

PAHO says Latin America's COVID-19 cases and deaths plateauing at alarmingly high level

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United Nations, May 27 (RHC)-- The COVID-19 situation in several Latin American countries is "alarming," the head of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) has said, after the region reported more than 1.2 million new cases and 31,000 deaths last week.

"These figures have remained unchanged over the last weeks, underscoring a worrying trend: cases and deaths are plateauing at an alarmingly high level," Carissa Etienne told a recent news briefing.

Last week, she said, four out of five of the countries reporting the highest number of new infections globally were in Latin America – and the region’s countries represented the top-five highest mortality rates worldwide.

While Chile, Peru, and Paraguay have registered declines in new infections, Uruguay, Argentina, and Brazil are witnessing rising case rates. “Bolivia is reporting a drastic increase in cases and deaths, and Guyana is experiencing its highest number of cases and deaths since the beginning of the pandemic,” Etienne added.

Global COVID-19 death toll a ‘significant undercount’, WHO says, with 6-to-8 million people likely dead from virus. She warned that, in areas with high infection rates, many people have stopped adhering to health measures designed to limit the spread of the virus.

The PAHO chief also referred to recent analysis by the World Health Organization (WHO) that concluded that the total global Covid-19 death toll was likely to be a “significant under-count.” The UN agency made the stark admission in a report last week, saying that deaths from the pandemic in 2020 totaled at least three million – an increase of 1.2 million on the 1.8 million deaths officially reported.

Etienne said “half of these” deaths had occurred in the Americas, underscoring the impact of the pandemic on the region.

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