

## Outbreak Brief #67: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 27 April 2021

Global case count: 146,851,700 cases and 3,105,041 deaths

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

**Outbreak Update:** Since the last brief (20 April 2021), 5,793,380 new confirmed<sup>1</sup> coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases and 89,727 new deaths have been reported globally. To date, a total of 146,851,700 COVID-19 cases and 3,105,041 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 7,605,640 (5%), European Region 50,849,952 (35%), Region of the Americas 61,152,648 (42%), South-East Asia Region 20,332,200 (14%) and Western Pacific Region 2,355,833 (2%). Over the last seven days, India reported more than 2,200,000 new cases, and has reported more than 1,000,000 new cases for the second consecutive week. Brazil, the United States and Turkey each reported more than 350,000 new cases in the past seven days while France, Argentina, Iran, Germany, and Colombia 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 COVID-19 dashboard.<sup>2</sup>

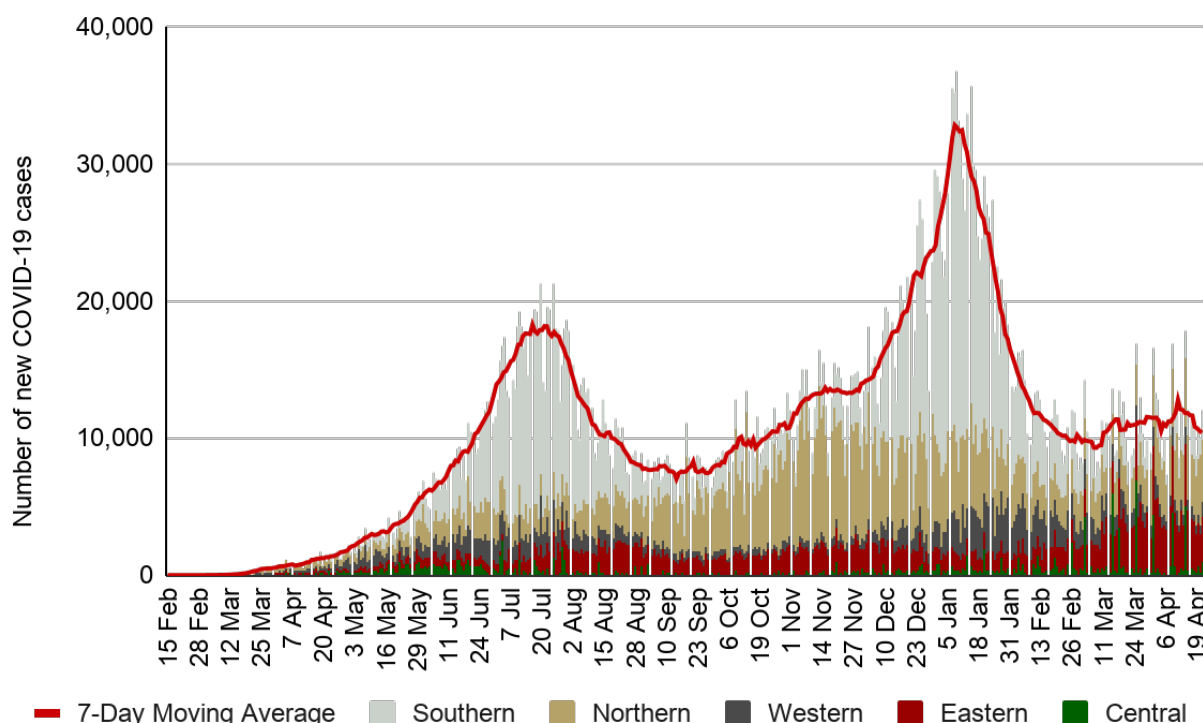
**As of 9 am East African Time (EAT) 27 April 2021,** a total of 4,516,235 COVID-19 cases and 120,420 deaths (CFR: 2.7%) have been reported in 55 African Union (AU) Member States. This represents 3.1% of all cases reported globally. The 21 AU Member States reporting case fatality ratios higher than the global case fatality ratio of 2.1% are Sudan (6.8%), Egypt (5.9%), Sahrawi Republic (5.6%), Somalia (5.1%), Zimbabwe (4.1%), Liberia (4.1%), Comoros (3.8%), Niger (3.7%), Eswatini (3.6%), Chad (3.5%), Mali (3.5%), South Africa (3.4%), Tunisia (3.4%), Malawi (3.4%), Gambia (3%), Lesotho (3%), Senegal (2.8%), Algeria (2.7%), DR Congo (2.6%), Mauritania (2.5%) and Angola (2.3%).

**For Epi week 16 (19 - 25 April 2021),** 75,355 new COVID-19 cases have been reported, which is a 9% decrease in the number of new cases reported when compared to Epi week 15. The majority of new COVID-19 cases reported for this week are from the Northern region (39%) followed by the Eastern (29%), Southern (22%), Western (7%) and Central (3%) regions. This week, six countries account for about 66% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: Tunisia (19%), Ethiopia (14%), South Africa (12%), Egypt (8%), Kenya (7%), and Botswana (6%). The countries reporting the highest

<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/>

incidence (COVID-19 new cases per 100,000 population) this week are Seychelles (405), Cabo Verde (314), Botswana (182), Tunisia (123), Libya (48), and Namibia (45). Figure 1 shows the trend of new COVID-19 cases reported per day from 15 February 2020 to 27 April 2021. Despite daily fluctuations in the number of new cases being reported by day, overall, there is a downward trend in the number of daily new cases being reported.



**Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day in Africa by African Union region, 15 February 2020 - 27 April 2021.**

Twenty AU Member States reporting the presence of the **B.1.1.7 variant<sup>3</sup>** are: Algeria, Angola, Cabo Verde, Côte d’Ivoire, DR Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Togo and Tunisia.

Twenty-one AU Member States reporting the presence of the **B.1.351 variant** are: Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Comoros, DR Congo, Eswatini, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Malawi, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Togo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

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

A new Pathogen Genomics Dashboard was launched on Saturday, 24 April 2021 and it provides the breakdown of variant types reported by Member State. More information on SARS-COV-2 sequencing in Africa is available on the [Africa Pathogen Genomics Initiative page](#).

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 State and Region in Africa, as well as the new COVID-19 cases and deaths reported during epi week 16. 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 16 (19 - 25 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 <sup>5</sup>
<b>Central Region</b>	<b>153,559 (2,624)</b>	<b>-62%</b>	<b>2,433 (28)</b>	<b>-68%</b>	
Burundi	3,853 (210)	-57%	6 (0)	NA*	3
Cameroon	65,998 (0)	-100%	991 (0)	-100%	3
Central African Republic	6,359 (252)	-46%	87 (4)	-50%	3
Chad	4,770 (64)	-9%	169 (0)	-100%	3
Congo	10,678 (594)	NA*	144 (7)	NA*	3
Democratic Republic of Congo	29,611 (606)	54%	756 (11)	NA*	3
Equatorial Guinea	7,559 (300)	650%	107 (1)	NA*	3
Gabon	22,433 (575)	-53%	138 (5)	-17%	3

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

<sup>5</sup> 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 <sup>5</sup>
Sao Tome and Principe	2,298 (23)	156%	35 (0)	NA*	3
<b>Eastern Region</b>	<b>593,601 (21,711)</b>	<b>-19%</b>	<b>10,909 (535)</b>	<b>-10%</b>	
Comoros	3,829 (10)	-67%	146 (0)	NA*	3
Djibouti	10,802 (342)	-41%	136 (20)	No change	3
Eritrea	3,605 (114)	159%	10 (0)	NA*	3
Ethiopia	252,279 (10,251)	-21%	3,551 (181)	-8%	3
Kenya	156,787 (5,134)	-14%	2,622 (141)	6%	3
Madagascar	35,083 (2,763)	-35%	594 (48)	4%	3
Mauritius	1,206 (3)	-73%	16 (1)	No change	3
Rwanda	24,593 (705)	53%	330 (5)	-50%	3
Seychelles	5,170 (405)	9%	26 (1)	No change	3
Somalia	13,812 (975)	126%	702 (46)	21%	3
South Sudan	10,538 (65)	-29%	114 (0)	NA*	3
Sudan	33,673 (651)	-45%	2,300 (92)	-37%	3
Tanzania <sup>6</sup>	509 (0)	NA*	21 (0)	NA*	3
Uganda	41,715 (293)	34%	341 (0)	-100%	3
<b>Northern Region</b>	<b>1,349,012 (29,066)</b>	<b>1%</b>	<b>39,091 (1,038)</b>	<b>10%</b>	
Algeria	120,922 (1,280)	6%	3,207 (52)	108%	3
Egypt	222,523 (6,189)	6%	13,049 (311)	6%	2
Libya	175,753 (3,289)	-13%	3,005 (97)	21%	3
Mauritania	18,257 (128)	20%	454 (1)	-67%	3
Morocco	509,363 (3,552)	-4%	8,992 (47)	4%	2
Tunisia	301,627 (14,566)	3%	10,352 (527)	7%	1

<sup>6</sup> Last report received 7-May-2020.

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 <sup>5</sup>
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	567 (62)	-40%	32 (3)	-40%	3
<b>Southern Region</b>	<b>1,960,219 (16,763)</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>61,798 (503)</b>	<b>-3%</b>	
Angola	25,609 (1,220)	31%	579 (18)	125%	3
Botswana	49,068 (4,366)	247%	702 (18)	-14%	3
Eswatini	18,442 (25)	-98%	671 (0)	-100%	3
Lesotho	10,728 (17)	325%	316 (1)	NA*	3
Malawi	34,016 (75)	-34%	1,147 (9)	-10%	3
Mozambique	69,665 (462)	4%	807 (9)	29%	3
Namibia	47,776 (1,121)	-1%	625 (21)	-38%	3
South Africa	1,575,471 (8,702)	5%	54,148 (412)	0%	3
Zambia	91,358 (440)	-51%	1,246 (11)	22%	3
Zimbabwe	38,086 (335)	-28%	1,557 (4)	-73%	3
<b>Western Region</b>	<b>455,596 (5,191)</b>	<b>-9%</b>	<b>6,002 (78)</b>	<b>-9%</b>	
Benin	7,720 (109)	14%	97 (1)	-67%	3
Burkina Faso	13,263 (134)	-11%	156 (2)	No change	3
Cape Verde	22,349 (1,883)	29%	203 (12)	33%	3
Côte d'Ivoire	45,852 (292)	-18%	282 (8)	-27%	3
Gambia	5,820 (100)	-15%	173 (3)	50%	3
Ghana	92,253 (325)	-28%	777 (0)	-100%	3
Guinea	21,985 (525)	23%	141 (3)	50%	3
Guinea-Bissau	3,726 (14)	-56%	67 (1)	NA*	3
Liberia	2,098 (56)	NA*	85 (0)	NA*	3
Mali	13,627 (557)	-55%	467 (34)	36%	3
Niger	5,191 (60)	5%	191 (1)	No change	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 <sup>5</sup>
Nigeria	164,719 (486)	10%	2,061 (0)	-100%	3
Senegal	40,135 (353)	1%	1,102 (11)	-15%	3
Sierra Leone	4,044 (16)	-30%	79 (0)	NA*	3
Togo	12,814 (281)	-47%	121 (2)	-33%	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,511,987 (75,355)</b>	<b>-9%</b>	<b>120,233 (2,182)</b>	<b>-2%</b>	

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

## NEW Africa CDC Response Activities

### General:

1. Dr. John Nkengasong, Director of Africa CDC, hosted the weekly Africa CDC's COVID-19 press briefing on Thursday, 22 April 2021. The recording is available on the [Africa CDC Facebook page](#).
2. Africa CDC Public Health Emergency Operations Centres (PHEOCs) and COVID-19 Management held its weekly PHEOC webinar series on Thursday, 22 April 2021. The recording can be accessed on the [Africa CDC Twitter page](#).
3. As of 27 April 2021, 47 out of 55 African Union Member States have started their COVID-19 vaccination programs targeting priority populations. Cumulatively, over 17.3 million doses have been administered and 12.9 million persons have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine in these countries. More information on COVID-19 vaccination can be found on the [Africa CDC COVID-19 vaccine dashboard](#).

### Laboratory:

1. Over 43 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 16, 787,581 new tests were conducted, a 27% decrease compared to Epi week 15 when 1,082,306 tests were conducted. The highest decrease in the number of tests conducted in Epi week 16 compared to Epi week 15 occurred in the Central region (83% decrease) and Western region (29% decrease). The cause of this reduction is under investigation.
2. Africa CDC supported the Ethiopian Public Health Institute (EPHI) to conduct training on antigen testing for 280 participants from all regions of Ethiopia. The training facilitated the identification of 103 antigen testing sites, expanding capacity for

antigen testing in the country. Overall, a total of 10,501 people have been trained on antigen testing for SARS-CoV-2 in 17 Member States.

### **Healthcare Preparedness and Medical Countermeasures:**

#### *Case Management*

1. Africa CDC Case Management TWG continued partnering with Project HOPE and Brown University to provide training of trainers on COVID-19 vaccines for 80 frontline health care workers from Chad (10) and Madagascar (70). The training was held on Wednesday, 21 April 2021. The objective of the training is to increase knowledge among frontline healthcare workers on the types of COVID-19 vaccines, mechanism of action, side effects, administration of the vaccines, cold chain management, supply chain, and risk communication. A recording of the training can be accessed [here](#). Cumulatively, Africa CDC has trained 634 healthcare workers in 26 Member States on the COVID-19 vaccines and vaccination.

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

1. Africa CDC, Infection Control Africa Network (ICAN), Resolve to Save Lives and WHO-AFRO hosted the sixth session of the sixth IPC webinar series for Francophone countries last week. The topic was “Challenges and barriers to implement best practices: lessons learnt” and was attended by 98 participants.

### **Surveillance:**

1. Africa CDC Surveillance TWG held the second session on the webinar series titled “Africa CDC saving lives, economies and livelihoods: Key recommendations to the continent related to safe opening of borders” on Wednesday, 21 April 2021.
2. Africa CDC Surveillance TWG will hold the third session of the weekly webinar surveillance series titled “Introducing Trusted Travel: The African Union’s New Digital Health Strategy”. The session will be held on Wednesday, 28 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-19<sup>7</sup> surveillance efforts to include:
  - a. Syndromic surveillance for influenza like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI).<sup>8</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>9</sup>
  - c. Genomic surveillance<sup>10</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>11</sup> of confirmed cases based on transmission type and country capacity and enhance diagnostic screening efforts with the use of rapid antigen tests<sup>12</sup>.
3. All Member States should notify and routinely share data with WHO and Africa CDC regarding confirmed COVID-19 cases, deaths, recoveries, tests conducted and healthcare workers infected to continually inform these and other updates. Notify Africa CDC by emailing: [AfricaCDCEBS@african-union.org](mailto:AfricaCDCEBS@african-union.org).
4. Member States should continue to guide the general public about seeking immediate medical care for those who develop severe symptoms (e.g. difficulty breathing).
5. Member States should put in place or strengthen existing public health and social measures if COVID-19 incidence starts to rise.<sup>13</sup>

## 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>

<sup>7</sup> [WHO COVID-19 Case definition](#)

<sup>8</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>9</sup> Revealing the toll of COVID-19: A technical package for Member States – Africa CDC

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

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

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

<sup>13</sup> [Recommendations for Stepwise response to COVID-19 – Africa CDC](#), [COVID-19 guidance for educational settings – Africa CDC](#), [COVID-19 guidance for the transportation sector – Africa CDC](#)