

Outbreak Brief #66: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 20 April 2021

Global case count: 141,058,320 cases and 3,015,314 deaths

Data sources: World Health Organization and African Union Member States

Outbreak Update: Since the last brief (13 April 2021), 5,397,279 new confirmed¹ coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases and 84,252 new deaths have been reported globally. To date, a total of 141,058,320 COVID-19 cases and 3,015,314 related deaths (case fatality ratio (CFR): 2.1%) 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 7,252,875 (5%), European Region 49,364,760 (35%), Region of the Americas 59,757,984 (42%), South-East Asia Region 17,981,667 (13%) and Western Pacific Region 2,224,974(2%). Over the last seven days, India reported more than 1,500,000 new cases, while Brazil, Turkey and the United States each reported more than 400,000 new cases. France, Iran, Argentina, Germany, Colombia, Poland and Italy have each reported more than 100,000 new cases during the same period. 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) 20 April 2021, a total of 4,437,846 COVID-19 cases and 118,133 deaths (CFR: 2.7%) have been reported in 55 African Union (AU) Member States. This represents 3.2% of all cases reported globally. The 21 AU Member States reporting case fatality ratios higher than the global case fatality ratio of 2.1% are: Sudan (6.7%), Egypt (5.9%), Sahrawi Republic (5.7%), Somalia (5.1%), Liberia (4.2%), Zimbabwe (4.1%), Comoros (3.8%), Niger (3.7%), Eswatini (3.6%), Chad (3.6%), South Africa (3.4%), Tunisia (3.4%), Mali (3.4%), Malawi (3.4%), Gambia (3%), Lesotho (2.9%), Senegal (2.7%), Algeria (2.6%), DR Congo (2.6%), Mauritania (2.5%) and Angola (2.3%).

For Epi week 15 (12 April - 18 April 2021), 78,303 new COVID-19 cases have been reported, which is 0.2% lower than the number of new cases reported in Epi week 14. The majority of new COVID-19 cases being reported for this week are from the Northern region (37%) followed by the Eastern (34%), Southern (19%), Western (7%) and Central (3%) regions. This week, six countries account for about 66% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: Tunisia (18%), Ethiopia (17%), South Africa (11%), Kenya (8%), Egypt (7%) and Madagascar (5%). The countries reporting the highest incidence (COVID-19 new cases per 100,000 population) this week are Seychelles (370), Cabo

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/>

Verde (244), Tunisia (120), Eswatini (87), Djibouti (58), Gabon (56), Libya (55), Botswana (52) and Namibia (45). Figure 1 shows the trend of new COVID-19 cases reported per day from 15 February 2020 to 20 April 2021. The Epi chart is showing an almost steady trend for the last few weeks.

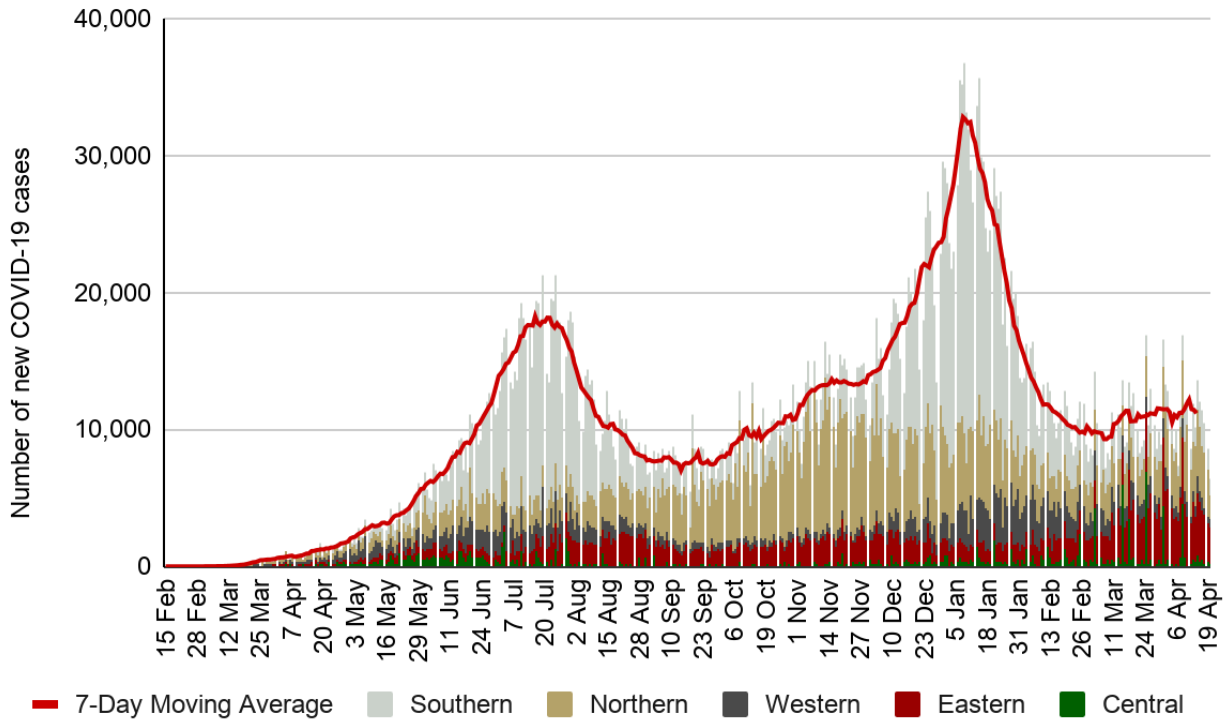


Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day in Africa by African Union region, 15 February 2020 - 20 April 2021.

Currently, the 19 AU Member States reporting the presence of the **B.1.1.7 variant**³ are: Algeria, Angola, Cape Verde, Côte d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia and Malawi.

Also, the 18 AU Member States reporting the presence of the **B.1.351 variant** are: Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Comoros, DR Congo, Eswatini, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Libya, and Lesotho. See Figure 2 for the breakdown of variant types reported by Member State.

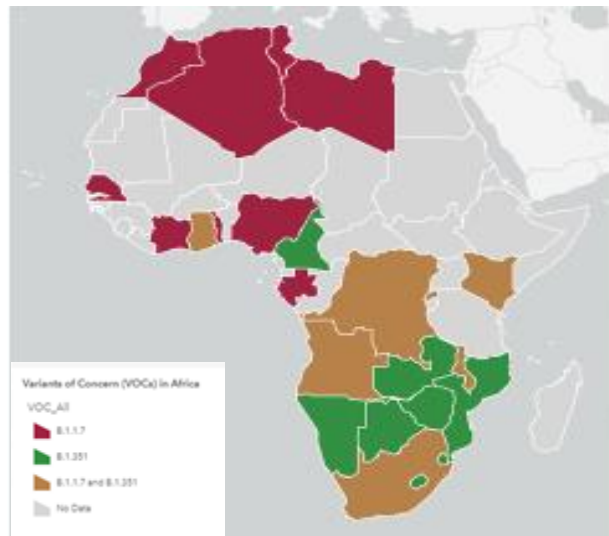


Figure 2: Variants of concern (501Y.V1 and 501Y.V2) reported by African Union Member States as of 20 April 2021.

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 14. The table also provides the current epidemic phase for each country.

³ Also described as VOC 202012/01

Table 1. Confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths⁴ reported in Africa for epi week 15 (12 April 2021 - 18 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	146,637 (2,663)	-57%	2,333 (16)	-80%	
Burundi	3,612 (458)	88%	6 (0)	NA*	3
Cameroon	61,731 (0)	-100%	919 (0)	-100%	3
Central African Republic	6,107 (470)	65%	83 (8)	300%	3
Chad	4,706 (70)	71%	169 (2)	No change	3
Congo	10,084 (0)	NA*	137 (0)	NA*	3
Democratic Republic of Congo	29,005 (394)	53%	745 (0)	NA*	3
Equatorial Guinea	7,259 (40)	-75%	106 (0)	-100%	3
Gabon	21,858 (1,222)	58%	133 (6)	-25%	3
Sao Tome and Principe	2,275 (9)	-65%	35 (0)	NA*	3
Eastern Region	571,864 (26,677)	1%	10,374 (594)	26%	
Comoros	3,819 (30)	-57%	146 (0)	NA*	3
Djibouti	10,460 (584)	-57%	116 (20)	-17%	3
Eritrea	3,491 (44)	-61%	10 (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 ⁶
Ethiopia	242,028 (13,032)	-6%	3,370 (196)	-7%	3
Kenya	151,653 (5,983)	-10%	2,481 (133)	7%	3
Madagascar	32,320 (4,257)	81%	546 (46)	12%	3
Mauritius	1,203 (11)	-86%	15 (1)	-50%	3
Rwanda	23,888 (462)	-51%	325 (10)	150%	3
Seychelles	4,765 (370)	270%	25 (1)	NA*	3
Somalia	12,837 (431)	-31%	656 (38)	-38%	3
South Sudan	10,473 (92)	-8%	114 (0)	-100%	3
Sudan	33,022 (1,189)	NA*	2,208 (145)	NA*	3
Tanzania	509 (0)	NA*	21 (0)	NA*	3
Uganda	41,396 (192)	6%	341 (4)	100%	3
Northern Region	1,319,946 (28,883)	5%	38,053 (944)	21%	
Algeria	119,642 (1,210)	47%	3,155 (25)	No change	3
Egypt	216,334 (5,845)	6%	12,738 (293)	4%	3
Libya	172,464 (3,788)	-28%	2,908 (80)	13%	3
Mauritania	18,129 (107)	13%	453 (3)	200%	3
Morocco	505,811 (3,709)	-5%	8,945 (45)	-10%	3
Tunisia	287,061 (14,121)	20%	9,825 (493)	45%	3

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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 ⁷
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	505 (103)	-38%	29 (5)	-58%	3
Southern Region	1,943,456 (14,585)	21%	61,295 (520)	13%	
Angola	24,389 (932)	13%	561 (8)	-27%	3
Botswana	44,702 (1,258)	-27%	684 (21)	-55%	3
Eswatini	18,417 (1,041)	4238%	671 (2)	100%	3
Lesotho	10,711 (4)	NA*	315 (0)	NA*	3
Malawi	33,941 (114)	-31%	1,138 (10)	100%	3
Mozambique	69,203 (445)	-30%	798 (7)	-22%	3
Namibia	46,655 (1,128)	53%	604 (34)	3%	3
South Africa	1,566,769 (8,311)	28%	53,736 (414)	24%	3
Zambia	90,918 (889)	-19%	1,235 (9)	50%	3
Zimbabwe	37,751 (463)	27%	1,553 (15)	15%	3
Western Region	450,186 (5,495)	-13%	5,918 (80)	5%	
Benin	7,611 (96)	-52%	96 (3)	NA*	3
Burkina Faso	13,129 (150)	-7%	154 (2)	No change	3
Cape Verde	20,466 (1,461)	29%	191 (9)	No change	3
Côte d'Ivoire	45,560 (354)	-23%	274 (11)	38%	3
Gambia	5,720 (118)	22%	170 (2)	No change	3

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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 ⁸
Ghana	91,709 (232)	-50%	771 (8)	-27%	3
Guinea	21,460 (428)	-19%	138 (2)	-67%	3
Guinea-Bissau	3,712 (32)	78%	66 (0)	NA*	3
Liberia	2,042 (0)	NA*	85 (0)	NA*	3
Mali	13,070 (1,226)	-9%	433 (25)	56%	3
Niger	5,131 (57)	73%	190 (1)	No change	3
Nigeria	164,233 (440)	-26%	2,061 (1)	-50%	3
Senegal	39,782 (351)	-14%	1,091 (13)	-13%	2
Sierra Leone	4,028 (23)	35%	79 (0)	NA*	2
Togo	12,533 (527)	-36%	119 (3)	-25%	1
Total	4,432,089 (78,303)	0%	117,973 (2,154)	15%	

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

NEW Africa CDC Response Activities

General:

1. Africa CDC organized a two day virtual conference bringing together high level officials from across the continent to discuss the development and manufacture of vaccines on the continent. The theme for this high level conference was “Africa’s Vaccines Manufacturing for Health Security” and it took place on Monday and Tuesday 12 and 13 April 2021. A recording of the meeting is available on the [Africa CDC Twitter page](#).

⁸ 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.

2. Thursday, 15 April 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](#).
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 "IMS roundup" on Thursday, 15 April 2021, at 3 pm EAT. The recording can be accessed on the [Africa CDC Facebook page](#).

Laboratory:

1. Over 42.5 million tests for COVID-19 have been conducted in Africa since February 2020. The cumulative positivity ratio and test per case ratio are 10.4% and 9.6 respectively. For Epi week 15, 834,671 new tests were conducted. This represents a 15% decrease compared to Epi week 14 when 982,030 tests were conducted.
2. Africa CDC is committed to strengthen the testing capacity across the continent. Out of 22.4 million antigen tests committed by partners, 18.7 million have been procured and 7.6 million have been distributed to Member States. Africa CDC alone has finalized the procurement process for an additional 500,000 antigen tests.
3. Shipment of reagents and consumables for pathogen genomic sequencing to 10 sequencing centers is being completed and most have already received the supplies.
4. Training of Trainers (TOT) training for 25 laboratory workers on antigen testing started on 19 April, 2021 in Conakry, Guinea with support from Africa CDC.
5. Africa CDC in collaboration with partners has continued to support the rollout of antigen test training in DRC. The Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) is working with the Ministry of Health (MOH) to conduct cascade training in four regions of DRC.
6. Africa CDC has distributed more than 120,000 antigen tests to DRC to support the scale up of COVID-19 testing in the country.

Healthcare Preparedness and Medical Countermeasures:

Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC)

1. Africa CDC and partners held the fifth session of the sixth IPC webinar series titled "Challenges and barriers in implementing IPC best practices". The English session was attended by 675 participants on Wednesday, 14 April 2021 and the French session was attended by nearly 100 participants on Friday, 16 April 2021.
2. Africa CDC, Infection Control Africa Network (ICAN), Resolve to Save Lives and WHO-AFRO will host the sixth session of the sixth IPC webinar series this week. This week's topic is "Challenges and barriers to implement best practices: lessons learnt". The French session will be held on Friday, 23 April 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 Surveillance TWG held its English and French webinar titled “Africa CDC saving lives, economies and livelihoods: Key recommendations to the continent related to safe opening of borders” on Wednesday 14 April 2021 at 4 pm EAT.
2. Africa CDC Surveillance TWG will hold the first session of the weekly webinar surveillance series titled “Saving lives, economies and livelihood: key recommendation to the continent related to safe opening of borders”. The session will be held on Wednesday, 21 April 2021 at 4:00 pm EAT. [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](#).
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-19⁹ surveillance efforts to include:
 - a. Syndromic surveillance for influenza like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI).¹⁰
 - b. Rapid mortality surveillance that includes the collection, analysis and use of all-cause mortality data collected through the facility- or community-based surveillance.¹¹
 - c. Genomic surveillance¹² to monitor variant presence and spread as well as the continued evolution of the virus.
2. Member States should continue to perform contact tracing¹³ of confirmed cases based on transmission type and country capacity and enhance diagnostic screening efforts with the use of rapid antigen tests¹⁴.
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.

⁹ [WHO COVID-19 Case definition](#)

¹⁰ 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](#)

¹¹ Revealing the toll of COVID-19: A technical package for Member States – Africa CDC

¹² Genomic sequencing of SARS-CoV-2: a guide to implementation for maximum impact on public health

¹³ Africa CDC Guidance on Contact Tracing for COVID-19 Pandemic: <https://africacdc.org/download/guidance-on-contact-tracing-for-covid-19-pandemic/>

¹⁴ [Interim Guidance on the Use of Rapid Antigen tests for COVID-19 Response – Africa CDC](#)

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 if COVID-19 incidence starts 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>