

Outbreak Brief #93: Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Pandemic

Date of Issue: 26 October 2021

Global case count: 243,210,229 cases and 4,941,498 deaths

Data sources: World Health Organization and African Union Member States

Outbreak Update: Since the last brief (19 October 2021), **2,999,086** new confirmed¹ coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases, including 50,746 new deaths, have been reported globally. To date, a global total of 243,210,229 COVID-19 cases and 4,941,498 related deaths (case fatality ratio (CFR): 2%) have been reported by 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 13,842,835** (6%), **European Region 75,158,335** (31%), **Region of the Americas 92,640,794** (38%), **South-East Asia Region 43,806,780** (18%) and **Western Pacific Region 9,268,583** (4%). In the last seven days, the five countries reporting the highest number of new cases globally are the United States (346,399), The United Kingdom (324,509), the Russian Federation (252,561), Turkey (197,528) and Ukraine (139,345). 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) 26 October 2021, a total of 8,472,405 COVID-19 cases and 217,283 deaths (**CFR: 2.6%**) have been reported in 55 African Union (AU) Member States. This represents 3.5% of all cases and 4.4% of all deaths reported globally. Twenty-seven (49%) 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, 45 (82%) 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 the AU region from 15 February 2020 to 26 October 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>

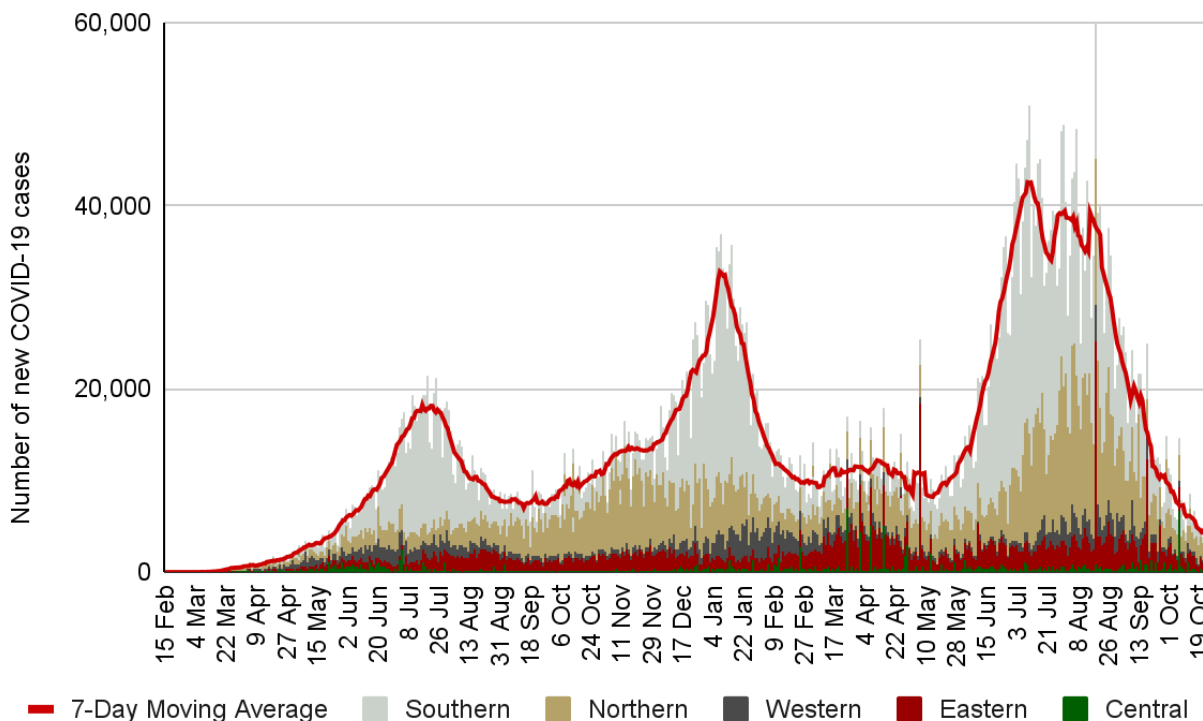


Figure 1: New COVID-19 cases reported by day in Africa by African Union region, 15 February 2020 - 26 October 2021².

As of 25 October 2021, 51 AU Member States have reported the presence of the Alpha (45 Member States), Beta (40 Member States), Delta (41 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 42 (18 - 24 October 2021), 31,903 new COVID-19 cases were reported, which is a 24% decrease in the number of new cases reported compared to Epi week 41. The Northern Region accounted for 43% of the new COVID-19 cases reported for this week, followed by the Southern (22%), Eastern (19%), Central (9%) and regions Western (7%). This week, six countries accounted for 63% of the new COVID-19 cases reported: Egypt (19%), Libya (11%), Ethiopia (10%), South Africa (10%), Morocco (7%) and Botswana (6%). The countries reporting the highest incidence (COVID-19 new cases per 100,000 population) this week are Seychelles (137), Botswana (81) and Libya (52). Table 1 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 42.

² The dates are at a two-week interval; the last date is 26 October 2021.

Table 1: Confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths³ reported in Africa for epidemiological week 42 (18 - 24 October 2021).

Country by AU Region	Cumulative number of cases (new cases)	% change in new cases since week 41	Cumulative number of deaths (new deaths)	% change in new deaths since week 41
Central Region	262,617 (3,072)	-26%	3,671 (41)	-46%
Burundi	19,940 (510)	195%	14 (0)	NA*
Cameroon	100,289 (0)	-100%	1,600 (0)	-100%
Central African Republic	11,518 (32)	88%	100 (0)	NA*
Chad	5,069 (2)	-75%	174 (0)	NA*
Congo	16,868 (1,354)	192%	249 (27)	200%
Democratic Republic of Congo	57,469 (249)	241%	1,091 (0)	-100%
Equatorial Guinea	13,166 (146)	-38%	163 (8)	NA*
Gabon	34,601 (759)	-40%	224 (6)	-54%
Sao Tome and Principe	3,697 (20)	-59%	56 (0)	NA*
Eastern Region	1,045,375 (5,948)	-31%	22,728 (222)	-35%
Comoros	4,205 (15)	-38%	147 (0)	NA*
Djibouti	13,451 (55)	-67%	181 (2)	No change
Eritrea	6,792 (18)	-5%	45 (0)	-100%
Ethiopia	362,335 (3,088)	-35%	6,358 (141)	-38%
Kenya	252,705 (672)	-24%	5,257 (34)	-23%
Madagascar	43,622 (6)	No change	960 (0)	NA*
Mauritius	17,139 (518)	57%	148 (7)	-77%
Rwanda	97,167 (234)	-57%	1,293 (9)	80%
Seychelles	21,991 (137)	7%	115 (0)	NA*
Somalia	21,799 (0)	-100%	1,180 (0)	NA*
South Sudan	12,293 (109)	56%	130 (0)	NA*
Sudan	40,084 (599)	-1%	2,990 (14)	-44%

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

Tanzania	26,034 (0)	-100%	724 (0)	-100%
Uganda	125,758 (497)	10%	3,200 (15)	150%
Northern Region	2,579,506 (13,619)	-8%	69,836 (589)	6%
Algeria	205,822 (536)	-22%	5,890 (18)	-5%
Egypt	324,619 (6,163)	2%	18,285 (315)	15%
Libya	354,215 (3,587)	-6%	5,028 (124)	11%
Mauritania	36,955 (278)	6%	792 (4)	33%
Morocco	944,277 (2,145)	-27%	14,612 (68)	-22%
Tunisia	711,863 (910)	-16%	25,160 (60)	-2%
Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic	1,755 (0)	-100%	69 (0)	NA*
Southern Region	3,921,565 (7,179)	-28%	111,023 (398)	1%
Angola	63,861 (1,072)	-24%	1,697 (35)	-13%
Botswana	185,985 (1,934)	-31%	2,402 (13)	63%
Eswatini	46,384 (21)	-76%	1,241 (8)	33%
Lesotho	21,587 (57)	-19%	656 (1)	-67%
Malawi	61,757 (41)	3%	2,296 (4)	100%
Mozambique	151,225 (123)	5%	1,928 (2)	-50%
Namibia	128,849 (496)	121%	3,550 (10)	-23%
South Africa	2,919,632 (3,039)	-32%	88,925 (313)	6%
Zambia	209,634 (113)	-35%	3,659 (1)	-75%
Zimbabwe	132,651 (283)	-51%	4,669 (11)	-48%
Western Region	660,003 (2,085)	-51%	9,919 (79)	-44%
Benin	24,560 (0)	-100%	161 (0)	-100%
Burkina Faso	14,793 (34)	-84%	214 (5)	-44%
Cape Verde	38,140 (91)	-38%	349 (2)	100%
Côte d'Ivoire	61,178 (140)	-36%	690 (8)	-50%
Gambia	9,956 (3)	-70%	339 (0)	NA*
Ghana	129,948 (143)	-90%	1,172 (2)	-83%
Guinea	30,642 (70)	52%	678 (2)	100%
Guinea-Bissau	6,131 (0)	-100%	141 (0)	NA*
Liberia	5,811 (8)	100%	287 (1)	NA*

Mali	15,848 (229)	55%	558 (1)	-75%
Niger	6,254 (84)	53%	207 (3)	NA*
Nigeria	210,460 (1,162)	-28%	2,882 (45)	-50%
Senegal	73,893 (27)	-7%	1,878 (7)	133%
Sierra Leone	6,397 (1)	NA*	121 (0)	NA*
Togo	25,992 (93)	-23%	242 (3)	No change
Total	8,469,066 (31,903)	-24%	217,177 (1,329)	-12%

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

NEW Africa CDC Response Activities

General:

1. Dr. John Nkengasong, Director of Africa CDC, hosted a special press briefing to provide an update on Africa Vaccine Acquisition Task Team (AVATT) vaccine deliveries on Tuesday 26 October 2021 at 12 p.m. EAT. He was joined by Mr. Strive Masiyiwa, African Union (AU) Special Envoy on COVID-19, Dr. Vera Songwe, the United Nations Under-Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), H.E. Jessica Lapenn, Ambassador and Head of the United States (US) mission to the African Union (AU) and Dr Seth Berkeley, Chief Executive Officer, Gavi, representatives of vaccine manufacturing companies and technical partners. The recording is available on the [Africa CDC Twitter page](#).
2. Dr. John Nkengasong, Director of Africa CDC hosted the Africa CDC weekly press briefing on Thursday 21 October 2021, at 12 p.m. EAT. 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](#).
3. The African Union Commission, through Africa CDC and the Department of Infrastructure and Energy will hold a virtual Joint Meeting of African Ministers of Health, ICT and Transport and Civil Aviation titled “Showcase: Trusted Travel to Trusted Health” to show the progress of the Africa CDC Trusted Travel Platform and unveiling the Trusted Health paradigm, within the African Union’s 4D Agenda, on Thursday 28 October 2021, at 1 - 3 p.m. EAT. Register [here](#)
4. Africa CDC will virtually hold its inaugural One Health conference, from 1 - 3 November 2021. The aim of the conference is to share best practices and experiences 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. Register [here](#).

5. As of 26 October 2021, 54 (98%) out of 55 African Union Member States have started COVID-19 vaccination campaigns targeting priority populations. Cumulatively, over 185.4 million doses have been administered, giving a coverage of 6.9% of the continental population. Of the doses administered, 111.9 million have received the first dose and 73.4 million have received the second dose. On Monday 18 October 2021, Burundi rolled out its first COVID-19 vaccines, namely Sinopharm (500,000 doses). Eritrea is the only AU Member States yet to start COVID-19 vaccine roll out. More information on COVID-19 vaccination can be found on the [Africa CDC COVID-19 vaccine dashboard](#).
6. African Union Member States continue to receive allocations of Johnson & Johnson vaccines through the AVAT initiative. In the past week, the Democratic Republic of Congo received 756,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson single-shot vaccine. Overall, 6,621,780 vaccine doses have been delivered in twenty-eight countries.

Laboratory:

1. Over 75.8 million tests for COVID-19 have been conducted in Africa since February 2020. The cumulative positivity rate⁴ and test per case ratio⁵ are 11.2% and 8.9, respectively. For Epi week 42, a total of 845,425 new tests were conducted, a decrease of 16% compared to Epi week 41 when 1,002,002 tests were conducted.
2. Africa CDC in collaboration with the Centre for Epidemic Response and Innovation (CERI) and Pathogen Genomics Institute (PGI) will hold a training on genomic sequencing for 20 participants from 13 Member States from 1 - 12 November 2021, at Stellenbosch University, South Africa.
3. Africa CDC will conduct training of trainers (ToT) on antigen testing in Windhoek, Namibia, on 22 - 26 November 2021 and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania on 6 - 10 December 2021.
4. The Southern Africa Regional Collaborating Centre (SA-RCC) of Africa CDC will host a three-day regional workshop on Implementation of Public Health Pathogen Genomics in the Southern Africa region in Lusaka, Zambia from 25 - 27 October 2021. The objectives of the workshop are to amplify Africa CDC's vision on pathogen genomics and engage Member States to identify challenges in the operation of the Africa CDC/WHO AFRO COVID-19 sequencing network.

Healthcare Preparedness and Medical Countermeasures:

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

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.

1. Africa CDC held the sixth session of the ninth IPC webinar series titled “Improving Healthcare Facilities: Practical Solutions for Design and Traffic Flow” in English with Portuguese and Arabic interpretations, on Wednesday 20 October 2021 at 1 p.m. EAT for 652 participants. The recording can be accessed [here](#).
2. The sixth session of the ninth IPC webinar series titled “Improving Healthcare Facilities: Practical Solutions for Design and Traffic Flow” in French was held on Thursday 21 October 2021 at 2 p.m. EAT for 156 participants. The recording can be accessed [here](#).
3. Africa CDC joined the 1st National Symposium for Waste Pickers and Plastic Pollution in Zambia on 22 October 2021. The symposium aimed to sensitise waste pickers in Zambia on their roles in disease prevention and transmission, and a call to have all waste pickers and other affiliated members vaccinated for COVID-19 across the country.
4. Africa CDC IPC Technical Working Group will hold its Regional IPC training for Member States (MS) in the Central Africa region and Francophone MS in the Western Africa region in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, from 25 - 27 October 2021.

Surveillance:

1. Africa CDC in collaboration with the East, Central and Southern Africa Community (ECSA-HC) and Southern Africa Centre for Infectious Disease Surveillance (SACIDS) supported the Ministry of Health, Republic of Congo in strengthening its Event-Based Surveillance and health information systems while also providing technical support in the development of National EBS guidelines, from 12 - 19 October 2021.

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

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

- 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/>
- Africa CDC HotSpot and PHSM Tiers dashboards: <https://africacdccovid.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/>
- WHO Technical Guidance. <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance>

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](#)