

Outbreak Brief #69: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 11 May 2021

Global case count: 157,983,475 cases and 3,288,777 deaths

Data sources: World Health Organization and African Union Member States

Outbreak Update: Since the last brief (4 May 2021), 5,441,028 new confirmed¹ coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases and 89,924 new deaths have been reported globally. To date, a total of 157,983,475 COVID-19 cases and 3,288,777 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 8,150,064 (5%), European Region 52,914,444 (33%), Region of the Americas 63,677,932 (40%), South-East Asia Region 25,938,567 (16%) and Western Pacific Region 2,617,354 (2%). Over the last seven days, India reported more than 2,700,000 new cases, and has reported more than 2,000,000 new cases for the third consecutive week. Brazil and the United States each reported more than 200,000 new cases in the past seven days while Argentina, Colombia, France, Germany, Iran, and Turkey 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.²

As of 9 am East African Time (EAT) 11 May 2021, a total of 4,643,529 COVID-19 cases and 124,789 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 (7.1%), Egypt (5.9%), Sahrawi Republic (5.7%), Somalia (5.2%), Zimbabwe (4.1%), Liberia (4%), Comoros (3.7%), Niger (3.6%), Eswatini (3.6%), Tunisia (3.6%), Chad (3.5%), Mali (3.5%), South Africa (3.4%), Malawi (3.4%), Gambia (3%), Lesotho (3%), Senegal (2.8%), Algeria (2.7%), DR Congo (2.5%), Mauritania (2.4%) and Angola (2.2%).

For Epi week 18 (3 - 9 May 2021), 59,461 new COVID-19 cases have been reported, which is a 13% decrease in the number of new cases reported when compared to Epi week 17. The majority of new COVID-19 cases reported for this week are from the Northern region (38%) followed by the Southern (33%), Eastern (19%), Western (7%) and Central (3%) regions. This week, six countries account for about 61% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: South Africa (21%), Tunisia (15%), Egypt (13%), Ethiopia (7%) and Kenya (5%). The countries reporting the highest incidence (COVID-

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/>

19 new cases per 100,000 population) this week are Seychelles (714), Cabo Verde (494), Tunisia (110), Namibia (67), Libya (39) and Djibouti (25). 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.

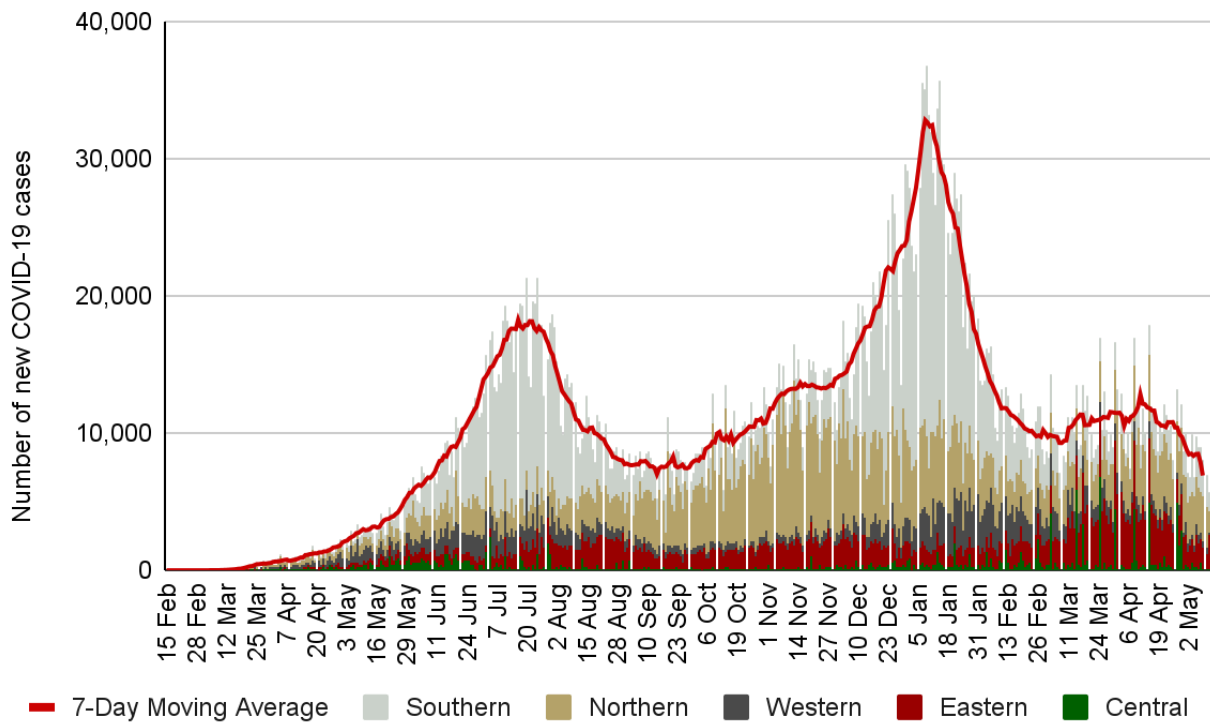


Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day in Africa by African Union region, 15 February 2020 - 11 May 2021.

As of 10 May 2021, twenty-three AU Member States reporting the presence of the **B.1.1.7 variant³** are: Algeria, Angola, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d’Ivoire, DR Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, and Tunisia.

Twenty-four 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, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Malawi, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Togo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe .

On 9 May 2021, the National Department of Health, South Africa announced the detection of four new COVID-19 cases infected with the **B.1.617 variant⁴** which was first detected in India. Seven AU

³ Also described as VOC 202012/01

⁴ <https://twitter.com/healthza/status/1391116101266944003?s=24>

Member States reporting the presence of this variant are Angola, DR Congo, Gabon, Kenya, Morocco, South Africa and Uganda.

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 18. 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 18 (3 - 9 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	165,807 (1,784)	-83%	2,634 (25)	-86%	
Burundi	4,177 (139)	-25%	6 (0)	NA*	3
Cameroon	74,946 (213)	-98%	1,152 (8)	-95%	3
Central African Republic	6,866 (204)	-33%	95 (4)	No change	3
Chad	4,877 (49)	-16%	171 (1)	No change	3
Congo	11,147 (469)	NA*	148 (4)	NA*	3

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 ⁶
Democratic Republic of Congo	30,350 (345)	-12%	772 (4)	-67%	3
Equatorial Guinea	7,694 (0)	-100%	112 (0)	-100%	3
Gabon	23,432 (357)	-44%	143 (4)	300%	3
Sao Tome and Principe	2,318 (8)	-33%	35 (0)	NA*	3
Eastern Region	620,107 (11,433)	-17%	11,877 (471)	-3%	
Comoros	3,922 (82)	645%	146 (0)	NA*	3
Djibouti	11,335 (178)	-50%	149 (3)	-70%	3
Eritrea	3,742 (71)	8%	12 (2)	NA*	3
Ethiopia	262,702 (4,318)	-29%	3,888 (162)	-7%	3
Kenya	163,554 (3,132)	-14%	2,895 (132)	-6%	3
Madagascar	39,162 (1,411)	-17%	729 (52)	-28%	3
Mauritius	1,255 (44)	780%	17 (0)	-100%	3
Rwanda	25,652 (399)	-40%	338 (1)	-86%	3
Seychelles	6,373 (500)	13%	28 (0)	-100%	3
Somalia	14,415 (500)	385%	747 (34)	209%	3
South Sudan	10,641 (39)	-39%	115 (0)	-100%	3
Sudan	34,461 (407)	7%	2,446 (81)	25%	3
Tanzania	509 (0)	NA*	21 (0)	NA*	Unknown
Uganda	42,384 (352)	19%	346 (4)	300%	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 ⁶
Northern Region	1,396,829 (22,617)	-10%	41,341 (1,118)	-1%	
Algeria	124,104 (1,582)	-1%	3,328 (58)	-8%	3
Egypt	237,410 (7,775)	9%	13,904 (435)	4%	3
Libya	180,226 (1,891)	-27%	3,072 (25)	-40%	3
Mauritania	18,667 (219)	15%	456 (1)	No change	3
Morocco	513,864 (2,008)	-19%	9,072 (44)	22%	3
Tunisia	321,837 (9,090)	-18%	11,468 (553)	-2%	3
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	721 (52)	-49%	41 (2)	-71%	1
Southern Region	1,990,814 (19,759)	41%	62,605 (440)	20%	
Angola	28,464 (1,471)	6%	631 (31)	48%	3
Botswana	51,538 (3,687)	85%	751 (27)	23%	3
Eswatini	18,480 (22)	38%	671 (0)	NA*	3
Lesotho	10,773 (40)	700%	319 (1)	-50%	3
Malawi	34,171 (75)	-6%	1,153 (5)	400%	3
Mozambique	70,212 (228)	-29%	823 (8)	No change	3
Namibia	50,070 (1,168)	4%	689 (40)	67%	3
South Africa	1,596,595 (12,531)	46%	54,735 (318)	18%	3
Zambia	92,092 (399)	19%	1,257 (4)	-43%	3
Zimbabwe	38,419 (138)	-29%	1,576 (6)	-54%	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 ⁶
Western Region	464,318 (3,868)	-16%	6,124 (47)	-36%	
Benin	7,884 (0)	-100%	100 (0)	-100%	3
Burkina Faso	13,379 (55)	-10%	162 (5)	400%	3
Cape Verde	26,441 (2,073)	3%	232 (9)	-55%	3
Côte d'Ivoire	46,442 (328)	25%	291 (5)	25%	3
Gambia	5,929 (28)	-65%	175 (0)	-100%	3
Ghana	93,011 (183)	-42%	783 (0)	-100%	3
Guinea	22,633 (300)	-14%	150 (4)	-20%	3
Guinea-Bissau	3,741 (5)	-50%	67 (0)	NA*	3
Liberia	2,114 (4)	-67%	85 (0)	NA*	3
Mali	14,108 (193)	-33%	500 (11)	-50%	3
Niger	5,321 (70)	17%	192 (1)	NA*	3
Nigeria	165,382 (201)	-56%	2,065 (2)	No change	3
Senegal	40,692 (259)	-13%	1,119 (9)	13%	2
Sierra Leone	4,087 (25)	39%	79 (0)	NA*	3
Togo	13,154 (144)	-27%	124 (1)	-50%	3
Total	4,637,875 (59,461)	-13%	124,581 (2,101)	-6%	

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

NEW Africa CDC Response Activities

General:

1. African Union, under the leadership of H.E Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, Chairperson of the African Union and President of the Democratic Republic of Congo held a high level emergency virtual meeting of African Ministers of Health on the COVID-19 situation in Africa to review the state of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa and evaluate the implementation of the Joint Continental Strategy, one year after, on Saturday, 8 May 2021 at 1pm - 8pm EAT. In attendance at this high-level meeting were Ministers of Health and representatives from 40 AU Member States. The recording is available on the [Africa CDC Facebook page](#).
2. Africa CDC, WHO, Merck pharmaceuticals and African Medical and Research Foundation (AMREF) Health Africa held a virtual press conference titled “Launch of the Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Leadership Training Programme (PHEPR-LTP)” on Thursday, 6 May 2021 at 11am - 12pm EAT, with a panel discussion at 3pm - 4pm EAT. 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 Thursday, 6 May 2021. The recording can be accessed on the [Africa CDC Twitter page](#).
4. As of 11 May 2021, 47 out of 55 African Union Member States have started their COVID-19 vaccination programs targeting priority populations. Cumulatively, over 22.3 million doses have been administered and 17.3 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 45 million tests for COVID-19 have been conducted in Africa since February 2020. The cumulative positivity ratio and test per case ratio are 10.3% and 9.7 respectively. For Epi week 18, 726,469 new tests were conducted, a 22% decrease compared to Epi week 17 when 936,155 tests were conducted.
2. Africa CDC, Elizabeth Glaser Paediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) and the Ministry of Health, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) conducted a three-day workshop for four trainers and a two-day training for 20 healthcare providers on rapid antigen testing for COVID-19 in Kinshasha, DRC.

Healthcare Preparedness and Medical Countermeasures:

Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC)

1. Africa CDC and partners will hold the first session of the seventh IPC webinar series titled “Setting up and operationalising IPC committees at the health/hospital level” on Wednesday 12 May 2021 at 1pm EAT for the [English](#) session and on Thursday 13 May 2021 at 2pm EAT for the French session.
2. The IPC TWG participated in the 2021 World Hand Hygiene Day hosted by WHO AFRO on Wednesday 5 May 2021.

Surveillance:

1. On 5 May 2021, Africa CDC Surveillance TWG held the fifth session of the weekly webinar surveillance series titled “Use of genetic sequencing in COVID-19 surveillance”. The webinar included 40 participants from different Member States.
2. This week’s surveillance webinar titled “The interface between One Health and Public Health Surveillance; the intersection between animal and human health and role of surveillance” will be held on Wednesday 12 May 2021 at 4pm 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-19⁷ surveillance efforts to include:
 - a. Syndromic surveillance for influenza like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI).⁸
 - b. Rapid mortality surveillance that includes the collection, analysis and use of all-cause mortality data collected through the facility- or community-based surveillance.⁹
 - c. Genomic surveillance¹⁰ to monitor variant presence and spread as well as the continued evolution of the virus.
2. Member States should continue to perform contact tracing¹¹ of confirmed cases based on transmission type and country capacity and enhance diagnostic screening efforts with the use of rapid antigen tests¹².
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

⁷ [WHO COVID-19 Case definition](#)

⁸ 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](#)

⁹ Revealing the toll of COVID-19: A technical package for Member States – Africa CDC

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

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

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

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.¹³

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>

¹³ [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](#)