

# WHO warns COVID 'has not gone away'

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The World Health Organization's European office on Tuesday warned the risk of COVID-19 has not gone away, saying it was still responsible for nearly 1,000 deaths a week in the region.

The global health body on May 5 announced that the COVID-19

pandemic was no longer deemed a "global health emergency."

"While it may not be a global public health emergency, however, COVID-19 has not gone away," WHO Regional Director for Europe Hans Kluge told reporters.

The WHO's European region comprises 53 countries, including several in central Asia.

"Close to 1,000 new COVID-19 deaths continue to occur across the region every week, and this is an underestimate due to a drop in countries regularly reporting COVID-19 deaths to WHO," Kluge added, and urged authorities to ensure vaccination coverage of at least 70 percent for [vulnerable groups](#).

Kluge also said estimates showed that one in 30, or some 36 million people, in the region had experienced so called "long COVID" in the last three years, which "remains a complex condition we still know very little about."

"Unless we develop comprehensive diagnostics and treatment for long COVID, we will never truly recover from the pandemic," Kluge said, encouraging more research in the area which he called an under-recognized condition.

The health body also urged [vigilance](#) in the face of a resurgence of mpox, having recorded 22 new cases across the [region](#) in May, and the health impact of heat waves.

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