

U.S. lawmakers mark 900,000 COVID deaths in the country

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Members of the US House and Senate hold a moment of silence for 900,000 American lives lost to COVID-19 [J Scott Applewhite/The Associated Press]

Washington, February 8 (RHC)-- U.S. legislators have held a moment of silence at the Capitol to mark 900,000 COVID deaths in the country. The officials walked onto the steps of the seat of the US legislature carrying lights and stood silently as U.S. Army Chorus performed Shall We Gather at the River and God Bless America on Monday.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer stood at the front of the crowd of bipartisan legislators. "Tonight, I joined Members of Congress for a Moment of Silence to pay tribute to the more than 900,000 Americans tragically lost to COVID-19," Pelosi later wrote on Twitter. "In their memories, let us continue our work to bring an end to this pandemic."

Shortly before legislators held their observance, the Washington National Cathedral tolled its funeral bell 900 times. The memorial came three days after the U.S. passed the 900,000 death toll, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University.

About 2,400 people continue to die daily from COVID-19 in the country, with the death rate believed to be those infected during a wave of infections at the beginning of the year. The daily cases have dropped dramatically since mid-January, when they hit a record peak of about 800,000, and have been on the decline in 47 states in the last two weeks, according to Johns Hopkins University data.

Meanwhile, the number of people hospitalised with COVID-19 has dropped 24 percent compared with the same period in mid-January. As of Monday, about 110,000 people were hospitalised with COVID-19 in the country.

Still, the U.S. had the highest case count over the last 28 days as of Monday of any country in the world, with more than 15 million infections reported in that time. At least 63,255 people were reported to have died from COVID-19 during that period.

Federal officials have largely eschewed supporting further lockdowns amid the most recent wave of the Omicron variant, which has caused generally milder symptoms, particularly for those already vaccinated. Instead, they have focused on widespread testing and supporting vaccination campaigns.

Despite the vaccine being available for more than a year, only about 65 percent of people in the U.S. are fully vaccinated.

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