

Outbreak Brief #85: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 31 August 2021

Global case count: 216,340,385 cases and 4,498,657 deaths

Data sources: World Health Organization and African Union Member States

Outbreak Update: Since the last brief (24 August 2021), **4,566,357** new confirmed¹ coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases, including **67,160** new deaths, have been reported globally. To date, a global total of 216,340,385 COVID-19 cases and 4,498,657 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** 12,381,559 (6%), **European Region** 64,991,125 (30%), **Region of the Americas** 83,479,049 (39%), **South-East Asia Region** 41,178,198 (19%) and **Western Pacific Region** 6,478,375 (3%). In the last seven days, the five countries reporting the highest number of new cases globally are the United States (977,947), India (288,633), the Islamic Republic of Iran (249,850), the United Kingdom (238,517) and Brazil (172,118). 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) 31 August 2021, a total of 7,763,616 COVID-19 cases and 195,475 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, 39 (71%) have experienced a third wave, and six countries (Algeria, Benin, Kenya, Mauritius, 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 31 August 2021. There is a downward trend in the number of new cases being reported daily 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>

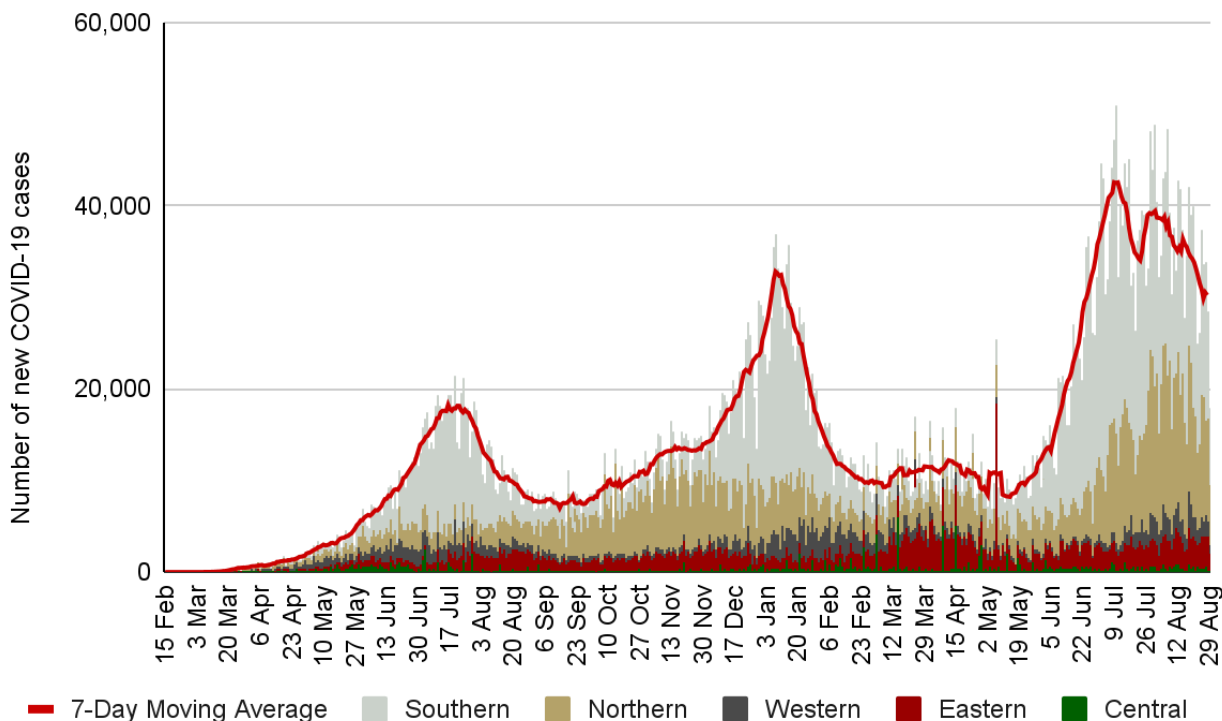


Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day in Africa by African Union region, 15 February 2020 - 31 August 2021².

As of 26 August 2021, 51 AU Member States have reported the presence of the Alpha (43 Member States), Beta (37 Member States), Delta (32 Member States), and/or Gamma (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 34 (23 - 29 August 2021), 209,308 new COVID-19 cases were reported, which is a 13% decrease in the number of new cases reported compared to Epi week 33. The Southern Region accounted for 44% of the new COVID-19 cases reported for this week, followed by the Northern (38%), Eastern (11%), Western (6%) and Central (1%) regions. This week, seven countries accounted for 79% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: South Africa (35%), Morocco (20%), Tunisia (9%), Libya (5%), Ethiopia (5%), Botswana (3%) and Kenya (2%). The countries reporting the highest incidence (COVID-19 new cases per 100,000 population) this week are Seychelles (387), Botswana (254), Mauritius (200), Eswatini (198), Tunisia (158), Libya (154), South Africa (125) and Morocco (115). Table 2 summarises the cumulative COVID-19 cases and deaths reported by

² The dates are at a two-week interval; the last date is 31 August 2021

Member State and Region in Africa and the new COVID-19 cases and deaths reported during Epi week 34.

Table 2: Confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths³ reported in Africa for epidemiological week 34 (23 - 29 August 2021).

Country	Cumulative number of cases (new cases)	% change in new cases since week 33	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 33
Central Region	218,606 (2,648)	-13%	3,201 (9)	-31%
Burundi	12,529 (1,196)	-3%	10 (0)	NA*
Cameroon	83,425 (0)	-100%	1,350 (0)	-100%
Central African Republic	11,293 (22)	144%	100 (1)	NA*
Chad	4,991 (6)	100%	174 (0)	NA*
Congo	13,588 (95)	No change	183 (4)	NA*
Democratic Republic of Congo	55,045 (881)	8%	1,059 (4)	-20%
Equatorial Guinea	9,326 (230)	85%	123 (0)	NA*
Gabon	25,819 (152)	48%	165 (0)	NA*
Sao Tome and Principe	2,590 (66)	83%	37 (0)	NA*
Eastern Region	904,152 (23,174)	6%	18,768 (403)	0%
Comoros	4,062 (12)	No change	147 (0)	NA*
Djibouti	11,741 (45)	221%	157 (0)	-100%
Eritrea	6,640 (18)	-14%	37 (0)	NA*
Ethiopia	306,117 (10,313)	58%	4,644 (83)	No change
Kenya	234,952 (5,943)	-28%	4,710 (213)	36%
Madagascar	42,862 (15)	-46%	955 (0)	-100%
Mauritius	10,411 (2,595)	57%	21 (0)	NA*

³ Data is continuously verified for accuracy and reliability, thus may change based on retrospective updates from Member States.

Country	Cumulative number of cases (new cases)	% change in new cases since week 33	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 33
Rwanda	86,222 (3,219)	-3%	1,074 (53)	-15%
Seychelles	19,777 (387)	-5%	104 (3)	No change
Somalia	17,302 (515)	10%	963 (45)	29%
South Sudan	11,403 (93)	-33%	120 (0)	NA*
Sudan	37,646 (19)	-73%	2,826 (6)	-14%
Tanzania	16,970 (0)	NA*	50 (0)	NA*
Uganda	98,047 (0)	-100%	2,960 (0)	-100%
Northern Region	2,341,609 (78,350)	-11%	62,781 (1,786)	-6%
Algeria	195,162 (3,579)	-17%	5,209 (205)	-2%
Egypt	287,899 (1,547)	56%	16,721 (50)	-4%
Libya	307,471 (10,592)	-14%	4,213 (137)	-4%
Mauritania	33,309 (1,487)	-13%	705 (32)	-14%
Morocco	853,373 (42,424)	-18%	12,437 (645)	-17%
Tunisia	662,752 (18,680)	8%	23,430 (716)	4%
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	1,643 (41)	-71%	66 (1)	-50%
Southern Region	3,687,845 (91,931)	-17%	101,922 (2,731)	-8%
Angola	47,168 (1,223)	-8%	1,201 (48)	-9%
Botswana	156,927 (6,085)	-28%	2,261 (90)	-30%
Eswatini	42,828 (2,373)	-47%	1,081 (77)	10%
Lesotho	14,395 (13)	-91%	403 (3)	No change
Malawi	60,345 (874)	-37%	2,161 (87)	-18%
Mozambique	145,863 (3,079)	-24%	1,851 (51)	-39%

Country	Cumulative number of cases (new cases)	% change in new cases since week 33	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 33
Namibia	124,900 (1,039)	-21%	3,372 (27)	-55%
South Africa	2,764,931 (73,958)	-13%	81,595 (2,174)	-5%
Zambia	206,051 (1,502)	-34%	3,596 (22)	-51%
Zimbabwe	124,437 (1,785)	-30%	4,401 (152)	9%
Western Region	598,486 (13,205)	-22%	8,312 (404)	30%
Benin	13,366 (1,345)	-54%	128 (3)	-75%
Burkina Faso	13,762 (49)	29%	171 (0)	-100%
Cape Verde	35,227 (489)	48%	309 (5)	25%
Côte d'Ivoire	55,108 (1,463)	1%	430 (35)	-3%
Gambia	9,698 (259)	6%	319 (23)	-8%
Ghana	118,266 (1,825)	-48%	1,017 (26)	-43%
Guinea	29,400 (598)	9%	335 (21)	No change
Guinea-Bissau	5,766 (248)	-37%	117 (14)	8%
Liberia	5,594 (76)	111%	245 (0)	-100%
Mali	14,854 (97)	56%	539 (3)	200%
Niger	5,843 (73)	59%	198 (2)	NA*
Nigeria	191,345 (4,322)	-4%	2,454 (186)	280%
Senegal	72,709 (782)	-37%	1,749 (78)	10%
Sierra Leone	6,367 (12)	-8%	121 (0)	NA*
Togo	21,181 (1,567)	-3%	180 (8)	14%
Total	7,750,698 (209,308)	-13%	194,984 (5,333)	-5%

*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 21 - 27 August 2021. Please see the [Africa CDC PHSM Tiers framework](#) for more information.

Table 3: Changes in Public Health and Social Measures, selected countries, 21- 27 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%		
Guinea-Bissau	↑	Officials in Guinea-Bissau extended the nationwide state of calamity by 15 days and implemented new domestic measures until 10 September 2021, including a nightly curfew, closure of religious institutions, and movement restrictions into and out of Bissau, Safim, and Prabis.
Mauritius	↓	Mauritius began its phased reopening to tourists, allowing fully-vaccinated travelers to enter the country starting 1 September 2021, but they must take a PCR test upon arrival and quarantine for 7 days. Unvaccinated travellers will be required to take a PCR test and quarantine for 14 days.
Morocco	→	Morocco extended the nationwide state of health emergency until 31 October 2021. Under current measures, a nightly curfew remains in place, and only vaccinated individuals are permitted to travel to and from tourist hubs including Casablanca and Marrakech.
Tunisia	↑	Officials in Tunisia updated requirements for incoming passengers. Travellers are required to present a negative PCR test within 72 hours of arrival, and unvaccinated travellers will be required to quarantine at a designated hotel for 10 days upon arrival.
Tier 3 (Moderate Alert): Daily case incidence per 1M people/day is 20 to <80 and/or positivity rate is 5% to <12%		
Zimbabwe	↓	Schools in Zimbabwe will reopen on Monday, 30 August 2021. Officials also announced that restaurants can reopen, but only to fully-vaccinated customers, and inter-city travel is permitted to resume.
Tier 2 (Low Alert): Daily case incidence per 1M people/day is 5 to <20 and/or positivity rate is 3% to 5%		
Algeria	↓	Algeria reopened beaches and places of leisure, the first measures loosened since the third wave began.
Uganda	↑	Travellers into Uganda will now be required to take a COVID-19 test upon arrival, regardless of vaccination status, as of 3 September 2021.
Tier 1 (Standard Precautions): Daily case incidence per 1M people/day is <5 and/or positivity rate is <3%		
Madagascar	→	Madagascar extended the nationwide state of health emergency for an additional 15 days. Individual protective measures such as wearing a face mask and social distancing must be adhered to in public, and public gatherings of more than 400 people indoors remain prohibited.

NEW Africa CDC Response Activities

General:

1. Dr. John Nkengasong, Director of Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) hosted the Africa CDC's weekly press briefing on Thursday 26 August 2021. He was joined by Amanda McClelland, Senior Vice President, Prevent Epidemics, Resolve to Save Lives. Thursday's briefing provided details about the Director and team's visit to the Kingdom of Morocco and discussed the newly developed [COVID-19 Tiered Public Health and Social Measure Framework for Africa](#) and [dashboard](#) developed in collaboration with Resolve to Save Lives. The recording is available on the [Africa CDC Twitter page](#).
2. On 25 August 2021, Africa CDC and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) launched a [new collaboration](#) to strengthen community resilience and response to public health emergencies at community level.
3. Last week, Africa CDC announced its inaugural One Health conference. The conference will be held virtually on 1-3 November 2021 and aims to share best practices from Member States and partners, showcase continental One Health research, highlight operational tools and guidance documents developed by the African Union and partners, exhibit opportunities for collaboration and strengthen One Health advocacy and capacity across the AU Member States and regional networks.
4. Through a partnership between the African Union and the French government, AU Member States will receive an additional 10 million doses of AstraZeneca and Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines over the next three months. The vaccines will be allocated and distributed by the Africa Vaccine Acquisition Trust (AVAT) and the COVAX global vaccine initiative.
5. As of 29 August 2021, 53 (95%) out of 55 African Union Member States have started COVID-19 vaccination campaigns targeting priority populations. Cumulatively, over 97.5 million doses have been administered, giving a coverage of 3.6% of the continental population. Of the doses administered, 62.5⁴ million have received the first dose and 35 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:

1. Over 66.4 million tests for COVID-19 have been conducted in Africa since February 2020. The cumulative positivity rate⁵ and test per case ratio⁶ are 11.7% and 8.6, respectively. For Epi week 34, a total of 1,493,732 new tests were conducted, a decrease of 6% compared to Epi week 33 when 1,582,089 tests were conducted.

⁴ Most countries don't disaggregate their data into one shot and 2 doses vaccines

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.

2. Last week, a total of 394,000 Antigen Rapid Test (Ag-RDT) kits were delivered to 8 Member states (Burkina Faso, Chad, Congo, Ethiopia, Guinea, Sierra Leone, South Sudan, and Zambia)
3. On 23 August 2021, Africa CDC held a 5-day workshop on specimen referral framework development for the Southern Africa region in Lusaka, Zambia. It was attended by twelve participants from 8 countries (Angola, Botswana, Eswatini, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe). The participants drafted an outline of the framework that had been endorsed by the 8 Member States.

Healthcare Preparedness and Medical Countermeasures:

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

1. Africa CDC held the sixth session of the eighth IPC webinar series titled “Addressing COVID-19 and Viral Haemorrhagic Fever (VHF)- IPC Considerations” in English on Wednesday 25 August 2021 and it was attended by 790 participants. The recording is available [here](#).
2. The sixth session of the eight IPC webinar series entitled “Addressing COVID-19 and Viral Haemorrhagic Fever (VHF) - IPC Considerations” in French was held on Thursday 26 August 2021 and was attended by 171 participants.

Sciences, Standards and Regulations:

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

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

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://africacdc.org/covid-19-hotspot-and-phsm-tiers-dashboards/>
- 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/>
- WHO Technical Guidance. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance>

¹¹Africa 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](#)