

S.Africa excess deaths nearly triple official virus fatalities

March 4 2021



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South Africa has recorded over 145,000 excess natural deaths over the past 10 months, a medical research report showed, suggesting COVID-19 fatalities could be almost triple the official figures.

So far the [health ministry](#) has recorded over 1.5 million coronavirus cases in South Africa, of which more than 50,000 have been fatal.

But emerging data compiled by the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) shows that over 145,000 extra natural deaths have occurred since May—almost two [months](#) after South Africa reported its first coronavirus case.

The latest tallies, spanning from May 3 to February 27, were released in a Wednesday report by the council, which is government-funded but independent research group.

The "excess" [death](#) figure is derived from an estimate of deaths "that might be expected to have occurred" without a pandemic, according to the methodology.

The SAMRC does not give details on the cause of these extra deaths, but estimates that between 85 and 95 percent are attributable to COVID-19.

South Africa already accounts for around 38.5 percent of all coronavirus cases officially reported in Africa and close to half the continent's confirmed deaths, according to an AFP tally.

The country seems to have emerged from a second wave of [coronavirus](#) infections fuelled by a more transmissible local virus variant.

Vaccine procurement has been sluggish and inoculation only started last month.

Experts predict a third infection resurgence by the start of the southern hemisphere winter from late May.

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