

Outbreak Brief #101: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 21 December 2021

Global case count: 273,869,899 cases and 5,352,069 deaths

Data sources: World Health Organization and African Union Member States

Outbreak Update: Since the last brief (14 December 2021), **4,501,031** new confirmed¹ coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases, including 47,740 new deaths, have been reported globally. To date, a global total of 273,869,899 COVID-19 cases and 5,352,069 related deaths (case fatality ratio (CFR): 2%) have been reported by 226 countries and territories to the World Health Organization (WHO). The distribution of cumulative cases (proportion of global cases) from the WHO reporting regions (excluding Africa) are as follows: **Eastern Mediterranean Region 14,513,439** (5%), **European Region 94,637,598** (35%), **Region of the Americas 99,775,067** (36%), **South-East Asia Region 44,833,250** (16%) and **Western Pacific Region 10,824,481** (4%). In the last seven days, the five countries reporting the highest number of new cases globally are the United States (827,506), the United Kingdom (541,872), France (362,800), Germany (278,016) and the Russian Federation (195,358). For more detailed information on cases and deaths reported outside of Africa, refer to the [WHO COVID-19 dashboard](#).

As of 6 p.m. East African Time (EAT) 20 December 2021, a total of **9,197,647** COVID-19 cases and 226,090 deaths (**CFR: 2.5%**) have been reported in 55 African Union (AU) Member States (MS). This represents 3.4% of all cases and 4.2% of all deaths reported globally. Twenty-seven (49%) AU MS are reporting CFRs higher than the global CFR. Since the beginning of the pandemic, 46 (84%) AU MS have experienced a third wave, 21 (38%) countries (Algeria, Benin, Burkina Faso, DR Congo, Egypt, Eritrea, Eswatini, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Somalia, South Africa, Tunisia, Zambia and Zimbabwe) have experienced a fourth wave and three countries (Algeria, Kenya and Mauritius) are experiencing a fifth wave of COVID-19 cases. Figure 1 shows the trend of new COVID-19 cases reported per day by the AU region from 15 February 2020 to 20 December 2021. The overall daily number of new cases being reported across the continent is on an upward trend. More information on COVID-19 situation in Africa is available on the Africa CDC [daily dashboard](#) and [hotspot dashboard](#).

¹ WHO COVID-19 surveillance guidance and case definition: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/who-2019-nCoV-surveillanceguidance-2020.7>

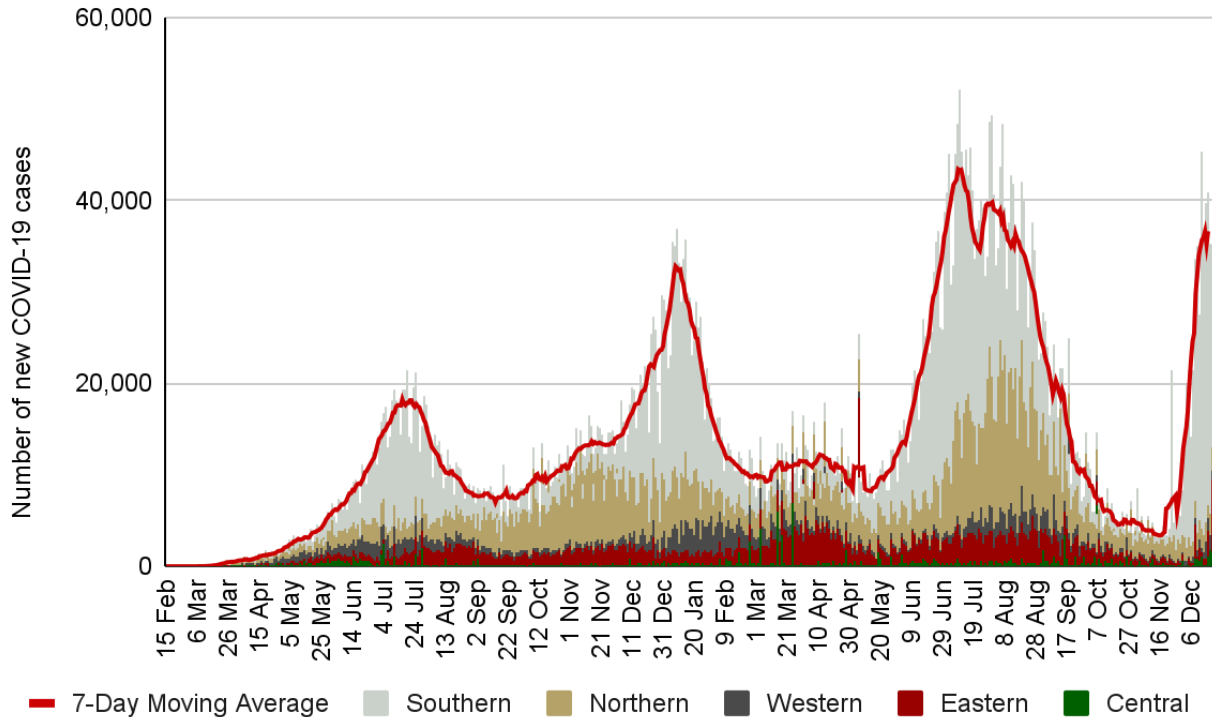


Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day in Africa by African Union region, 15 February 2020 - 20 December 2021².

As of 16 December 2021, 51 AU MS have reported the presence of the Alpha (45 MS), Beta (41), Delta (44), and/or Gamma (2) Variants of Concern (VOC). As of 20 December 2021, 22 MS (Algeria, Botswana, Burkina Faso, DR Congo, Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe) have reported the presence of the Omicron VOC.

The Pathogen Genomics Dashboard provides a breakdown of variant types reported by Member State. More information on SARS-COV-2 sequencing in Africa is available on the [Africa Pathogen Genomics Initiative Dashboard](#).

For Epi week 50 (13 - 19 December 2021), 228,073 new COVID-19 cases were reported, which is an 18% increase in the number of new cases reported compared to Epi week 49. The Southern Region accounted for 81% of the new COVID-19 cases reported for this week, followed by the Northern (6%), Eastern (6%), Central (4%) and Western (3%) regions. This week, nine countries accounted for 85% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: South Africa (57%), Zimbabwe (10%), Eswatini (3%), DR Congo (3%), Mozambique (3%), Namibia (3%), Nigeria (3%), Egypt (2%) and Zambia (2%). The countries reporting the highest incidence (COVID-19 new cases per 1 million population per day) this week are Eswatini (842), Seychelles (729), South Africa (339), Zimbabwe (235), Namibia (219), Botswana (132) and Lesotho (103). Table 1 summarises the cumulative

² The dates are at a two-week interval; the last date is 20 December 2021.

COVID-19 cases and deaths reported by MS and Region in Africa, and the new COVID-19 cases and deaths reported during Epi week 50.

Table 1: Confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths³ reported in Africa for epidemiological week 50 (13 - 19 December 2021).

Country by AU Region	Cumulative number of cases (new cases)	% change in new cases since week 49	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 49
Central Region	292,693 (9,251)	63%	4,134 (8)	-87%
Burundi	22,639 (1,753)	324%	14 (0)	NA*
Cameroon	107,662 (0)	-100%	1,836 (0)	-100%
Central African Republic	12,045 (49)	-76%	101 (0)	NA*
Chad	5,703 (2)	NA*	182 (0)	-100%
Congo	19,490 (424)	748%	367 (8)	700%
Democratic Republic of Congo	70,058 (6,898)	73%	1,117 (0)	-100%
Equatorial Guinea	13,618 (6)	-54%	175 (0)	NA*
Gabon	37,743 (117)	-21%	285 (0)	-100%
Sao Tome and Principe	3,735 (2)	NA*	57 (0)	-100%
Eastern Region	1,094,103 (14,306)	104%	24,434 (323)	104%
Comoros	4,677 (108)	414%	151 (0)	-100%
Djibouti	13,535 (21)	250%	189 (0)	-100%
Eritrea	7,713 (67)	-60%	65 (2)	No change
Ethiopia	376,375 (3,260)	262%	6,866 (37)	28%
Kenya	263,707 (7,372)	721%	5,353 (5)	-62%
Madagascar	44,800 (0)	-100%	972 (0)	-100%
Mauritius	22,979 (328)	-42%	686 (264)	NA*

³ Data is continuously verified for accuracy and reliability, thus may change based on retrospective updates from Member States.

Country by AU Region	Cumulative number of cases (new cases)	% change in new cases since week 49	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 49
Rwanda	99,244 (565)	304%	1,346 (0)	-100%
Seychelles	24,047 (510)	50%	131 (4)	100%
Somalia	23,537 (0)	-100%	1,333 (2)	-50%
South Sudan	13,614 (741)	544%	133 (0)	NA*
Sudan	44,247 (0)	-100%	3,201 (0)	-100%
Tanzania	26,309 (48)	NA*	734 (4)	NA*
Uganda	129,319 (1,286)	296%	3,274 (5)	-55%
Northern Region	2,688,400 (14,909)	14%	74,370 (458)	-6%
Algeria	214,835 (1,987)	44%	6,190 (45)	7%
Egypt	375,330 (6,132)	2%	21,361 (301)	-10%
Libya	382,341 (3,525)	5%	5,607 (46)	-26%
Mauritania	40,126 (320)	29%	855 (6)	-33%
Morocco	952,916 (1,434)	46%	14,810 (14)	56%
Tunisia	721,031 (1,445)	26%	25,470 (38)	23%
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	1,821 (66)	NA*	77 (8)	NA*
Southern Region	4,433,541 (199,919)	12%	112,749 (300)	38%
Angola	65,938 (534)	268%	1,738 (1)	-50%
Botswana	199,864 (2,220)	6%	2,425 (1)	-75%
Eswatini	60,036 (7,393)	44%	1,261 (11)	450%
Lesotho	25,609 (2,386)	94%	665 (1)	NA*
Malawi	64,741 (2,511)	908%	2,311 (4)	NA*
Mozambique	160,457 (6,783)	288%	1,952 (8)	167%
Namibia	139,518 (6,428)	95%	3,583 (5)	25%

Country by AU Region	Cumulative number of cases (new cases)	% change in new cases since week 49	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 49
South Africa	3,308,074 (140,577)	4%	90,348 (211)	23%
Zambia	216,508 (5,431)	610%	3,679 (9)	200%
Zimbabwe	192,796 (25,656)	-9%	4,787 (49)	75%
Western Region	685,342 (8,166)	62%	10,381 (22)	-60%
Benin	24,907 (10)	-71%	161 (0)	NA*
Burkina Faso	16,672 (0)	-100%	296 (0)	-100%
Cape Verde	38,589 (86)	62%	351 (0)	NA*
Côte d'Ivoire	62,119 (214)	164%	706 (0)	NA*
Gambia	10,051 (6)	-87%	342 (0)	NA*
Ghana	132,132 (221)	-67%	1,257 (2)	-93%
Guinea	30,814 (0)	-100%	684 (0)	-100%
Guinea-Bissau	6,456 (8)	100%	149 (0)	NA*
Liberia	5,844 (9)	-18%	287 (0)	NA*
Mali	19,306 (715)	6%	639 (10)	-9%
Niger	7,199 (38)	-53%	272 (4)	-43%
Nigeria	223,887 (6,406)	124%	2,985 (4)	300%
Senegal	74,183 (91)	49%	1,886 (0)	NA*
Sierra Leone	6,505 (84)	342%	121 (0)	NA*
Togo	26,678 (278)	190%	245 (2)	NA*
Total	9,194,079 (246,551)	18%	226,068 (1,111)	14%

*No new cases/deaths reported in the previous week.

NEW Africa CDC Response Activities

General:

1. Africa CDC held its inaugural International Conference on Public Health in Africa (CPHIA 2021) virtually from 14 - 16 December 2021 (<https://cphia2021.com/>). The conference provided a platform for African researchers, policymakers and stakeholders to share

scientific findings and public health perspectives and collaborate on research, innovation and public health across the continent. The recordings are available on the Africa CDC [Twitter page](#).

2. Africa CDC held a special press briefing on CPHIA 2021 on Wednesday 15 December 2021 at 1.30 p.m. EAT. The panelists included Dr. John Nkengasong, Director of Africa CDC, Prof. Salim Abdool Karim, Director of CAPRISA, Dr. Ebere Okereke, Honorary Senior Public Health Adviser to Africa CDC, Dr. Githinji Gatahi Group Chief Executive Officer of Amref Health Africa and Prof. Helen Rees, Founder and Executive Director of the Wits Reproductive Health and HIV Institute, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. They discussed a new public health order in Africa, impact of COVID-19 on Africa's health systems and public health research in Africa. The recording is available on the [Africa CDC Twitter page](#).
3. As of 20 December 2021, 54 (98%) out of 55 AU MS have started COVID-19 vaccination campaigns targeting priority populations. Cumulatively, 294.6 million doses have been administered, and of the doses administered, 175.8 million have received the first dose and 118.8 million have received the second dose. Overall, 8.8% of the continental population is fully vaccinated. Eritrea is the only AU MS yet to start COVID-19 vaccine roll out. More information on COVID-19 vaccination can be found on the [Africa CDC COVID-19 vaccine dashboard](#).

Laboratory:

1. Over 86.2 million tests for COVID-19 have been conducted in Africa since February 2020. The cumulative positivity rate⁴ and test per case ratio⁵ are 10.7% and 9.4, respectively. For Epi week 50, a total of 1,182,751 new tests were conducted, a decrease of 15% compared to Epi week 49 when 1,392,799 tests were conducted.
2. Africa CDC in collaboration with Global Health Systems Solution is conducting a step-down training on antigen testing in The Gambia from 21 - 24 December 2021.
3. Africa CDC held a meeting on the Development of a Harmonized Training Curriculum for Basic Laboratory Quality Management System using the One Health Approach in Africa for 15 participants from 13 Member States in Lusaka, Zambia from 6 - 17 December 2021.
4. Africa CDC held a workshop on SARS-CoV-2 genome sequencing and bioinformatics for 17 participants from 11 Member States in Nigeria from 1 - 14 December 2021.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

1. Africa CDC held the sixth session of the tenth IPC webinar series titled "Impact of Pandemic on Health and Safety, Physical and Mental Health of HCWs" on 15 December 2021 for 491 participants in English and 16 December 2021 for 134 participants in French. Recordings are available here:

⁴ [Public health criteria to adjust public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19](#)

⁵ WHO set 10-30 tests per every confirmed case as a general benchmark of adequate testing.

- a. English session:
https://zoom.us/rec/share/TwT61cHIZ_f35hVsaTv_k3W8aGWSZ7okpe-3CvyAHpF8ICTcRrZ9xUV15a_SKs9N.cogQieiPjgC6568P
- b. French session:
https://zoom.us/rec/share/YPR92ROSoOQ2xY9Qhgtk_mvrvqZBCVUMBxrRRiDiMBCOQDXRSFY7FwflFZrAlgw.ICusrFYKw4YbSDuX

Sciences, Standards and Regulations:

1. Subscribe [here](#) to receive the weekly Partnership for Evidence-Based Response to COVID-19 (PERC) update and all other products, or visit the [PERC](#) and [Africa CDC websites](#).
2. Access the latest PERC report on “Responding to COVID-19 in Africa: Finding the Balance (Part IV) and Calls to Action” [here](#).

Recommendations for the Member States

1. AU Member States should continue to enhance their COVID-19⁶ surveillance efforts to include:
 - a. Syndromic surveillance for influenza-like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI).⁷
 - b. Rapid mortality surveillance includes collection, analysis and the use of all-cause mortality data collected through the facility and/or community-based surveillance.⁸
 - c. Genomic surveillance⁹ to monitor the presence of variants, the spread and the continuous evolution of the virus.
 - d. Community-based surveillance¹⁰ to detect symptomatic cases early for treatment and to avert viral transmission.
2. AU Member States should continue to perform contact tracing of confirmed cases based on transmission type and country capacity as well as enhance diagnostic screening efforts using the rapid antigen tests¹¹.
3. All AU Member States should notify and routinely share data with WHO and Africa CDC regarding confirmed COVID-19 cases, deaths, recoveries, tests conducted and infected healthcare workers for updated information for action. Notify Africa CDC by emailing: AfricaCDCEBS@africa-union.org.
4. AU Member States should continue to guide the general public about seeking immediate medical care for those who develop severe symptoms (e.g. difficulty breathing).

⁶ [WHO COVID-19 Case definition](#)

⁷ Africa CDC Protocol for enhanced surveillance for COVID-19 in Africa: [Protocol for Enhanced Severe Acute Respiratory Illness and Influenza-Like Illness Surveillance for COVID-19 in Africa – Africa CDC](#)

⁸ Revealing the toll of COVID-19: A technical package for AU Member States – Africa CDC

⁹ Genomic sequencing of SARS-CoV-2: a guide to implementation for maximum impact on public health

¹⁰ [Enhanced COVID-19 Surveillance at the Community Level in Africa](#)

¹¹ [Interim Guidance on the Use of Rapid Antigen tests for COVID-19 Response – Africa CDC](#)

5. AU Member States should put in place or strengthen existing public health and social measures if COVID-19 incidence starts to rise.

Resources for more information

- Africa CDC COVID-19 updates: <https://africacdc.org/covid-19/>
- Adapted Africa Joint Continental Strategy for COVID-19 Pandemic: <https://africacdc.org/download/adapted-africa-joint-continental-strategy-for-covid-19-pandemic/>
- Africa CDC Resources, policy guidelines, and infographics: <https://africacdc.org/covid-19/covid-19-resources/>
- Africa CDC Hotspot and PHSM Tiers dashboards: <https://africacdc.org/covid-19/covid-19-hotspots/>
- Africa CDC vaccination dashboard: <https://africacdc.org/covid-19-vaccination/>
- Africa CDC pathogen genomics dashboard: <https://africacdc.org/institutes/africa-pathogen-genomics-initiative/>
- Partnership for Evidence-Based Response to COVID-19 (PERC) <https://preventepidemics.org/covid19/perc/>
- WHO Technical Guidance. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance>