

Brazil facing 200,000 virus deaths by October: expert

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With Brazil poised to register 100,000 coronavirus deaths, AFP spoke to medical statistician Domingos Alves about what went wrong in the giant South American country and where its outbreak is headed.

Alves, coordinator of the Health Intelligence Lab at the University of Sao Paulo's Ribeirao Preto [medical school](#), was scathing in his criticism of President Jair Bolsonaro's government, which he accused of "sacrificing the Brazilian people" in the name of keeping the economy afloat.

Q: When do you calculate Brazil's [death toll](#) will hit 200,000?

"If [current trends](#) continue, we should reach (200,000 deaths) on October 15 or 16....

"But I'm afraid it could be even earlier, because the infection and fatality curves are likely to accelerate in the coming weeks....

"If things go on like this, we'll have a high level of daily deaths until there's a vaccine."

Q: How do you see the pandemic evolving from here in Brazil?

"Infection rates are accelerating in the interior, even as they slow in the state capitals. At the regional level, the situation is getting worse in the states that hadn't been hit hard yet, such as the southern and west-central regions.

"The number of confirmed cases is still much lower than the real figure—six to seven times lower, according to our calculations. At the beginning of the pandemic, it was up to 16 times lower. But that doesn't mean we've gotten anything under control. Testing has increased, but Brazil remains one of the countries that is testing least worldwide."

Q: How did Brazil get here?

"In large part due to our leaders. The [federal government](#) continues to

consider it a 'little flu,' and there is no national policy to fight COVID-19.

"Governors and mayors have started going in the same direction, mainly because local elections are coming up in November. Places started coming out of lockdown in June, but that was too soon given the high number of new infections.

"We're still seeing record numbers of cases and deaths, but the authorities are trying to make people believe we can just increase the number of intensive care beds. Their only goal is to have an acceptable occupancy rate (in intensive care units) so they can let businesses reopen. The plan is to sacrifice the Brazilian people to achieve an economic pseudo-recovery.

"Brazil has systematically rejected lockdown measures recommended by the World Health Organization that worked in Europe. There is zero political will, and science was sidelined in our country a long time ago."

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