

Tunisia over worst of Covid wave but must speed up jabs: WHO

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Tunisia—which has seen the world's worst COVID-19 death toll—may be over the peak of the latest wave but the government must still speed up inoculations, the WHO said on Monday.

"The epidemiological data are going in the right direction," World Health Organization representative in Tunisia Yves Souteyrand told a press conference.

"We have the feeling that the peak of the epidemic may have passed."

But with vaccines in short supply, overwhelmed hospitals, shortages of oxygen and the highly contagious Delta variant rampaging through the country's 12 million population mean the risk of a [health](#) disaster remains, the WHO warned.

The Delta variant was responsible for "more than 90 percent" of cases, and the impact of family gatherings during a recent religious holiday was hard to evaluate but could set back progress made, Souteyrand said.

"The challenge is to speed up the [vaccination campaign](#)," he said.

The country had "in 10 days received around seven million vaccine doses and will receive perhaps two or three million more" soon, he said.

The WHO has also provided 400 oxygen concentrators and four oxygen generators to Tunisia, where the government has been in crisis after President Kais Saied suspended parliament and took direct power—a move his critics said was a coup.

Since the shock move late last month, Saied has established a coronavirus crisis unit, supervised by a high-level military official, to help manage the country's outbreak.

Souteyrand said that "relations between the WHO and the health ministry have not been affected by the political crisis".

The [health ministry](#) on Monday announced the start of a mobile

vaccination campaign in several regions.

Authorities have also announced a vaccination drive across the country on Sunday for Tunisians aged over 40.

Over the past seven days, the North African country has registered the worst official COVID-19 mortality rate in the world, with 10.64 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, an AFP tally based on officially reported data shows.

On the other hand, Tunisia shares its coronavirus data more transparently than many other countries, the WHO said.

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