

Outbreak Brief #102: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 28 December 2021

Global case count: 279,089,404 cases and 5,397,936 deaths

Data sources: World Health Organization and African Union Member States

Outbreak Update: Since the last brief (21 December 2021), **4,444,521** new confirmed¹ coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases, including 38,559 new deaths, have been reported globally. To date, a global total of 279,089,404 COVID-19 cases and 5,397,936 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** 14,575,179 (5%), **European Region** 97,546,769 (35%), **Region of the Americas** 101,370,646 (36%), **South-East Asia Region** 44,909,586 (16%) and **Western Pacific Region** 11,096,847 (4%). In the last seven days, the five countries reporting the highest number of new cases globally are the United States (1,180,930), the United Kingdom (529,905), France (483,886), Italy (258,158) and Germany (195,667). 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) 27 December 2021, a total of **9,497,292** COVID-19 cases and 227,609 deaths (**CFR: 2.4%**) 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-six (47%) AU MS are reporting CFRs higher than the global CFR. Since the beginning of the pandemic, 51 (93%) AU MS have experienced a third wave, 31 (56%) countries have experienced a fourth wave, and four countries (Algeria, Kenya, Mauritius and Somalia) 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 27 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>

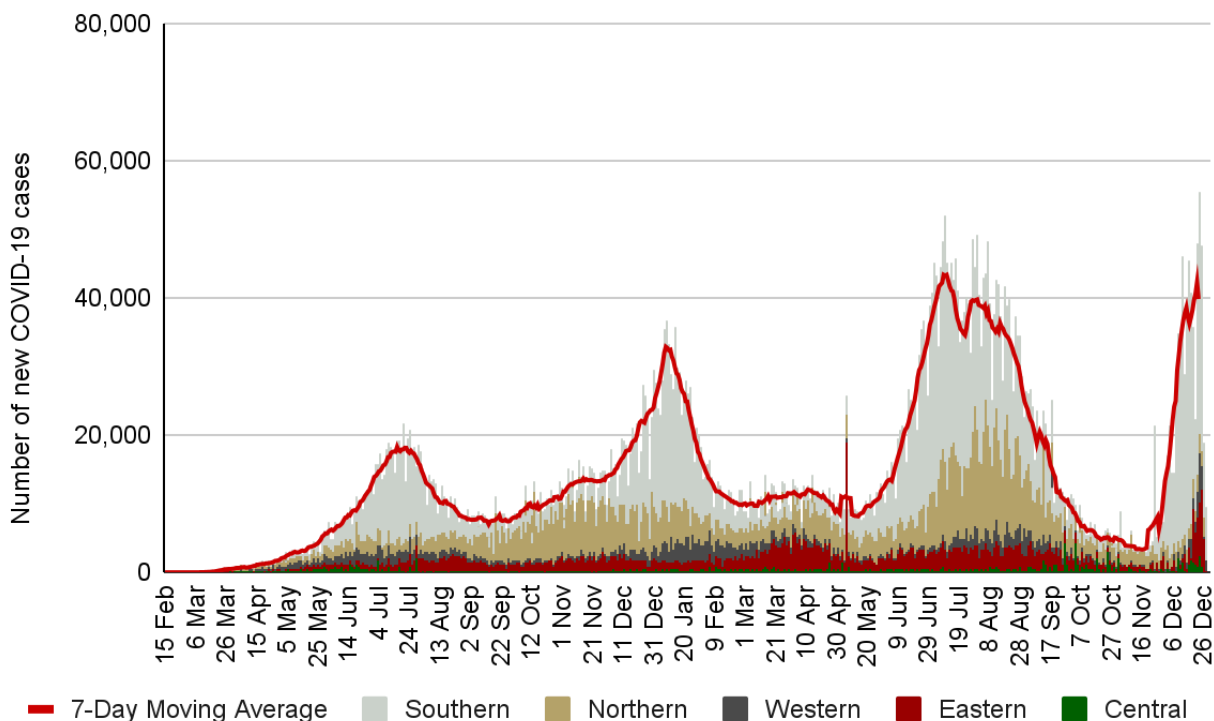


Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day in Africa by African Union region, 15 February 2020 - 27 December 2021².

As of 23 December 2021, 51 AU MS have reported the presence of the Alpha (47 MS), Beta (41), Delta (45), and/or Gamma (5) Variants of Concern (VOC). As of 27 December 2021, 23 MS (Algeria, Angola, 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 initiative Dashboard provides a breakdown of variant types reported by AU Member States. More information on SARS-COV-2 sequencing in Africa is available on the [Africa Pathogen Genomics Initiative Dashboard](#).

For Epi week 51 (20 - 26 December 2021), 279,052 new COVID-19 cases were reported, which is a 7% increase in the number of new cases reported compared to Epi week 50. The Southern Region accounted for 63% of the new COVID-19 cases reported for this week, followed by the Eastern (19%), Western (8%), Northern (6%) and Central (4%) regions. This week, eight countries accounted for 74% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: South Africa (38%), Ethiopia (8%), Kenya (7%), Zambia (6%), Nigeria (4%), Zimbabwe (4%), Mozambique (4%), and Angola (3%). The countries reporting the highest incidence (COVID-19 new cases per 1 million population per day) this week are Seychelles (1,503), Sao Tome and Principe (1,287), Guinea (1,150), Djibouti (940), Eswatini (427), Eritrea (180), Congo Republic (156), Somalia (149), Malawi (141), Senegal (99) and

² The dates are at a two-week interval; the last date is 27 December 2021.

Comoros (95). **Table 1** summarizes the cumulative COVID-19 cases and deaths reported by MS and AU geographic Region in Africa, and the new COVID-19 cases and deaths reported during Epi week 51.

Table 1: Confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths³ reported in Africa for epidemiological week 51 (20 - 26 December 2021).

Country by AU Region	Cumulative number of cases (new cases)	% change in new cases since week 50	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 50
Central Region	304,338 (11,163)	18%	4,159 (20)	54%
Burundi	26,999 (4,360)	149%	14 (0)	NA*
Cameroon	108,026 (0)	-100%	1,841 (0)	-100%
Central African Republic	12,219 (56)	-66%	101 (0)	NA*
Chad	5,703 (0)	-100%	182 (0)	NA*
Congo	20,089 (599)	41%	367 (0)	-100%
Democratic Republic of Congo	75,044 (4,986)	-28%	1,135 (18)	NA*
Equatorial Guinea	13,630 (12)	100%	175 (0)	NA*
Gabon	38,870 (1,127)	863%	287 (2)	NA*
Sao Tome and Principe	3,758 (23)	1050%	57 (0)	NA*
Eastern Region	1,150,464 (53,931)	235%	24,646 (212)	-34%
Comoros	5,729 (1,052)	874%	153 (2)	NA*
Djibouti	13,572 (37)	76%	189 (0)	NA*
Eritrea	7,886 (173)	158%	73 (8)	300%
Ethiopia	398,696 (22,321)	585%	6,898 (32)	-14%
Kenya	282,554 (18,847)	156%	5,361 (8)	60%
Madagascar	47,295 (1,501)	51%	1,027 (55)	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 50	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 50
Mauritius	23,208 (229)	-30%	686 (0)	-100%
Rwanda	101,984 (2,740)	385%	1,350 (4)	NA*
Seychelles	24,249 (52)	-82%	131 (0)	-100%
Somalia	23,537 (368)	287%	1,333 (0)	-100%
South Sudan	14,275 (661)	-9%	133 (0)	NA*
Sudan	46,079 (178)	-81%	3,298 (97)	NA*
Tanzania	26,309 (0)	-100%	734 (0)	-100%
Uganda	135,091 (5,772)	349%	3,280 (6)	20%
Northern Region	2,706,125 (17,725)	19%	74,816 (446)	-3%
Algeria	216,637 (1,802)	-9%	6,238 (48)	7%
Egypt	381,343 (6,013)	-2%	21,608 (247)	-18%
Libya	386,279 (3,938)	12%	5,665 (58)	26%
Mauritania	40,504 (378)	18%	862 (7)	17%
Morocco	956,119 (3,203)	123%	14,828 (18)	29%
Tunisia	723,422 (2,391)	65%	25,538 (68)	79%
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	1,821 (0)	-100%	77 (0)	-100%
Southern Region	4,618,434 (175,763)	-16%	113,452 (701)	132%
Angola	73,697 (7,759)	1353%	1,753 (15)	1400%
Botswana	212,482 (3,488)	-69%	2,439 (12)	300%
Eswatini	64,443 (4,407)	-40%	1,277 (16)	45%
Lesotho	28,195 (2,586)	8%	665 (0)	-100%
Malawi	71,007 (6,266)	150%	2,332 (21)	425%
Mozambique	171,502 (11,045)	63%	1,968 (16)	100%

Country by AU Region	Cumulative number of cases (new cases)	% change in new cases since week 50	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 50
Namibia	146,097 (6,579)	2%	3,611 (28)	460%
South Africa	3,413,540 (105,466)	-25%	90,814 (466)	121%
Zambia	233,120 (16,612)	206%	3,702 (23)	156%
Zimbabwe	204,351 (11,555)	-55%	4,891 (104)	112%
Western Region	709,819 (21,787)	100%	10,477 (63)	15%
Benin	24,935 (28)	180%	161 (0)	NA*
Burkina Faso	17,040 (0)	-100%	317 (0)	-100%
Cape Verde	39,072 (483)	462%	351 (0)	NA*
Côte d'Ivoire	63,392 (1,273)	495%	707 (1)	NA*
Gambia	10,136 (58)	76%	342 (0)	NA*
Ghana	138,957 (4,602)	88%	1,280 (11)	-21%
Guinea	31,238 (424)	2550%	684 (0)	NA*
Guinea-Bissau	6,466 (10)	25%	149 (0)	NA*
Liberia	5,929 (13)	-84%	287 (0)	NA*
Mali	20,079 (773)	8%	654 (15)	50%
Niger	7,271 (72)	89%	274 (2)	-50%
Nigeria	236,014 (12,127)	89%	3,014 (29)	625%
Senegal	74,412 (229)	152%	1,890 (4)	NA*
Sierra Leone	6,610 (105)	25%	121 (0)	NA*
Togo	28,268 (1,590)	472%	246 (1)	-50%
Total	9,489,180 (280,369)	8%	227,550 (1,442)	25%

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

NEW Africa CDC Response Activities

General:

1. Dr. John Nkengasong, Director of Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) hosted the Africa CDC weekly press briefing on Thursday 23 December 2021. He provided an update on the COVID-19 situation across the continent, including response efforts and updates on the progress of vaccinations across the continent. The recording is available on the [Africa CDC Twitter page](#).
2. As of 27 December 2021, 54 (98%) out of 55 AU MS have started COVID-19 vaccination campaigns targeting priority populations. Cumulatively, 297,9 million doses have been administered, and of the doses administered, 175.4 million have received the first dose and 118.9 million have received the second dose. Overall, 9% 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 88 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 9.3, respectively. For Epi week 51, a total of 1,368,956 new tests were conducted, a decrease of 27% compared to Epi week 50 when 1,847,016 tests were conducted.

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.

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.

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

- 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).
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/>
- 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>

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](#)