

## Outbreak Brief #70: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 18 May 2021

Global case count: 162,782,725 cases and 3,375,953 deaths

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

**Outbreak Update:** Since the last brief (11 May 2021), 4,799,250 new confirmed<sup>1</sup> coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases and 87,176 new deaths have been reported globally. To date, a total of 162,782,725 COVID-19 cases and 3,375,953 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 8,344,428 (5%), European Region 53,631,235 (33%), Region of the Americas 64,930,098 (40%), South-East Asia Region 28,387,552 (17%) and Western Pacific Region 2,747,337 (2%). Over the last seven days, India reported more than 2,300,000 new cases, and has reported more than 2,000,000 new cases for the fourth consecutive week. During the same period Brazil reported more than 400,000 new cases the United States has reported more than 200,000 new cases while Argentina and Colombia have each reported more than 100,000 new cases. For more detailed information on cases and deaths being reported outside of Africa, refer to the WHO COVID-19 dashboard.<sup>2</sup>

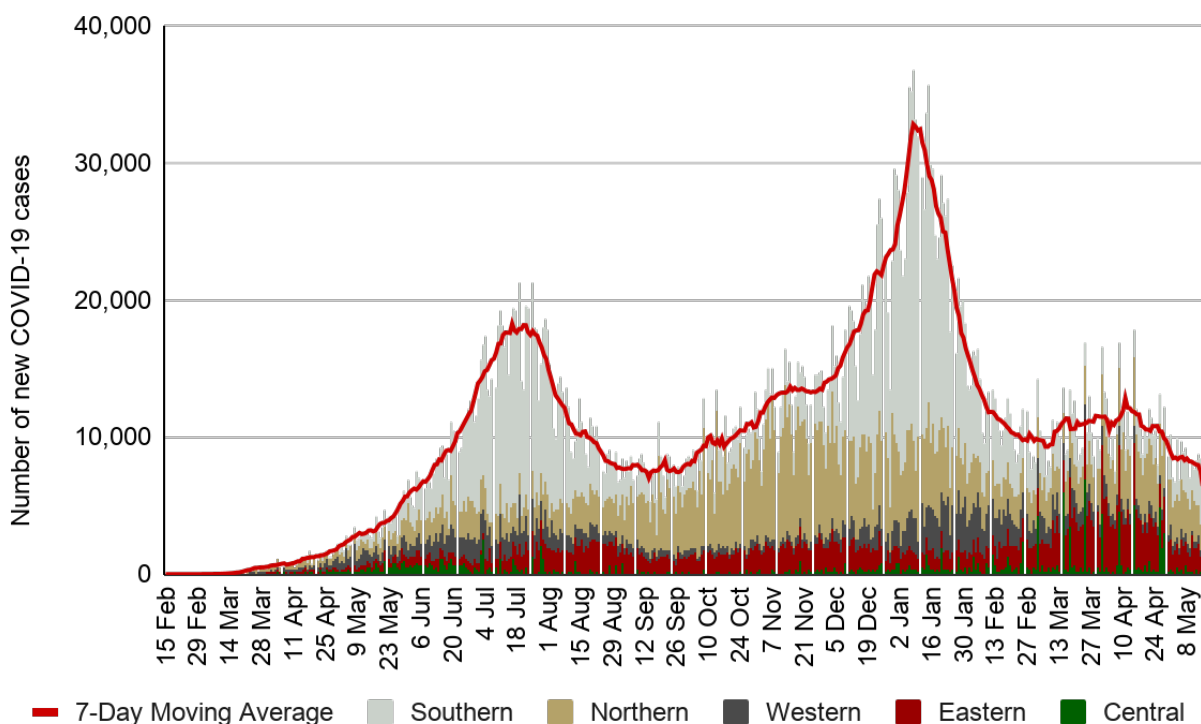
**As of 9 am East African Time (EAT) 18 May 2021,** a total of 4,699,255 COVID-19 cases and 126,681 deaths (CFR: 2.7%) have been reported in 55 African Union (AU) Member States. This represents 3% of all cases reported globally. The 21 AU Member States reporting case fatality ratios higher than the global case fatality ratio of 2.1% are Sudan (7.2%), Egypt (5.8%), Sahrawi Republic (5.7%), Somalia (5.2%), Zimbabwe (4.1%), Liberia (4%), Comoros (3.7%), Tunisia (3.6%), Eswatini (3.6%), Mali (3.6%), Niger (3.6%), Chad (3.5%), South Africa (3.4%), Malawi (3.4%), Lesotho (3%), Gambia (2.9%), Senegal (2.8%), Algeria (2.7%), Democratic Republic (DR) of Congo (2.5%), Mauritania (2.4%) and Angola (2.2%).

**For Epi week 19 (10 - 16 May 2021),** 55,709 new COVID-19 cases have been reported, which is a 7% decrease in the number of new cases reported when compared to Epi week 18. The majority of new COVID-19 cases reported for this week are from the Southern region (41%), followed by the Northern (32%), Eastern (20%), Western (5%) and Central (2%) regions. This week, six countries account for about 61% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: South Africa (31%), Egypt (15%), Tunisia (10%), Ethiopia (6%), Seychelles (5%) and Cote d'Ivoire (5%). The countries reporting the

<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/>

highest incidence (COVID-19 new cases per 100,000 population) this week are Seychelles (2,811), Cabo Verde (251), Botswana (74), Tunisia (48), Namibia (46), and South Africa (29). Figure 1 shows the trend of new COVID-19 cases reported per day from 15 February 2020 to 18 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 - 18 May 2021.**

As of 18 May 2021, twenty-four AU Member States reporting the presence of the **B.1.1.7 variant<sup>3</sup>** are: Algeria, Angola, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Côte d’Ivoire, DR Congo, Egypt, 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, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Togo, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

Nine AU Member States reporting the presence of the **B.1.617 variant** are: Angola, Botswana, DR Congo, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda and Zambia.

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

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-three (96%) of the 55 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 deaths<sup>4</sup> reported in Africa for Epi week 19 (10 – 16 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 <sup>5</sup>
<b>Central Region</b>	<b>166,943 (875)</b>	<b>-57%</b>	<b>2,641 (7)</b>	<b>-72%</b>	
Burundi	4,329 (152)	9%	6 (0)	NA*	3
Cameroon	74,946 (0)	-100%	1,152 (0)	-100%	3
Central African Republic	6,992 (61)	-77%	96 (1)	-75%	3
Chad	4,904 (27)	-45%	173 (2)	100%	3
Congo	11,343 (0)	-100%	148 (0)	-100%	3
Democratic Republic of Congo	30,609 (259)	-25%	776 (4)	No change	3
Equatorial Guinea	7,694 (0)	NA*	112 (0)	NA*	3
Gabon	23,799 (367)	3%	143 (0)	-100%	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	2,327 (9)	13%	35 (0)	NA*	3
<b>Eastern Region</b>	<b>631,143 (10,993)</b>	<b>-4%</b>	<b>12,153 (276)</b>	<b>-40%</b>	
Comoros	3,930 (8)	-90%	146 (0)	NA*	3
Djibouti	11,434 (99)	-44%	151 (2)	-33%	3
Eritrea	3,844 (102)	44%	12 (0)	-100%	3
Ethiopia	266,264 (3,562)	-18%	3,996 (108)	-33%	3
Kenya	165,465 (1,911)	-39%	3,003 (108)	-18%	3
Madagascar	40,204 (1,042)	-26%	770 (41)	-21%	3
Mauritius	1,282 (27)	-39%	17 (0)	NA*	3
Rwanda	26,141 (489)	23%	344 (6)	500%	3
Seychelles	9,184 (2,811)	462%	32 (4)	NA*	3
Somalia	14,486 (71)	-86%	753 (6)	-82%	3
South Sudan	10,652 (11)	-72%	115 (0)	NA*	3
Sudan	34,889 (428)	5%	2,446 (0)	-100%	3
Tanzania	509 (0)	NA*	21 (0)	NA*	Unknown
Uganda	42,859 (432)	9%	347 (1)	-75%	3
<b>Northern Region</b>	<b>1,414,723 (17,894)</b>	<b>-21%</b>	<b>42,289 (948)</b>	<b>-15%</b>	
Algeria	125,311 (1,207)	-24%	3,374 (46)	-21%	3
Egypt	245,721 (8,311)	7%	14,327 (423)	-3%	3
Libya	181,714 (1,488)	-21%	3,092 (20)	-20%	3
Mauritania	18,828 (161)	-26%	457 (1)	No change	3
Morocco	514,944 (1,080)	-46%	9,098 (26)	-41%	3
Tunisia	327,473 (5,636)	-38%	11,899 (431)	-22%	3
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	732 (11)	-79%	42 (1)	-50%	1

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>Southern Region</b>	<b>2,013,863 (23,049)</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>63,174 (569)</b>	<b>29%</b>	
Angola	30,637 (2,173)	48%	659 (28)	-10%	3
Botswana	53,318 (1,780)	-52%	774 (23)	-15%	3
Eswatini	18,520 (40)	82%	672 (1)	NA*	3
Lesotho	10,790 (17)	-58%	320 (1)	No change	3
Malawi	34,214 (43)	-43%	1,153 (0)	-100%	3
Mozambique	70,442 (230)	1%	826 (3)	-63%	3
Namibia	51,218 (1,148)	-2%	718 (29)	-28%	3
South Africa	1,613,728 (17,133)	37%	55,210 (475)	49%	3
Zambia	92,436 (344)	-14%	1,260 (3)	-25%	3
Zimbabwe	38,560 (141)	2%	1,582 (6)	No change	3
<b>Western Region</b>	<b>467,330 (2,898)</b>	<b>-27%</b>	<b>6,168 (44)</b>	<b>-6%</b>	
Benin	7,984 (100)	NA*	101 (1)	NA*	3
Burkina Faso	13,397 (18)	-67%	164 (2)	-60%	3
Cape Verde	27,951 (1,510)	-27%	246 (14)	56%	3
Côte d'Ivoire	46,656 (214)	-35%	298 (7)	40%	3
Gambia	5,946 (17)	-39%	175 (0)	NA*	3
Ghana	93,333 (208)	-30%	783 (0)	NA*	3
Guinea	22,746 (113)	-62%	151 (1)	-75%	3
Guinea-Bissau	3,746 (5)	No change	67 (0)	NA*	3
Liberia	2,131 (17)	325%	85 (0)	NA*	3
Mali	14,190 (82)	-58%	511 (11)	No change	3
Niger	5,333 (12)	-83%	192 (0)	-100%	3
Nigeria	165,702 (320)	59%	2,066 (1)	-50%	3
Senegal	40,850 (158)	-39%	1,125 (6)	-33%	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>
Sierra Leone	4,090 (3)	-88%	79 (0)	NA*	3
Togo	13,275 (121)	-16%	125 (1)	No change	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,694,002 (55,709)</b>	<b>-7%</b>	<b>126,425 (1,844)</b>	<b>-12%</b>	

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

## NEW Africa CDC Response Activities

### General:

1. The [communiqué](#) for the emergency virtual meeting of African Ministers of Health held on 8 May 2021 to review the state of the COVID-19 pandemic in Africa, under the leadership of H.E Felix-Antoine Tshisekedi Tshilombo, Chairperson of the African Union and President of the Democratic Republic of Congo has been published on the Africa CDC website. The high level ministerial meeting endorsed an adapted joint continental strategy with focus on enhanced Prevention, Monitoring, and Treatment (PMT) in order to meet the changing dimensions of the COVID-19 on the continent as well as the evolving nature of the global pandemic. The meeting also appeals to AU Member States to invest in acquiring data with appropriate security, and sharing of data in a timely fashion, to help support the continental response efforts against COVID-19, and to enable Africa CDC to better implement the continental strategy in response to COVID-19.
2. Last Thursday (13 May 2021), Dr. Nkengasong hosted Africa CDC’s weekly press briefing with guest speaker Dr Faisal Shuaib, Executive Director/CEO, National Primary Health Care Development Agency, Nigeria. 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, 13 May 2021. The recording can be accessed on the [Africa CDC Facebook page](#).
4. As of 17 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 45.7 million tests for COVID-19 have been conducted in Africa since February 2020. The cumulative positivity ratio and test per case ratio are 10.2% and 9.8

respectively. For Epi week 19, 675,759 new tests were conducted, a 9% decrease compared to Epi week 18 when 739,196 tests were conducted.

2. Africa CDC in collaboration with the African Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM) conducted two COVID-19 webinar sessions titled “Global Fund COVID-19 Response Mechanism: SARS-CoV-2 Diagnostics Laboratory Systems Strengthening Priorities” on Wednesday, 12 May 2021 and “Country Experiences with the Use of Digital Tools for COVID-19” on Thursday, 13 May 2021. About 750 participants from various health backgrounds attended these webinars.

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

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

1. Africa CDC and partners will hold the second session of the seventh IPC webinar series titled “Monitoring and evaluation of IPC committee’s activities” on Wednesday 19 May 2021, at 1 pm EAT for the [English](#) session. [Register here](#)
2. The first French session for the seventh IPC webinar series on “Setting up and operationalizing IPC committee at the health/hospital level” will be held on Thursday 20 May 2021, at 2 pm EAT . [Register here](#).

### **Surveillance:**

1. This week’s surveillance webinar titled “COVID-19 Sero-surveillance in Africa: The experience of Africa CDC and Member States” will be held on Wednesday 19 May 2021, at 4 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>6</sup> surveillance efforts to include:
  - a. Syndromic surveillance for influenza like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI).<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> [WHO COVID-19 Case definition](#)

<sup>7</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](#)



- 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>8</sup>
  - c. Genomic surveillance<sup>9</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>10</sup> of confirmed cases based on transmission type and country capacity and enhance diagnostic screening efforts with the use of rapid antigen tests<sup>11</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@africa-union.org](mailto: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.<sup>12</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>8</sup> Revealing the toll of COVID-19: A technical package for Member States – Africa CDC

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

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

<sup>11</sup> [Interim Guidance on the Use of Rapid Antigen tests for COVID-19 Response – Africa CDC](#)

<sup>12</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](#)