

WHO warns COVID-19 is not going anywhere



Geneva, November 11 (RHC)-- The World Health Organization's Europe director, Hans Kluge, has warned that the COVID pandemic won't end until nations "learn to live with the virus," ensuring health systems are not overwhelmed by infections and deaths.

Speaking during an interview with Spain's La Vanguardia newspaper, Kluge warned that the international health body is not able to declare an end to the pandemic while there is still a risk that health systems may be unable to cope with a spike in case numbers.

"We have to learn to live with the virus. As soon as our health system is not overwhelmed by hospitalizations and deaths from COVID, that is, it can provide the services it provided before, the pandemic will possibly become an endemic," Kluge said.

The comments from the WHO's Europe boss came as he addressed concerns about the situation on the continent ahead of the winter months. Responding to a question about whether "Europe is once again the

epicenter of the pandemic,” Kluge flagged that the organization is expecting “half a million deaths” from the virus before February. Blaming a combination of “fake news” and the “relaxation of public health and social measures,” Kluge was clear that countries have to refute opposition to the COVID vaccine and safety protocols, and proposed a “working group in Europe” to challenge critics.

Despite concerns about the situation in Europe, the WHO director was clear that the situation would have been “very difficult” without the, so far, effective vaccine rollout in many countries. However, for vaccinations to be fully effective, Kluge stressed that countries must “leave no one behind” and focus on booster shots and inoculating children to maximize the coverage provided and to reduce the spread of the virus.

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