

Outbreak Brief #89: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 28 September 2021

Global case count: 231,661,257 cases and 4,747,644 deaths

Data sources: World Health Organization and African Union Member States

Outbreak Update: Since the last brief (21 September 2021), **3,259,824** new confirmed¹ coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases, including **56,683** new deaths, have been reported globally. To date, a global total of 231,661,257 COVID-19 cases and 4,747,644 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** 13,340,109 (6%), **European Region** 69,543,348 (30%), **Region of the Americas** 89,268,802 (39%), **South-East Asia Region** 42,882,174 (19%) and **Western Pacific Region** 8,322,819 (4%). In the last seven days, the five countries reporting the highest number of new cases globally are the United States (737,335), The United Kingdom (234,484), India (200,367), Turkey (192,241) and the Russian Federation (148,477). 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) 28 September 2021, a total of 8,283,763 COVID-19 cases and 210,435 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-five (45%) 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, 44 (80%) 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 28 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>

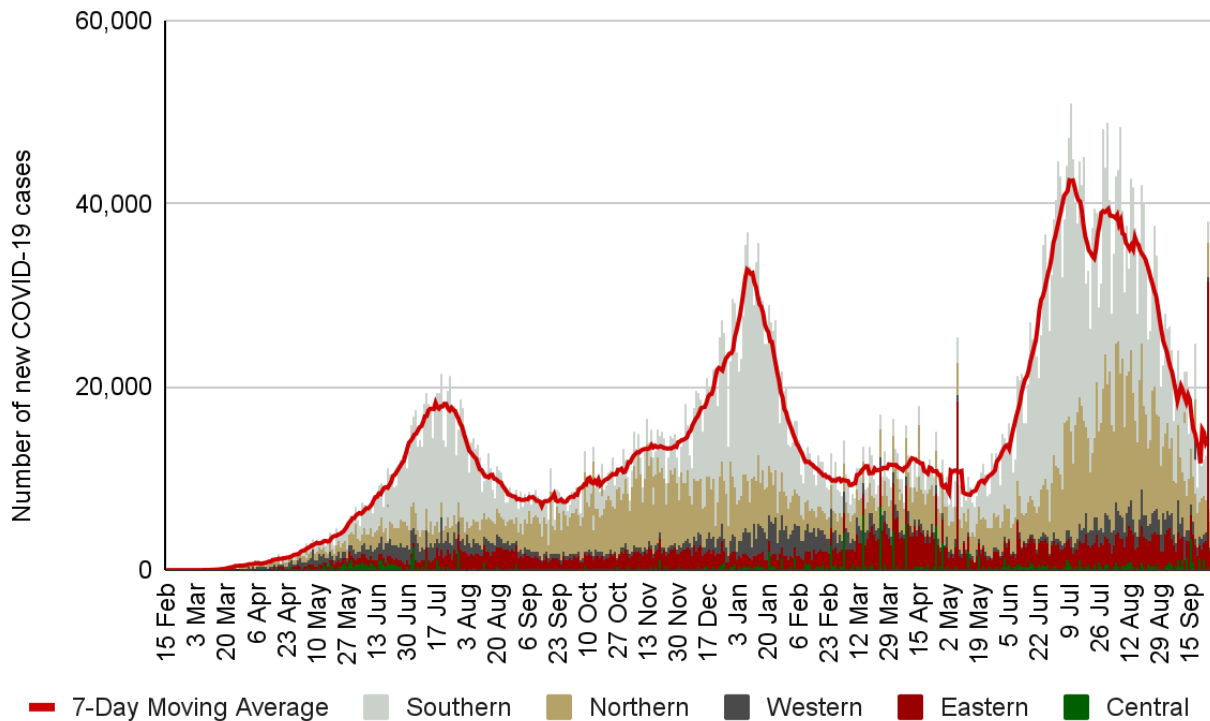


Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day in Africa by African Union region, 15 February 2020 - 28 September 2021².

As of 23 September 2021, 51 AU Member States have reported the presence of the Alpha (44 Member States), Beta (38 Member States), Delta (40 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 38 (20 - 26 September 2021), 105,361 new COVID-19 cases were reported, which is a 10% decrease in the number of new cases reported compared to Epi week 37. The Eastern Region accounted for 42% of the new COVID-19 cases reported for this week, followed by the Northern (25%), Southern (24%), Western (6%) and Central (3%) regions. This week, eight countries accounted for 76% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: Uganda (27%), South Africa (14%), Morocco (9%), Ethiopia (8%), Libya (6%), Egypt (4%), Tunisia (4%) and Botswana (4%). The countries reporting the highest incidence (COVID-19 new cases per 100,000 population) this week are Seychelles (314), Botswana (178), Sao Tome and Principe (149) and Libya (85). 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 38.

² The dates are at a two-week interval; the last date is 28 September 2021.

Table 2: Confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths³ reported in Africa for epidemiological week 38 (20 - 26 September 2021).

Country	Cumulative number of cases (new cases)	% change in new cases since week 37	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 37
Central Region	237,553 (3,959)	-40%	3,345 (27)	-63%
Burundi	17,505 (773)	-54%	14 (0)	-100%
Cameroon	88,183 (0)	-100%	1,411 (0)	-100%
Central African Republic	11,371 (12)	-57%	100 (0)	NA*
Chad	5,033 (4)	-69%	174 (0)	NA*
Congo	14,244 (230)	33%	193 (2)	-67%
Democratic Republic of Congo	56,947 (416)	124%	1,084 (11)	120%
Equatorial Guinea	11,806 (743)	32%	142 (5)	-17%
Gabon	29,126 (1,483)	48%	178 (3)	-50%
Sao Tome and Principe	3,338 (298)	33%	49 (6)	50%
Eastern Region	1,010,567 (43,763)	71%	21,144 (665)	-35%
Comoros	4,128 (22)	144%	147 (0)	NA*
Djibouti	12,253 (213)	18%	162 (3)	50%
Eritrea	6,694 (23)	44%	40 (0)	NA*
Ethiopia	341,714 (8,753)	-11%	5,401 (271)	35%
Kenya	248,461 (1,931)	-31%	5,102 (113)	36%
Madagascar	43,570 (686)	NA*	958 (1)	NA*
Mauritius	13,685 (505)	-33%	21 (0)	NA*
Rwanda	94,797 (1,449)	-28%	1,222 (37)	23%
Seychelles	21,257 (314)	-10%	115 (1)	-75%
Somalia	19,723 (719)	14%	1,103 (40)	No change
South Sudan	11,948 (134)	-33%	128 (7)	600%
Sudan	38,201 (148)	-11%	2,899 (20)	400%

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

Tanzania	25,647 (0)	-100%	714 (0)	-100%
Uganda	128,489 (28,866)	NA*	3,132 (172)	NA*
Northern Region	2,514,673 (26,416)	-21%	67,379 (896)	-5%
Algeria	202,772 (1,144)	-25%	5,777 (78)	-33%
Egypt	301,625 (4,696)	18%	17,187 (217)	119%
Libya	337,890 (5,864)	-14%	4,617 (100)	32%
Mauritania	35,859 (397)	-32%	768 (2)	-83%
Morocco	929,305 (9,624)	-36%	14,167 (257)	-29%
Tunisia	705,474 (4,667)	-14%	24,794 (241)	-14%
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	1,748 (24)	4%	69 (1)	No change
Southern Region	3,872,098 (25,204)	-41%	108,754 (1,110)	-38%
Angola	55,121 (2,698)	36%	1,501 (110)	112%
Botswana	178,050 (4,262)	-48%	2,367 (13)	-24%
Eswatini	45,770 (390)	-25%	1,212 (17)	-26%
Lesotho	18,320 (335)	-91%	693 (3)	-99%
Malawi	61,509 (146)	-42%	2,276 (15)	-35%
Mozambique	150,530 (512)	-37%	1,909 (6)	-45%
Namibia	127,373 (473)	-15%	3,494 (23)	-34%
South Africa	2,896,943 (14,313)	-41%	87,052 (878)	-32%
Zambia	208,857 (388)	-27%	3,646 (8)	14%
Zimbabwe	129,625 (1,687)	1%	4,604 (37)	28%
Western Region	644,711 (6,019)	-34%	9,466 (122)	-37%
Benin	23,255 (297)	-80%	154 (0)	-100%
Burkina Faso	14,183 (131)	41%	181 (9)	800%
Cape Verde	37,448 (340)	-27%	334 (4)	-50%
Côte d'Ivoire	59,879 (931)	-20%	600 (34)	-43%
Gambia	9,930 (42)	100%	335 (3)	50%
Ghana	126,806 (660)	-62%	1,147 (8)	-71%
Guinea	30,364 (93)	-50%	669 (11)	NA*
Guinea-Bissau	6,102 (22)	-55%	135 (5)	67%
Liberia	5,792 (15)	NA*	283 (0)	NA*

Mali	15,163 (95)	12%	547 (2)	No change
Niger	5,980 (18)	-55%	201 (0)	-100%
Nigeria	204,456 (2,658)	0%	2,678 (23)	-60%
Senegal	73,742 (97)	-42%	1,855 (10)	-29%
Sierra Leone	6,393 (1)	-92%	121 (0)	NA*
Togo	25,218 (619)	-37%	226 (13)	63%
Total	8,279,602 (105,361)	-10%	210,088 (2,820)	-30%

*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 18 - 24 September 2021. Please see the [Africa CDC PHSM Tiers framework](#) for more information.

Table 3: Changes in Public Health and Social Measures, selected countries, 18 - 24 September 2021.

Country	PHSM Trend	PHSM Change
Tier 4 (High Alert): Daily case incidence per 1M people/day ≥ 80 and/or positivity rate $\geq 12\%$		
Lesotho	↓	Lesotho partially eased nationwide COVID-19 restrictions, moving to Level Purple. Under this level, the nightly curfew has been reduced, capacity limitations on social gatherings were increased, and sports are permitted to resume with no spectators, among other measures.
Somalia	↑	Somalia tightened restrictions for travellers amid rising cases. All incoming passengers (except children under 12) must present a negative COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours of departure. Travellers who have been in a country designated high-risk must quarantine for 14 days upon arrival.
Tunisia	↓	Officials in Tunisia are lifting the nightly curfew in all regions as of 25 September.
Tier 3 (Moderate Alert): Daily case incidence per 1M people/day is 20 to <80 and/or positivity rate is 5% to <12%		
Equatorial Guinea	↑	Several measures were implemented in Equatorial Guinea amid rising cases. A state of alarm was declared, the nationwide curfew was lengthened by 6 hours, travel between regions is restricted, and public transport must operate at reduced capacity.

Eswatini	↓	Eswatini moved to Adjusted Risk Level 2. Under the new directive, the nightly curfew was shortened and business hours were expanded.
Kenya	→	Kenya maintained some COVID-19 measures due to a spike in cases. The nightly curfew will remain in effect until 19 October 2021, public gatherings remain suspended, and religious services remain restricted.
Rwanda	↓/↑	Officials in Rwanda announced the reopening of bars after 18 months of COVID-related closures. The nightly curfew in Kigali was also reduced by one hour, while the curfew in high-incidence areas (including Gicumbi and Ngoma) has been tightened.
Tier 2 (Low Alert): Daily case incidence per 1M people/day is 5 to <20 and/or positivity rate is 3% to 5%		
Zimbabwe	↑	The level 2 lockdown in Zimbabwe was extended for an additional two weeks. Measures include a nightly curfew, restrictions on nonessential businesses, and capacity limits on social gatherings.
Tier 1 (Standard Precautions): Daily case incidence per 1M people/day is <5 and/or positivity rate is <3%		
Tier 0 (No Data Available)		
Uganda	↓	Additional COVID-19 restrictions were loosened in Uganda. Universities and post-secondary institutions were permitted to reopen on 1 November, places of worship can reopen at reduced capacity, and some social events, including funerals and weddings, are permitted to resume with a maximum of 200 people.

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 23 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. Africa CDC in collaboration with the Government of Kenya will officially launch its Eastern Africa Regional Collaborating Centre (EA-RCC) in Nairobi, Kenya on Friday 1 October 2021, at 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. EAT. The theme of the event is “Ensuring effective preparedness and response to current public health threats in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond”. Register [here](#).
3. Africa CDC held a meeting on Saving lives – Saving livelihoods, titled “Achieving high-level, equitable, COVID-19 vaccination coverage in African Union (AU) Member States” on Thursday 23 September 2021. The recording can be accessed [here](#)
4. Dr. John Nkengasong, Director of Africa CDC, and Mr. Strive Masiyiwa, African Union (AU) Special Envoy on COVID-19 and Coordinator, Africa Vaccine Acquisition Trust (AVAT) joined iconic artists and leaders from around the world at the Global Citizen Live event on September 25, 2021 to address vaccine equity and production needs to combat COVID-19.

The event advocated for a global recovery plan, with a focus on COVID-19, ending the hunger crisis, resuming learning for all, protecting the planet and advancing equity for all.

5. As of 27 September 2021, 53 (95%) out of 55 African Union Member States have started COVID-19 vaccination campaigns targeting priority populations. Cumulatively, over 139.9 million doses have been administered, giving a coverage of 5.2% of the continental population. Of the doses administered, 84.7 million have received the first dose and 55.2 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 71.6 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 8.7, respectively. For Epi week 38, a total of 1,124,895 new tests were conducted, a decrease of 19% compared to Epi week 37 when 1,389,281 tests were conducted.
2. Africa CDC will hold its Pathogen Genomic Institute (PGI) webinar series on Pathogen Genomic Surveillance in Africa titled “Enabling Data Sharing for Public Health: Lessons from the VirusSeq Data Portal in Canada” on Wednesday 29 September 2021 at 2 p.m. EAT. [Register here](#)

Healthcare Preparedness and Medical Countermeasures:

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

1. Africa CDC held 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 532 participants. The recording can be accessed [here](#).
2. The second session of the ninth IPC webinar series titled “IPC considerations for aerosol generating and invasive procedures during COVID-19 case management” in French was held on Thursday 23 September 2021 at 2 p.m. EAT for 114 participants. The recording can be accessed [here](#).
3. Africa CDC will hold the third session of the ninth IPC webinar series titled “Impact of COVID-19 and IPC on Emergency Management Team, Laboratory and other services” on Wednesday 29 September 2021 at 1 p.m. EAT for the English session. Register [here](#).
4. The third session of the ninth IPC webinar series titled “Impact of COVID-19 and IPC on Emergency Management Team, Laboratory and other services” will be held on Thursday 30 September 2021 at 2 p.m. EAT for the French session. Register [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.

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-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 tracing of confirmed cases based on transmission type and country capacity as well as enhance diagnostic screening efforts using the rapid antigen tests¹⁰.
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/>

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

- Africa CDC HotSpot and PHSM Tiers dashboards: <https://africadccovid.org/>
- Africa CDC vaccination dashboard: <https://africadc.org/covid-19-vaccination/>
- Africa CDC pathogen genomics dashboard: <https://africadc.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>