

Outbreak Brief #115: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 29 March 2022

Global count: 479,994,739 cases and 6,123,749 deaths

Data sources: World Health Organization and African Union Member States

Outbreak Update: As of 28 March 2022, a total of 479,994,739 COVID-19 cases and 6,123,749 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 (percentage of global cases) from the WHO regions (excluding Africa) are as follows: **Eastern Mediterranean Region** 18,246,216 (4%), **European Region** 199,160,734 (41%), **Region of the Americas** 150,351,422 (31%), **South-East Asia Region** 57,003,334 (12%) and **Western Pacific Region** 43,545,056 (9%). In the last seven days, the five countries reporting the highest number of new cases are Republic of Korea (2,420,494), Germany (1,551,448), Vietnam (1,053,425), France (874,065) and Italy (502,980). 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) 28 March 2022, a total of **11,323,949** COVID-19 cases and **250,948** 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) experienced a sixth wave. **Figure 1** shows the number of new COVID-19 cases reported by the AU region from 15 February 2020 to 28 March 2022. Despite a test positivity rate of 11%, the daily reported number of new cases across the continent is on a downward trend. More than 720,000 tests were conducted during the past week, reflecting a 14% increase in the number of tests 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](#).

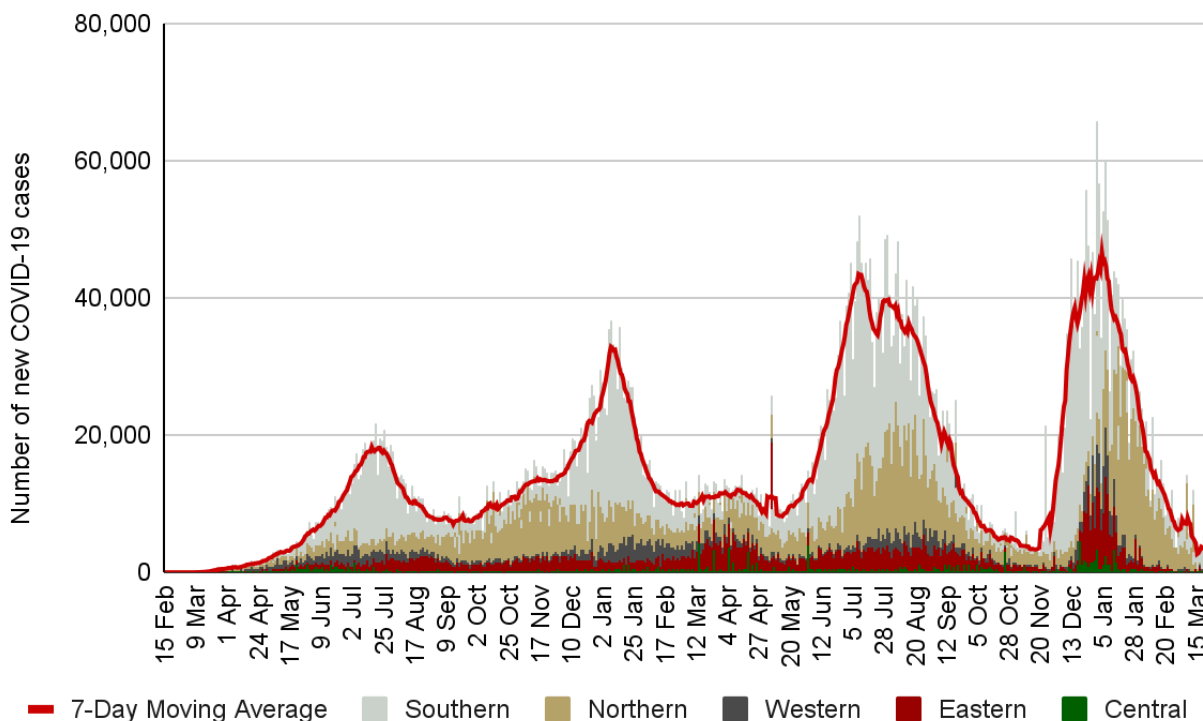


Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day in Africa by African Union region, 15 February 2020 - 28 March 2022¹.

As of 24 March 2022, 53 AU MS have reported the presence of the Alpha (48 MS), Beta (45), Delta (50), Gamma (6), Omicron (45) variants of concern (VOC). Additionally, 15 MS are reporting the presence of the Omicron BA.2 sub-variant.

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 12 (21 - 27 March 2022), 18,597 new COVID-19 cases were reported, reflecting a 17% decrease in the number of new cases reported compared to Epi week 11. The Southern Region accounted for 56% of the new COVID-19 cases reported this week, followed by the Northern (30%), Eastern (7%), Western (3%) and Central (1%) regions. The highest number of new daily COVID-19 cases per 1 million population was reported from Seychelles (640), Mauritius (100), South Africa (19) and Eswatini (13). This week, 202 new deaths were reported, which is a 4% decrease in the number of new deaths reported compared to the previous week. Approximately 51% of these deaths were reported from the Southern Region, followed by the Northern (44%), Eastern (3%), Central (1%) and Western (1%) regions.

¹ The dates are at a two-week interval; the last date is 28 March 2022.

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 12.

Table 1: Confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths² reported in Africa for epidemiological week 12 (21 - 27 March 2022).

Country by AU Region	Cumulative number of cases (new cases)	% change in new cases since week 11	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 11
Central Region	359,880 (245)	-42%	4,521 (0)	-100%
Burundi	38,463 (91)	-2%	15 (0)	NA*
Cameroon	119,544 (0)	-100%	1,927 (0)	-100%
Central African Republic	14,344 (0)	-100%	113 (0)	NA*
Chad	7,288 (2)	-89%	190 (0)	NA*
Congo	24,062 (3)	-70%	383 (0)	-100%
Democratic Republic of Congo	86,747 (137)	1%	1,335 (0)	NA*
Equatorial Guinea	15,903 (4)	300%	183 (0)	NA*
Gabon	47,584 (3)	-82%	303 (0)	NA*
Sao Tome and Principe	5,945 (5)	No change	72 (0)	NA*
Eastern Region	1,394,683 (1,915)	-6%	27,294 (0)	-100%
Comoros	8,083 (6)	-25%	160 (0)	NA*
Djibouti	15,580 (7)	-13%	189 (0)	NA*
Eritrea	9,726 (3)	50%	103 (0)	NA*
Ethiopia	469,621 (166)	-42%	7,489 (0)	-100%
Kenya	323,374 (85)	-20%	5,647 (0)	-100%
Madagascar	63,928 (58)	NA*	1,377 (0)	NA*
Mauritius	36,220 (912)	-4%	904 (0)	NA*
Rwanda	124,946 (46)	-6%	1,459 (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 11	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 11
Seychelles	40,209 (448)	187%	163 (0)	NA*
Somalia	26,410 (0)	-100%	1,361 (0)	-100%
South Sudan	17,222 (85)	16%	138 (0)	-100%
Sudan	61,724 (0)	-100%	3,909 (0)	NA*
Tanzania	33,797 (24)	-49%	800 (0)	NA*
Uganda	163,843 (75)	-70%	3,595 (0)	-100%
Northern Region	3,525,241 (5,567)	-10%	82,825 (0)	-100%
Algeria	265,562 (14)	-88%	6,871 (0)	-100%
Egypt	500,889 (4,728)	500%	24,289 (0)	-100%
Libya	501,559 (524)	-28%	6,377 (0)	-100%
Mauritania	58,665 (3)	-25%	981 (0)	NA*
Morocco	1,162,764 (267)	-33%	16,052 (0)	-100%
Tunisia	1,033,762 (31)	-99%	28,165 (0)	-100%
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	2,040 (0)	NA*	90 (0)	NA*
Southern Region	5,208,718 (10,398)	-19%	124,778 (0)	-100%
Angola	99,115 (100)	14%	1,900 (0)	NA*
Botswana	263,950 (0)	NA*	2,676 (0)	NA*
Eswatini	69,664 (112)	-4%	1,392 (0)	NA*
Lesotho	32,896 (16)	-85%	697 (0)	NA*
Malawi	85,610 (49)	-21%	2,626 (0)	-100%
Mozambique	225,239 (29)	-6%	2,200 (0)	-100%
Namibia	157,611 (88)	19%	4,016 (0)	-100%
South Africa	3,712,263 (8,045)	-17%	99,881 (0)	-100%

Country by AU Region	Cumulative number of cases (new cases)	% change in new cases since week 11	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 11
Zambia	316,550 (658)	-5%	3,963 (0)	-100%
Zimbabwe	245,820 (1,301)	-35%	5,427 (0)	-100%
Western Region	835,394 (472)	-52%	11,328 (0)	-100%
Benin	26,952 (0)	-100%	163 (0)	NA*
Burkina Faso	20,822 (9)	No change	379 (0)	-100%
Cape Verde	55,948 (21)	No change	401 (0)	NA*
Côte d'Ivoire	81,713 (50)	-23%	796 (0)	NA*
Gambia	11,986 (8)	-47%	365 (0)	NA*
Ghana	160,925 (55)	-64%	1,445 (0)	NA*
Guinea	36,492 (16)	-38%	778 (0)	NA*
Guinea-Bissau	8,131 (18)	-71%	169 (0)	-100%
Liberia	7,397 (0)	-100%	294 (0)	NA*
Mali	30,472 (19)	-42%	727 (0)	-100%
Niger	8,801 (7)	-46%	308 (0)	NA*
Nigeria	255,296 (193)	29%	3,142 (0)	NA*
Senegal	85,868 (41)	95%	1,964 (0)	NA*
Sierra Leone	7,674 (0)	-100%	125 (0)	NA*
Togo	36,917 (35)	59%	272 (0)	NA*
Total	11,323,916 (18,597)	-17%	250,746 (0)	-100%

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

New Africa CDC Response Activities

General:

1. Dr. John Nkengasong, Director of Africa CDC hosted the Africa CDC weekly press briefing on Thursday 24 March 2022 at 12 p.m. EAT. He provided an update on the COVID-19 situation across the continent, including response efforts and progress on increasing COVID-19 vaccination coverage. The recording is available on the [Africa CDC Twitter page](#).
2. Africa CDC's Consortium for COVID-19 Vaccine Clinical Trials (CONVACT) will hold a webinar titled "Vaccines, vaccines and variants: what can we expect next?" on 29 March 2022 at 12 p.m. EAT. Register [here](#).
3. As of 28 March 2022, 54 (98%) of the 55 AU MS have started COVID-19 vaccination campaigns targeting priority populations. Cumulatively, 493,8 million doses have been administered. Of the doses administered, 270.1 million people have been partially vaccinated, 206.6 million have been fully vaccinated, and 17 million have received a booster dose. Overall, 15.4% 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](#).
4. Africa CDC is co-hosting a webinar titled "Global Call to Action: End the COVID-19 Crisis and Prevent the Next Pandemic" on 29 March 2022 at 3 p.m. EAT. The webinar will focus on the urgent actions needed at the Global COVID-19 Leaders' Summit, G7 and G20 Summits and other critical events and convenings to bring COVID-19 pandemic to an end and sustainably prepare for the next.
Register [here](#).

Laboratory:

1. Over 102.5 million tests for COVID-19 have been conducted in Africa since February 2020. The cumulative positivity rate³ and test per case ratio⁴ are 11% and 9.1, respectively. During Epi week 12, a total of 720,119 tests were conducted, an increase of 14% from the 630,909 tests conducted during Epi week 11.
2. Africa CDC is holding a workshop on "Hands-on training on SARS-CoV-2 genome sequencing and bioinformatics analysis" at the International Livestock Research Institute in Nairobi, Kenya from 28 March - 8 April 2022.
3. As part of the PGI webinar series, Africa CDC will hold a webinar on Pathogen Genomics in Africa titled "Phylogenetics in and beyond the pandemic." on 29 March 2022 at 2 p.m. EAT. Register [here](#)

Sciences, Standards and Regulations:

1. Subscribe [here](#) to receive the 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](#).

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.

Recommendations for the Member States

1. To meet the 70% global vaccination coverage rates, AU Member States should continue to **organize and implement COVID-19 vaccination campaigns**, with a focus on increasing eligibility⁵ and demand, while addressing misinformation.
2. To **ensure public health and social measure (PHSM) implementation** is both targeted and informed by the current COVID-19 situation, AU Member States should put in place a tiered PHSM system⁶.
3. AU Member States should continue to **enhance COVID-19⁷ surveillance** efforts to include:
 - a. Community-based surveillance⁸ to detect symptomatic cases early and minimize viral transmission. Where feasible, rapid antigen tests⁹ and self-testing¹⁰ can be used to enhance diagnostic screening efforts.
 - b. Rapid mortality surveillance¹¹ that focuses on collection, analysis and use of all-cause mortality data captured from facility and/or community-based surveillance activities to improve knowledge of COVID-19 related outcomes.
 - c. Genomic surveillance¹² to monitor the presence of variants and the spread and continuous evolution of the virus.
 - d. Syndromic surveillance for influenza-like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI)¹³ to monitor COVID-19 trends in comparison to other respiratory pathogens.
4. AU Member States are encouraged to:
 - a. Continue contact tracing activities where feasible based on the current epidemiological situation and country capacity.
 - b. guide the general public about seeking immediate medical care for individuals who develop severe symptoms of COVID-19 (e.g. difficulty breathing).
 - c. Engage social scientists to help inform and enhance vaccination campaigns and PHSM implementation.
5. 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 healthcare workers to support data for action. Notify Africa CDC by emailing: AfricaCDCEBS@africa-union.org.

Resources for more information

- Africa CDC COVID-19 updates <https://africacdc.org/covid-19/>

⁵ [Vaccination Advocacy Infographics – Africa CDC](#)

⁶ [COVID-19 Tiered Public Health and Social Measure Framework for Africa](#)

⁷ [WHO COVID-19 Case definition](#)

⁸ [Enhanced COVID-19 Surveillance at the Community Level in Africa](#)

⁹ [Interim Guidance on the Use of Rapid Antigen tests for COVID-19 Response – Africa CDC](#)

¹⁰ [Interim guidance on COVID-19 Rapid Antigen self-testing to African Union Member States – Africa CDC](#)

¹¹ [Revealing the toll of COVID-19: A technical package for AU Member States – Africa CDC](#)

¹² [Interim operational guidance on SARS-CoV-2 genomic surveillance in Africa: An updated guide](#)

¹³ [Protocol for Enhanced Severe Acute Respiratory Illness and Influenza-Like Illness Surveillance for COVID-19 in Africa – Africa CDC](#)

- 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://africadccovid.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>