

Outbreak Brief #114: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 22 March 2022

Global count: 469,052,852 cases and 6,076,720 deaths

Data sources: World Health Organization and African Union Member States

Outbreak Update: As of 21 March 2022, a total of 469,052,852 COVID-19 cases and 6,076,720 related deaths (case fatality ratio (CFR): 1.3%) have been reported globally by 227 countries and territories to the World Health Organization (WHO). The distribution of cumulative cases (proportion of global cases) from the WHO regions (excluding Africa) are as follows: **Eastern Mediterranean Region** 18,212,887 (4%), **European Region** 193,660,994 (41%), **Region of the Americas** 149,760,111 (32%), **South-East Asia Region** 56,769,938 (12%) and **Western Pacific Region** 38,987,615 (8%). In the last seven days, the five countries reporting the highest number of new cases are Republic of Korea (2,716,603), Vietnam (1,845,400), Germany (1,538,602), France (603,150) and Australia (528,816). 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) 21 March 2022, a total of **11,301,084** COVID-19 cases and **250,646** deaths (CFR: **2.2%**) have been reported by the 55 African Union (AU) Member States (MS). This represents 2.4% of all cases and 4.1% of all deaths reported globally. Thirty-five (64%) AU MS are reporting CFRs higher than the global CFR. Since the detection of COVID-19 on the African continent in February 2020, 53 (96%) AU MS have experienced three COVID-19 waves, 47 (72%) countries have experienced four waves and nine countries have experienced five waves. One country (Mauritius) is currently experiencing a sixth wave. **Figure 1** shows the trend of new COVID-19 cases reported per day by the AU region from 15 February 2020 to 21 March 2022. Despite a test positivity rate of 11.1%, the daily reported number of new cases across the continent is on a downward trend. In the past week, more than 572 thousand new tests were conducted, which is a 32% decrease in the number of tests conducted in week 11 compared to the previous week. More information on the COVID-19 situation in Africa is available on the Africa CDC [daily dashboard](#) and [hotspot dashboard](#).

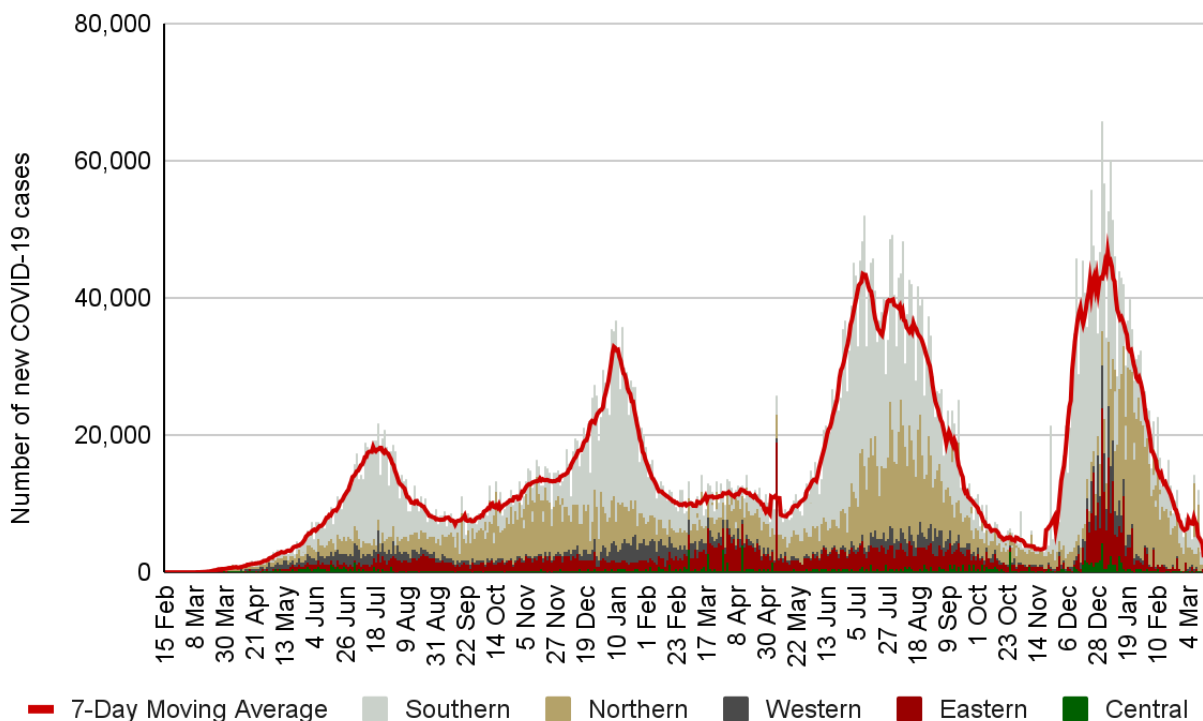


Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day in Africa by African Union region, 15 February 2020 - 21 March 2022¹.

As of 17 March 2022, 53 AU MS have reported the presence of the Alpha (48 MS), Beta (45), Delta (50), Gamma (6), Omicron (44) Variants of Concern (VOC), and/or Omicron sub-variant BA.2 (13).

The Pathogen Genomics Initiative Dashboard provides a breakdown of variants 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 11 (14 - 20 March 2022), 22,288 new COVID-19 cases were reported, which is a 55% decrease in the number of new cases reported compared to Epi week 10. The Southern Region accounted for 58% of the new COVID-19 cases reported this week, followed by the Northern (28%), Eastern (9%), Western (4%) and Central (1%) regions. The highest number of new daily COVID-19 cases per 1 million populations was reported from Seychelles (223), Mauritius (105) Tunisia (50) and South Africa (23). This week, 359 new deaths were reported, which is a 30% decrease in the number of new deaths reported compared to the previous week. Approximately 50% of these deaths were reported from the Southern Region, followed by the Northern (45%), Eastern (3%), Central (1%) and Western (1%) regions.

Table 1 summarizes the cumulative COVID-19 cases and deaths totals reported by MS and AU region in Africa, and the new COVID-19 cases and deaths reported during Epi week 11.

¹ The dates are at a two-week interval; the last date is 21 March 2022.

Table 1: Confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths² reported in Africa for epidemiological week 11 (14 - 20 March 2022).

Country by AU Region	Cumulative number of cases (new cases)	% change in new cases since week 10	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 10
Central Region	359,420 (205)	-45%	4,515 (0)	NA*
Burundi	38,317 (38)	-46%	15 (0)	NA*
Cameroon	119,414 (0)	-100%	1,926 (0)	NA*
Central African Republic	14,339 (5)	-38%	113 (0)	NA*
Chad	7,269 (2)	-78%	190 (0)	NA*
Congo	24,059 (10)	-66%	378 (0)	NA*
Democratic Republic of Congo	86,610 (135)	-16%	1,335 (0)	NA*
Equatorial Guinea	15,899 (1)	-75%	183 (0)	NA*
Gabon	47,573 (9)	350%	303 (0)	NA*
Sao Tome and Principe	5,940 (5)	400%	72 (0)	NA*
Eastern Region	1,392,768 (2,040)	-13%	27,284 (0)	-100%
Comoros	8,077 (8)	-62%	160 (0)	NA*
Djibouti	15,573 (8)	-47%	189 (0)	NA*
Eritrea	9,723 (2)	-67%	103 (0)	NA*
Ethiopia	469,455 (285)	40%	7,485 (0)	-100%
Kenya	323,289 (106)	19%	5,645 (0)	-100%
Madagascar	63,870 (0)	-100%	1,377 (0)	-100%
Mauritius	35,308 (952)	-27%	904 (0)	NA*
Rwanda	124,900 (49)	53%	1,459 (0)	NA*
Seychelles	39,761 (156)	-23%	163 (0)	NA*

² 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 10	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 10
Somalia	26,410 (10)	NA*	1,359 (0)	-100%
South Sudan	17,137 (73)	49%	137 (0)	NA*
Sudan	61,724 (93)	-35%	3,909 (0)	NA*
Tanzania	33,773 (47)	-56%	800 (0)	-100%
Uganda	163,768 (251)	149%	3,594 (0)	-100%
Northern Region	3,515,705 (2,208)	-93%	82,663 (0)	-100%
Algeria	265,548 (118)	-29%	6,864 (0)	-100%
Egypt	496,161 (788)	-82%	24,277 (0)	-100%
Libya	501,035 (731)	-61%	6,350 (0)	-100%
Mauritania	58,662 (4)	-56%	981 (0)	-100%
Morocco	1,162,497 (401)	-11%	16,039 (0)	-100%
Tunisia	1,029,762 (166)	-99%	28,062 (0)	-100%
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	2,040 (0)	NA*	90 (0)	NA*
Southern Region	5,198,297 (12,862)	-16%	124,599 (0)	-100%
Angola	99,015 (88)	-27%	1,900 (0)	NA*
Botswana	263,950 (0)	NA*	2,676 (0)	-100%
Eswatini	69,552 (117)	-15%	1,392 (0)	-100%
Lesotho	32,857 (82)	39%	697 (0)	NA*
Malawi	85,561 (62)	-11%	2,623 (0)	-100%
Mozambique	225,210 (31)	-21%	2,198 (0)	-100%
Namibia	157,523 (74)	-25%	4,014 (0)	NA*
South Africa	3,704,218 (9,714)	-5%	99,725 (0)	-100%
Zambia	315,892 (690)	-50%	3,960 (0)	-100%

Country by AU Region	Cumulative number of cases (new cases)	% change in new cases since week 10	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 10
Zimbabwe	244,519 (2,004)	-39%	5,414 (0)	-100%
Western Region	834,889 (948)	67%	11,325 (0)	-100%
Benin	26,952 (377)	NA*	163 (0)	NA*
Burkina Faso	20,813 (9)	NA*	378 (0)	NA*
Cape Verde	55,925 (19)	138%	401 (0)	NA*
Côte d'Ivoire	81,663 (65)	55%	796 (0)	-100%
Gambia	11,978 (15)	114%	365 (0)	NA*
Ghana	160,839 (123)	151%	1,445 (0)	-100%
Guinea	36,476 (26)	24%	778 (0)	NA*
Guinea-Bissau	8,113 (63)	271%	168 (0)	-100%
Liberia	7,397 (5)	-38%	294 (0)	NA*
Mali	30,453 (33)	50%	726 (0)	-100%
Niger	8,794 (13)	-13%	308 (0)	-100%
Nigeria	255,103 (150)	-49%	3,142 (0)	NA*
Senegal	85,827 (21)	-57%	1,964 (0)	-100%
Sierra Leone	7,674 (7)	600%	125 (0)	NA*
Togo	36,882 (22)	-33%	272 (0)	NA*
Total	11,301,079 (18,263)	-63%	250,386 (0)	-100%

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

New Africa CDC Response Activities

General:

1. Africa CDC's Partnership for African Vaccine Manufacturing (PAVM) held a Member State meeting with Ghana, Morocco and Nigeria to highlight the progress made in developing local vaccine manufacturing on 16 March 2022.
2. Africa CDC and WHO-AFRO held a joint workshop in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia from 16 - 18 March 2022. The workshop focused on identifying key priority areas of collaboration and developing a joint plan to address Emergency Preparedness and Response gaps and challenges in Africa.
3. Africa CDC and the African Union Commission (AUC) Women, Gender and Youth Directorate through its youth division held a partners' forum for the "AU COVID-19 Vaccination Bingwa Initiative" on 17 March 2022.
4. As of 21 March 2022, 54 (98%) of the 55 AU MS have started COVID-19 vaccination campaigns targeting priority populations. Cumulatively, 489.9 million doses have been administered. Of the doses administered, 268.2 million people have been partially vaccinated, 205.1 million have been fully vaccinated, and 16.3 million have received a booster dose. Overall, 15.3% 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 101.9 million tests for COVID-19 have been conducted in Africa since February 2020. The cumulative positivity rate³ and test per case ratio⁴ are 11.1% and 9, respectively. For Epi week 11, a total of 615,481 new tests were conducted, a decrease of 27% compared to Epi week 10 when 842,884 tests were conducted.
2. As part of the Agency's PGI webinar series, Africa CDC held a webinar on Pathogen Genomics in Africa titled "Genomic Surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 in Kenya: March 2020 to February 2022." on 16 March 2022 at 2 p.m. EAT. The recording is available on the [AFRICA CDC YouTube page](#).
3. Africa CDC's laboratory technical working group (TWG) conducted a workshop on the "Development of the Africa CDC certificate training curriculum for sample referral" from 7 - 18 March 2022 in Kampala, Uganda.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

1. The sixth session of the 11th IPC webinar series titled "Importance of Ventilation for IPC in the context of COVID-19" was held on Wednesday 16 March 2022 at 1 p.m. EAT for 539 participants in English and on Thursday 17 March 2022 at 2 p.m. for 184 participants in French.
 - a. French session recording:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jrxdvoowisw>

³ [Public health criteria to adjust public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19](#)

⁴ WHO set 10-30 tests per every confirmed case as a general benchmark of adequate testing.

Surveillance

1. Africa CDC will host a webinar titled "Integration of Community Healthcare Workers (CHWs) into the broader health systems" on 23 March 2022 at 4 p.m. EAT. The session will focus on the role of CHWs in pandemic preparedness and response. Register [here](#).
2. Africa CDC in collaboration with the Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, and Water and Environment in Uganda conducted a training on Event Based Surveillance (EBS) from 14 - 18 March 2022. The Ministries will work together to establish a coordinated EBS framework using the One Health approach for Uganda, with support from Africa CDC.

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-19⁵ surveillance efforts to include:
 - a. Syndromic surveillance for influenza-like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI).⁶
 - b. Rapid mortality surveillance that focuses on collection, analysis and use of all-cause mortality data captured from facility and/or community-based surveillance activities.⁷
 - c. Genomic surveillance⁸ to monitor the presence of variants and the spread and continuous evolution of the virus.
 - d. Community-based surveillance⁹ to detect symptomatic cases early for treatment and to minimize viral transmission.
2. AU Member States should continue to perform contact tracing of confirmed cases based on country capacity. When possible, Member States should enhance diagnostic screening efforts using the rapid antigen tests¹⁰.
3. All AU Member States should notify and routinely share data with Africa CDC and WHO on confirmed COVID-19 cases, deaths, recoveries, tests conducted and infected

⁵ [WHO COVID-19 Case definition](#)

⁶ 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](#)

⁷ Revealing the toll of COVID-19: A technical package for AU Member States – Africa CDC

⁸ Genomic sequencing of SARS-CoV-2: a guide to implementation for maximum impact on public health

⁹ [Enhanced COVID-19 Surveillance at the Community Level in Africa](#)

¹⁰ [Interim Guidance on the Use of Rapid Antigen tests for COVID-19 Response – Africa CDC](#)

healthcare workers to support data 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 continue to organize and implement COVID-19 vaccination campaigns, with a focus on increasing demand and addressing misinformation and false rumors.
6. AU Member States should implement and/or enhance 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-hotspot-and-phsm-tiers-dashboards/>
- 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>