

The coronavirus disease COVID-19 continues to spread at the regional and global levels. As of 23 January 2021, the global cumulative incidence reached 97 702 888 reported cases and 2 099 021 associated deaths with a case fatality ratio (CFR) of 2.1%. Meanwhile, the 22 countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) have reported a total of 5 512 527 cases, which represent about 5.6% of the global count, with 131 062 associated deaths (CFR 2.4%). 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 (1 367 032 cases; 24.8% of the Region's total), followed by Iraq (612 870; 11.1%) and Pakistan (532 412; 9.7%). Islamic Republic of Iran also reported the highest number of total associated deaths (57 294; CFR 4.2%) followed by Iraq (12 988; CFR 2.1%) and Pakistan (11 295; CFR 2.1%). The highest CFRs were reported by Yemen (29%) followed by Syrian Arab Republic (6.5%), while the lowest CFRs were reported by Qatar (0.2%) followed by United Arab Emirates (0.3%) and Bahrain (0.4%).

During epidemiological week 3, the Region reported a decrease of 9% in cases when compared to the previous week (168 771 cases compared to 184 993 cases). On the other hand, a 3.6% increase was observed for associated deaths (3004 deaths compared to 2901 deaths).

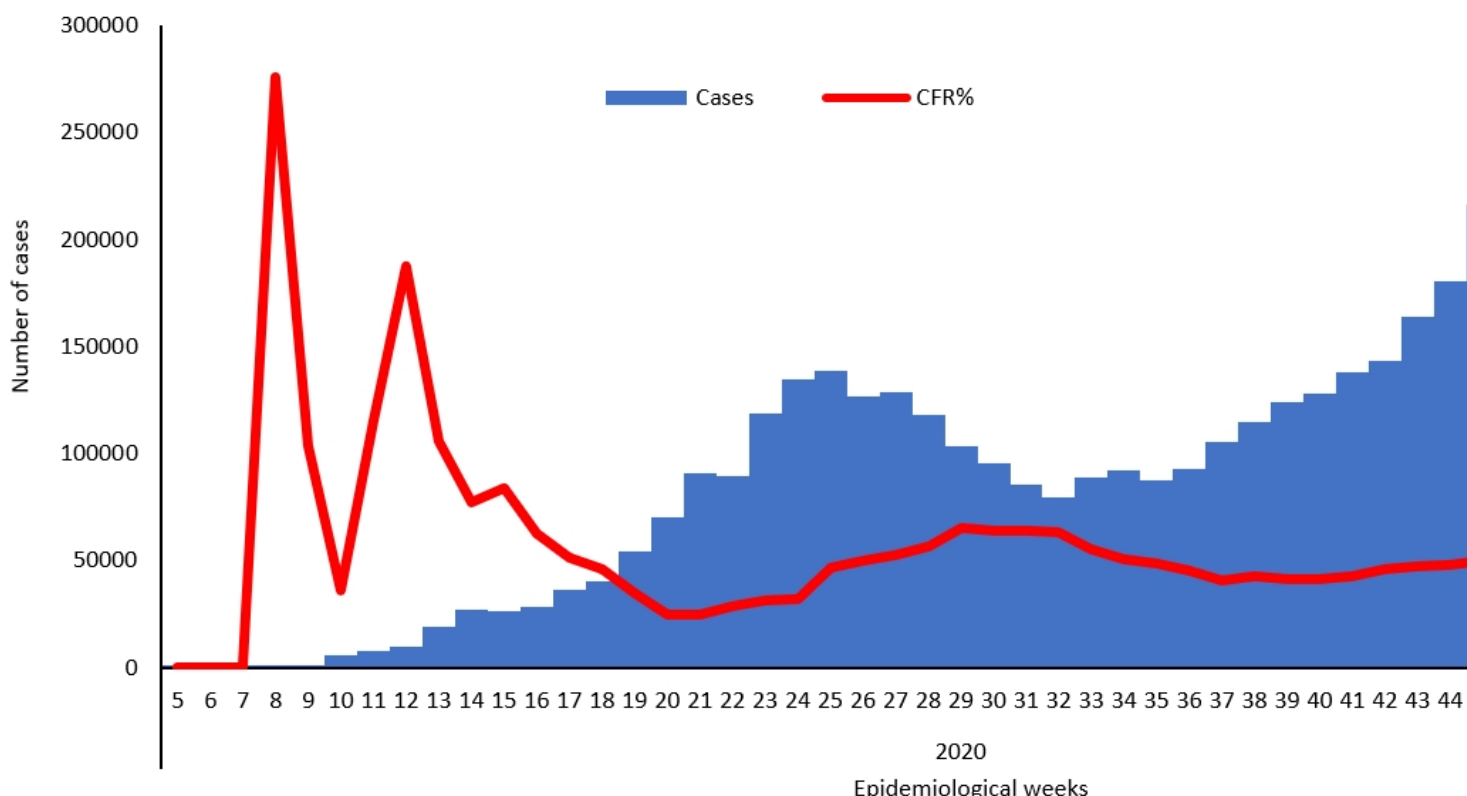
Lebanon, United Arab Emirates and Tunisia reported a relative increase in COVID-19 activity in week 3. The cumulative number of cases increased from 249 158 to 276 587 in Lebanon (11% weekly increase), from 249 808 to 274 376 in United Arab Emirates (10% weekly increase) and from 180 090 to 197 373 in Tunisia (9.6% weekly increase). Lebanon, Tunisia, and Syrian Arab Republic had the largest relative increase in deaths.

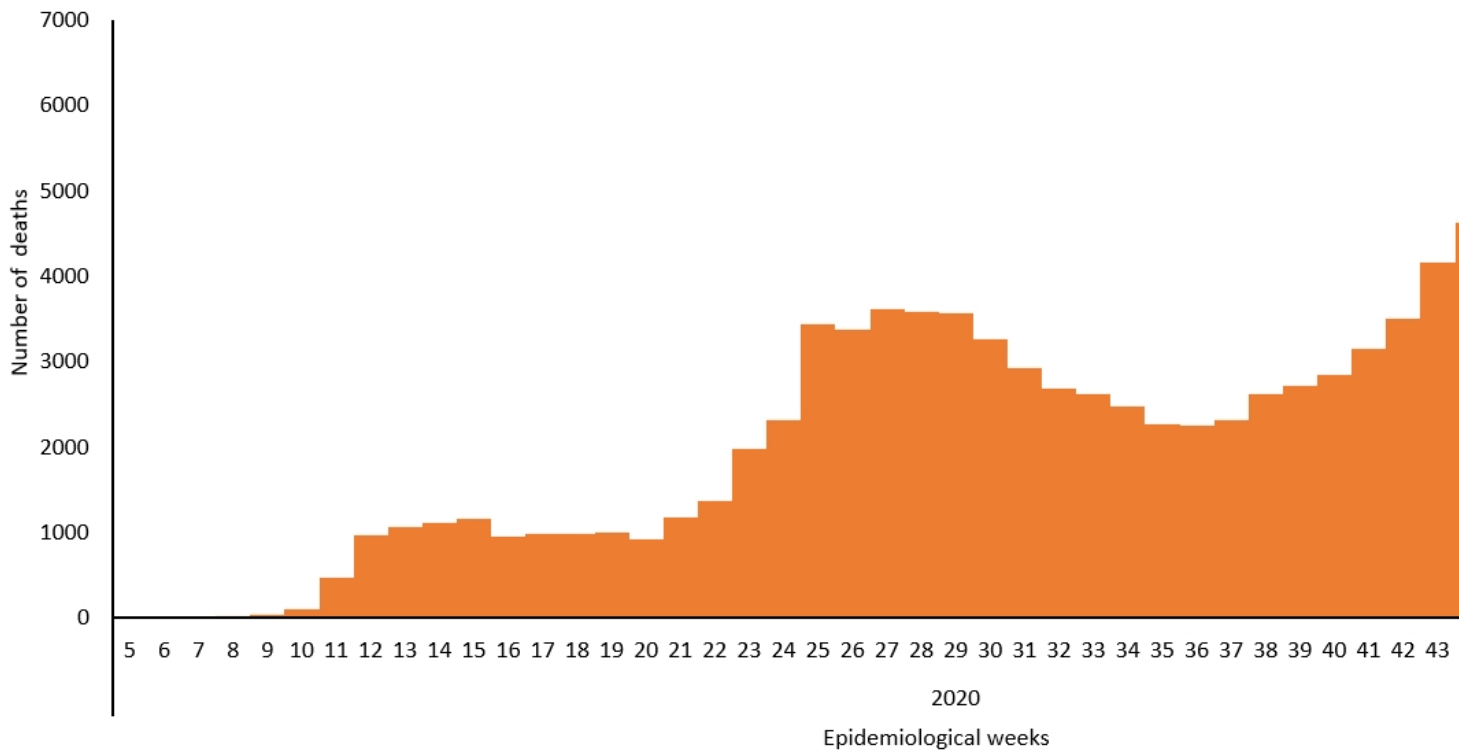
In terms of testing, a total of 81 094 538 laboratory PCR tests were conducted since the start of the outbreak across the Region including 3 890 466 tests in week 3, which shows an 8% increase compared to the previous week (3 610 992). The highest number of PCR tests were reported from United Arab Emirates (24.4 million), followed by Saudi Arabia (11.9 million) and Islamic Republic of Iran (8.8 million). The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain are performing the highest rates of testing per capita (2465/1000 and 1538/1000, respectively). The average positivity rate for the Region is 6.8%. WHO recommends a positivity rate of around 3–12% as a general benchmark indicating adequate testing, which was achieved in most countries of the Region.

COVID-19 vaccination has started in six countries of the Region. The total number of doses administered so far include 2 571 091 in United Arab Emirates, 144 130 in Bahrain, 295 530 in Saudi Arabia, 32 765 Oman, 29 377 in Jordan and 2500 in Kuwait.

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.





[Full details of the region's progress with the COVID-19 situation in WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region](#)