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South Africa coronavirus deaths top 10,000: government

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More than 10,000 people have died from coronavirus in South Africa since the pandemic arrived in the country in March, the health ministry said Saturday.

The continent's most industrialised economy has registered 553,188 infections, more than half of the continental caseload, and the fifth

biggest number of COVID-19 cases in the world.

Minister Zweli Mkhize said in his daily update statement that 301 new virus-related deaths had been recorded.

"This means we have breached the 10,000 mark, with 10,210 cumulative deaths now recorded," he said.

More than half of the deaths registered on Saturday were in the southeastern KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) province

The National Assembly announced Saturday that the KZN-based veteran opposition politician and lawmaker 91-year-old Mangosuthu Buthelezi, had tested positive for coronavirus, but was asymptomatic.

Buthelezi, led the once-feared Zulu nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) that presided over South Africa's deadliest violence ahead of the country's first all-race elections in 1994, until he stepped down last year.

"The peak is here, the peak is where we are," health minister Mkhize said during an inspection of hospitals in the KZN province on Saturday.

While South Africa is the continent's hardest-hit nation in terms of infections, its mortality rate at around 1,8 percent, is one of the lowest among countries with high numbers of cases.

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