

Outbreak Brief #60: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 9 March 2021

116,529,128 cases and 2,589,895 deaths

Data sources: World Health Organization and African Union Member States

Outbreak Update: Since the last brief (2 March 2021), 2,700,450 new confirmed¹ coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases and 61,692 new deaths have been reported globally. To date, a total of 116,529,128 COVID-19 cases and 2,589,895 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 5,556,048 (5%), European Region 39,892,674 (34%), Region of the Americas 51,694,320 (44%), South-East Asia Region 13,710,065 (12%) and Western Pacific Region 1,669,536 (1%). Over the last seven days, Brazil, the United States, 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) 9 March 2021, a total of 3,975,045 COVID-19 cases and 106,095 deaths (CFR: 2.7%) have been reported in 55 African Union (AU) Member States. This is 3.4% of all cases reported globally. Figure 1 shows the trend of new COVID-19 cases reported by day from 15 February 2021 to 9 March 2021. The curve continues to trend downward to the level reported in October 2020. The majority (91%) of Member States continue to report community transmission. 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 (4.1%), Comoros (4%), Eswatini (3.8%), Niger (3.7%), Somalia (3.6%), Tunisia (3.5%), Chad (3.4%), South Africa (3.3%), Malawi (3.3%), Gambia (3.2%), Lesotho (2.9%), DR Congo (2.7%), Algeria (2.6%), Senegal (2.6%), Mauritania (2.5%), and Angola (2.4%).

Currently, 20 Member States are reporting the presence of either one or both of the following **variants of concern:** 501Y.V1 variant (lineage B.1.1.7)³, 501Y.V2 variant (B.1.351). See Figure 2 for the breakdown of variant type reported by Member State.

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/>

³ Also described as VOC 202012/01

Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day in Africa by African Union region, 15 February 2020 - 9 March 2021.

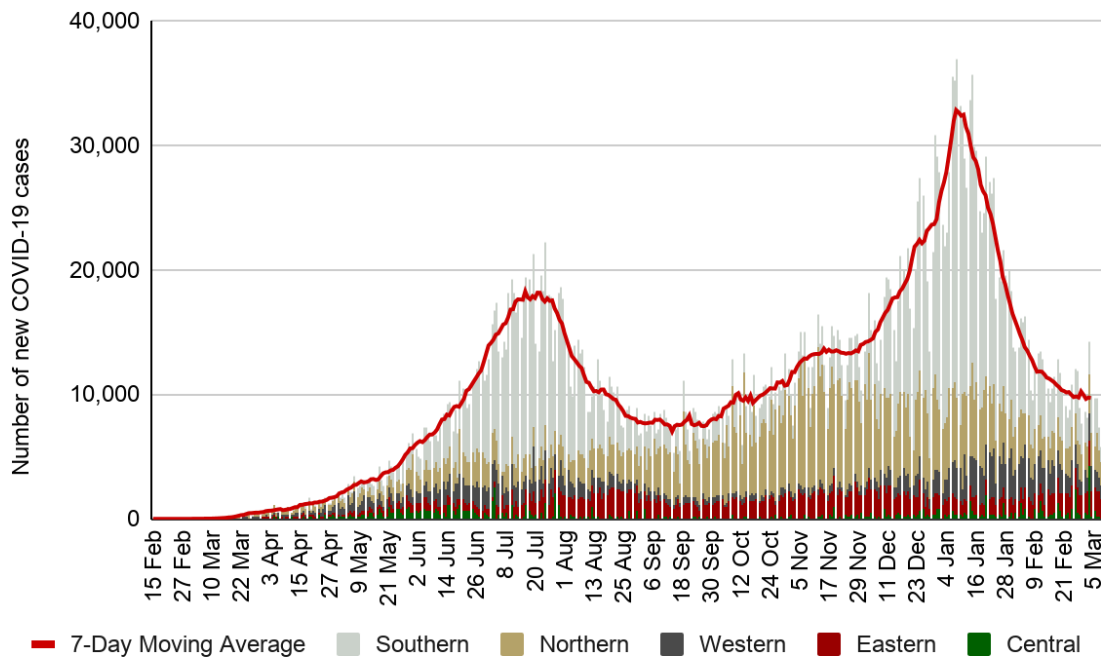
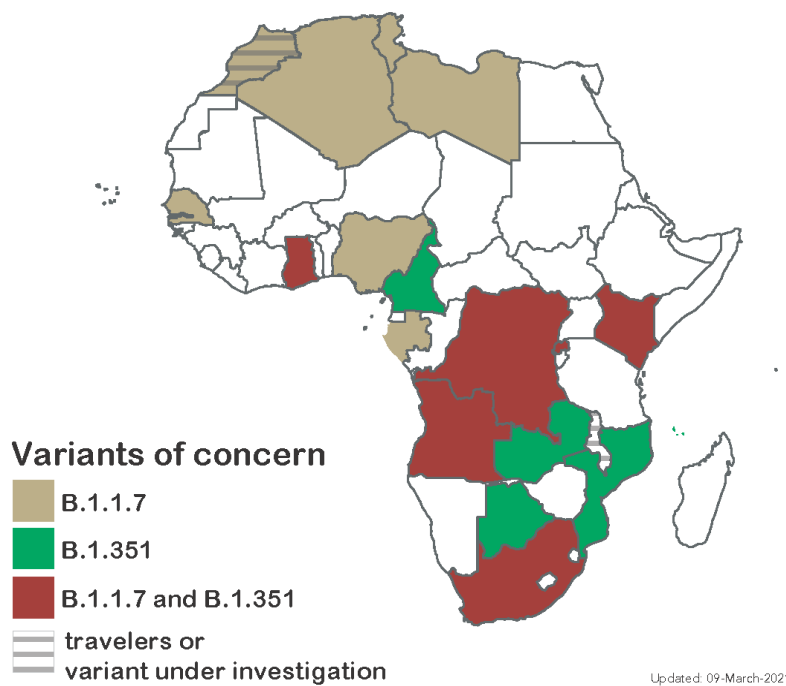


Figure 2: Variants of concern (501Y.V1 and 501Y.V2) reported by African Union Member State⁴ as of 9 March 2021.



⁴ 501Y.V1/B.1.1.7 variant: Algeria, Angola, DR Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Libya, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, and Tunisia. 501Y.V2/B.1.351 variant: Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Comoros, DR Congo, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, South Africa, and Zambia

For Epi week 9 (1 - 7 March 2021), 41,132 new COVID-19 cases have been reported, which is a 40% decrease in the number of new cases reported compared to Epi week 8. The majority of new COVID-19 cases being reported for this week are from the Southern region (47%) followed by the Northern (43%), Eastern (33%), Western (28%) and Central (15%) regions. This week, seven countries account for about 88% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: South Africa (19%), Ethiopia (17%), Libya (13%), Egypt (10%), Tunisia (11%), Zambia (10%), and Cameroon (8%). The countries reporting the highest incidence (COVID-19 new cases per 100,000 population) this week include Seychelles (358), Sao Tome and Principe (82), Libya (80), Cabo Verde (64) and Gabon (48). Table 1 lists the reported COVID-19 cases and deaths by Member State in Africa for epi week 9 and the current phase of the epidemic for each country.

Table 1. Confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths⁵ reported in Africa for epi week 9 (1 March 2021 - 7 March 2021)

Country	Number of cases (new)	Percent change in new cases since the previous Epi week (8)	Number of deaths (new)	Percent change in new deaths since the previous Epi week (8)	Epidemic phase ⁶
Central Region	109,314 (5,169)	10%	1,810 (14)	-77%	
Burundi	2,268 (59)	-67%	3 (0)	NA*	3
Cameroon	38,988 (3,274)	67%	551 (0)	-100%	3
Central African Republic	5,023 (13)	117%	63 (0)	NA*	3
Chad	4,089 (103)	-25%	140 (0)	-100%	3
Congo Republic	9,179 (359)	84%	131 (3)	200%	3
DR Congo	26,405 (444)	-38%	711 (4)	-33%	3
Equatorial Guinea	6,210 (115)	-61%	93 (1)	-67%	3
Gabon	15,254 (690)	-32%	88 (5)	-38%	3

⁵ Data is continuously verified for accuracy and reliability, thus may change based on retrospective updates from Member States.

⁶ 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.

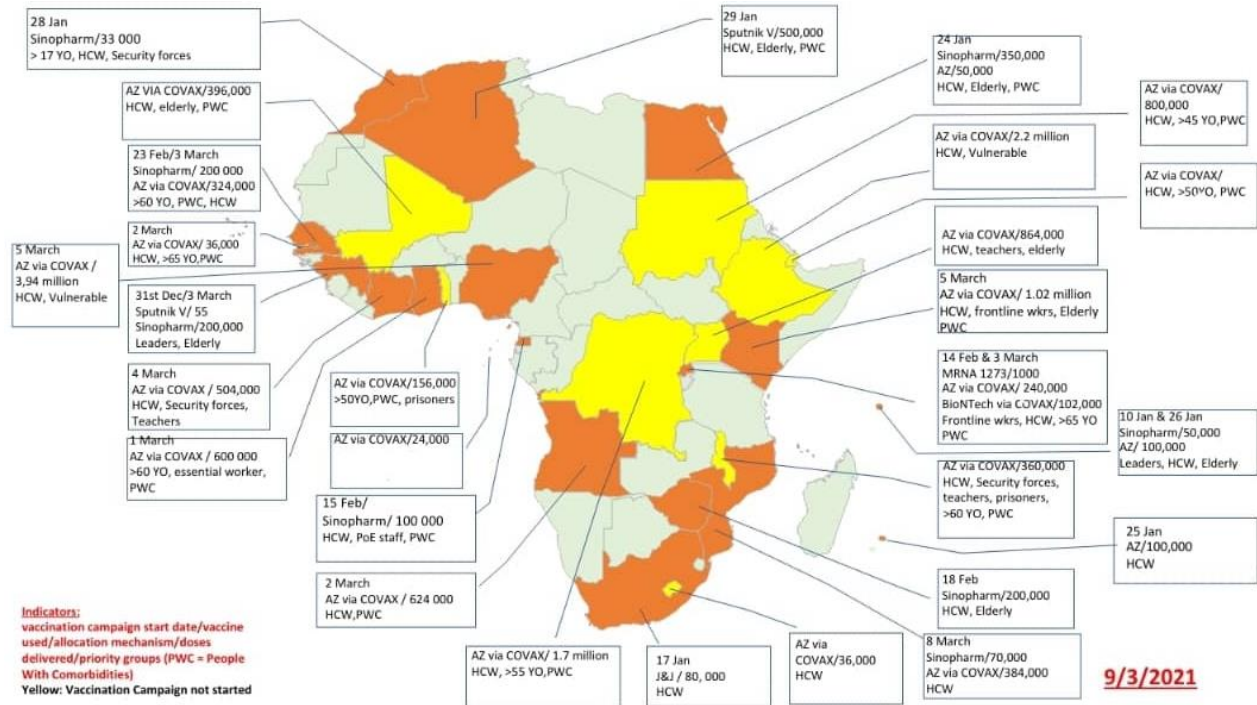
Sao Tome and Principe	1,898 (112)	-36%	30 (1)	-88%	3
Eastern Region	413,769 (7,543)	-37%	7,692 (107)	-43%	
Comoros	3,587 (16)	-77%	145 (1)	No change	3
Djibouti	6,110 (44)	5%	63 (0)	NA*	3
Eritrea	2,913 (66)	-59%	7 (0)	NA*	3
Ethiopia	162,954 (3,882)	-38%	2,394 (29)	-66%	3
Kenya	107,329 (1,356)	-23%	1,870 (14)	-58%	1
Madagascar	20,155 (0)	NA*	300 (0)	NA*	3
Mauritius	619 (9)	29%	10 (0)	NA*	2
Rwanda	19,334 (484)	-39%	266 (5)	-58%	3
Seychelles	2,890 (298)	13%	13 (2)	100%	3
Somalia	7,850 (593)	-52%	274 (35)	-5%	3
South Sudan	8,527 (517)	-52%	100 (6)	-14%	3
Sudan	30,540 (193)	14%	1,895 (15)	67%	3
Tanzania	509 (0)	NA*	21 (0)	NA*	3
Uganda	40,452 (85)	-42%	334 (0)	-100%	3
Northern Region	1,174,718 (10,595)	-37%	33,359 (383)	-48%	
Algeria	113,669 (669)	-43%	3,004 (19)	-14%	3
Egypt	184,755 (2,331)	-45%	10,871 (183)	-45%	3
Libya	137,482 (3,355)	-14%	2,236 (26)	-72%	3
Mauritania	17,267 (60)	-46%	442 (1)	-86%	3
Morocco	485,147 (1,493)	-40%	8,669 (46)	-33%	3
Tunisia	236,356 (2,687)	-43%	8,130 (108)	-49%	3
Sahrawi Republic	42 (0)	NA*	7 (0)	NA*	3
Southern Region	1,847,873 (10,678)	-55%	57,052 (612)	-49%	

Angola	20,981 (174)	-40%	510 (2)	-78%	3
Botswana	31,746 (1,019)	-66%	359 (27)	-16%	3
Eswatini	17,129 (115)	-49%	654 (2)	-71%	3
Lesotho	10,522 (31)	3%	307 (15)	114%	1
Malawi	32,283 (338)	-72%	1,058 (14)	-55%	2
Mozambique	61,170 (1,820)	-51%	674 (33)	-28%	3
Namibia	39,466 (621)	-54%	436 (12)	-45%	3
South Africa	1,517,666 (4,273)	-55%	50,462 (469)	-50%	3
Zambia	80,687 (2,153)	-47%	1,109 (18)	-75%	3
Zimbabwe	36,223 (134)	-54%	1,483 (20)	-26%	3
Western Region	397,720 (7,147)	-37%	5,119 (111)	-43%	
Benin	6,071 (437)	119%	75 (5)	NA*	1
Burkina Faso	12,103 (121)	-35%	143 (1)	-67%	3
Cape Verde	15,621 (221)	-37%	152 (5)	67%	3
Côte d'Ivoire	33,976 (1,222)	70%	196 (4)	-33%	3
Gambia	4,759 (68)	-54%	152 (4)	-20%	3
Ghana	86,092 (1,342)	-56%	629 (9)	-72%	3
Guinea	16,420 (415)	-28%	93 (4)	33%	3
Guinea-Bissau	3,303 (41)	-72%	49 (1)	No change	3
Liberia	2,024 (10)	-17%	85 (0)	NA*	3
Mali	8,470 (94)	22%	357 (4)	-20%	3
Niger	4,740 (0)	-100%	172 (0)	-100%	3
Nigeria	157,671 (2,014)	-44%	1,951 (44)	-35%	3
Senegal	35,247 (727)	-54%	898 (26)	-59%	3
Sierra Leone	3,900 (13)	-59%	79 (0)	NA*	3
Togo	7,323 (422)	-27%	88 (4)	33%	3
Total	3,943,394 (41,132)	-40%	105,032 (1,227)	-48%	

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

To date, 28 Member States have received the COVID-19 vaccine, 19 through the COVAX facility and nine through bilateral agreements. Currently, 16 have started vaccinating priority populations. Figure 3 lists the breakdown of vaccine status by Member State.

Figure 3: Vaccine distribution by African Union Member State as of 9 March 2021.



NEW Africa CDC Response Activities

General:

1. Last week, Dr. Nkengasong hosted Africa CDC’s weekly press briefing on Thursday, 4 March 2021 at 11 am EAT. The recording is available on the [Africa CDC Facebook page](#).
2. This week, Africa CDC will facilitate the Public Health Emergency Operations Centres (PHEOCs) and COVID-19 Incident Management System webinar series on the topic 'Plans Function' on Thursday, 11 March 2021 at 3 pm EAT. The recording is available on the [Africa CDC Facebook page](#).

Laboratory:

1. To date, over 37.1 million tests for COVID-19 have been conducted across the continent with a positivity rate of 11.2% and test per case ratio of 9.0. For epi week 9, 759,633 new tests were conducted, which is a 2.2% decrease when compared to the previous week (744,167 tests).

Healthcare Preparedness and Medical Countermeasures:

Case Management

1. Last week, Africa CDC’s Case Management TWG in collaboration with Project HOPE (Health Opportunities for People Everywhere) conducted COVID-19 vaccine online TOT on 5 March 2021 at 3pm EAT. Participation included 50 clinicians and EPI

managers from Burundi, Cameroon, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Mauritania, and Togo. The recording can be accessed here:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/n04j854pure9c3p/AAA8IIRBmm5b5Z3mEIKUyTvRa?dl=0>

Infection and Prevention Control (IPC)

1. This week, the IPC TWG will hold a sixth webinar series titled “Dealing with COVID-19 and Ebola: Back to basics in transmission-based precautions ” in English on Wednesday, 10 March 2021 at 1 pm EAT. Registration links: https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_Ptp61gQTTQilezJXL09sIA

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](#). 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-19⁷ surveillance efforts to include:
 - a. Syndromic surveillance like influenza like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI).⁸
 - b. Rapid mortality surveillance that includes the collection, analysis and use of all-cause mortality data collected through the facility- or community-based surveillance.⁹
 - c. Genomic surveillance¹⁰ to monitor variant presence and spread as well as the continued evolution of the virus.
2. Member States should continue to perform contact tracing¹¹ of confirmed cases based on transmission type and country capacity and enhance diagnostic screening efforts with the use of rapid antigen tests¹².
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.

⁷ [WHO COVID-19 Case definition](#)

⁸ 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](#)

⁹ Revealing the toll of COVID-19: A technical package for Member States – Africa CDC

¹⁰ Genomic sequencing of SARS-CoV-2: a guide to implementation for maximum impact on public health

¹¹ Africa CDC Guidance on Contact Tracing for COVID-19 Pandemic: <https://africacdc.org/download/guidance-on-contact-tracing-for-covid-19-pandemic/>

¹² [Interim Guidance on the Use of Rapid Antigen tests for COVID-19 Response – Africa CDC](#)

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>