

## Outbreak Brief #63: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 30 March 2021

**126,900,703 cases and 2,778,944 deaths**

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

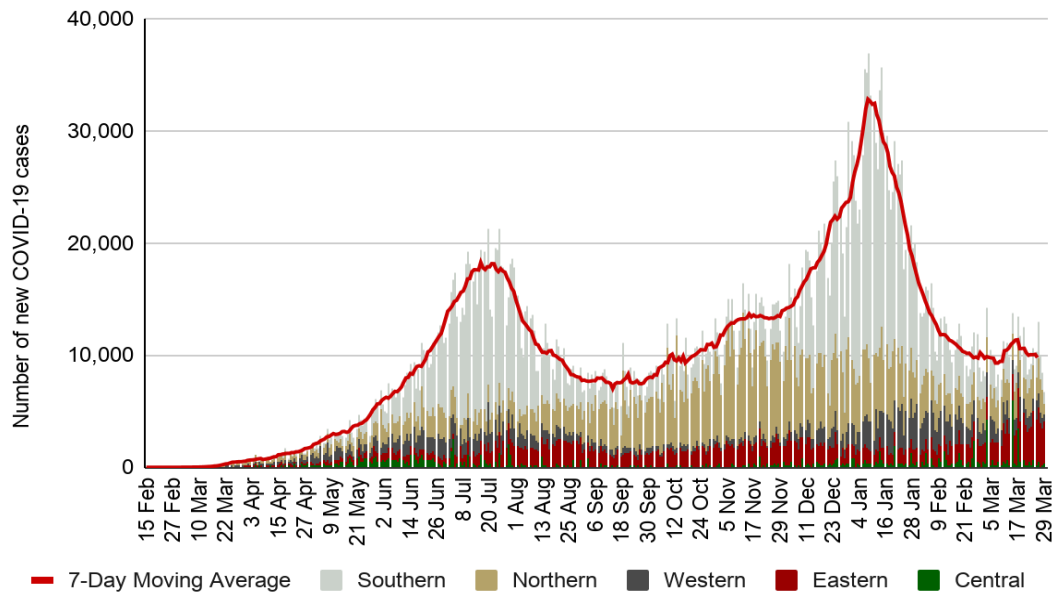
**Outbreak Update:** Since the last brief (23 March 2021), 3,889,322 new confirmed<sup>1</sup> coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases and 67,608 new deaths have been reported globally. To date, a total of 126,900,703 COVID-19 cases and 2,778,944 related deaths (case fatality rate (CFR): 2.2%) have 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 6,284,389 (5%), European Region 44,368,048 (35%), Region of the Americas 55,447,785 (44%), South-East Asia Region 14,696,415 (12%) and Western Pacific Region 1,874,131 (1%). Over the last seven days, Brazil, the United States and India have each reported more than 300K new cases. While France, Turkey, Poland, Italy, and Germany 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.<sup>2</sup>

**As of 9 am East African Time (EAT) 30 March 2021,** a total of 4,195,068 COVID-19 cases and 4,195,068 deaths (CFR: 2.7%) have been reported in 55 African Union (AU) Member States. This is 3.3% of all cases reported globally. 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 (7.3%), Sudan (6.5%), Egypt (5.9%), Somalia (4.6%), Liberia (4.2%), Zimbabwe (4.1%), Comoros (4%), Eswatini (3.9%), Mali (3.8%), Niger (3.7%), Chad (3.6%), Tunisia (3.5%), South Africa (3.4%), Malawi (3.3%), Gambia (3%), Lesotho (3%), Senegal (2.7%), DR Congo (2.7%), Algeria (2.6%), Mauritania (2.5%) and Angola (2.4%).

**For Epi week 12 (22 - 28 March 2021),** 70,541 new COVID-19 cases have been reported, which is a 7% decrease in the number of new cases reported compared to Epi week 11. The majority of new COVID-19 cases being reported for this week are from the Eastern region (38%) followed by the Northern (27%), Southern (20%), Western (12%) and Central (3%) regions. This week, six countries account for about 64% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: Ethiopia (19%), Kenya (13%), South Africa (11%), Tunisia (7%), Libya (7%) and Egypt (7%). The countries reporting the highest incidence (COVID-19 new cases per 100,000 population) this week include Seychelles (323), Cabo Verde (151) Botswana (136) and Djibouti (110). Figure 1 shows the trend of new COVID-19 cases reported by day from 15 February 2020 to 30 March 2021. The number of new cases being reported daily is decreasing compared to the level reported in October 2020.

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

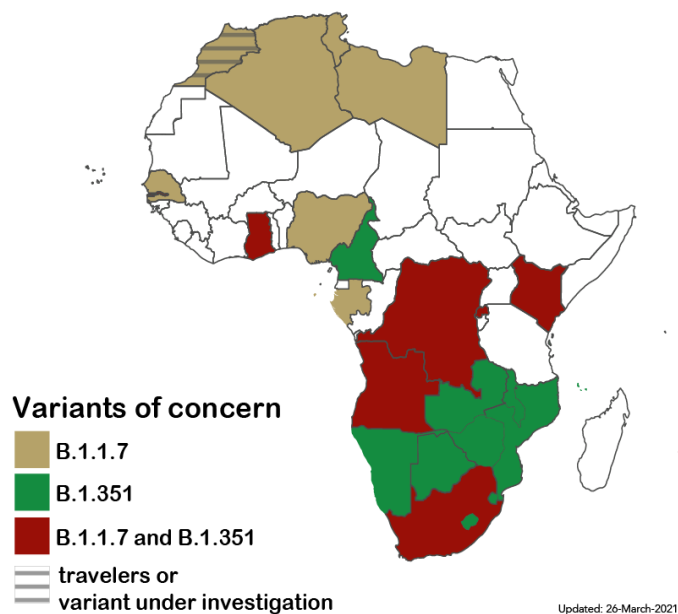
<sup>2</sup> WHO coronavirus disease (COVID-19) dashboard: <https://covid19.who.int/>



**Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day in Africa by African Union region, 15 February 2020 - 30 March 2021.**

Currently, 16 Member States are reporting the presence of the **B.1.1.7 variant**<sup>3</sup> Algeria, Angola, DR Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Togo and Tunisia.

Eighteen Member States are reporting the presence of the **B.1.351 variant**: Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Comoros, DR Congo, Eswatini, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Namibia. See Figure 2 for the breakdown of variant types reported by Member State.



**Figure 2: Variants of concern (501Y.V1 and 501Y.V2) reported by African Union Member States as of 26 March 2021.**

<sup>3</sup> Also described as VOC 202012/01

Fifty-two (95%) of 55 of AU Member States are experiencing community transmission of the SARS-COV 2 virus. Table 1 lists the cumulative COVID-19 cases and deaths reported by Member States in Africa as well as the new COVID-19 cases and deaths reported during epi week 12. The table also provides the current epidemic phase for each country.

**Table 1. Confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths<sup>4</sup> reported in Africa for epi week 12 (22 March 2021 - 28 March 2021)**

Country	Number of cases (new)	Percent change in new cases since previous brief	Number of deaths (new)	Percent change in new deaths since previous brief	Epidemic phase
<b>Central Region</b>	<b>125,721 (2,116)</b>	<b>-60%</b>	<b>2,076 (28)</b>	<b>-73%</b>	
Burundi	2,757 (144)	-5%	6 (3)	NA*	3
Cameroon	47,669 (0)	-100%	721 (0)	-100%	3
Central African Republic	5,199 (68)	5%	68 (1)	-67%	3
Chad	4,501 (81)	-27%	160 (3)	-25%	3
Congo Republic	9,681 (117)	-50%	135 (1)	-67%	3
Democratic Republic of Congo	28,011 (439)	-11%	739 (13)	44%	3
Equatorial Guinea	6,914 (134)	-39%	102 (1)	-67%	3
Gabon	18,777 (1,066)	1%	111 (5)	-50%	3
Sao Tome and Principe	2,212 (67)	No change	34 (1)	No change	3
<b>Eastern Region</b>	<b>489,080 (26,854)</b>	<b>12%</b>	<b>8,847 (413)</b>	<b>25%</b>	
Comoros	3,690 (24)	-23%	146 (0)	NA*	3
Djibouti	7,361 (773)	142%	67 (3)	200%	3
Eritrea	3,208 (90)	13%	9 (2)	NA*	3
Ethiopia	200,563 (13,198)	11%	2,801 (142)	30%	3
Kenya	130,214 (9,304)	21%	2,117 (106)	8%	3

<sup>4</sup> Data is continuously verified for accuracy and reliability, thus may change based on retrospective updates from Member States.

Madagascar	23,903 (1,287)	25%	388 (33)	57%	3
Mauritius	933 (104)	65%	10 (0)	NA*	3
Rwanda	21,419 (591)	-8%	301 (11)	10%	3
Seychelles	3,996 (226)	-50%	20 (4)	NA*	3
Somalia	10,838 (753)	-16%	496 (67)	8%	3
South Sudan	10,103 (213)	-37%	108 (2)	No change	3
Sudan	31,409 (262)	66%	2,028 (42)	56%	3
Tanzania	509 (0)	NA*	21 (0)	NA*	3
Uganda	40,934 (29)	-91%	335 (1)	NA*	3
<b>Northern Region</b>	<b>1,238,061 (18,773)</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>35,630 (673)</b>	<b>5%</b>	
Algeria	116,744 (679)	-24%	3,080 (23)	21%	3
Egypt	200,050 (4,632)	3%	11,882 (284)	-5%	2
Libya	157,545 (5,035)	-22%	2,653 (140)	26%	3
Mauritania	17,771 (170)	4%	448 (2)	No change	3
Morocco	494,659 (2,950)	6%	8,798 (31)	-30%	2
Tunisia	251,169 (5,246)	38%	8,760 (191)	16%	3
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	123 (61)	369%	9 (2)	NA*	1
<b>Southern Region</b>	<b>1,904,346 (14,341)</b>	<b>-14%</b>	<b>59,791 (669)</b>	<b>-28%</b>	
Angola	22,063 (330)	-7%	533 (6)	No change	3
Botswana	39,841 (2,282)	-11%	506 (21)	-45%	3
Eswatini	17,321 (35)	-29%	667 (2)	-50%	3
Lesotho	10,686 (151)	2920%	315 (6)	NA*	3
Malawi	33,481 (244)	-40%	1,114 (18)	38%	3
Mozambique	67,197 (985)	-42%	764 (18)	-14%	3
Namibia	43,632 (1,155)	-10%	509 (17)	-50%	3
South Africa	1,545,431 (7,579)	-10%	52,663 (552)	-30%	3

Zambia	87,872 (1,423)	-14%	1,200 (21)	No change	3
Zimbabwe	36,822 (157)	-13%	1,520 (8)	-11%	3
<b>Western Region</b>	<b>431,046 (8,457)</b>	<b>-13%</b>	<b>5,642 (100)</b>	<b>-37%</b>	
Benin	7,100 (282)	-11%	90 (0)	-100%	3
Burkina Faso	12,692 (157)	-4%	145 (0)	-100%	3
Cape Verde	17,125 (634)	63%	165 (6)	100%	3
Côte d'Ivoire	43,180 (2,870)	8%	237 (17)	89%	3
Gambia	5,420 (165)	-30%	164 (3)	-63%	3
Ghana	90,287 (288)	-82%	740 (3)	-91%	3
Guinea	19,670 (793)	-23%	120 (9)	13%	3
Guinea-Bissau	3,634 (66)	-45%	61 (6)	100%	3
Liberia	2,042 (0)	-100%	85 (0)	NA*	3
Mali	9,871 (541)	30%	379 (11)	38%	3
Niger	4,987 (59)	-13%	185 (0)	-100%	3
Nigeria	162,593 (856)	-21%	2,048 (18)	6%	3
Senegal	38,520 (687)	-27%	1,037 (24)	-52%	3
Sierra Leone	3,970 (22)	100%	79 (0)	NA*	3
Togo	9,955 (1,037)	41%	107 (3)	-63%	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,188,254 (70,541)</b>	<b>-5%</b>	<b>111,986 (1,883)</b>	<b>-13%</b>	

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

## **NEW Africa CDC Response Activities**

### **General:**

1. Thursday, 27 March 2021, Dr. John Nkengasong, the Director of Africa CDC hosted Africa CDC's weekly press briefing. The recording is available on the [Africa CDC Facebook page](#).
2. The Africa CDC Southern Africa Regional Collaboration Centre (SA-RCC) will be officially launched in Zambia on Wednesday, 31 March 2021. Details on the [Africa CDC Facebook page](#).

## Laboratory:

1. To date, over 39.7 million tests for COVID-19 have been conducted across the continent with a positivity rate of 10.6% and test per case ratio of 9.5. For epi week 12, approximately 802,412 new tests were conducted, which is a 4% decrease when compared to the previous week (838,066 tests).
2. Mozambique and Eswatini received 3,600 GeneXpert cartridges for COVID-19 testing. While a total of 90,800 GeneXpert cartridges are being shipped to 5 Member States (Zimbabwe, Zambia, Kenya, South Sudan and Sierra Leone)
3. Last week, lab TWG conducted a training workshop of trainers on Antigen testing for SARS-CoV-2 in coordination with the National Public Health Institute in Juba, South Sudan between 24 to 26 March 2021. This workshop included a total of 25 participants representing 5 zones and 10 health facilities participated in the training. Up to date, a total of 7,600 people were trained on Antigen testing in 17 countries.

## Healthcare Preparedness and Medical Countermeasures:

### *Infection and Prevention Control (IPC)*

1. Last week, Africa CDC and partners held the 3rd session of the sixth IPC webinar series entitled “Optimising the Environment for IPC: Screening and Triage for COVID-19 and Ebola”. The English session was held on Wednesday 24 March 2021 at 1 pm EAT with 546 participants. The French session was held on Friday 26 March 2021 at 2pm EAT with 102 participants.
2. This week, Africa CDC- IPC TWG and partners will hold the 4th session of 6 on “Layout and flow for specialised units looking at theatre and how to change behaviour during covid-19” in English, Wednesday 31st March 2021 10:00 am GMT (Dakar Time) | 11:00 am GMT+1 (Lagos Time) | 12:00 noon GMT+2 (Cairo and Johannesburg Time) | 13:00 pm GMT+3 (Nairobi Time). Register [here](#)
3. This week, IPC TWG will hold a webinar training on “Layout and flow for specialised units looking at theatres and how to change behaviour during COVID-19” in French Friday, 2nd April 2021 11:00 am GMT (Dakar Time) | 12:00 noon GMT+1 (Lagos Time) | 13:00 pm GMT+2 (Cairo and Johannesburg Time) | 14:00 pm GMT+3 (Nairobi Time). Register [here](#)

## Surveillance:

1. Africa CDC continues to support 17 Member States with the implementation of serosurveys. Data collection has been completed in Uganda and Nigeria.
2. Friday, 26 March 2021, Africa CDC hosted “the Consultative meeting with Mobile Telecom & Technology companies to discuss the Africa CDC Trusted Travel plus #Vaccines System & Policy for the continent.”
3. [Last week, the Partnership for Evidence-Based Response to COVID-19 \(PERC\) announced the release of 19 in-depth situational analyses for African Union Member States.](#) The new briefs combine results from phone surveys on the impact of public health and social measures (PHSMs) with information on epidemiological trends, media monitoring, and data on population mobility.

4. Last week, Africa CDC in collaboration with the Ministry of Health Uganda and other partners conducted the national training of trainers on the 3rd edition of Integrated Disease Surveillance and Response Strategy.

#### **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](#).

#### **Risk Communication:**

1. Thursday, 25 March 2021, Africa CDC hosted the monthly meeting of the Community of Practice for Public Health Risk Communication & Community Engagement (RCCE) for Africa. The meeting included COVID-19 RCCE in fragile communities and Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) response and in DRC and Guinea.

#### **Recommendations for the Member States**

1. Member States should continue to enhance their COVID-19<sup>5</sup> surveillance efforts to include:
  - a. Syndromic surveillance like influenza like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI).<sup>6</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>7</sup>
  - c. Genomic surveillance<sup>8</sup> to monitor variant presence and spread as well as the continued evolution of the virus.
2. Member States should continue to perform contact tracing<sup>9</sup> of confirmed cases based on transmission type and country capacity and enhance diagnostic screening efforts with the use of rapid antigen tests<sup>10</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).

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<sup>5</sup> [WHO COVID-19 Case definition](#)

<sup>6</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>7</sup> Revealing the toll of COVID-19: A technical package for Member States – Africa CDC

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

<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/>

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

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>