

# *Researchers say Trump's failures led to at least 130,000 coronavirus deaths*

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Researchers say Trump's failures led to at least 130,000 coronavirus deaths. (Photo: Democracy Now)

Washington, October 22 (RHC)-- The confirmed U.S. death toll from COVID-19 has topped 222,000, as a new report by Columbia University researchers blasted the Donald Trump administration over its disastrous handling of the pandemic.

The report's authors write: "We estimate that at least 130,000 deaths and perhaps as many as 210,000 could have been avoided with earlier policy interventions and more robust federal coordination and leadership. Even with the dramatic recent appearance of new COVID-19 waves globally, the abject failures of U.S. government policies and crisis messaging persist."

The study came as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention warned the U.S. is heading into the most dangerous phase of the pandemic yet — with cold weather and holidays driving people to congregate indoors, where the virus spreads much more easily.

CDC Deputy Director Jay Butler spoke at a rare news conference at the agency's Atlanta headquarters. Butler said: "Unfortunately, we are seeing a distressing trend here in the United States with COVID-19 cases increasing in nearly 75% of the country."

On Wednesday, the CDC changed its definition of a "close contact" with an infectious person to include brief interactions totaling 15 minutes or more within six feet of someone over a one-day period. The recommendation will expand the number of people who should go into quarantine, according to the CDC.

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