

Outbreak Brief #72: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 1 June 2021

Global case count: 170,061,833 cases and 3,540,878 deaths

Data sources: World Health Organization and African Union Member States

Outbreak Update: Since the last brief (25 May 2021), 3,191,911 new confirmed¹ coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases, including 80,450 new deaths have been reported globally. To date, a global total of 170,061,833 COVID-19 cases and 3,540,878 related deaths (case fatality ratio (CFR): 2.1%) have been reported from 225 countries and territories to the World Health Organization (WHO). 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 8,731,777 (5%), European Region 54,288,252 (32%), Region of the Americas 67,354,733 (40%), South-East Asia Region 31,778,539 (19%) and Western Pacific Region 3,020,432 (2%). Over the last seven days, India reported more than 1,200,000 new cases, however, the number of new cases being reported by day has been declining since 7 May 2021. During the same period, Brazil reported more than 400,000 new cases, Argentina has reported more than 200,000 new cases, while the United States 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.²

As of 9 am East African Time (EAT) 1 June 2021, a total of 4,843,874 COVID-19 cases and 130,814 deaths (CFR: 2.7%) have been reported in 55 African Union (AU) Member States. This represents 3% of all cases reported globally. Mortality in critically ill patients with COVID-19 is higher in African countries than reported from studies done in Asia, Europe, North America, and South America. Increased mortality was associated with insufficient critical care resources, as well as the comorbidities of HIV/AIDS, diabetes, chronic liver disease, and kidney disease, and severity of organ dysfunction at admission. COVID-19 is now the 12th leading cause of death worldwide, the sixth leading cause of death in high-income countries, and the 41st leading cause of death in Africa.³ The 21 AU Member States reporting case fatality ratios higher than the global case fatality ratio of 2.1% are Sudan (7.4%), Sahrawi Republic (6.2%), Egypt (5.8%), Somalia (5.3%), Zimbabwe (4.1%), Liberia (4.0%), Comoros (3.7%), Tunisia (3.7%), Eswatini (3.6%), Mali (3.6%), Niger (3.6%), Chad (3.5%),

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/>

³ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(21\)00441-4/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)00441-4/fulltext)

South Africa (3.4%), Malawi (3.4%), Lesotho (3.0%), Gambia (3.0%), Algeria (2.8%), Senegal (2.8%), Democratic Republic (DR) of Congo (2.5%), Mauritania (2.4%) and Angola (2.2%).

For Epi week 21 (24 - 30 May 2021), 73,740 new COVID-19 cases have been reported, which is a 6% increase in the number of new cases reported when compared to Epi week 20. The majority of new COVID-19 cases reported for this week are from the Southern region (49%), followed by the Northern (32%), Eastern (13%), Central (3%) and Western (3%) regions. This week, eight countries account for 76% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: South Africa (37%), Tunisia (12%), Egypt (11%), Uganda (4%), Kenya (3%), Namibia (3%), Ethiopia (3%) and Morocco (3%). The countries reporting the highest incidence (COVID-19 new cases per 100,000 population) this week are Seychelles (1,179), Cabo Verde (171), Botswana (88), Namibia (88), Tunisia (77), South Africa (46) and Libya (32). Figure 1 shows the trend of new COVID-19 cases reported per day by AU region from 15 February 2020 to 1 June 2021. The number of daily new cases registered has been steadily increasing over the last week.

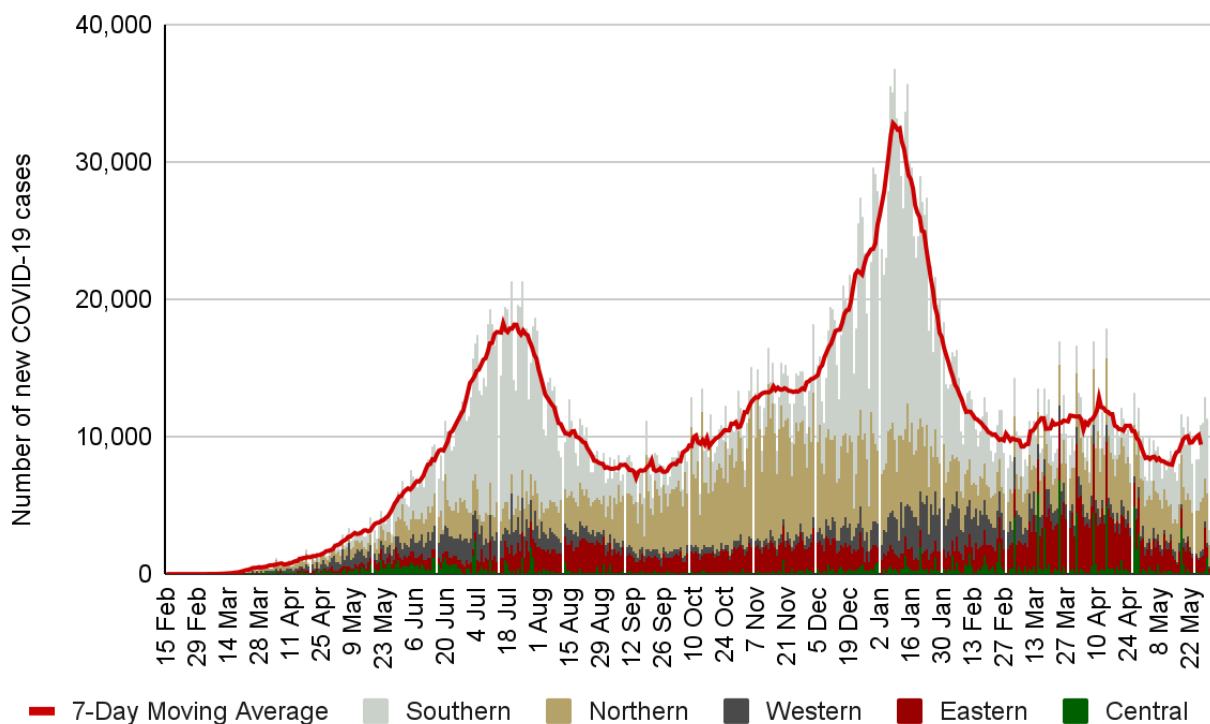


Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day in Africa by African Union region, 15 February 2020 - 1 June 2021.

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 Dashboard](#).

Table 1 shows the breakdown of three reported COVID-19 variants of concern in circulation by Member States in Africa as of this week.

Table 1: SARS-COV 2 Variants of Concern reported in African Union Member States, as of 1 June 2021

Variant	Number of MS	Member States
B.1.1.7	27	Algeria, Angola, Burkina Faso, Cabo Verde, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo Republic, Côte d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Libya, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, South Africa, Togo, and Tunisia
B.1.351	26	Angola, Botswana, Cameroon, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, DR Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Gambia, Gabon, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, Seychelles, South Africa, Togo, Tunisia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe
B.1.617	10	Angola, Botswana, DR Congo, Kenya, Morocco, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe

Fifty-three (96%) of the 55 AU Member States are experiencing community transmission of the SARS-COV 2 virus. Fifty-three (96%) Member States have experienced a second wave while 14

(25%) have experienced a third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. Table 2 lists the cumulative COVID-19 cases and deaths reported by Member State and Region in Africa and the new COVID-19 cases and deaths reported during Epi week 21. The table also provides the current epidemic phase for each country.

Table 2: Confirmed COVID-19 cases, deaths⁴ and current epidemic phases reported in Africa for Epi week 21 (24 - 30 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 ⁵
Central Region	174,251 (2,179)	-56%	2,792 (18)	-86%	
Burundi	4,754 (260)	58%	6 (0)	NA*	3
Cameroon	78,929 (947)	-69%	1,275 (5)	-96%	3
Central African Republic	7,091 (8)	-91%	98 (1)	No change	3
Chad	4,929 (5)	-75%	173 (0)	NA*	3
Congo	11,658 (0)	-100%	153 (0)	-100%	3
Democratic Republic of Congo	31,651 (599)	35%	782 (3)	No change	3
Equatorial Guinea	8,529 (93)	-87%	118 (6)	NA*	3
Gabon	24,365 (258)	-16%	150 (3)	-25%	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 ⁵
Sao Tome and Principe	2,345 (9)	No change	37 (0)	-100%	3
Eastern Region	651,267 (9,831)	-4%	12,775 (287)	-14%	
Comoros	3,949 (9)	-10%	146 (0)	NA*	3
Djibouti	11,527 (34)	-42%	154 (1)	-50%	3
Eritrea	4,061 (129)	47%	14 (0)	-100%	3
Ethiopia	271,345 (2,151)	-27%	4,155 (79)	-1%	3
Kenya	170,647 (2,215)	-25%	3,157 (98)	75%	3
Madagascar	41,342 (388)	-48%	840 (33)	-11%	3
Mauritius	1,367 (71)	407%	18 (1)	NA*	3
Rwanda	26,918 (230)	-58%	352 (3)	-40%	3
Seychelles	11,612 (1,179)	-6%	42 (4)	-33%	3
Somalia	14,660 (28)	-81%	769 (2)	-86%	3
South Sudan	10,688 (18)	No change	115 (0)	NA*	3
Sudan	35,495 (306)	2%	2,630 (62)	-49%	3
Tanzania	509 (0)	NA*	21 (0)	NA*	Unknown
Uganda	47,147 (3,073)	169%	362 (4)	-56%	3
Northern Region	1,460,985 (23,375)	2%	44,075 (795)	-20%	
Algeria	128,725 (1,865)	20%	3,596 (47)	-73%	3
Egypt	261,666 (7,831)	-3%	15,047 (326)	-17%	3
Libya	185,776 (2,184)	16%	3,126 (14)	-30%	3
Mauritania	19,494 (345)	7%	463 (5)	400%	3
Morocco	519,108 (2,085)	0%	9,143 (21)	-13%	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 ⁵
Tunisia	345,474 (9,060)	1%	12,654 (381)	2%	3
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	742 (5)	No change	46 (1)	-67%	1
Southern Region	2,078,379 (35,995)	26%	64,738 (801)	5%	
Angola	34,366 (1,925)	7%	764 (39)	-41%	3
Botswana	57,516 (2,114)	1%	849 (40)	14%	3
Eswatini	18,591 (40)	29%	673 (1)	NA*	3
Lesotho	10,831 (9)	-72%	326 (0)	-100%	3
Malawi	34,335 (51)	-27%	1,155 (2)	NA*	3
Mozambique	70,780 (190)	28%	836 (5)	No change	3
Namibia	55,141 (2,195)	27%	824 (59)	26%	3
South Africa	1,662,825 (27,360)	26%	56,439 (637)	8%	3
Zambia	95,050 (1,849)	142%	1,278 (10)	25%	3
Zimbabwe	38,944 (262)	115%	1,594 (8)	100%	3
Western Region	473,086 (2,360)	-28%	6,235 (32)	-9%	
Benin	8,058 (33)	-20%	101 (0)	NA*	3
Burkina Faso	13,431 (16)	-11%	166 (1)	No change	3
Cape Verde	30,359 (1,025)	-26%	264 (8)	-20%	3
Côte d'Ivoire	47,233 (226)	-36%	303 (5)	NA*	3
Gambia	5,992 (14)	-33%	179 (1)	-67%	3
Ghana	93,898 (175)	-34%	785 (2)	NA*	3
Guinea	23,177 (125)	-59%	161 (2)	-75%	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 ⁵
Guinea-Bissau	3,766 (15)	200%	68 (0)	-100%	3
Liberia	2,191 (30)	No change	86 (0)	-100%	3
Mali	14,265 (24)	-53%	517 (3)	No change	3
Niger	5,410 (27)	-46%	192 (0)	NA*	3
Nigeria	166,315 (296)	-7%	2,071 (4)	300%	3
Senegal	41,387 (245)	-16%	1,138 (6)	-14%	3
Sierra Leone	4,147 (26)	-16%	79 (0)	NA*	3
Togo	13,457 (83)	-16%	125 (0)	NA*	3
Total	4,837,968 (73,740)	6%	130,615 (1,933)	-14%	

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

NEW Africa CDC Response Activities

General:

1. Dr. John Nkengasong, Director of Africa CDC, hosted Africa CDC’s weekly press briefing on Thursday 27 May 2021 at 12 p.m. EAT. The recording is available on the [Africa CDC Twitter page](#).
2. As of 1 June 2021, 48 out of 55 African Union Member States have started COVID-19 vaccination programs targeting priority populations. Cumulatively, over 31.8 million doses have been administered and 24.9 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 47.8 million tests for COVID-19 have been conducted in Africa since February 2020. The cumulative positivity ratio and test per case ratio are 10.1% and 9.8 respectively. For Epi week 21, a total of 893,466 new tests were conducted, a 4% decrease compared to Epi week 20 when 934,734 tests were conducted.

2. Africa CDC commenced the first round of antigen testing in-country training through Global Health Systems Solutions (GHSS) for participants in Cameroon, Ghana and Mali on 31 May 2021.
3. Africa CDC conducted a training on Laboratory Quality Management System using the One Health approach for 35 participants in Kampala, Uganda on 24 - 28 May 2021.

Healthcare Preparedness and Medical Countermeasures:

Case Management

1. Africa CDC in partnership with Project HOPE and Brown University conducted a training of trainers on COVID-19 vaccines for 60 frontline health care workers from Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique on 27 May 2021.

Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC)

1. Africa CDC and partners held the third session of the seventh IPC webinar series titled “Ebola and COVID-19 vaccination roll-out: understanding the IPC measures” for 468 participants on Wednesday 26 May 2021, at 1 p.m. EAT for the English session.
2. The second French session for the seventh IPC webinar series on “Monitoring and evaluation of IPC committee’s activities” was held on Thursday 27 May 2021, at 2 p.m. EAT. A total of 99 persons attended the webinar.
3. Africa CDC held the Eastern Africa regional IPC training for 30 national and sub-national IPC focal points in the region, in Nairobi, Kenya on 25 - 27 May 2021.
4. Africa CDC and partners will hold the fourth session of the seventh IPC webinar series on “Design of health services for droplet and airborne diseases: IPC considerations” on Wednesday 2 June 2021 at 1 p.m. EAT for the English session. [Register here.](#)
5. The third session of the seventh IPC webinar series titled “Ebola and COVID-19 vaccination roll-out: understanding the IPC measures” will be held on Thursday 3 June 2021 at 2 p.m. EAT for the French session. [Register here.](#)

Surveillance:

1. Africa CDC held its weekly surveillance webinar titled “Event-based Surveillance and the rapidly changing dynamics of COVID-19: Discussion on EBS and its role in identifying and tracing cases and contacts” for 70 participants held on Wednesday 26 May 2021, at 4 p.m. EAT
2. Africa CDC surveillance TWG will continue its weekly webinar series titled “COVID-19 sero-surveillance in Africa: experience from Zambia” on Wednesday 2 June 2021 at 4 p.m. EAT.
3. To better estimate the numbers of infections and the pandemic burden among African populations, Africa CDC is supporting population based serological survey studies in 17 African countries. So far, we received preliminary results from 3 Member States and data collection completed in 2 additional Member States. Three Member States are still collecting data on the field while 9 others are finalizing their protocol before commencement of data collection. The overall seroprevalence of

COVID-19 is as follows: 2.96% (95% CI: 1.86 - 4.06) in Sierra Leone, 20.67% (95% CI: 19.15 - 22.18) in Uganda and 11.68% (95% CI: 9.49 - 13.88) in Zambia.

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-19⁶ surveillance efforts to include:
 - a. Syndromic surveillance for influenza like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI).⁷
 - b. Rapid mortality surveillance that includes the collection, analysis and use of all-cause mortality data collected through the facility- or community-based surveillance.⁸
 - c. Genomic surveillance⁹ to monitor variant presence and spread as well as the continued evolution of the virus.
2. Member States should continue to perform contact tracing¹⁰ of confirmed cases based on transmission type and country capacity and enhance diagnostic screening efforts with the use of rapid antigen tests¹¹.
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).

⁶ [WHO COVID-19 Case definition](#)

⁷ 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](#)

⁸ Revealing the toll of COVID-19: A technical package for Member States – Africa CDC

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

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

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

5. Member States should put in place or strengthen existing public health and social measures if COVID-19 incidence starts to rise.¹²

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 [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](#)