting more than 1,000 cases per day, making the region the pandemic epicenter, despite great progress in the last year in the fight against the new coronavirus.

According to data from that organization, 84,237 cases and 2,844 deaths have been reported in the last 24 hours, representing a relative increase of 0.13 percent in infections and a relative increase of 0.19 percent in deaths, compared to last Tuesday in the Americas.

Specifically, Latin America and the Caribbean account for more than 934,000 deaths and almost 30 million infections since the beginning of the pandemic. Brazil, for its part, remains the center of the cases in the region and was, until Tuesday, the country with the second highest number of deaths in the world.

The PAHO director pointed out that the region did a remarkable job in expanding hospital capacity by 2020 and that some countries doubled the capacity of intensive care unit (ICU) beds, while others tripled their capacity.

However, Etienne regretted that despite what was learned about the virus in 2020, "control efforts are not as strict and prevention is not as efficient."

PAHO-WHO issued a similar warning in recent days about the state of the disease in the region. The organization's Director of Health Emergencies, Ciro Ugarte, stated at the time that "Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia, Argentina, Uruguay and Guyana are experiencing new peaks of transmission, with a dramatic increase in infections, and their health services are saturated."

Etienne urged countries with surplus vaccination doses "to consider donating a significant portion to the Americas, where these life-saving vaccines are desperately needed and will be used promptly".

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