

## Outbreak Brief #54: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 26 January 2021

**98,811,424 cases and 2,124,799 deaths**

*Data sources: World Health Organization and African Union Member States*

**Outbreak Update:** Since the last brief (19 January 2021), 5,145,748 new confirmed<sup>1</sup> coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases and 101,239 new deaths have been reported globally. To date, a total of 98,811,424 COVID-19 cases and 2,124,799 related deaths (case fatality rate (CFR): 2.2%) have been reported from 225 countries and territories. The distribution of cumulative cases (proportion of global cases) from the World Health Organization (WHO) reporting regions (excluding Africa) are as follows: Eastern Mediterranean Region 4,552,061 (5%), European Region 32,980,237 (33%), Region of the Americas 43,763,906 (44%), South-East Asia Region 12,683,853 (13%) and Western Pacific Region 1,358,794 (1%). Among the affected locations, the United States has reported more than one million new cases each week for the last 11 consecutive weeks, while for the last seven days, the United Kingdom and Brazil reported over 200,000 new cases. For more detailed information on cases and deaths being reported outside of Africa, refer to the WHO daily situation reports.<sup>2</sup>

**As of 9 am East African Time (EAT) 26 January 2021,** a total of 3,455,328 COVID-19 cases and 85,883 deaths (CFR: 2.5%) have been reported in 55 African Union (AU) Member States. This is 3.5% of all cases reported globally. The majority (86%) of Member States continue to report community transmission. Of the countries actively reporting COVID-19 epidemiologic data, 21 countries are reporting case fatality rates higher than the global case fatality rate of 2.2%. These include Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (15.4%), Sudan (6.2%), Egypt (5.5%), Liberia (4.4%), Mali (4.1%), Chad (3.6%), Niger (3.5%), Eswatini (3.4%), Zimbabwe (3.4%), Gambia (3.2%), Tunisia (3.2%), Comoros (3.2%), Democratic Republic of Congo (3%), South Africa (2.9%), Somalia (2.7%), Algeria (2.7%), Malawi (2.6%), Mauritania (2.5%), Angola (2.4%), Sierra Leone (2.4%), and Senegal (2.3%).

**For Epi week 3 (18 January 2021 - 24 January 2021),** 173,556 new COVID-19 cases have been reported, which is a 17% decrease in the number of new cases reported compared to Epi week 2. The decrease is largely due to the recent decrease in new cases being reported from South Africa over the last week. The majority of new COVID-19 cases being reported for this week are from the Southern region (62%) followed by the Northern (20%), Western (12%), Eastern (4%) and Central (2%) regions. The countries reporting the highest incidence (COVID-19 new cases per 100,000 population) this week include South Africa (129), Seychelles (267), Tunisia (142), Eswatini (110), Cape Verde (83), Namibia (79), Botswana (77), Comoros (75), Libya (68) and Lesotho (56). South

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

<sup>2</sup> WHO coronavirus disease (COVID-19) dashboard: <https://covid19.who.int/>

Africa is still reporting the highest number of new cases of all Member States and the 501Y.V2 variant continues to spread across the continent. To date, there are six Member States who have reported presence of the 501Y.V2 variant: Botswana, Comoros, Ghana, Kenya, South Africa, and Zambia.

Table 1 highlights the reported cases and deaths from COVID-19 in all countries in Africa for Epi week 3. The table reports the current phase of the epidemic for each country. Figure 1 shows the trend of new COVID-19 cases reported by day and region from 15 February to date. The recent downward trend is due to the reduced number of new cases being reported from South Africa, which continues to drive the continental trends. This week, five countries account for about 72% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: South Africa (43%), Tunisia (10%), Nigeria (6%), Zambia (5%), Malawi (4%) and Morocco (4%).

**Table 1. Confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths<sup>3</sup> reported in Africa for Epi week 3 (18 January 2021 - 24 January 2021)**

Country	Number of cases (new)	Percent change in new cases since the previous Epi week (2)	Number of deaths (new)	Percent change in new deaths since the previous Epi week (2)	Epidemic phase <sup>4</sup>
<b>Central Region</b>	<b>85,919 (3,605)</b>	<b>-9%</b>	<b>1,591 (41)</b>	<b>5%</b>	
Burundi	1,472 (236)	-6%	2 (0)	NA*	3
Cameroon	29,617 (1,607)	74%	462 (7)	75%	3
Central African Republic	4,980 (6)	500%	63 (0)	NA*	3
Chad	3,182 (263)	-20%	116 (3)	-50%	3
Congo	7,794 (85)	-83%	117 (3)	-50%	3

<sup>3</sup> Data is continuously verified for accuracy and reliability however it may change based on retrospective updates from Member States.

<sup>4</sup> Phases defined according to Africa CDC's Recommendations for a stepwise COVID-19 response - <https://africacdc.org/download/recommendations-for-stepwise-response-to-covid-19/>: **Phase 0 (No COVID-19 case)**: no reported case in-country; **Phase 1 (Early stage outbreak)**: one or more imported cases, limited local transmission related to imported cases; **Phase 2 (Expanding outbreak)**: increasing number of imported cases, increased local spread but all cases linked to known transmission chains, outbreak clusters with a known common exposure; **Phase 3 (Advancing outbreak)**: localized outbreaks start to merge, one or more cases or deaths occur outside known transmission, multiple generations in transmission chains, cases are detected among severe acute respiratory illness (SARI) case with no known exposure; **Phase 4 (Large outbreak with nationwide transmission)**: widespread sustained community transmission, multiple generation transmission chains can be identified but most cases occurring outside of chains, community-wide transmission throughout all or nearly all of the country.

Democratic Republic of Congo	21,954 (894)	-45%	661 (27)	17%	3
Equatorial Guinea	5,454 (89)	29%	86 (0)	NA*	3
Gabon	10,278 (379)	85%	67 (1)	NA*	3
Sao Tome and Principe	1,188 (46)	-39%	17 (0)	NA*	3
<b>Eastern Region</b>	<b>352,642 (7,056)</b>	<b>-10%</b>	<b>6,651 (122)</b>	<b>-4%</b>	
Comoros	2,268 (676)	53%	71 (26)	-4%	3
Djibouti	5,919 (14)	-59%	61 (0)	NA*	3
Eritrea	1,940 (63)	-80%	6 (0)	NA*	3
Ethiopia	133,676 (2,481)	-14%	2,066 (36)	No change	3
Kenya	99,983 (821)	-8%	1,744 (13)	-38%	3
Madagascar	18,743 (0)	-100%	279 (0)	-100%	3
Mauritius	556 (9)	13%	10 (0)	NA*	3
Rwanda	12,975 (1,943)	39%	174 (32)	45%	3
Seychelles	972 (267)	53%	3 (1)	No change	3
Somalia	4,754 (10)	NA*	130 (0)	NA*	3
South Sudan	3,788 (118)	1375%	64 (1)	NA*	3
Sudan	27,371 (0)	NA*	1,704 (0)	NA*	3
Tanzania <sup>5</sup>	509 (0)	NA*	21 (0)	NA*	3
Uganda	39,188 (654)	-10%	318 (13)	333%	3
<b>Northern Region</b>	<b>1,063,100 (35,372)</b>	<b>-12%</b>	<b>28,463 (1,248)</b>	<b>3%</b>	
Algeria	105,493 (1,660)	-2%	2,863 (27)	-7%	3
Egypt	161,817 (5,420)	-18%	8,959 (376)	-3%	3
Libya	114,429 (4,560)	2%	1,782 (84)	-23%	3
Mauritania	16,397 (358)	-32%	416 (14)	-22%	3

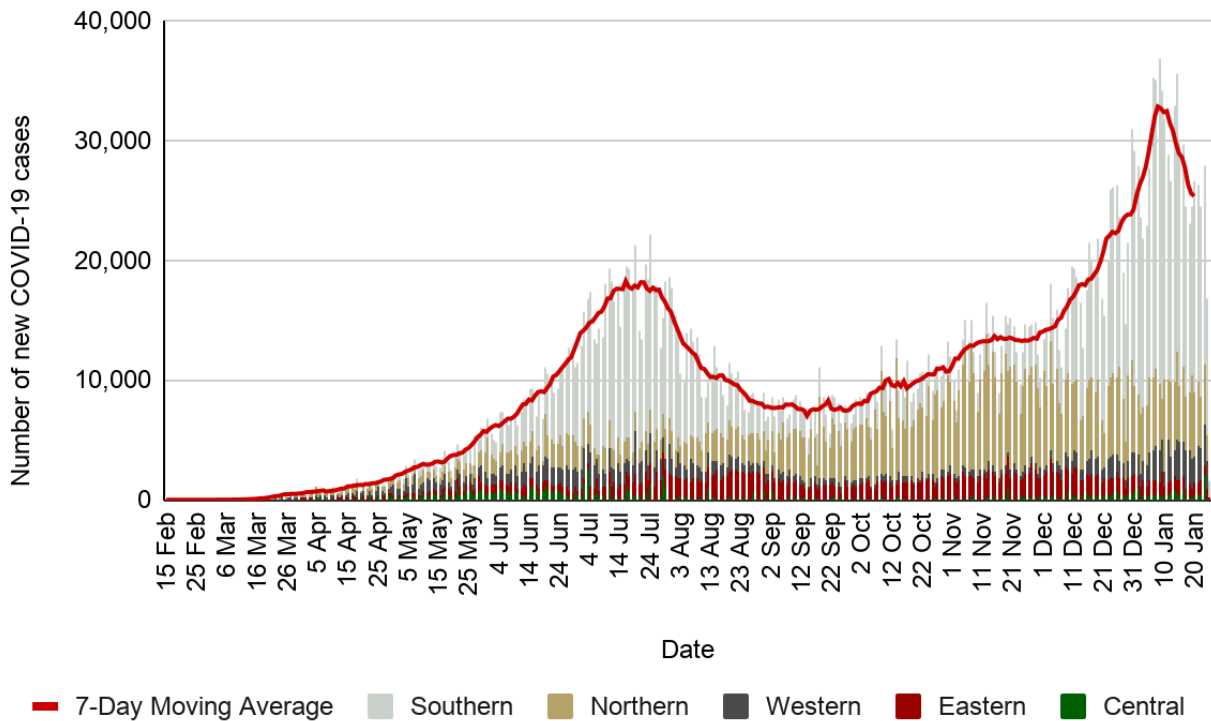
<sup>5</sup> Last report received 7-May-2020.

Morocco	466,289 (6,618)	-7%	8,150 (208)	5%	3
Tunisia	198,636 (16,751)	NA*	6,287 (537)	NA*	3
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	39 (5)	-100%	6 (2)	-100%	3
<b>Southern Region</b>	<b>1,636,078 (107,140)</b>	<b>-22%</b>	<b>44,835 (4,638)</b>	<b>2%</b>	
Angola	19,399 (524)	-23%	459 (23)	15%	3
Botswana	20,658 (2,028)	9%	124 (36)	24%	3
Eswatini	14,484 (1,540)	2%	479 (103)	27%	3
Lesotho	7,656 (1,285)	196%	123 (30)	275%	3
Malawi	19,395 (6,925)	78%	508 (194)	118%	3
Mozambique	32,418 (5,867)	27%	305 (64)	31%	3
Namibia	32,425 (2,062)	-2%	319 (34)	10%	3
South Africa	1,412,986 (75,060)	-29%	40,874 (3,769)	-4%	3
Zambia	45,337 (7,732)	-22%	639 (93)	21%	3
Zimbabwe	31,320 (4,117)	-28%	1,005 (292)	42%	3
<b>Western Region</b>	<b>305,382 (20,383)</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>3,842 (189)</b>	<b>-7%</b>	
Benin	3,643 (86)	-66%	48 (2)	No change	3
Burkina Faso	10,038 (850)	-23%	112 (10)	-23%	3
Cape Verde	13,489 (496)	-11%	127 (8)	100%	3
Côte d'Ivoire	26,850 (1,609)	8%	146 (5)	150%	3
Gambia	3,972 (62)	17%	128 (1)	-50%	3
Ghana	62,135 (3,313)	64%	372 (14)	-22%	3
Guinea	14,379 (214)	16%	82 (1)	NA*	2
Guinea-Bissau	2,532 (23)	-26%	45 (0)	NA*	2
Liberia	1,914 (18)	-81%	84 (0)	-100%	2
Mali	7,983 (144)	-40%	323 (13)	8%	2
Niger	4,353 (197)	-29%	151 (11)	-21%	2
Nigeria	121,566 (11,179)	-1%	1,497 (62)	-27%	1

Senegal	24,727 (1,699)	-5%	575 (60)	20%	1
Sierra Leone	3,139 (133)	-23%	77 (0)	NA*	1
Togo	4,662 (360)	4%	75 (2)	100%	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,443,121 (173,556)</b>	<b>-17%</b>	<b>85,382 (6,238)</b>	<b>2%</b>	

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

**Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day and AU region, 15 February 2020 - 26 January 2021**



**NEW Africa CDC Response Activities**

**General:**

1. Last week, Africa CDC received procurement of 500 cubic meters of personal protective equipment (PPE) supplies from UNICEF's procurement services. As a continental response to COVID-19.
2. Last week, Dr. Nkengasong hosted Africa CDC's weekly press briefing on Thursday, 21 January 2021 at 11 am EAT. The recording is available on the Africa CDC Facebook page. Link: <https://web.facebook.com/watch/?v=757691255074767&extid=gyiQO5GcQdC8XNaY>
3. The Public Health Emergency Operations Centres (PHEOCs) and COVID-19 Management webinar series is addressing 'Learning Lessons from Public Health Emergencies' this week.

The webinar will be held on Thursday, 28 January 2021 at 3 pm EAT. Registration link: [bit.ly/3jxGzv9](https://bit.ly/3jxGzv9)

### Laboratory:

1. To date, over 30 million tests for COVID-19 have been conducted across the continent with a positivity rate of 11.4% and test per case ratio of 8.8, which is a 3.2% increase from last week.
2. A total of 104,450 antigen tests procured by African Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM) through the support of Global Affairs Canada will be distributed to five Member States (DRC, Niger, Burkina Faso, Congo and Sierra Leone).

### Healthcare Preparedness and Medical Countermeasures:

#### Case Management

1. Last week, Africa CDC's Case Management TWG held the 39th clinical webinar titled "Support for families of COVID-19 patients in Africa" on Thursday, 21 January 2021 at 2 pm EAT. There were 120+ participants on the webinar and IWD Facebook page. The recording can be accessed here: <https://www.africacdc.training/courses/ccop>

#### Infection and Prevention Control (IPC)

1. This week, the IPC TWG will hold its second webinar session titled "The value of observation: how to exploit it to support behaviour change in hand hygiene" in English on Wednesday, 27 January 2021 at 1 pm EAT. The French session will be held on Friday, 29 January 2021 at 1 pm EAT. Register here: [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_IIC9yfl9QDSyFQmvo61tOw](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_IIC9yfl9QDSyFQmvo61tOw)

### Surveillance

1. Africa CDC continues to support 17 Member States with the implementation of serosurveys. Data sharing agreements have been obtained from two countries (Uganda and Nigeria) so far.
2. Africa CDC continues to support two AU Member States (Uganda and South Africa) with mortality surveillance implementation. This week, data collection in Uganda has commenced.

### Sciences, Standards and Regulations:

1. Access the biweekly COVID-19 Scientific and Public Health Policy Update which is published every other week on Tuesdays at <https://africacdc.org/resources/> or the WHO AFRO link: [https://afrolib.afro.who.int/pmb/opac\\_css/doc\\_num.php?explnum\\_id=7728](https://afrolib.afro.who.int/pmb/opac_css/doc_num.php?explnum_id=7728)
2. 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 website](#).

## Recommendations for the Member States

1. All Member States should continue to enhance their surveillance<sup>6</sup> to include COVID-19<sup>7</sup> and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI)<sup>8</sup>. Examples of enhanced surveillance include:
  - a. Adding questions about travel, contact history, and testing for coronaviruses to existing influenza surveillance systems;
  - b. Notifying healthcare facilities to immediately inform local public health officials about persons who meet the case definition for COVID-19, SARI and/or have recent travel to a country with local transmission or history of contact with a case.
2. Member States should perform contact tracing of confirmed cases based on transmission type and country capacity.<sup>9</sup>
3. Member states should notify and routinely share with WHO and Africa CDC data regarding suspected or confirmed COVID-19 cases, deaths, recoveries, tests conducted and healthcare workers infected to continually inform these and other updates. Notify Africa CDC by emailing: [AfricaCDCEBS@africa-union.org](mailto:AfricaCDCEBS@africa-union.org).
4. Member states should continue to guide the general public about seeking immediate medical care and informing healthcare providers about recent travel or contact history in anyone who develops symptoms of severe respiratory illness.
5. Member states should put in place or strengthen existing public health and social measures as cases start to rise especially through the holiday.

### Resources for more information:

#### *Africa CDC Resources*

- Africa CDC COVID-19 updates: <https://africacdc.org/covid-19/>
- Multimedia: <https://africacdc.org/covid-19-multimedia/>
- Resources, policy guidelines, and infographics: <https://africacdc.org/covid-19/covid-19-resources/>

#### *Other Resources*

- European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control. <https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/novel-coronavirus-china>
- US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/novel-coronavirus-2019.html>

<sup>6</sup>Africa CDC Protocol for enhanced surveillance for COVID-19 in Africa: <https://africacdc.org/download/protocol-for-enhanced-severe-acute-respiratory-illness-and-influenza-like-illness-surveillance-for-covid-19-in-africa/>

<sup>7</sup>WHO COVID-19 surveillance guidance and case definition: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/who-2019-nCoV-surveillanceguidance-2020.7>

<sup>8</sup>WHO SARI case definition: anyone with an acute respiratory infection with a history of fever (or measured fever of  $\geq 38\text{ }^{\circ}\text{C}$ ) and cough with symptom onset within the last 10 days that requires hospitalization.

[https://www.who.int/influenza/surveillance\\_monitoring/ili\\_sari\\_surveillance\\_case\\_definition/en/](https://www.who.int/influenza/surveillance_monitoring/ili_sari_surveillance_case_definition/en/)

<sup>9</sup>Africa CDC Guidance on Contact Tracing for COVID-19 Pandemic: <https://africacdc.org/download/guidance-on-contact-tracing-for-covid-19-pandemic/>

- WHO. Technical Guidance. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance>
- Partnership for Evidence-Based Response to COVID-19 (PERC) <https://preventepidemics.org/covid19/perc/>