

# *COVID-19 pandemic claimed 75,000 lives last week*

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Geneva, February 18 (RHC)-- The World Health Organization says the number of confirmed coronavirus cases worldwide fell by 19% last week, as many countries in Europe and the Americas saw a sharp drop from record-high levels of infection. Even so, there were 16 million new cases and about 75,000 deaths reported around the globe last week.

In related news, in the United States, where more than 3,300 new COVID-19 deaths were reported Wednesday, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky said her agency is preparing to issue new guidelines that will suggest loosening public health restrictions.

Top infectious disease expert Dr. Anthony Fauci said it's understandable, given growing public fatigue with the pandemic. Dr. Fauci told reporters: "There's no perfect solution to this. They're trying to balance the fact that the world and the United States, and particularly certain parts of the United States, are just up to here with COVID. They just really need to somehow get their life back. You don't want to be reckless and throw everything aside, but you've got to start inching towards that."

Meanwhile, a new study by the People's Vaccine Alliance shows European Union nations are set to throw away nearly double the number of vaccine doses the EU has donated to Africa so far this year. That's about 55 million expired doses, compared to just 30 million doses exported to African nations.

According to reports, only 11% of the African population has been fully vaccinated.

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