

Outbreak Brief #84: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 24 August 2021

Global case count: 211,774,028 cases and 4,431,497 deaths

Data sources: World Health Organization and African Union Member States

Outbreak Update: Since the last brief (17 August 2021), **4,555,465** new confirmed¹ coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases, including **68,529** new deaths, have been reported globally. To date, a global total of 211,774,028 COVID-19 cases and 4,431,497 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 WHO reporting regions (excluding Africa) are as follows: **Eastern Mediterranean Region** 12,013,429 (6%), **European Region** 63,790,934 (30%), **Region of the Americas** 81,824,784 (39%), **South-East Asia Region** 40,584,666 (19%) and **Western Pacific Region** 5,918,998 (3%). In the last seven days, the five countries reporting the highest number of new cases globally are the United States (838,639), the Islamic Republic of Iran (251,293), the United Kingdom (225,469), India (223,793) and Brazil (206,345). For more detailed information on cases and deaths reported outside of Africa, refer to the [WHO COVID-19 dashboard](#).

As of 9 a.m. East African Time (EAT) 24 August 2021, a total of 7,574,781 COVID-19 cases and 189,989 deaths (CFR: **2.5%**) have been reported in 55 African Union (AU) Member States. This represents 3.6% of all cases and 4.3% of all deaths reported globally. Twenty-two (40%) AU Member States are reporting CFRs higher than the global CFR. Since the beginning of the pandemic, 54 (98%) AU Member States have experienced at least a second wave, 38 (68%) have experienced a third wave, and four countries (Algeria, Kenya, Somalia and Tunisia) have experienced a fourth wave of COVID-19 cases. Figure 1 shows the trend of new COVID-19 cases reported per day by AU region from 15 February 2020 to 24 August 2021. There is daily fluctuation with an overall downward trend in the number of new cases being reported by day for the last four weeks. More information on COVID-19 situation in Africa is available on the Africa CDC [daily dashboard](#) and [hotspot dashboard](#).

¹ WHO COVID-19 surveillance guidance and case definition: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/who-2019-nCoV-surveillanceguidance-2020.7>

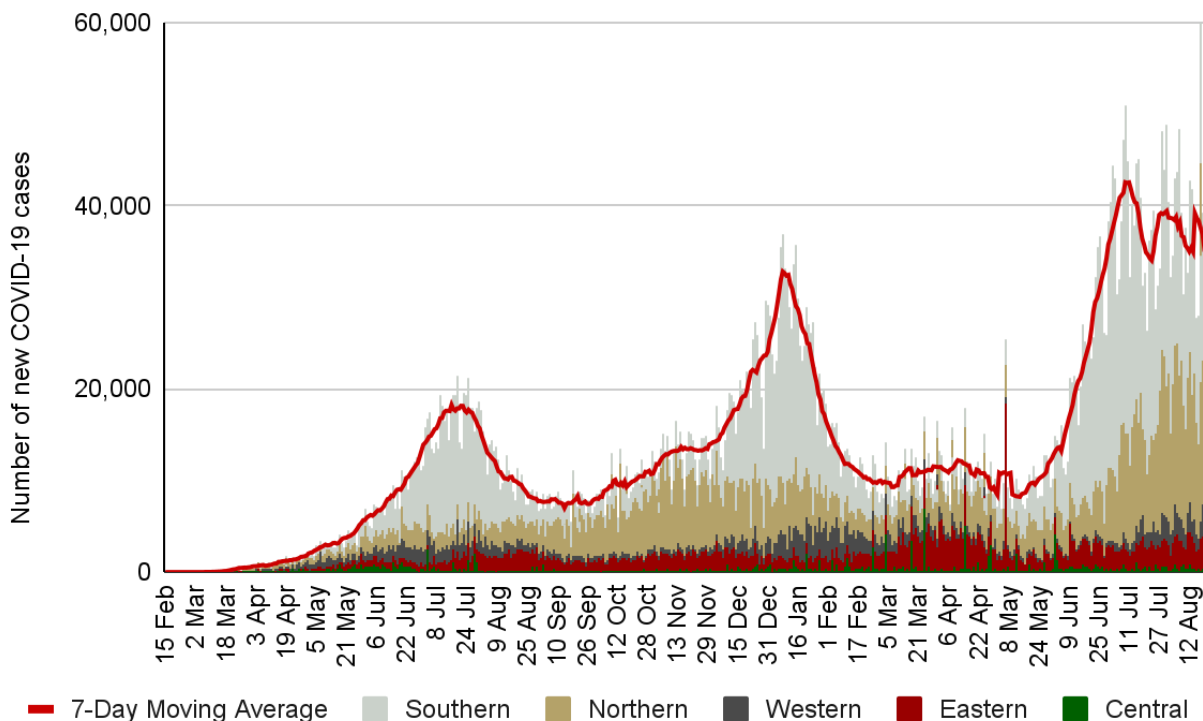


Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day in Africa by African Union region, 15 February 2020 - 24 August 2021².

As of 18 August 2021, 51 AU Member States have reported the presence of the Alpha (42 Member States), Beta (37 Member States), Delta (30 Member States), and/or Gamma³ (1 Member State) Variants of Concern (VOC).

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](#).

For Epi week 33 (16 - 22 August 2021), 238,727 new COVID-19 cases were reported, which is a 2% decrease in the number of new cases reported compared to Epi week 32. The Southern Region accounted for 47% of the new COVID-19 cases reported for this week, followed by the Northern (37%), Eastern (9%), Western (6%) and Central (1%) regions. This week, seven countries accounted for 81% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: South Africa (36%), Morocco (22%), Tunisia (7%), Libya (5%), Botswana (4%), Kenya (4%) and Ethiopia (3%). The countries reporting the highest incidence (COVID-19 new cases per 100,000 population) this week are Seychelles (409), Eswatini (371), Botswana (353), Libya (178), Tunisia (147), South Africa (144), Morocco (140) and Mauritius

² The dates are at a two-week interval; the last date is 24 August 2021

³ Sudan inadvertently reported the presence of the Gamma VOC. Correct number now listed.

(127). Table 2 summarises 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 33.

Table 2: Confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths⁴ reported in Africa for epidemiological week 33 (16 - 22 August 2021).

Country	Cumulative number of cases (new cases)	% change in new cases since week 32	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 32
Central Region	214,242 (1,673)	-44%	3,175 (0)	-100%
Burundi	10,791 (688)	-47%	10 (0)	NA*
Cameroon	82,454 (0)	NA*	1,338 (0)	NA*
Central African Republic	11,270 (8)	-78%	99 (0)	NA*
Chad	4,985 (3)	-25%	174 (0)	NA*
Congo	13,493 (95)	-33%	179 (0)	NA*
Democratic Republic of Congo	54,009 (663)	-51%	1,050 (0)	-100%
Equatorial Guinea	9,049 (77)	267%	123 (0)	NA*
Gabon	25,667 (103)	1%	165 (0)	-100%
Sao Tome and Principe	2,524 (36)	100%	37 (0)	-100%
Eastern Region	880,978 (21,795)	3%	18,365 (404)	-39%
Comoros	4,050 (12)	71%	147 (0)	-100%
Djibouti	11,696 (14)	-30%	157 (1)	-99%
Eritrea	6,622 (21)	-16%	37 (0)	-100%
Ethiopia	295,804 (6,530)	26%	4,561 (83)	60%
Kenya	229,009 (8,282)	-7%	4,497 (157)	-18%
Madagascar	42,847 (28)	-26%	955 (1)	NA*
Mauritius	7,816 (1,650)	49%	21 (0)	-100%
Rwanda	83,003 (3,311)	-9%	1,021 (62)	-10%
Seychelles	19,390 (409)	3%	101 (3)	-25%
Somalia	16,787 (468)	3%	918 (35)	6%

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

South Sudan	11,310 (138)	92%	120 (0)	NA*
Sudan	37,627 (71)	154%	2,820 (7)	-30%
Tanzania	16,970 (0)	NA*	50 (0)	-100%
Uganda	98,047 (861)	-30%	2,960 (55)	-41%
Northern Region	2,263,259 (88,238)	-11%	60,995 (1,908)	-10%
Algeria	191,583 (4,325)	-26%	5,004 (210)	-14%
Egypt	286,352 (994)	52%	16,671 (52)	18%
Libya	296,879 (12,261)	-17%	4,076 (143)	-22%
Mauritania	31,822 (1,701)	-12%	673 (37)	19%
Morocco	810,949 (51,493)	-18%	11,792 (775)	14%
Tunisia	644,072 (17,322)	34%	22,714 (689)	-26%
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	1,602 (142)	1%	65 (2)	-33%
Southern Region	3,595,914 (111,354)	8%	99,191 (2,969)	-5%
Angola	45,945 (1,328)	39%	1,153 (53)	-7%
Botswana	150,842 (8,462)	-27%	2,171 (128)	-39%
Eswatini	40,455 (4,447)	-10%	1,004 (70)	-4%
Lesotho	14,382 (139)	-65%	400 (3)	-57%
Malawi	59,471 (1,388)	-36%	2,074 (106)	-24%
Mozambique	142,784 (4,035)	789%	1,800 (84)	155%
Namibia	123,861 (1,316)	-70%	3,345 (60)	88%
South Africa	2,690,973 (85,387)	18%	79,421 (2,280)	-2%
Zambia	204,549 (2,288)	3%	3,574 (45)	No change
Zimbabwe	122,652 (2,564)	-32%	4,249 (140)	-33%
Western Region	583,942 (15,667)	-1%	7,891 (293)	-27%
Benin	12,021 (2,956)	547%	125 (12)	-73%
Burkina Faso	13,713 (38)	-30%	171 (1)	No change
Cape Verde	34,738 (331)	-23%	304 (4)	100%
Côte d'Ivoire	53,645 (1,443)	76%	395 (36)	100%
Gambia	9,439 (244)	-11%	296 (25)	25%
Ghana	115,102 (2,174)	-38%	974 (29)	-37%
Guinea	28,802 (547)	-52%	314 (21)	-30%

Guinea-Bissau	5,518 (395)	18%	103 (13)	18%
Liberia	5,518 (36)	57%	245 (24)	-67%
Mali	14,757 (62)	17%	536 (1)	No change
Niger	5,770 (46)	24%	196 (0)	NA*
Nigeria	187,023 (4,520)	2%	2,268 (49)	53%
Senegal	71,927 (1,248)	-60%	1,671 (71)	-40%
Sierra Leone	6,355 (13)	-52%	121 (0)	NA*
Togo	19,614 (1,614)	43%	172 (7)	17%
Total	7,538,335 (238,727)	-2%	189,617 (5,574)	-23%

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

Public Health and Social Measure (PHSM) Highlights

Table 3 below highlights changes in PHSMs for selected countries based on data from the [Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker](#). An up arrow indicates new PHSMs were announced; a horizontal arrow indicates PHSM was extended; a down arrow indicates PHSMs were loosened/expired. Member States are organised by tiers based on current epidemiological data from 14 - 20 August 2021. Please see the [Africa CDC PHSM Tiers framework](#) for more information.

Table 3: Changes in Public Health and Social Measures, selected countries, 14 - 20 August 2021.

Country	PHSM Trend	PHSM Change
Tier 4 (High Alert): Daily case incidence per 1M people/day \geq 80 and/or positivity rate \geq 12%		
Botswana	↑	COVID-19 measures have been tightened in Botswana . The nightly curfew was extended by 2 hours, all public gatherings have been suspended, capacity limits were placed on religious services, and inter-zonal movement was banned except for essential travel.
Democratic Republic of Congo	↓	DRC relaxed some COVID-19 measures in capital city Kinshasa. The nightly curfew was reduced by two hours, bars and nightclubs were permitted to reopen with capacity limits, and religious institutions can provide services at low capacity with barrier measures observed.
Kenya	→	Restrictions in Kenya have been extended for an additional 60 days, despite large scale protests erupting across the country. Measures include a nightly curfew and a ban on public gatherings.
Libya	↓	After closing the border with Tunisia last month amid rising COVID-19 cases, officials in Libya have decided to reopen all land and air borders. A partial curfew was also lifted in Libya , although other individual protective measures such as social distancing and wearing a face mask remain mandatory.

Mauritius	↓	Mauritius announced plans to fully reopen its borders to vaccinated travellers by 1 October 2021. Fully-vaccinated travellers will not have to quarantine as long as they provide a negative PCR test within 72 hours of travel.
Tunisia	↓	Officials in Tunisia relaxed some COVID-19 measures. The nightly curfew was reduced by 2 hours, and cafes are now allowed to remain open until 22:00.
Tier 3 (Moderate Alert): Daily case incidence per 1M people/day is 20 to <80 and/or positivity rate is 5% to <12%		
Uganda	↓	Although other schools and educational institutions remain closed, Uganda has permitted the reopening of medical schools in an effort to increase the country's healthcare workforce.
Zimbabwe	↓	Officials in Zimbabwe are preparing to return students to the classrooms. Although a firm date has not yet been set, US\$500 million has been allocated to support schools to safely reopen.
Tier 2 (Low Alert): Daily case incidence per 1M people/day is 5 to <20 and/or positivity rate is 3% to 5%		
Algeria	→	The COVID-19 related nightly curfew has been extended to an additional 3 provinces in Algeria, increasing the total number of provinces under this measure to 40 out of 58.

NEW Africa CDC Response Activities

General:

1. Dr. John Nkengasong, Director of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), met with HE Nasser Bourita, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Morocco on 17 August 2021. They [discussed](#) the COVID-19 situation in Morocco and across the continent, as well as vaccine production plans. Morocco's vaccination program, which has a coverage of over 45 percent was also discussed.
2. During his visit to Morocco, Dr. John Nkengasong, Director of Africa CDC, also met with HE Khalid Ait Taleb, the Minister of Health, Morocco. They discussed the need for a new Public Health Order in Africa, including the need for Africa to develop its workforce, strengthen its public health institutions and partnership with the private sector.
3. This week, Africa CDC issued the [COVID-19 Tiered Public Health and Social Measure \(PHSM\) Framework for Africa](#) and [dashboard](#) to inform targeted interventions Member States can put in place that are appropriate for different levels of disease transmission. The Tiered PHSM framework and dashboard will be launched at the weekly COVID-19 press briefing on Thursday 26 August 2021, at 12 p.m. EAT. Register [here](#)
4. African Union Member States continue to receive their first allocation of Johnson & Johnson vaccines through the AVAT initiative. In the past week, Mauritania (108,000) received its first consignment of the Johnson & Johnson single-shot vaccine. Overall, 1,598,900 vaccine doses have been delivered in eleven countries.

- As of 23 August 2021, 53 (95%) out of 55 African Union Member States have started COVID-19 vaccination campaigns targeting priority populations. Cumulatively, over 90.6 million doses have been administered, giving a coverage of 3.4% of the continental population. Of the doses administered, 63.6 million have received the first dose and 26.6 million have received the second dose. Eritrea and Burundi are the two AU Member States yet to start the COVID-19 vaccine rollout. More information on COVID-19 vaccination can be found on the [Africa CDC COVID-19 vaccine dashboard](#).

Laboratory:

- Over 64.8 million tests for COVID-19 have been conducted in Africa since February 2020. The cumulative positivity rate⁵ and test per case ratio⁶ are 12% and 8.6, respectively. For Epi week 33, a total of 1,426,097 new tests were conducted, a decrease of 9% compared to Epi week 32 when 1,573,086 tests were conducted.

Healthcare Preparedness and Medical Countermeasures:

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

- Africa CDC in collaboration with Infection Control Africa Network (ICAN) held an IPC webinar series titled “IPC Practice for Management and Health Care workers” on Thursday 19 August 2021. A recording of the webinar can be accessed on the [Africa CDC Facebook page](#).
- Africa CDC held the English session of the fifth session of the eighth IPC webinar series titled “IPC - WASH in healthcare facilities” on Wednesday 18 August 2021 at 1 p.m. EAT, and was attended by 868 participants. The recording can be accessed [here](#).
- Africa CDC held the French session of the fifth session of the eighth IPC webinar series titled “IPC - WASH in healthcare facilities” on Thursday 19 August 2021 at 11 a.m. EAT, and was attended by 163 participants.
- The sixth session of the eighth IPC webinar series “Addressing COVID-19 and Viral Haemorrhagic Fever(VHF)- IPC Considerations” will continue on Wednesday 25 August 2021 at 1 p.m. EAT for the English facilitated session. Register [here](#).
- The sixth session of the eighth IPC webinar series entitled “Addressing COVID-19 and Viral Haemorrhagic Fever(VHF)- IPC Considerations” will continue on Thursday 26 August 2021 at 11 a.m EAT, for the French facilitated session. Register [here](#).

Sciences, Standards and Regulations:

- Access the biweekly COVID-19 Scientific and Public Health Policy Update [here](#).
- 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](#).

⁵ [Public health criteria to adjust public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19](#)

⁶ WHO set 10-30 tests per every confirmed case as a general benchmark of adequate testing.

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 includes collection, analysis and the use of all-cause mortality data collected through the facility- or community-based surveillance.⁹
 - c. Genomic surveillance¹⁰ to monitor the presence of variants, the spread and the continuous evolution of the virus.
2. Member States should continue to perform contact tracing¹¹ of confirmed cases based on transmission type and country capacity as well as enhance diagnostic screening efforts using the 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 infected healthcare workers for updated information for action. 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.

Resources for more information

- Africa CDC COVID-19 updates: <https://africacdc.org/covid-19/>
- Adapted Africa Joint Continental Strategy for COVID-19 Pandemic: <https://africacdc.org/download/adapted-africa-joint-continental-strategy-for-covid-19-pandemic/>
- Africa CDC Resources, policy guidelines, and infographics: <https://africacdc.org/covid-19/covid-19-resources/>
- Africa CDC HotSpot and PHSM Tiers dashboards: <https://africadccovid.org/>
- Africa CDC vaccination dashboard: <https://africacdc.org/covid-19-vaccination/>
- Africa CDC pathogen genomics dashboard: <https://africacdc.org/institutes/africa-pathogen-genomics-initiative/>
- Partnership for Evidence-Based Response to COVID-19 (PERC) <https://preventepidemics.org/covid19/perc/>

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](#)

- WHO. Technical Guidance. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance>