

# Italy's COVID-19 death toll tops 50,000

23 November 2020



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Italy, the first European country to be hit by the global coronavirus pandemic, on Monday passed the threshold of 50,000 deaths from COVID-19.

Most took place earlier this year, but around 15,000 deaths have been reported since the beginning of September.

The health ministry recorded 630 new deaths in the past 24 hours, bringing the total to 50,453. There were 22,930 new cases, to total more than 1.4 million.

Italy joins the United States, Brazil, India, Mexico and the United Kingdom in passing the symbolic 50,000-[death](#) mark, AFP figures show.

A punishing lockdown of all its 60 million residents brought the first outbreak under control but, as elsewhere, the number of cases has risen sharply in recent months.

Deaths have followed, with more than 750 recorded in one 24-hour period last week. The worst daily toll in Italy was 969 deaths, on March 27.

The Italian government has sought to avoid another lockdown after it crippled the economy, focusing instead on regional restrictions alongside a nationwide night-time curfew.

Officials say the measures, which include the closure of bars, restaurants and shops in the worst-hit areas, are having an effect.

But medics warn of the continued pressure on intensive care units, for although the number of beds has been increased there is a lack of qualified staff.

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said last week that Italians should expect a "more sober Christmas, without Christmas Eve gatherings, hugs and kisses.

"Otherwise we'll pay for it in January with more deaths."

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