

Thousands die in Spain as PSOE-Podemos declares pandemic measures over

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Spain has recorded almost 12,000 deaths during the “sixth wave” of the coronavirus pandemic, since mid-October 2021. More than a sixth of these fatalities occurred just in the week beginning February 14, when 2,003 people lost their lives.

On Wednesday, February 16, Spain recorded a huge 444 deaths in a single day, the highest toll in almost a year. An average of nearly 300 people died across the country every day last week, as around 34,000 daily infections were recorded. Spain has suffered over 122,000 excess deaths since the pandemic began.

Almost 11 million people have been infected with the coronavirus in total—nearly a quarter of Spain’s population. Over 1 million are currently estimated to be suffering with long COVID in Spain, including symptoms such as fatigue, breathlessness and cognitive dysfunction.

The 14-day incidence rate across the country still remains exceptionally high, at 613 per 100,000 people, well above the 500 per 100,000 bar that the Spanish government considers to be an indicator of a situation of “very high” risk. This in itself is a significant downplaying of the dangers posed by the virus: in mid-November, the PSOE-Podemos coalition doubled this threshold from 250 to 500 per 100,000, supposedly in response to the decreased risks posed by COVID-19 now that a large proportion of the Spanish population is vaccinated. In some regions, the incidence rate is between 800 and 1,000.

Despite mass vaccination, the pandemic still claims thousands of lives a week and infects tens of thousands, giving the lie to the claim that widespread inoculation and the prevalence of the supposedly “milder” Omicron variant have made the virus harmless. Vaccination is a powerful tool in the fight against COVID-19, but it does not on its own suffice to prevent

death and disease.

The enormous death toll and the incalculable impact on the lives and health of Spain’s population are a direct result of the criminal policy of “herd immunity” pursued by the Socialist Party (PSOE)-Podemos government. It has refused to follow a scientifically guided policy to defeat the pandemic in Spain, and is now proceeding to eliminate even the most basic mitigation measures that are still in place.

Following the example of European countries such as Norway, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom, which have recently lifted all or almost all of their pandemic-related health restrictions, PSOE Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez announced last week that even the requirement to wear masks in indoor spaces would soon be waived.

In a press conference last Monday with Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen, Sánchez said Spain would soon be in the same epidemiological situation as Denmark, which ditched all of its pandemic measures at the start of February—the first European country to do so. Referring to ending the use of masks indoors, Sánchez stated, “It would be a good measure that Spanish society will appreciate. We hope that it can be done sooner rather than later.”

Meanwhile, the regional government of Catalonia announced that quarantines in schools would be ended after a positive coronavirus case as of Wednesday last week. It was also reported that schools would no longer have to record COVID-19 cases that had broken out on their premises, and parents would no longer have to tell school officials if their child’s absence was due to the virus. Teachers will also no longer receive testing kits to ensure they are not infected with the disease.

The PSOE-Podemos government has for months been waging a concerted propaganda campaign to depict the

coronavirus as “endemic” and for it to be treated like seasonal influenza. The term “endemic” implies a predictable and controllable level of disease in a given geographic region.

This definition has nothing in common with the current trajectory of the pandemic. The virus is far from under control, as a result of the refusal of the ruling class in Spain and internationally to implement the necessary measures to eliminate and ultimately eradicate the virus. Instead, a policy of “letting it rip” has been pursued in virtually every country bar China, leading to continued waves of entirely preventable death and disease.

As a demonstration of the continuing severe and widespread impact of the pandemic, in mid-February it was reported that around 2.4 million people have had to take time off work during the sixth wave as a result of infection with or exposure to COVID-19. This is around 56 percent of total workplace absences since March 2020, when the pandemic first hit Spain in force.

A record 678,000 absences were reported in December 2021. This all-time high was rapidly exceeded in January this year, when a staggering 1.7 million people were off sick. This represents roughly 12 percent of the Spanish workforce.

Despite the appalling toll the pandemic has had on lives and health, 2021 was a bonanza year for the banks and big businesses in Spain. Last year, Spain’s largest companies reported record profits of over €53 billion, even as tens of thousands lost their lives, millions were infected and hundreds of thousands struggled to make ends meet after losing jobs or seeing their hours cut.

Telephone operating companies made some of the biggest profits in 2021, at €8.137 billion—a 414 percent increase on 2020. Banking companies in Spain’s Ibex 35 stock market index reported a collective profit of nearly €20 billion, compared to losses of around €5 billion the previous year.

The energy sector was the other great beneficiary of the last year of the pandemic. Energy and petrochemical company Repsol recorded profits of around €2.5 billion, while gas supplier Naturgy made gains of €1.24 billion. At the same time, consumer utility prices reached record highs in December 2021, with electricity costing €360,02 per megawatt hour, forcing many workers to choose between heating their

homes and putting food on the table over the winter.

The record sums going into the coffers of Spain’s banks and businesses are a stark demonstration of the profits before lives strategy pursued by the PSOE-Podemos government. This anti-scientific and criminal policy has support across the entire political establishment, from the fascistic Vox party to the PSOE, Podemos and the various middle class groups which orbit them. Only an independent movement of the international working class, in irreconcilable opposition to Podemos and the PSOE, can stop this murderous policy of mass infection and save lives.



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