

# Mexico's real COVID-19 death toll now stands at over 321,000

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In this Nov. 18, 2020 file photo, workers ride their horses in the Valle de Chalco municipal cemetery, mostly reserved for those who have died from the coronavirus, on the outskirts of Mexico City. As Mexico approaches 200,000 in officially test-confirmed deaths from COVID-19, the real death toll is probably higher due to the country's extremely low rate of testing. (AP Photo/Marco Ugarte, File)

Mexico's government acknowledged Saturday that the country's true death toll from the coronavirus pandemic now stands above 321,000, almost 60% more than the official test-confirmed number of 201,429.

Mexico does little testing, and because hospitals were overwhelmed, many Mexicans died at home without getting a test. The only way to get a clear picture is to review "excess deaths" and review death certificates.

On Saturday, the government quietly published such a report, which found there were 294,287 deaths linked to COVID-19 from the start of the [pandemic](#) through Feb. 14. Since Feb. 15 there have been an additional 26,772 test-confirmed deaths.

The higher toll would rival that of Brazil, which currently has the world's second-highest number of deaths after the United States. But Mexico's population of 126 million is far smaller than either of those countries.

The new report also confirms just how deadly Mexico's second wave in January was. As of the end of December, excess death estimates suggested a total of about 220,000 deaths related to COVID-19 in Mexico. That number jumped by around 75,000 in just a month and a half.

Also suggestive were the overall [number](#) of "excess deaths" since the pandemic began, around 417,000. Excess deaths are determined by comparing the deaths in a given year to those that would be expected based on data from previous years.



In this Oct. 27, 2020 file photo, workers wearing full protection gear amid the new coronavirus pandemic, lower a coffin into a grave in an area of the San Rafael municipal cemetery set apart for people who have died from COVID-19, in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. As Mexico approaches 200,000 in officially test-confirmed deaths from COVID-19, the real death toll is probably higher due to the country's extremely low rate of testing. (AP Photo/Christian Chavez, File)



In this June 24, 2020 file photo, crematorium workers burn the coffins that contained the remains of people who died from the coronavirus after their cremation at the San Nicolas Tolentino cemetery in the Iztapalapa neighborhood of Mexico City. As Mexico approaches 200,000 in officially test-confirmed deaths from COVID-19, the real death toll is probably higher due to the country's extremely low rate of testing. (AP Photo/Marco Ugarte, File)



In this June 4, 2020 file photo, workers in protective gear as a precaution against the coronavirus, remove a coffin that contained the remains of a person who died from the coronavirus, at the crematorium inside the San Nicolas Tolentino cemetery in the Iztapalapa borough of Mexico City. As Mexico approaches 200,000 in officially test-confirmed deaths from COVID-19, the real death toll is probably higher due to the country's extremely low rate of testing. (AP Photo/Marco Ugarte, File)

A [review](#) of death certificates found about 70.5% of the excess deaths were COVID-19 related, often because it was listed on the certificates as a suspected or contributing cause of [death](#). But some experts say COVID-19 may have contributed to many of the other excess deaths because many people couldn't get treatment for other diseases because hospitals were overwhelmed.

Former President Felipe Calderón wrote in his Twitter account Saturday that "more than 400,000 Mexicans have died, above the average for previous years ... probably the highest figure in the world."

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