

Brazil surges to second in coronavirus cases worldwide

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Brazil overtook Russia Friday as the country with the second-highest number of coronavirus infections worldwide behind the United States, as the Americas emerged as a new epicenter of the pandemic.

The South American country has now registered 330,890 infections and 21,048 deaths from the new coronavirus, though experts say under-

testing means the real figures may be 15 times higher or more.

Brazil's [death](#) toll rose by 1,001 in 24 hours, the third time in four days it has come in over 1,000.

The surge came as the World Health Organization declared South America "a new epicenter" of the pandemic.

"Clearly there is a concern across many of those countries, but clearly the most affected is Brazil at this point," said WHO emergencies director Mike Ryan.

The United States has registered more than 1.6 million cases and nearly 96,000 deaths, according to a tally kept by Johns Hopkins University.

Russia has registered 326,488 cases and 3,200 deaths.

Brazil's [death toll](#) is currently the sixth-highest in the world, behind the United States, Britain, Italy, Spain and France.

But the crisis is not expected to peak in Brazil until June.

The country of 210 million people has had a disjointed response to the pandemic.

Far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, who has famously compared the virus to a "little flu," condemns the stay-at-home measures imposed by state and local authorities, saying they are needlessly harming the economy.

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