



End of Covid Pandemic Is 'Still A Long Way Off' WHO Chief Warns

Description

USA: The head of the World Health Organization back-tracked on his previous assertion that the end of the Covid pandemic was near, warning instead that the end of the crisis was “still a long way off”.

Last week, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters that the end of the pandemic was in sight.

US President Joe Biden went one further in an interview broadcast Sunday and declared that the pandemic was over in the United States.

Speaking to the media again from the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York on Thursday, Tedros appeared less upbeat, and this time said “being able to see the end, doesn’t mean we are at the end.”

[France 24](#) reports: He reiterated that the world was in the best position it had ever been in to end the pandemic, with the number of weekly deaths continuing to drop — and now just 10 percent of what they were at the peak in January 2021.

Tedros pointed out that two-thirds of the world’s population has been [vaccinated](#), including three-quarters of health workers and older people.

“We have spent two-and-a-half years in a long, dark tunnel, and we are just beginning to glimpse the light at the end of that tunnel,” he said.

But, he stressed, “it is still a long way off, and the tunnel is still dark, with many obstacles that could trip us up if we don’t take care.”

“We’re still in the tunnel.”

In its latest epidemiological update, the [WHO](#) said over 9,800 fatalities were reported last week, down 17 percent from a week earlier, while 3.2 million new cases were reported.

The UN health agency has warned that the falling number of reported cases is deceptive, since many countries have cut back on testing and may not be detecting less serious cases.

Maria Van Kerkhove, the WHO's technical lead on Covid, told reporters the virus is still "circulating at an intense level," although the situation varied in different countries.

But she pointed out that the world has the tools needed to rein in the spread.

"Our goal is to end the emergency in all countries. And we will keep at this until we reach that goal," she said.

by Niamh Harris

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