

Outbreak Brief #64: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 6 April 2021

Global case count: 131,034,139 cases and 2,850,839 deaths

Data sources: World Health Organization and African Union Member States

Outbreak Update: Since the last brief (30 March 2021), 4,133,436 new confirmed¹ coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases and 71,895 new deaths have been reported globally. To date, a total of 131,034,139 COVID-19 cases and 2,850,839 related deaths (case fatality ratio (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 6,562,225 (5%), European Region 46,085,310 (35%), Region of the Americas 56,759,442 (43%), South-East Asia Region 15,330,286 (12%) and Western Pacific Region 1,980,202(2%). Over the last seven days, India, Brazil and the United States have each reported more than 300K new cases. While Turkey, France, Poland, Italy, Germany and Ukraine 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) 6 April 2021, a total of 4,280,598 COVID-19 cases and 114,083 deaths (CFR: 2.7%) have been reported in 55 African Union (AU) Member States. This represents 3.3% of all cases reported globally. The 21 AU Member States reporting case fatality ratios higher than the global case fatality ratio of 2.2% are: Sudan (6.5%), Sahrawi Republic (6.1%), Egypt (5.9%), Somalia (4.7%), Liberia (4.2%), Zimbabwe (4.1%), Comoros (3.9%), Eswatini (3.9%), Niger (3.7%), Mali (3.7%), Chad (3.6%), Tunisia (3.4%), South Africa (3.4%), Malawi (3.3%), Gambia (3.0%), Lesotho (2.9%), Senegal (2.7%), Algeria (2.6%), DR Congo (2.6%), Mauritania (2.5%) and Angola (2.4%).

For Epi week 13 (29 March - 4 April 2021), 80,106 new COVID-19 cases have been reported, which is a 4% higher than the number of new cases reported in Epi week 12. The majority of new COVID-19 cases being reported for this week are from the Eastern region (37%) followed by the Northern (32%), Southern (16%), Western (9%) and Central (7%) regions. This week, six countries account for about 63% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: Ethiopia (18%), Tunisia (12%), Kenya (11%), South Africa (8%), Libya (7%) and Egypt (6%). The countries reporting the highest incidence (COVID-19 new cases per 100,000 population) this week are Seychelles (427), Cabo Verde (178),

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/>

Djibouti (164), Libya (122), Tunisia (121) and Botswana (111). Figure 1 shows the trend of new COVID-19 cases reported per day from 15 February 2020 to 6 April 2021. The number of new cases being reported daily has not varied much in the past few weeks, however there is a slight upward trend in new cases.

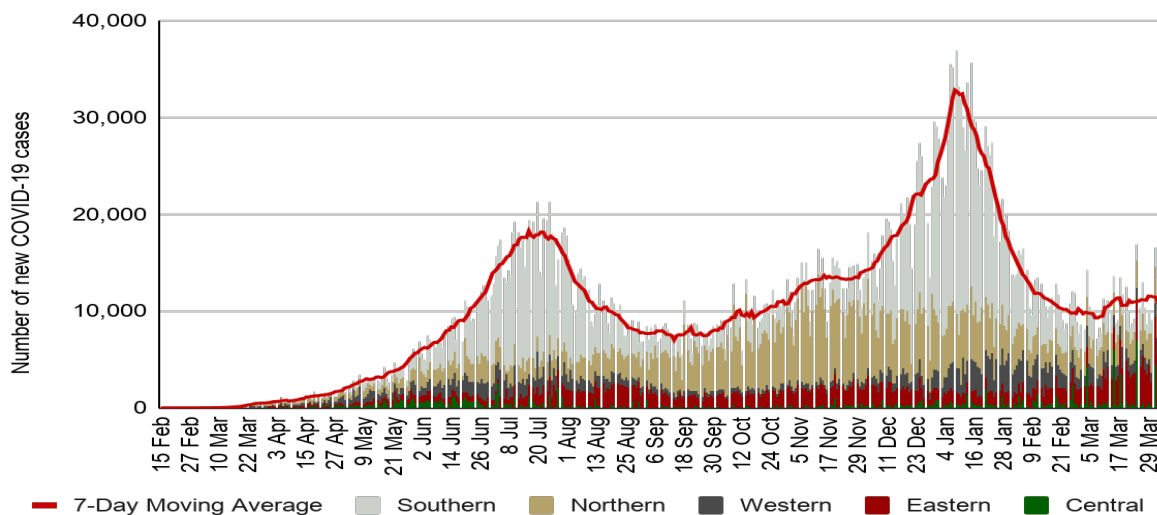


Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day in Africa by African Union region, 15 February 2020 - 6 April 2021.

Currently, the 18 AU Member States reporting the presence of the **B.1.1.7 variant³** are: Algeria, Angola, Cape Verde, Côte d’Ivoire, DR Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Togo and Tunisia.

Also, the 18 AU Member States reporting the presence of the **B.1.351 variant** are: 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.

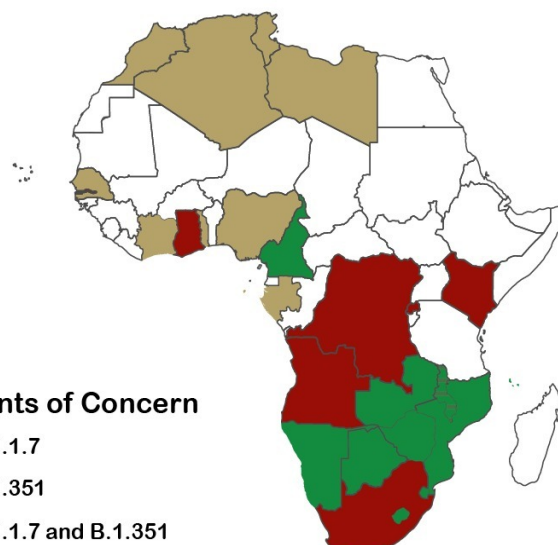


Figure 2: Variants of concern (501Y.V1 and 501Y.V2) reported by African Union Member States as of 6 April

³ Also described as VOC 202012/01

Fifty-two (95%) of the 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, by Region, 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 deaths⁴ reported in Africa for epi week 13 (29 March 2021 - 4 April 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 ⁵
Central Region	137,756 (5,784)	-31%	2,235 (101)	17%	
Burundi	2,911 (154)	7%	6 (0)	-100%	3
Cameroon	57,337 (3,417)	-45%	851 (72)	24%	3
Central African Republic	5,313 (114)	68%	73 (5)	400%	3
Chad	4,595 (94)	16%	165 (5)	67%	3
Congo	10,084 (403)	244%	137 (2)	100%	3
Democratic Republic of Congo	28,354 (343)	-22%	745 (6)	-54%	3
Equatorial Guinea	7,059 (145)	8%	104 (2)	100%	3
Gabon	19,863 (1,086)	2%	119 (8)	60%	3
Sao Tome and Principe	2,240 (28)	-58%	35 (1)	No change	3
Eastern Region	518,693 (29,613)	10%	9,288 (441)	44%	
Comoros	3,719 (29)	21%	146 (0)	NA*	3

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

⁵ 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.

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 ⁵
Djibouti	8,509 (1,148)	49%	72 (5)	67%	3
Eritrea	3,334 (126)	40%	10 (1)	-50%	3
Ethiopia	215,189 (14,626)	11%	2,963 (162)	14%	3
Kenya	138,988 (8,774)	-6%	2,224 (107)	NA*	3
Madagascar	25,643 (1,740)	35%	448 (60)	82%	3
Mauritius	1,112 (179)	72%	12 (2)	NA*	3
Rwanda	22,482 (1,063)	80%	311 (10)	-9%	3
Seychelles	4,295 (299)	32%	24 (4)	No change	3
Somalia	11,783 (945)	25%	546 (50)	-25%	3
South Sudan	10,281 (178)	-16%	113 (5)	150%	3
Sudan	31,833 (424)	62%	2,063 (35)	-17%	3
Tanzania	509 (0)	NA*	21 (0)	NA*	3
Uganda	41,016 (82)	183%	335 (0)	-100%	3
Northern Region	1,263,473 (25,412)	35%	36,329 (699)	4%	
Algeria	117,530 (786)	16%	3,105 (25)	9%	3
Egypt	204,965 (4,915)	6%	12,163 (281)	-1%	3
Libya	163,442 (5,897)	17%	2,757 (104)	-26%	3
Mauritania	17,927 (156)	-8%	449 (1)	-50%	3
Morocco	498,197 (3,538)	20%	8,850 (52)	68%	3
Tunisia	261,177 (10,008)	91%	8,993 (233)	22%	3
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	235 (112)	84%	12 (3)	50%	3
Southern Region	1,916,787 (12,441)	-13%	60,315 (524)	-22%	
Angola	22,631 (568)	72%	542 (9)	50%	3
Botswana	41,710 (1,869)	-18%	616 (110)	424%	3
Eswatini	17,352 (31)	-11%	668 (1)	-50%	3
Lesotho	10,707 (21)	-86%	315 (0)	-100%	3

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 ⁵
Malawi	33,661 (180)	-26%	1,123 (9)	-50%	3
Mozambique	68,119 (922)	-6%	782 (18)	No change	3
Namibia	44,790 (1,158)	0%	537 (28)	65%	3
South Africa	1,551,964 (6,533)	-14%	52,987 (324)	-41%	3
Zambia	88,930 (1,058)	-26%	1,220 (20)	-5%	3
Zimbabwe	36,923 (101)	-36%	1,525 (5)	-38%	3
Western Region	438,301 (6,856)	-23%	5,762 (117)	14%	
Benin	7,313 (213)	-24%	93 (3)	NA*	3
Burkina Faso	12,817 (125)	-20%	150 (5)	NA*	3
Cape Verde	17,871 (746)	18%	173 (8)	33%	3
Côte d'Ivoire	44,749 (1,569)	-45%	255 (18)	6%	3
Gambia	5,505 (85)	-48%	166 (2)	-33%	3
Ghana	90,900 (317)	-46%	752 (9)	50%	3
Guinea	20,506 (733)	-18%	130 (10)	11%	3
Guinea-Bissau	3,662 (28)	-58%	66 (5)	-17%	3
Liberia	2,042 (0)	NA*	85 (0)	NA*	3
Mali	10,501 (630)	16%	392 (13)	18%	3
Niger	5,041 (54)	-8%	188 (3)	NA*	3
Nigeria	163,195 (602)	-30%	2,058 (10)	-44%	3
Senegal	39,024 (504)	-27%	1,063 (26)	8%	2
Sierra Leone	3,988 (18)	-18%	79 (0)	NA*	2
Togo	11,187 (1,232)	19%	112 (5)	67%	1
Total	4,275,010 (80,106)	4%	113,929 (1,882)	2%	

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

As of 6 April 2021, 33 African Union Member States have started their COVID-19 vaccination programs targeting priority populations. Cumulatively, over 8.7 million persons have been vaccinated with the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine in these countries. Figure 3 shows the number of persons vaccinated with the first dose against COVID-19.

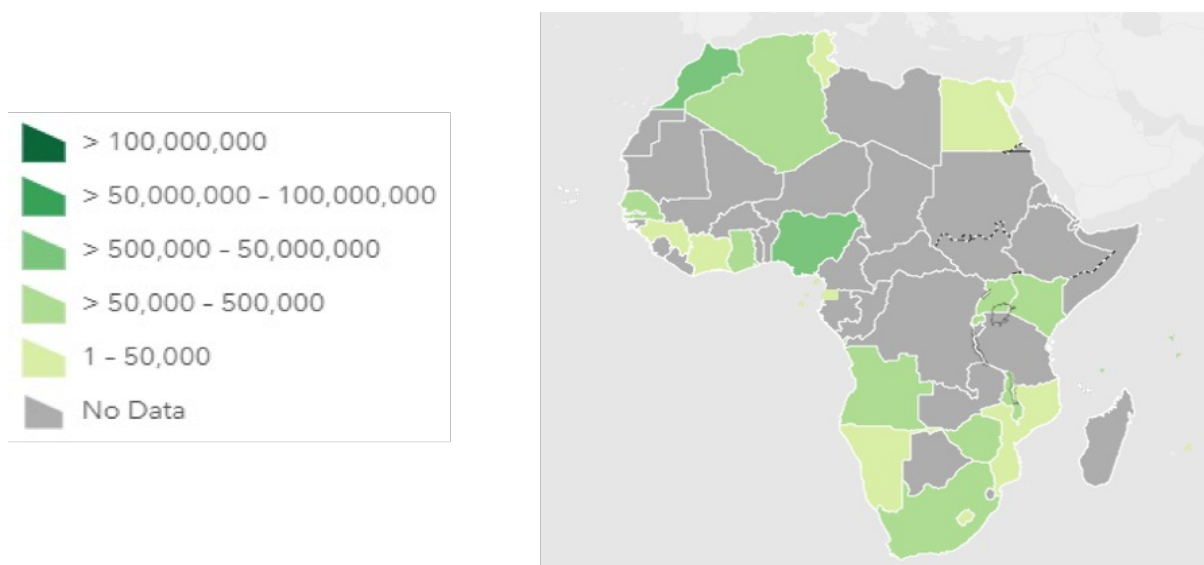


Figure 3: Number of persons vaccinated with at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine as of 6 April 2021.

NEW Africa CDC Response Activities

General:

1. Thursday, April 1, 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) was officially launched in Zambia on Wednesday, March 31 2021. Details on the [Africa CDC Facebook page](#).
3. Africa CDC Public Health Emergency Operations Centres (PHEOCs) and COVID-19 Management held its weekly PHEOC webinar series on Incident Management System (IMS), titled "The Public Communication Officer" on Thursday, April 1, 2021, at 3 pm EAT. The recording can be accessed on the [Africa CDC twitter page](#).

Laboratory:

1. Over 40.5 million tests for COVID-19 have been conducted in Africa since February 2020. The cumulative positivity ratio and test per case ratio are 10.5% and 9.5 respectively. For Epi week 13, 873,613 new tests were conducted. This represents a 6% decrease compared to Epi week 12 when 930,557 tests were conducted.

2. Africa CDC and other PACT partners have cumulatively supplied 21.7M antigen tests across the continent. Additionally, a total of 8,499 people from 17 countries have been trained on antigen testing.
3. Three regional labs; Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research (NMIMR) Ghana, Institut Pasteur de Dakar (IPD) Senegal, and Institut National de la Recherche Biomédicale (INRB) DRC received Illumina donation reagents and other consumables for sequencing this week.
4. Africa CDC in collaboration with Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) and the DRC Ministry of Health supported the training of 20 persons on COVID-19 Antigen RDT in Kinshasa. Provincial training will be rolled out to four regions of DRC in the next two weeks.

Healthcare Preparedness and Medical Countermeasures:

Case Management

1. Africa CDC supported Equatorial Guinea to conduct a Training of Trainers (ToT) on COVID-19 clinical management for 32 frontline healthcare workers. The training was held between 29-31 March 2021 in Malabo.

Infection and Prevention Control (IPC)

1. Africa CDC and partners held the 4th session of the sixth IPC webinar series titled “Layout and flow for specialized units looking at theatre and how to change behavior during COVID-19”. The English session was attended by 512 participants from 40 AU Member States. The French session was postponed to Friday, April 9 2021.
2. The French forum for the 4th session of the sixth IPC webinar series titled “Layout and flow for specialised units looking at theatre and how to change behaviour during covid-19” will be held on Friday, April 9 2021 at 11 am GMT (Dakar Time) | 12 pm GMT+1 (Lagos Time) | 1 pm GMT+2 (Cairo and Johannesburg Time) | 2 pm GMT+3 (Nairobi Time). [Register here](#).
3. Africa CDC, Infection Control Africa Network (ICAN), Resolve to Save Lives and WHO-AFRO will host the fifth session of the sixth IPC webinar series. This week's topic is on “Project management as a tool for Leadership: Quality improvement in IPC”. The English session will be held on Wednesday April 7 2021 at 10 am GMT (Dakar Time) | 11 am GMT+1 (Lagos Time) | 12 noon GMT+2 (Cairo and Johannesburg Time) | 1 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. Africa CDC and the Partnership for Evidence-Based Response to COVID-19 (PERC) will hold a webinar titled “Using Data to Find a Balance: Insights on the Human Impact of COVID-19 Response Measures from 19 AU Member States”. This will be a review of the [findings](#) from phone surveys to understand the reactions of the public to the pandemic and to Public Health Social Measures. The webinar will be held on

Wednesday April 7 2021 at 1pm GMT (Dakar Time) | 1 pm GMT+1 (Lagos Time) | 1 pm GMT+2 (Cairo and Johannesburg Time) | 1 pm GMT+3 (Nairobi Time). Register [here](#)

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. Africa CDC collaborated with Access Challenge through the OnebyOne campaign to host the Virtual Influencer Workshop for African Celebrities, Media Houses and Journalists on Tuesday, March 30, 2021. The recording can be accessed on the [Africa CDC twitter page](#).

Recommendations for the Member States

1. Member States should continue to enhance their COVID-19⁶ surveillance efforts to include:
 - a. Syndromic surveillance for influenza like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI).⁷
 - b. Rapid mortality surveillance that includes the collection, analysis and use of all-cause mortality data collected through the facility- or community-based surveillance.⁸
 - c. Genomic surveillance⁹ to monitor variant presence and spread as well as the continued evolution of the virus.
2. Member States should continue to perform contact tracing¹⁰ of confirmed cases based on transmission type and country capacity and enhance diagnostic screening efforts with the use of rapid antigen tests¹¹.
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).

⁶ [WHO COVID-19 Case definition](#)

⁷ 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](#)

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

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

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

¹¹ [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>