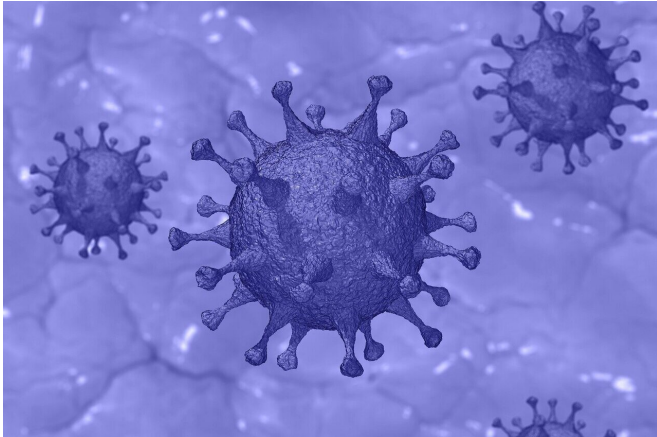


Greece tops 5,000 COVID-19 deaths: health agency

4 January 2021



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Greece on Monday announced that the coronavirus death toll had exceeded 5,000 people, days after the government was accused of vaccinating too many state officials instead of health staff.

The state [public health agency](#) said it had recorded 54 deaths over the last 24 hours, raising the [death toll](#) to 5,011.

Over 140,000 people have been infected since the start of the pandemic, and over 400 are still in [intensive care](#), it said.

The government last week said it was postponing dozens of "symbolic" vaccinations of [state officials](#) following complaints that [health workers](#) and the elderly were not being given adequate priority.

Government deputy spokeswoman Aristotelia Pelsoni told Parapolitika radio that over 60 officials had received jabs and the remainder "will be vaccinated when their turn comes."

The government had originally announced last

month that 45 senior state, army and other officials would receive priority vaccination in January.

But over 120 people were subsequently placed on what media described as a 'VIP list', sparking outcry.

Over 9,500 vaccinations have been carried out in the country so far.

Greece weathered the first phase of the coronavirus pandemic with comparatively low cases and fatalities, but infections spiked in the autumn.

Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis faced criticism after relaxing lockdown restrictions for retail and churches over Christmas.

The governing body of the Orthodox church on Monday said it would ignore government requirements to keep places of worship closed to the public during Epiphany.

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APA citation: Greece tops 5,000 COVID-19 deaths: health agency (2021, January 4) retrieved 29 June 2022 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2021-01-greece-tops-covid-deaths-health.html>

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