

WHO chief warns Trump: Don't politicize virus unless you want more death



Geneva, April 9 (RHC)-- The head of the World Health Organization Tedros Ghebreyesus has responded to U.S. President Donald Trump's threat to de-fund the UN health body with a harsh rebuke. Not focusing on the criticism of the body's COVID-19 response, he instead promised more deaths.

"The focus of all political parties should be to save their people, please do not politicize this virus," the World Health Organization's director general said a day after Trump dubbed the UN health body "China-centric" and blamed it for being too slow to respond to the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan that eventually grew into a pandemic.

The WHO chief said: "If you want to be exploited and if you want to have many more body bags, then you do it. If you don't want many more body bags, then you refrain from politicizing it."

The comment came the day after Trump threatened to cut the organization's funding. The U.S. is WHO's biggest single donor, contributing about one fifth of the organization's budget over the last two years.

The president's words apparently fell on the fertile ground as Senator Lindsey Graham, who is in charge of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee overseeing foreign operations, immediately rushed to declare that "there is not going to be any money for the WHO" in the next appropriations bill. The Senator also called for a change of leadership in the UN body for one that would be more in line with Washington's expectations, adding that "it is in America's best interests to withhold funding" until then.

Over the months since that start of the outbreak, China has seemingly beaten the virus through weeks-long severe quarantine, which previously saw the city of Wuhan with a population of 11 million people put on a total lockdown. Meanwhile, the U.S. has emerged as the new epicenter of the epidemic as the number of confirmed cases there surpassed 400,000, while more than 13,000 people died from COVID-19.

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