

Outbreak Brief #88: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 21 September 2021

Global case count: 228,401,433 cases and 4,690,961 deaths

Data sources: World Health Organization and African Union Member States

Outbreak Update: Since the last brief (14 September 2021), **3,862,133** new confirmed¹ coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases, including **62,740** new deaths, have been reported globally. To date, a global total of 228,401,433 COVID-19 cases and 4,690,961 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** 13,164,909 (6%), **European Region** 68,419,751 (30%), **Region of the Americas** 88,054,178 (39%), **South-East Asia Region** 42,547,959 (19%) and **Western Pacific Region** 7,975,252 (3%). In the last seven days, the five countries reporting the highest number of new cases globally are the United States (950,031), Brazil (241,161), India (214,244), the United Kingdom (203,470), and Turkey (189,008). 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) 21 September 2021, a total of 8,166,634 COVID-19 cases and 206,740 deaths (CFR: 2.5%) have been reported in 55 African Union (AU) Member States. This represents 3.6% of all cases and 4.4% 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, 43 (78%) have experienced a third wave and seven countries (Algeria, Benin, Egypt, 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 21 September 2021. The overall daily number of new cases being reported across the continent has continued to decline. 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>

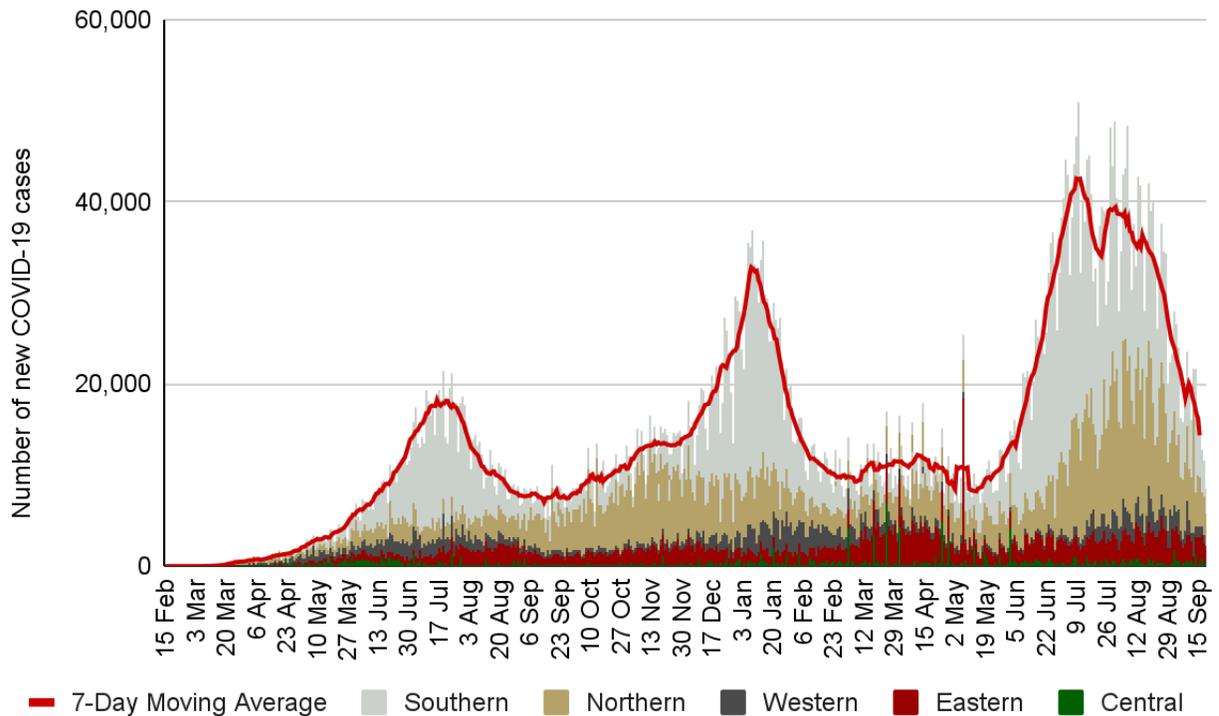


Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day in Africa by African Union region, 15 February 2020 - 21 September 2021².

As of 15 September 2021, 51 AU Member States have reported the presence of the Alpha (43 Member States), Beta (37 Member States), Delta (37 Member States), and/or Gamma (2 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 37 (13 - 19 September 2021), 103,821 new COVID-19 cases were reported, which is a 23% decrease in the number of new cases reported compared to Epi week 36. The Southern Region accounted for 41% of the new COVID-19 cases reported for this week, followed by the Northern (32%), Eastern (16%), Western (7%) and Central (4%) regions. This week, seven countries accounted for 69% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: South Africa (24%), Morocco (14%), Ethiopia (9%), Botswana (8%), Libya (7%), Tunisia (5%) and Egypt (4%). The countries reporting the highest incidence (COVID-19 new cases per 100,000 population) this week are Seychelles (350), Botswana (339), Lesotho (171), Sao Tome and Principe (112), Libya (99) and Cabo Verde (78). 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 37.

² The dates are at a two-week interval; the last date is 21 September 2021.

Table 2: Confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths³ reported in Africa for epidemiological week 37 (13 - 19 September 2021).

Country	Cumulative number of cases (new cases)	% change in new cases since week 36	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 36
Central Region	230,805 (4,342)	33%	3,275 (40)	400%
Burundi	16,732 (1,674)	13%	14 (2)	NA*
Cameroon	85,414 (494)	NA*	1,368 (11)	NA*
Central African Republic	11,342 (11)	-50%	100 (0)	NA*
Chad	5,029 (13)	-35%	174 (0)	NA*
Congo	14,014 (173)	-18%	191 (6)	200%
Democratic Republic of Congo	56,528 (183)	-31%	1,073 (5)	NA*
Equatorial Guinea	11,063 (565)	1%	137 (6)	200%
Gabon	27,643 (1,005)	80%	175 (6)	200%
Sao Tome and Principe	3,040 (224)	68%	43 (4)	100%
Eastern Region	958,127 (16,977)	11%	19,815 (365)	7%
Comoros	4,106 (9)	-18%	147 (0)	NA*
Djibouti	12,040 (180)	117%	159 (2)	NA*
Eritrea	6,671 (16)	129%	40 (0)	-100%
Ethiopia	332,961 (9,857)	21%	5,130 (201)	21%
Kenya	246,530 (2,805)	-21%	4,989 (83)	-31%
Madagascar	42,884 (0)	NA*	957 (0)	NA*
Mauritius	13,180 (753)	11%	21 (0)	NA*
Rwanda	93,348 (2,009)	2%	1,185 (30)	-3%
Seychelles	20,943 (350)	30%	114 (4)	100%

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 36	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 36
Somalia	19,004 (631)	17%	1,063 (40)	90%
South Sudan	11,814 (200)	75%	121 (1)	NA*
Sudan	38,053 (167)	NA*	2,879 (4)	NA*
Tanzania	16,970 (0)	NA*	50 (0)	NA*
Uganda	99,623 (0)	NA*	2,960 (0)	NA*
Northern Region	2,487,850 (32,944)	-39%	66,457 (921)	-24%
Algeria	201,628 (1,532)	-27%	5,699 (116)	-29%
Egypt	296,929 (3,972)	36%	16,970 (99)	21%
Libya	332,026 (6,805)	-19%	4,517 (76)	-22%
Mauritania	35,462 (584)	-13%	766 (12)	-43%
Morocco	919,681 (15,034)	-27%	13,910 (364)	-23%
Tunisia	700,400 (4,994)	-75%	24,527 (253)	-32%
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	1,724 (23)	NA*	68 (1)	NA*
Southern Region	3,846,894 (42,483)	-11%	107,644 (1,781)	4%
Angola	52,423 (1,977)	10%	1,391 (52)	-25%
Botswana	173,788 (8,144)	136%	2,354 (17)	-39%
Eswatini	45,380 (517)	-25%	1,195 (23)	-15%
Lesotho	17,985 (3,590)	NA*	690 (287)	NA*
Malawi	61,363 (250)	-14%	2,261 (23)	-18%
Mozambique	150,018 (811)	-37%	1,903 (11)	-21%
Namibia	126,900 (559)	-18%	3,471 (35)	46%
South Africa	2,882,630 (24,435)	-36%	86,174 (1,297)	-11%

Country	Cumulative number of cases (new cases)	% change in new cases since week 36	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 36
Zambia	208,469 (531)	-36%	3,638 (7)	-53%
Zimbabwe	127,938 (1,669)	132%	4,567 (29)	-48%
Western Region	636,603 (7,075)	-48%	9,322 (171)	-10%
Benin	21,450 (0)	-100%	146 (0)	-100%
Burkina Faso	14,052 (93)	-21%	172 (1)	NA*
Cape Verde	37,108 (468)	-34%	330 (8)	14%
Côte d'Ivoire	58,948 (1,164)	25%	566 (60)	54%
Gambia	9,888 (21)	-73%	332 (2)	No change
Ghana	125,565 (1,161)	-38%	1,125 (14)	-48%
Guinea	30,271 (186)	-11%	658 (0)	-100%
Guinea-Bissau	6,080 (49)	-49%	130 (3)	-40%
Liberia	5,777 (0)	-100%	283 (0)	NA*
Mali	15,068 (85)	93%	545 (2)	100%
Niger	5,962 (40)	No change	201 (2)	NA*
Nigeria	201,798 (2,647)	-27%	2,655 (57)	24%
Senegal	73,645 (167)	-42%	1,845 (14)	-50%
Sierra Leone	6,392 (13)	160%	121 (0)	NA*
Togo	24,599 (981)	-7%	213 (8)	-11%
Total	8,160,279 (103,821)	-23%	206,513 (3,278)	-6%

*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 11 - 17 September 2021. Please see the [Africa CDC PHSM Tiers framework](#) for more information.

Table 3: Changes in Public Health and Social Measures, selected countries, 11 - 17 September 2021.

Country	PHSM Trend	PHSM Change
Tier 4 (High Alert): Daily case incidence per 1M people/day ≥ 80 and/or positivity rate $\geq 12\%$		
Libya	↓	Libya reopened air and land borders with Tunisia two months after closing them due to surging COVID-19 transmission.
South Africa	↓	The level 2 alert level was officially put into effect on 12 September 2021 in South Africa. The nightly curfew was shortened by one hour, the capacity limits on public gatherings indoors increased from 50 to 250 (and outdoors, from 100 to 500), and some restrictions on restaurants and bars were lifted. These measures will be reviewed again in two weeks.
Tier 3 (Moderate Alert): Daily case incidence per 1M people/day is 20 to <80 and/or positivity rate is 5% to $<12\%$		
Benin	↑	Nightclubs are not permitted to open, and public gatherings are limited to no more than 50 people in Benin. Cultural and sporting events are also suspended, new capacity limits are in place for taxi drivers, and public employees must present proof of vaccination to enter government premises.
Guinea-Bissau	↓/→	The nightly curfew was lifted in Guinea-Bissau, and religious institutions were permitted to reopen. However, officials also renewed the nationwide state of calamity for an additional 15 days.
Malawi	↓	Malawi reopened its borders to non-resident travellers who present a negative COVID-19 test 72 hours before arrival in the country.
Mauritania	↓	Officials in Mauritania reduced the nightly curfew by 4 hours.
Namibia	↓	Some measures in Namibia have been relaxed . The nightly curfew was reduced, capacity limits on public gatherings were increased from 100 to 150 people, and contact sports may recommence.
Togo	↑	Amid increasing COVID-19 transmission, authorities in Togo have tightened some domestic restrictions. Bars, nightclubs, and other entertainment venues were ordered to close, all cultural, sporting, and political events suspended, and religious events and services are prohibited. In addition, government employees must present proof of vaccination to enter administrative buildings.
Tier 2 (Low Alert): Daily case incidence per 1M people/day is 5 to <20 and/or positivity rate is 3% to 5%		
Côte d'Ivoire	↑	As of 20 September 2021, a <i>pass sanitaire</i> showing vaccination status or a negative COVID-19 test taken with 72 hours of arrival will be required to travel into or out of Cote d'Ivoire.
Nigeria	↑	Edo State in Nigeria barred civil servants from accessing their offices without proof of vaccination.
Tier 1 (Standard Precautions): Daily case incidence per 1M people/day is <5 and/or positivity rate is $<3\%$		
Sierra Leone	↓	Officials in Sierra Leone eased some COVID-19 measures. The nightly curfew has been lifted, restrictions on bars and restaurants are no longer in effect, and public gatherings may resume with protective measures in place.

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 weekly press briefing on Thursday 16 September 2021. He provided an update on the COVID-19 situation across the continent, including response efforts and updates on the progress of vaccinations across the continent. The recording is available on the [Africa CDC Twitter page](#).
2. Dr. John Nkengasong, Director of Africa CDC, joined Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Director-General, World Health Organization (WHO), Mr. Strive Masiyiwa, African Union (AU) Special Envoy on COVID-19 and Coordinator, Africa Vaccine Acquisition Trust (AVAT), Professor Benedict Oramah, President and Chairman of the Board of Directors, Afreximbank, Dr. Matshidiso Moeti, WHO Regional Director for Africa, Dr. Vera Songwe, United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa and Dr. Seth Berkley, Chief Executive Officer, Gavi for a special press briefing on Tuesday 14 September 2021 at 5 p.m. EAT in Geneva, Switzerland. They discussed vaccine equity, vaccine access and manufacturing, particularly in Africa. The recording is available on the [Africa CDC Twitter page](#).
3. Africa CDC in collaboration with the United States Mission to the African Union and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) will hold a High-level Side Event with the theme "Saving Lives, Saving Livelihoods" during the White House Summit on the margins of the United Nations General Assembly on Thursday 23 September 2021 at 2.30 - 4.00 p.m. EAT. The objectives of the event are to galvanize governments of African Union Member States and humanitarian actors to implement equitable and inclusive vaccine roll-outs for COVID-19 vaccines and routine immunization, outline ways to increase demand for COVID-19 vaccines, and discuss approaches to minimize the socio-economic impacts of the pandemic and protect livelihoods.
4. African Union Member States continue to receive their first allocation of Johnson & Johnson vaccines through the AVAT initiative. As of 14 September 2021, a total of 4,550,400 vaccine doses have been delivered in 28 AU Member States.
5. As of 21 September 2021, 53 (95%) out of 55 African Union Member States have started COVID-19 vaccination campaigns targeting priority populations. Cumulatively, over 124.9 million doses have been administered, giving a coverage of 4.8% of the continental population. Of the doses administered, 77.5 million have received the first dose and 47.4 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 70.4 million tests for COVID-19 have been conducted in Africa since February 2020. The cumulative positivity rate⁴ and test per case ratio⁵ are 11.6% and 8.6, respectively. For Epi week 37, a total of 1,154,962 new tests were conducted, a decrease of 12% compared to Epi week 36 when 1,247,652 tests were conducted.
2. Africa CDC conducted meetings on Advocacy and Communication for the Biosafety and Biosecurity Legal Framework for two Member States - Central African Republic and Chad - on Tuesday 14 September 2021.
3. Africa CDC held a webinar titled “Genomic surveillance for emerging and re-emerging diseases in Africa: Experience from the Democratic Republic of Congo” on Wednesday 15 September 2021 at 2 p.m. EAT.

Healthcare Preparedness and Medical Countermeasures:

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

1. Africa CDC held the first session of the ninth IPC webinar series titled “Five step approach on implementation of IPC intervention for Healthcare worker protection” on Wednesday 15 September 2021 at 1 p.m. EAT for 502 participants. The recording can be accessed [here](#).
2. The first session of the ninth IPC webinar series titled “Five step approach on implementation of IPC intervention for Healthcare worker protection” in French was held on Thursday 16 September 2021 at 2 p.m. EAT for 101 participants. The recording can be accessed [here](#).
3. Africa CDC will hold the second session of the ninth IPC webinar series titled “IPC considerations for aerosol generating and invasive procedures during COVID-19 case management” on Wednesday 22 September 2021 at 1 p.m. EAT for the English session. Register [here](#).
4. The second session of the ninth IPC webinar series titled “IPC considerations for aerosol generating and invasive procedures during COVID-19 case management” will be held on Thursday 23 September 2021 at 2 p.m. EAT for the French session. Register [here](#).

Surveillance

1. Last week, Africa CDC in collaboration with East, Central and Southern Africa Health Community (ECSA-HC) provided technical support in the development of Event-Based Surveillance guidelines for Malawi.

Sciences, Standards and Regulations:

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

⁴ [Public health criteria to adjust public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19](#)

⁵ WHO set 10-30 tests per every confirmed case as a general benchmark of adequate testing.

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 includes collection, analysis and the use of all-cause mortality data collected through the facility and/or community-based surveillance.⁸
 - c. Genomic surveillance⁹ to monitor the presence of variants, the spread and the continuous evolution of the virus.
2. Member States should continue to perform contact tracing¹⁰ of confirmed cases based on transmission type and country capacity as well as enhance diagnostic screening efforts using the 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 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/>

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](#)

- 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>