

Outbreak Brief #68: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 4 May 2021

Global case count: 152,542,447 cases and 3,198,853 deaths

Data sources: World Health Organization and African Union Member States

Outbreak Update: Since the last brief (27 April 2021), 5,690,747 new confirmed¹ coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases and 93,812 new deaths have been reported globally. To date, a total of 152,542,447 COVID-19 cases and 3,198,853 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 7,898,630 (5%), European Region 52,009,750 (34%), Region of the Americas 62,463,885 (41%), South-East Asia Region 23,060,767 (15%) and Western Pacific Region 2,490,038 (2%). Over the last seven days, India reported more than 2,600,000 new cases, and has reported more than 1,000,000 new cases for the third consecutive week. Brazil, the United States and Turkey each reported more than 200,000 new cases in the past seven days while France, Argentina, Iran, Germany, and Colombia have each reported more than 120,000 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.²

As of 9 am East African Time (EAT) 4 May 2021, a total of 4,578,902 COVID-19 cases and 122,589 deaths (CFR: 2.7%) have been reported in 55 African Union (AU) Member States. This represents 3% 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 (6.9%), Egypt (5.9%), Sahrawi Republic (5.8%), Somalia (5.1%), Zimbabwe (4.1%), Liberia (4%), Comoros (3.8%), Niger (3.6%), Eswatini (3.6%), Chad (3.5%), Mali (3.5%), Tunisia (3.5%), South Africa (3.4%), Malawi (3.4%), Gambia (3%), Lesotho (3%), Senegal (2.8%), Algeria (2.7%), DR Congo (2.6%), Mauritania (2.5%) and Angola (2.2%).

For Epi week 17 (26 April - 2 May | 2021), 65,159 new COVID-19 cases have been reported, which is a 10% decrease in the number of new cases reported when compared to Epi week 16. The majority of new COVID-19 cases reported for this week are from the Northern region (39%) followed by the Southern (22%), Eastern (21%), Central (12%) and Western (7%) regions. This week, six countries account for about 66% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: Tunisia (17%), South Africa (13%), Egypt (11%), Cameroon (10%), Ethiopia (9%) and Kenya (6%). The countries reporting

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/>

the highest incidence (COVID-19 new cases per 100,000 population) this week are Seychelles (444), Cabo Verde (337), Tunisia (94), Botswana (83), Namibia (45), Libya (37) and Djibouti (36). Figure 1 shows the trend of new COVID-19 cases reported per day from 15 February 2020 to 4 May 2021. For the last four weeks, there is a downward trend in the number of daily new cases being reported.

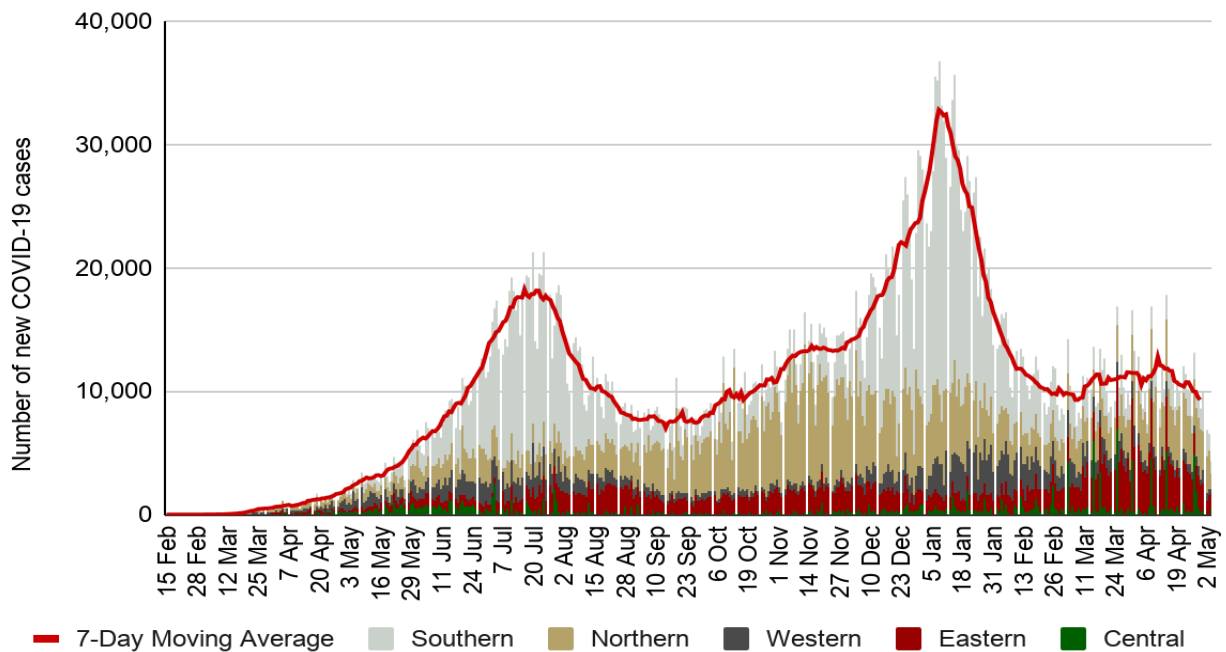


Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day in Africa by African Union region, 15 February 2020 - 4 May 2021.

As of 29 April 2021, twenty-one AU Member States reporting the presence of the **B.1.1.7 variant³** are: Algeria, Angola, Cameroon, 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-two AU Member States reporting the presence of the **B.1.351 variant** are: Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Comoros, Côte d’Ivoire, DR Congo, Eswatini, Equatorial Guinea, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Malawi, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, South Africa, Togo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe .

³ Also described as VOC 202012/01

On 3 May 2021, the Moroccan Ministry of Health announced the detection of two new COVID-19 cases infected with the **B.1.617 variant**⁴ which was first detected in India.

The Pathogen Genomics Dashboard provides a 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 deaths⁵ reported in Africa for epi week 17 (26 April - 2 May 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 ⁶
Central Region	161,359 (7,800)	197%	2,572 (139)	396%	
Burundi	4,038 (185)	-12%	6 (0)	NA*	3
Cameroon	72,250 (6,252)	NA*	1,107 (116)	NA*	3
Central African Republic	6,521 (162)	-36%	91 (4)	No change	3
Chad	4,828 (58)	-9%	170 (1)	NA*	3
Congo	10,678 (0)	-100%	144 (0)	-100%	3

⁴ <https://www.facebook.com/ministere.sante.ma/posts/1623426711178340>

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.

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
Democratic Republic of Congo	29,965 (354)	-42%	768 (12)	9%	3
Equatorial Guinea	7,694 (135)	-55%	112 (5)	400%	3
Gabon	23,075 (642)	12%	139 (1)	-80%	3
Sao Tome and Principe	2,310 (12)	-48%	35 (0)	NA*	3
Eastern Region	607,543 (13,661)	-38%	11,379 (470)	-12%	
Comoros	3,840 (11)	10%	146 (0)	NA*	3
Djibouti	11,157 (355)	4%	146 (10)	-50%	3
Eritrea	3,671 (66)	-42%	10 (0)	NA*	3
Ethiopia	258,384 (6,105)	-40%	3,726 (175)	-3%	3
Kenya	160,422 (3,635)	-29%	2,763 (141)	No change	3
Madagascar	36,789 (1,706)	-38%	666 (72)	50%	3
Mauritius	1,211 (5)	67%	17 (1)	No change	2
Rwanda	25,253 (660)	-6%	337 (7)	40%	3
Seychelles	5,873 (444)	-33%	28 (2)	100%	3
Somalia	13,915 (103)	-89%	713 (11)	-76%	3
South Sudan	10,602 (64)	-2%	115 (1)	NA*	3
Sudan	33,944 (271)	-58%	2,349 (49)	-47%	3

⁷ 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 ⁸
Tanzania ⁹	509 (0)	NA*	21 (0)	NA*	Unknown
Uganda	41,973 (236)	-25%	342 (1)	NA*	3
Northern Region	1,374,212 (25,200)	-13%	40,223 (1,132)	9%	
Algeria	122,522 (1,600)	25%	3,270 (63)	21%	3
Egypt	229,635 (7,112)	15%	13,469 (420)	35%	3
Libya	178,335 (2,582)	-21%	3,047 (42)	-57%	3
Mauritania	18,448 (191)	49%	455 (1)	No change	3
Morocco	511,856 (2,493)	-30%	9,028 (36)	-23%	3
Tunisia	312,747 (11,120)	-24%	10,915 (563)	7%	3
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	669 (102)	65%	39 (7)	133%	3
Southern Region	1,971,055 (14,049)	4%	62,165 (367)	-27%	
Angola	26,993 (1,384)	13%	600 (21)	17%	3
Botswana	47,851 (1,996)	73%	724 (22)	22%	3
Eswatini	18,458 (16)	-36%	671 (0)	NA*	3
Lesotho	10,733 (5)	-71%	318 (2)	100%	3
Malawi	34,096 (80)	7%	1,148 (1)	-89%	3
Mozambique	69,984 (319)	-31%	815 (8)	-11%	3

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.

⁹ 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 ¹⁰
Namibia	48,902 (1,126)	0%	649 (24)	14%	3
South Africa	1,584,064 (8,593)	-1%	54,417 (269)	-35%	3
Zambia	91,693 (335)	-24%	1,253 (7)	-36%	3
Zimbabwe	38,281 (195)	-42%	1,570 (13)	225%	3
Western Region	460,305 (4,449)	-18%	6,073 (69)	-14%	
Benin	7,884 (164)	50%	100 (3)	200%	3
Burkina Faso	13,324 (61)	-54%	157 (1)	-50%	3
Cape Verde	24,368 (2,019)	7%	223 (20)	67%	3
Côte d'Ivoire	46,114 (262)	-10%	286 (4)	-50%	3
Gambia	5,901 (81)	-19%	175 (2)	-33%	3
Ghana	92,683 (170)	-71%	779 (0)	-100%	3
Guinea	22,333 (348)	-34%	146 (5)	67%	3
Guinea-Bissau	3,736 (10)	-29%	67 (0)	-100%	3
Liberia	2,110 (12)	-79%	85 (0)	NA*	3
Mali	13,915 (288)	-48%	489 (22)	-35%	3
Niger	5,251 (60)	No change	191 (0)	-100%	3
Nigeria	165,181 (462)	-5%	2,063 (2)	NA*	3
Senegal	40,433 (298)	-16%	1,110 (8)	-27%	3

¹⁰ 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 ¹¹
Sierra Leone	4,062 (18)	13%	79 (0)	NA*	3
Togo	13,010 (196)	-30%	123 (2)	No change	3
Total	4,574,474 (65,159)	-10%	122,412 (2,177)	0%	

*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 Africa CDC’s weekly COVID-19 press briefing on Thursday, 29 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, 29 April 2021. The recording can be accessed on the [Africa CDC Twitter page](#).
3. Africa CDC, WHO, Merck pharmaceuticals and African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF) Health Africa will host a virtual press conference titled “Launch of the Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Leadership Training Programme” on Tuesday, 6 May 2021 at 11am - 12pm EAT. Register [here](#)
4. As of 4 May 2021, 47 out of 55 African Union Member States have started their COVID-19 vaccination programs targeting priority populations. Cumulatively, over 17.9 million doses have been administered and 14.7 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](#).

¹¹ 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.

Laboratory:

1. Over 44 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 9.7 respectively. For Epi week 17, 771,490 new tests were conducted, a 3% decrease compared to Epi week 16 when 797,649 tests were conducted.
2. Over 1,100 antigen testing sites have been established in seven countries and a total of 11,600 people have been trained on antigen testing for SARS-CoV-2 in 17 Member States.
3. Africa CDC laboratory TWC conducted a five day workshop on “laboratory quality management during the COVID-19 pandemic” for 35 human and animal health personnel using the one health approach. It was held in Addis Ababa from 26 - 30 April 2021.

Healthcare Preparedness and Medical Countermeasures:

Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC)

1. The Southern Africa IPC Regional Training for the National IPC Focal Points was conducted on 28th and 29th April 2021. It included 12 people from 6 countries (Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Namibia, Lesotho and Zambia) physically and 60 people joined online from South Africa, Eswatini, Botswana, Angola and Zambia.

Surveillance:

1. On 28 April 2021, Africa CDC Surveillance TWG held the fourth session of the weekly webinar surveillance series titled “Introducing Trusted Travel: The African Union’s New Digital Health Strategy”. The webinar included 50 participants from different Member States.

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-19¹² surveillance efforts to include:
 - a. Syndromic surveillance for influenza like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI).¹³
 - b. Rapid mortality surveillance that includes the collection, analysis and use of all-cause mortality data collected through the facility- or community-based surveillance.¹⁴
 - c. Genomic surveillance¹⁵ to monitor variant presence and spread as well as the continued evolution of the virus.
2. Member States should continue to perform contact tracing¹⁶ of confirmed cases based on transmission type and country capacity and enhance diagnostic screening efforts with the use of rapid antigen tests¹⁷.
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@africa-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.¹⁸

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>

¹² [WHO COVID-19 Case definition](#)

¹³ 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](#)

¹⁴ Revealing the toll of COVID-19: A technical package for Member States – Africa CDC

¹⁵ Genomic sequencing of SARS-CoV-2: a guide to implementation for maximum impact on public health

¹⁶ Africa CDC Guidance on Contact Tracing for COVID-19 Pandemic: <https://africacdc.org/download/guidance-on-contact-tracing-for-covid-19-pandemic/>

¹⁷ [Interim Guidance on the Use of Rapid Antigen tests for COVID-19 Response – Africa CDC](#)

¹⁸ [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](#)