

The coronavirus disease COVID-19 continues to spread at the regional and global levels. As of 21 January 2023, the global cumulative incidence reached 751 567 108 reported cases and 6 789 667 associated deaths at a case-fatality ratio (CFR) of 0.90%. Meanwhile, the 22 countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) have reported a total of 23 238 511 cases representing about 3.10% of the global count, with 349 259 associated deaths (CFR 1.5%). Most countries in the Region are in the community transmission phase.

Since the beginning of the outbreak, the country that has reported the highest number of total cases in the Region is Islamic Republic of Iran (7 563 273; 32.55% of the Region's total), followed by Iraq (2 465 545; 10.61%) and Jordan (1 746 997; 7.52%). Islamic Republic of Iran also reported the highest number of total COVID-19 associated deaths (144 734; CFR 1.91%), followed by Pakistan (30 640; CFR 1.94%) and Tunisia (29 302; CFR 2.55%). The highest CFRs were reported by Yemen (18.07%), followed by Sudan (7.84%) and Syria (5.51%), while the lowest CFRs were reported by United Arab Emirates (0.22%), Bahrain (0.22%) and Qatar (0.14%).

During epidemiological week 3, the Region reported a decrease in cases by 37% as compared to the previous week (4289 cases compared to 6796 cases). An increase by 33% was also observed for associated deaths (68 deaths in the current week compared to 51 deaths in the previous week).

The weekly number of cases have decreased in all countries of the Region except in 4 out of 22 countries as compared to the previous week. This week the number of COVID-19 associated deaths also decreased in all countries of the Region except in 3 out of 22 countries as compared to the previous week.*

In terms of testing, a total of 443 401 847 laboratory tests were conducted since the start of the outbreak across the Region, including 290 841 tests in week 3, which shows a 9% increase as compared to the previous week when 283 004 tests were conducted. The highest number of PCR tests were reported from United Arab Emirates (198 398 727), followed by Islamic Republic of Iran (54 937 564) and Saudi Arabia (45 012 272). The average positivity rate for the Region is 5.24%. WHO recommends a positivity rate of around 3% to 12% as a general benchmark indicating adequate testing, which was achieved in most countries of the Region.

Meanwhile, COVID-19 vaccination continues across the Region. The total number of doses administered so far in the 22 countries is 846 032 961. Pakistan has administered the highest number of doses at 317 696 373, followed by Islamic Republic of Iran at 154 773 070 and Egypt at 101 068 826. On the other hand, Bahrain (3 476 633), Yemen (1 242 982) and Djibouti (338 051) administrated the lowest number of COVID-19 doses in the Region.**

Supporting countries in the Region

The regional incident management support team continues to coordinate the response and provide technical support to countries and partners in the Region in the areas of coordination and partnership, surveillance, laboratory capacity, clinical management, infection prevention and control, risk communication and community engagement, points of entry according to the International Health Regulations (2005), research, health systems, and essential health services among others.



