

# Outbreak Brief #58: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 23 February 2021

**111,109,715 cases and 2,463,201 deaths**

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

**Outbreak Update:** Since the last brief (16 February 2021), 2,351,225 new confirmed<sup>1</sup> coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases and 66,384 new deaths have been reported globally. To date, a total of 111,109,715 COVID-19 cases and 2,463,210 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 5,148,429 (5%), European Region 37,679,536 (34%), Region of the Americas 49,465,467 (44%), South-East Asia Region 13,368,276 (12%) and Western Pacific Region 1,583,836 (1%). Over the last seven days, the United States, Brazil, and France have reported more than 100k 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) 23 February 2021,** a total of 3,836,817 COVID-19 cases and 101,629 deaths (CFR: 2.6%) have been reported in 55 African Union (AU) Member States. This is 3.5% of all cases reported globally. The majority (91%) of Member States continue to report community transmission. Eight Member States reported the presence of the 501Y.V1 variant (lineage B.1.1.7): DR Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa and The Gambia. Ten Member States have reported the presence of the 501Y.V2 variant (B.1.351): Botswana, Comoros, DR Congo, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, The Gambia, and Zambia. Of the countries actively reporting COVID-19 epidemiologic data, 21 are reporting case fatality rates higher than the global case fatality rate of 2.2%: Sahrawi Republic (16.7%), Sudan (6.2%), Egypt (5.8%), Liberia (4.3%), Mali (4.2%), Comoros (4.1%), Zimbabwe (4.0%), Eswatini (3.8%), Niger (3.6%), Chad (3.5%), Tunisia (3.4%), Somalia (3.3%), Malawi (3.3%), South Africa (3.3%), The Gambia (3.1%), DR Congo (2.8%), Lesotho (2.8%), Algeria (2.6%), Mauritania (2.5%), Senegal (2.5%), and Angola (2.4%).

**For Epi week 7 (15 - 21 February 2021),** 72,342 new COVID-19 cases have been reported, which is a 14% decrease in the number of new cases reported compared to Epi week 6. The majority of new COVID-19 cases being reported for this week are from the Southern region (38%) followed by the Northern (22%), Western (19%), Eastern (16%) and Central (5%) regions. The countries reporting the highest incidence (COVID-19 new cases per 100,000 population) this week include Seychelles (623), Sao Tome and Principe (91), Namibia (84), Cabo Verde (73), and Tunisia (65).

<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/>

Table 1 highlights the reported cases and deaths from COVID-19 in all countries in Africa for epi week 7. 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 from 15 February 2020 to 23 February 2021. The curve continues to trend downward as more countries are recovering from their second wave of cases. This week, seven countries account for about 60% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: South Africa (17%), Nigeria (8%), Ethiopia (8%), Tunisia (7%), Mozambique (7%), Zambia (7%), and Egypt (6%).

**Table 1. Confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths<sup>3</sup> reported in Africa for epi week 7 (15 February 2021 - 21 February 2021)**

Country	Number of cases (new)	Percent change in new cases since the previous Epi week (5)	Number of deaths (new)	Percent change in new deaths since the previous Epi week (5)	Epidemic phase <sup>4</sup>
<b>Central Region</b>	<b>99,461 (3,737)</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>1,736 (46)</b>	<b>-6%</b>	
Burundi	2,031 (207)	105%	3 (0)	-100%	3
Cameroon	33,749 (1,068)	-17%	523 (23)	-12%	3
Central African Republic	5,001 (4)	300%	63 (0)	NA*	3
Chad	3,849 (185)	19%	134 (3)	-50%	3
Congo Republic	8,625 (206)	217%	127 (5)	NA*	3
DR Congo	25,245 (859)	20%	701 (8)	-33%	3
Equatorial Guinea	5,798 (104)	30%	89 (3)	NA*	3
Gabon	13,553 (976)	-13%	75 (2)	No change	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.

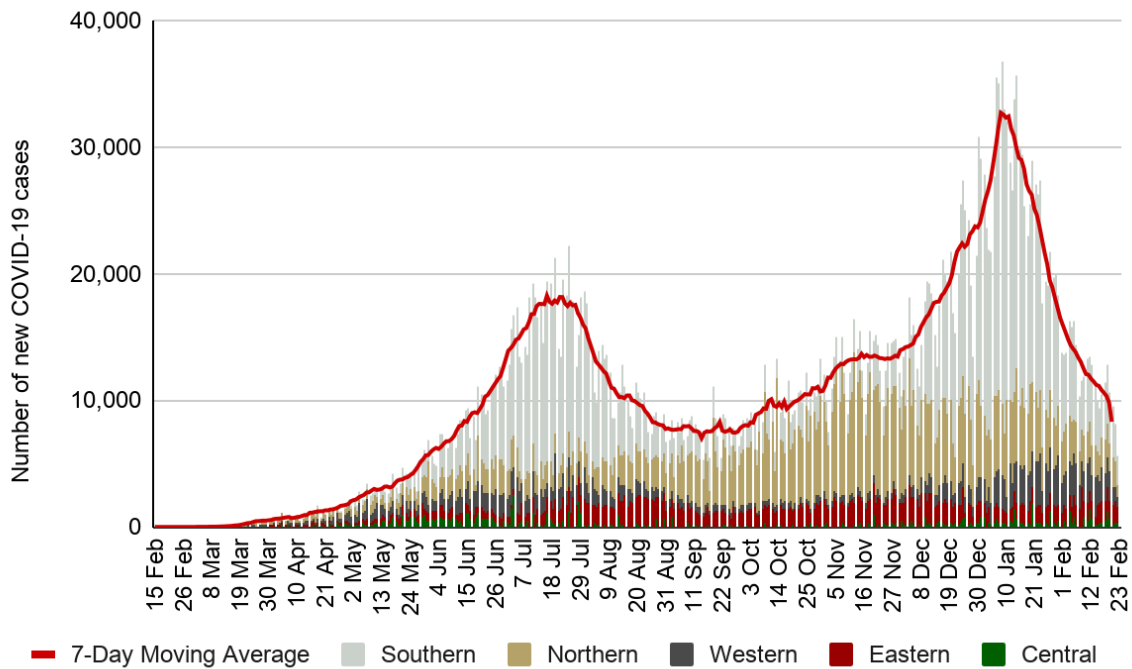
Sao Tome and Principe	1,610 (128)	-2%	21 (2)	No change	3
<b>Eastern Region</b>	<b>393,606 (11,431)</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>7,390 (217)</b>	<b>42%</b>	
Comoros	3,502 (168)	-32%	143 (14)	-18%	3
Djibouti	6,024 (53)	121%	63 (0)	NA*	1
Eritrea	2,685 (256)	149%	7 (0)	NA*	3
Ethiopia	152,806 (5,714)	20%	2,279 (85)	85%	3
Kenya	104,201 (1,334)	27%	1,823 (28)	75%	3
Madagascar	19,598 (0)	NA*	292 (0)	NA*	3
Mauritius	603 (8)	-27%	10 (0)	NA*	1
Rwanda	18,053 (710)	-20%	249 (10)	-47%	3
Seychelles	2,328 (436)	15%	10 (2)	No change	3
Somalia	6,017 (834)	160%	202 (50)	178%	3
South Sudan	6,931 (1,621)	131%	87 (13)	63%	3
Sudan	30,128 (139)	-94%	1,871 (13)	-43%	3
Tanzania	509 (0)	NA*	21 (0)	NA*	3
Uganda	40,221 (158)	-22%	333 (2)	-50%	3
<b>Northern Region</b>	<b>1,147,417 (16,242)</b>	<b>-8%</b>	<b>32,238 (772)</b>	<b>-8%</b>	
Algeria	111,825 (1,206)	-26%	2,963 (22)	-12%	3
Egypt	178,151 (4,338)	4%	10,353 (359)	5%	2
Libya	130,212 (2,507)	-11%	2,116 (74)	9%	3
Mauritania	17,095 (121)	-28%	434 (4)	No change	3
Morocco	481,155 (2,681)	-14%	8,554 (77)	-7%	2
Tunisia	228,937 (5,388)	-7%	7,811 (236)	-26%	1
Sahrawi Republic	42 (1)	NA*	7 (0)	NA*	3

<b>Southern Region</b>	<b>1,811,819 (27,472)</b>	<b>-20%</b>	<b>55,184 (1,481)</b>	<b>-30%</b>	
Angola	20,519 (153)	-45%	499 (7)	-59%	3
Botswana	26,524 (712)	-48%	254 (28)	-40%	3
Eswatini	16,789 (254)	-23%	645 (15)	-42%	3
Lesotho	10,461 (496)	-15%	285 (55)	17%	3
Malawi	30,305 (1,270)	-41%	995 (43)	-63%	3
Mozambique	55,643 (5,377)	-5%	595 (60)	-20%	3
Namibia	37,483 (1,531)	56%	402 (14)	8%	3
South Africa	1,503,796 (11,989)	-24%	49,053 (1,154)	-28%	3
Zambia	74,503 (5,066)	-26%	1,020 (69)	-30%	3
Zimbabwe	35,796 (624)	1%	1,436 (36)	-51%	3
<b>Western Region</b>	<b>378,365 (13,460)</b>	<b>-22%</b>	<b>4,807 (204)</b>	<b>-23%</b>	
Benin	5,434 (395)	-53%	70 (8)	14%	3
Burkina Faso	11,797 (183)	-44%	139 (1)	-75%	3
Cape Verde	15,048 (307)	-3%	144 (5)	25%	3
Côte d'Ivoire	32,036 (896)	-32%	186 (12)	No change	3
Gambia	4,543 (129)	-27%	143 (5)	25%	3
Ghana	80,759 (2,488)	-47%	582 (17)	-76%	3
Guinea	15,427 (460)	105%	86 (1)	No change	3
Guinea-Bissau	3,115 (191)	33%	47 (1)	NA*	3
Liberia	1,996 (11)	-62%	85 (0)	-100%	3
Mali	8,299 (70)	32%	348 (6)	50%	3
Niger	4,736 (41)	-51%	170 (1)	-75%	3
Nigeria	152,074 (5,890)	-8%	1,839 (87)	2%	3
Senegal	32,927 (1,920)	-15%	808 (60)	-9%	3
Sierra Leone	3,855 (34)	-6%	79 (0)	NA*	3

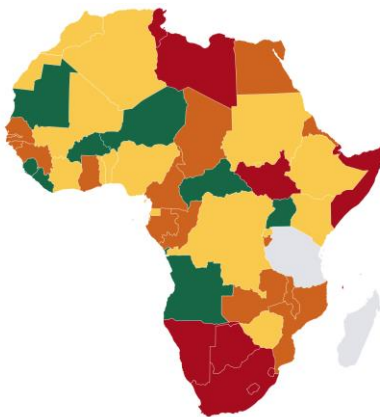
Togo	6,319 (445)	14%	81 (0)	-100%	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,830,668 (72,342)</b>	<b>-14%</b>	<b>101,355 (2,720)</b>	<b>-21%</b>	

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

**Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day in Africa by African Union region, 15 February 2020 - 23 February 2021.**



### Public Health and Social Measure (PHSM) Highlights



**Figure 3.** Map of AU Member States by hotspot level<sup>5</sup> on the PERC [dashboard](#). This system is intended to highlight AU Member States in need of attention due to an increasing or widespread outbreak. For specifics on calculations, refer to the dashboard [methodology](#).

The table below highlights changes in PHSMs by PERC hotspot warning level based on data from [Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker](#). An up arrow indicates new PHSMs announced. The horizontal arrow indicates PHSMs extended. The down arrow indicates PHSMs loosened/expired.

<sup>5</sup> The delineation of the international and other boundaries used on this map don't imply official endorsement or acceptance by the African Union or Africa CDC.

Country	PHSM Trend	PHSM Change
<b>Warning Level 4: Red - A very widespread or fast-growing outbreak.</b>		
Cabo Verde	↑	Authorities in <b>Cabo Verde</b> <a href="#">extended</a> income support measures as a result of the ongoing restrictions.
Libya	↓	More than half of <b>Libya's</b> schools <a href="#">reopened</a> on 15 February with some preventative measures in place, after a nearly one-year closure.
São Tomé and Príncipe	→	<b>São Tomé and Príncipe</b> <a href="#">extended</a> a state of calamity until 2 March, maintaining restrictions including suspension of religious services and restricted travel between the islands.
South Africa	↓	<b>South Africa</b> <a href="#">reopened</a> land borders and <a href="#">resumed</a> in-person learning.
<b>Warning Level 3: Orange - A widespread or growing outbreak.</b>		
Congo Republic	→	In <b>Congo Republic</b> , authorities have <a href="#">maintained</a> a nightly curfew in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire, where the majority of cases continue to be concentrated. Additionally, the state of health emergency has been extended until 6 March.
Gabon	↑	<b>Gabon</b> <a href="#">restricted</a> movement into and out of capital city Libreville and lengthened a nighttime curfew by two hours, beginning at 18:00 until 5:00.
Ghana	↑	<b>Ghana</b> <a href="#">suspended</a> the convening of its Parliament for three weeks after 17 members and 151 staffers contracted COVID-19.
Malawi	↓	<b>Malawi</b> <a href="#">announced</a> that schools will reopen on 22 February following a decline in new cases. Some schools will require students to produce a negative COVID-19 test, so the Ministry of Health has taken steps to improve access by <a href="#">increasing</a> testing sites.
Senegal	↑	Health authorities in <b>Senegal</b> have <a href="#">launched</a> a mass disinfection campaign of schools, markets, public buildings, and religious institutions in capital city Dakar.
<b>Warning Level 2: Yellow - A moderate outbreak or the possible start of a growing outbreak.</b>		

Algeria	↓	<b>Algeria</b> <a href="#">reopened</a> all mosques, lifted restrictions on restaurants and cafes, and reopened hotels. A nightly curfew was renewed for 15 days in 19 out of 48 provinces.
Morocco	→	<b>Morocco</b> <a href="#">extended</a> a state of emergency and maintained a nightly curfew for two more weeks.
Rwanda	↓	<b>Rwanda</b> schools are set to <a href="#">reopen</a> on 23 February.
Zimbabwe	→	<b>Zimbabwe</b> <a href="#">extended</a> national lockdown measures for two weeks, meaning schools will remain closed and public gatherings will continue to be prohibited.
<b>Warning Level 1: Green</b> - Relatively low spread and no evidence of a growing outbreak.		
Angola	↓	<b>Angola</b> <a href="#">extended</a> the state of public calamity until 11 March.

## NEW Africa CDC Response Activities

### General:

1. Last week, Dr. Nkengasong hosted Africa CDC’s weekly press briefing on Thursday, 18 February 2021 at 11 am EAT. The recording is available on the [Africa CDC Facebook page](#).
2. Last week, Africa CDC facilitated the Public Health Emergency Operations Centres (PHEOCs) and COVID-19 Management webinar series on the topic 'Implementing an Incident Management System'. The recording is available on the [Africa CDC Facebook page](#). The next session in this webinar series will be held on Thursday, 25 February 2021 at 3 pm EAT.

### Laboratory:

1. To date, over 33 million tests for COVID-19 have been conducted across the continent with a positivity rate of 11.3% and test per case ratio of 8.8. For epi week 7, 721,575 new tests were conducted, which is a 15% decrease when compared to the previous week (847,009 tests).

### Healthcare Preparedness and Medical Countermeasures:

#### Case Management

1. Last week, Africa CDC’s Case Management TWG held the 43rd clinical webinar titled “Effects of lockdown on intentional and unintentional injury during the COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa” on Thursday, 18 February 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. Last week on Wednesday 17 February 2021, the Infection and Prevention Control (IPC) TWG held the 4th session on “Healthcare worker safety: proper use of PPE in the context of COVID-19” and this was attended by over 800 participants from both Anglophone and Francophone speaking countries.
2. The IPC TWG has published guidance on [Safe Vaccination Administration in the Context of COVID-19 in Africa](#).

### Surveillance

1. Africa CDC is supporting the implementation of COVID-19 seroprevalence surveys in 17 countries. Technical teams will be deployed to Nigeria, Togo and Uganda to facilitate this activity.
2. Data collection for mortality surveillance is ongoing in Uganda and South Africa. This information will provide further information on the impact of COVID-19 on mortality in the population.
3. The Surveillance Technical Working Group is supporting development and implementation of the Trusted Travel Portal as part of the Saving Lives, Economies and Livelihoods Campaign. Discussions with South Africa, Malawi, and Zimbabwe for onboarding of the trusted travel platform are ongoing.

### 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](#).
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. Member States should continue to enhance their COVID-19<sup>6</sup> surveillance efforts to include:
  - a. Syndromic surveillance like influenza like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI).<sup>7</sup>
  - b. Rapid mortality surveillance that includes the collection, analysis and use of all-cause mortality data collected through the facility- or community-based surveillance.<sup>8</sup>
  - c. Genomic surveillance<sup>9</sup> to monitor variant presence and spread as well as the continued evolution of the virus.

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<sup>6</sup> [WHO COVID-19 Case definition](#)

<sup>7</sup> 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](#)

<sup>8</sup> Revealing the toll of COVID-19: A technical package for Member States – Africa CDC

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



2. Member States should continue to perform contact tracing<sup>10</sup> of confirmed cases based on transmission type and country capacity and enhance diagnostic screening efforts with the use of rapid antigen tests<sup>11</sup>.
3. All Member States should notify and routinely share data regarding confirmed COVID-19 cases, deaths, recoveries, tests conducted and healthcare workers infected with WHO and Africa CDC 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 for those who develop severe symptoms (i.e. difficulty breathing).
5. Member States should put in place or strengthen existing public health and social measures as cases start to rise.

### **Resources for more information**

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

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<sup>10</sup>Africa CDC Guidance on Contact Tracing for COVID-19 Pandemic: <https://africacdc.org/download/guidance-on-contact-tracing-for-covid-19-pandemic/>

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