

Outbreak Brief #59: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 2 March 2021

113,828,678 cases and 2,528,203 deaths

Data sources: World Health Organization and African Union Member States

Outbreak Update: Since the last brief (23 February 2021), 2,718,963 new confirmed¹ coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases and 65,002 new deaths have been reported globally. To date, a total of 113,828,678 COVID-19 cases and 2,526,521 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 5,342,027 (5%), European Region 38,788,470 (34%), Region of the Americas 50,595,663 (45%), South-East Asia Region 13,539,176 (12%) and Western Pacific Region 1,627,390 (1%). Over the last seven days, the United States, Brazil, France, Italy and India have each 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.²

As of 9 am East African Time (EAT) 2 March 2021, a total of 3,905,936 COVID-19 cases and 104,012 deaths (CFR: 2.7%) have been reported in 55 African Union (AU) Member States. This is 3.4% of all cases reported globally. The majority (91%) of Member States continue to report community transmission. Nine Member States reported the presence of the 501Y.V1 variant (lineage B.1.1.7): DR Congo, Gabon, Ghana, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Gambia and Libya. 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 (5.9%), Liberia (4.2%), Mali (4.2%), Zimbabwe (4%), Comoros (4%), Eswatini (3.8%), Niger (3.6%), Chad (3.5%), Tunisia (3.4%), South Africa (3.3%), Somalia (3.3%), Malawi (3.3%), Gambia (3.2%), Lesotho (2.8%), DR Congo (2.8%), Algeria (2.6%), Mauritania (2.6%), Senegal (2.5%), and Angola (2.4%).

For Epi week 8 (22 - 28 February 2021), 67,608 new COVID-19 cases have been reported, which is a 10% decrease in the number of new cases reported compared to Epi week 7. The majority of new COVID-19 cases being reported for this week are from the Southern region (35%) followed by

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

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

the Northern (25%), Eastern (18%), Western (16%) and Central (7%) regions. The countries reporting the highest incidence (COVID-19 new cases per 100,000 population) this week include Seychelles (264), Botswana (114), Sao Tome and Principe (88), Libya (59) and Cabo Verde (58).

Table 1 lists the reported COVID-19 cases and deaths by Member State in Africa for epi week 8. 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 2021 to 2 March 2021. The curve continues to trend downward to the level reported in October 2020. This week, seven countries account for about 54% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: South Africa (14%), Ethiopia (9%), Tunisia (7%), Egypt (6%), Zambia (6%), Libya (6%) and Mozambique (5%).

Table 1. Confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths³ reported in Africa for epi week 8 (22 February 2021 - 28 February 2021)

Country	Number of cases (new)	Percent change in new cases since the previous Epi week (7)	Number of deaths (new)	Percent change in new deaths since the previous Epi week (7)	Epidemic phase ⁴
Central Region	104,049 (4,585)	23%	1,795 (59)	28%	
Burundi	2,209 (178)	-14%	3 (0)	NA*	3
Cameroon	35,714 (1,965)	84%	551 (28)	22%	3
Central African Republic	5,004 (0)	-100%	63 (0)	NA*	3
Chad	3,986 (137)	-26%	140 (6)	100%	3
Congo Republic	8,820 (195)	-5%	128 (1)	-80%	3

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

⁴ 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.

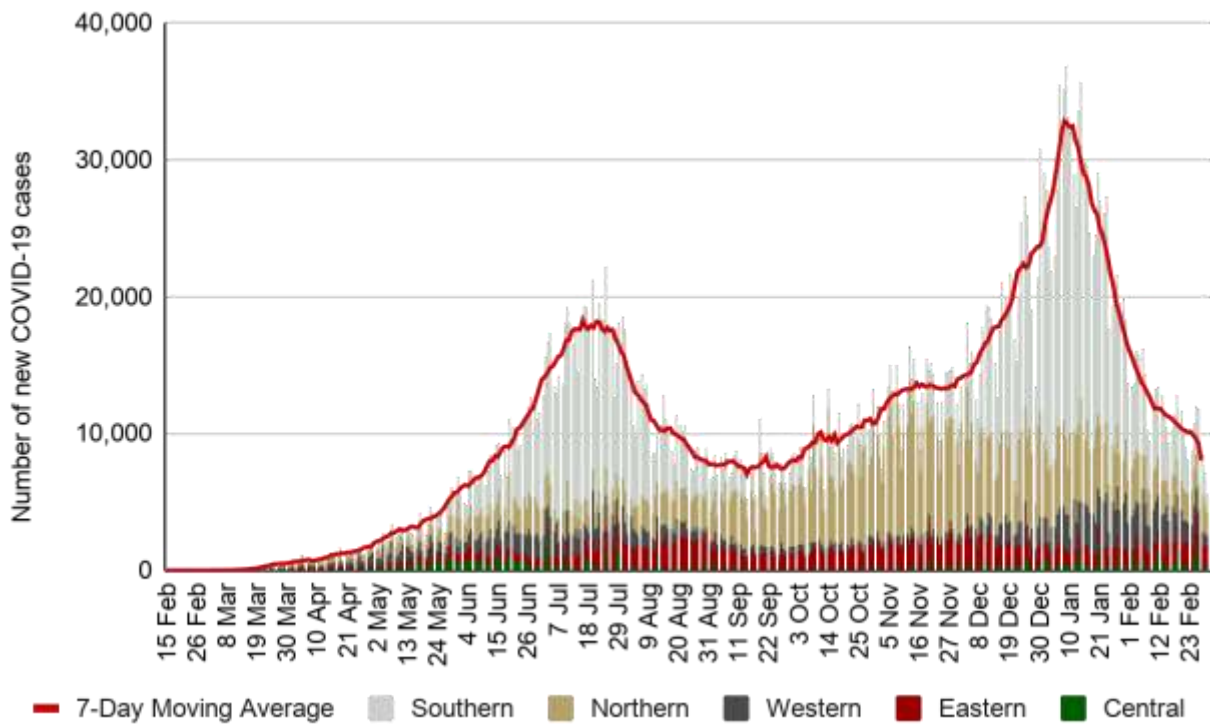
DR Congo	25,961 (716)	-17%	707 (6)	-25%	3
Equatorial Guinea	6,005 (207)	99%	91 (2)	-33%	3
Gabon	14,564 (1,011)	4%	83 (8)	300%	3
Sao Tome and Principe	1,786 (176)	38%	29 (8)	300%	3
Eastern Region	405,902 (12,014)	5%	7,582 (187)	-14%	
Comoros	3,571 (69)	-59%	144 (1)	-93%	3
Djibouti	6,066 (42)	-21%	63 (0)	NA*	3
Eritrea	2,847 (162)	-37%	7 (0)	NA*	3
Ethiopia	159,072 (6,266)	10%	2,365 (86)	1%	3
Kenya	105,973 (1,772)	33%	1,856 (33)	18%	1
Madagascar	19,831 (0)	NA*	297 (0)	NA*	3
Mauritius	610 (7)	-13%	10 (0)	NA*	2
Rwanda	18,850 (797)	12%	261 (12)	20%	3
Seychelles	2,592 (264)	-39%	11 (1)	-50%	3
Somalia	7,257 (1,240)	49%	239 (37)	-26%	3
South Sudan	8,010 (1,079)	-33%	94 (7)	-46%	3
Sudan	30,347 (170)	-10%	1,880 (9)	-31%	3
Tanzania	509 (0)	NA*	21 (0)	NA*	3
Uganda	40,367 (146)	-8%	334 (1)	-50%	3
Northern Region	1,164,123 (16,706)	3%	32,955 (717)	-7%	
Algeria	113,000 (1,175)	-3%	2,985 (22)	No change	3
Egypt	182,424 (4,273)	-1%	10,688 (335)	-7%	3
Libya	134,127 (3,915)	56%	2,210 (94)	27%	3
Mauritania	17,207 (112)	-7%	441 (7)	75%	3

Morocco	483,654 (2,499)	-7%	8,623 (69)	-10%	3
Tunisia	233,669 (4,732)	-12%	8,001 (190)	-19%	3
Sahrawi Republic	42 (0)	-100%	7 (0)	NA*	3
Southern Region	1,837,195 (23,742)	-18%	56,440 (1,192)	-23%	
Angola	20,807 (288)	88%	508 (9)	29%	3
Botswana	30,727 (3,006)	57%	332 (32)	-57%	3
Eswatini	17,014 (225)	-11%	652 (7)	-53%	3
Lesotho	10,491 (30)	-94%	292 (7)	-87%	1
Malawi	31,945 (1,203)	-30%	1,044 (31)	-49%	2
Mozambique	59,350 (3,707)	-31%	641 (46)	-23%	3
Namibia	38,845 (1,362)	-11%	424 (22)	57%	3
South Africa	1,513,393 (9,597)	-20%	49,993 (940)	-19%	3
Zambia	78,534 (4,031)	-20%	1,091 (71)	3%	3
Zimbabwe	36,089 (293)	-53%	1,463 (27)	-25%	3
Western Region	389,846 (10,561)	-27%	4,995 (182)	-13%	
Benin	5,634 (200)	-49%	70 (0)	-100%	1
Burkina Faso	11,982 (185)	1%	142 (3)	200%	3
Cape Verde	15,400 (352)	15%	147 (3)	-40%	3
Côte d'Ivoire	32,754 (718)	-20%	192 (6)	-50%	3
Gambia	4,691 (148)	15%	148 (5)	No change	3
Ghana	84,023 (2,350)	-31%	607 (19)	-17%	3
Guinea	16,005 (578)	26%	89 (3)	200%	3
Guinea-Bissau	3,262 (147)	-23%	48 (1)	No change	3
Liberia	2,014 (12)	-29%	85 (0)	NA*	3

Mali	8,376 (77)	10%	353 (5)	-17%	3
Niger	4,740 (4)	-90%	172 (2)	100%	3
Nigeria	155,657 (3,583)	-39%	1,907 (68)	-22%	3
Senegal	34,520 (1,593)	-17%	872 (64)	7%	3
Sierra Leone	3,887 (32)	-6%	79 (0)	NA*	3
Togo	6,901 (582)	31%	84 (3)	NA*	3
Total	3,901,115 (67,608)	-10%	103,767 (2,337)	-16%	

*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 - 2 March 2021.



NEW Africa CDC Response Activities

General:

1. Last week, Dr. Nkengasong hosted Africa CDC's weekly press briefing on Thursday, 25 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](#). This week, this webinar series will focus on "Operations Function" on Thursday, 4 March 2021 at 3 pm EAT.

Laboratory:

1. To date, over 34.5 million tests for COVID-19 have been conducted across the continent with a positivity rate of 11.3% and test per case ratio of 8.9. For epi week 8, 744,167 new tests were conducted, which is a 4% decrease when compared to the previous week (773,105 tests).

Healthcare Preparedness and Medical Countermeasures:

Case Management

1. Last week, Africa CDC's Case Management TWG held the 44th clinical webinar titled "Clinical services response to COVID-19: Challenges and achievements from Ethiopia" and "COVID-19 clinical challenges: Experience from Tanzania" on Thursday, 25 February 2021 at 2 pm EAT. The recording can be accessed here: <https://www.africacdc.training/courses/ccop>
2. The Case Management TWG, in partnership with Brown University's Center for Human Rights and Humanitarian Studies, is developing a capacity building training for vaccinators.

Infection and Prevention Control (IPC)

1. Last week on Wednesday 24 February 2021, the Infection and Prevention Control (IPC) TWG held the 5th session on "Country perspectives on implementing IPC M&E Programs". The recording can be accessed here: <https://www.facebook.com/africacdc/videos/707890909903585>

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-19⁵ surveillance efforts to include:
 - a. Syndromic surveillance like influenza like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI).⁶
 - b. Rapid mortality surveillance that includes the collection, analysis and use of all-cause mortality data collected through the facility- or community-based surveillance.⁷
 - c. Genomic surveillance⁸ to monitor variant presence and spread as well as the continued evolution of the virus.
2. Member States should continue to perform contact tracing⁹ of confirmed cases based on transmission type and country capacity and enhance diagnostic screening efforts with the use of rapid antigen tests¹⁰.
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.
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>

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 Member States – Africa CDC

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

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

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