

Not yet gone



The increase of positive cases in Peru is due to the high level of contagiousness of the Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 variants. | Photo: DW

By Guillermo Alvarado

The World Health Organization, WHO, recently warned about a significant resurgence of COVID-19 infections, which for many countries could constitute a fifth wave, and called on governments not to lower their guard against a virus that is still present.

In just two weeks there has been a 30 percent increase in infections in several European countries, particularly due to the presence of the BA.4 and BA.5 sub-variants of the omicron strain, which are highly contagious but less lethal than the previous forms.

According to the WHO report, although the number of positive cases soared, this did not lead to an increase in the number of hospitalizations in intensive care wards or in the number of deaths.

In any case, the institution recalled, COVID-19 has an impact at the family level, as well as on people's working lives, which can have a global impact on the economy of some countries.

The director of the WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, also drew attention to the decrease in testing for the virus, which masks the magnitude of the disease, as well as the low use of the recommended treatments, especially in low-income countries.

We are not asking for a return to restrictive or quarantine measures, said the specialist, who acknowledged that people aspire to return to a normal life, but called on the authorities to protect the most vulnerable.

And this leads to the issue of vaccines, whose administration globally reaches more than 5.2 billion people with at least one dose, or 67 percent of the world's population, but with notable asymmetries between regions or countries.

WHO's objective was to reach 70 percent of the world's population immunized by the middle of this year, but the goal was not met and there are many countries, especially in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America and the Caribbean, which are far, far from achieving it.

There are places where the situation is very complicated, such as Yemen, which barely reaches 1.5 percent of complete vaccination; Haiti, with 1.4;

Madagascar, with 4.2 percent, and Senegal, with 6.2 percent.

In this desolate landscape, the case of Cuba stands out, where 38.8 million doses of the nationally produced Soberana 02, Soberana Plus and Abdala vaccines have already been administered, protecting 90 percent of its population with the full schedule.

The pandemic is a health problem, but also a problem of political will and social organization, a truth little understood until now.

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