

The coronavirus disease COVID-19 continues to spread at the regional and global levels. As of 24 December 2022, the global cumulative incidence reached 651 922 986 reported cases and 6 669 794 associated deaths at a case-fatality ratio (CFR) of 1.02%. Meanwhile, the 22 countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) have reported a total of 23 218 338 cases, representing about 3.56% of the global count, with 349 049 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 (7 560 731; 32.56% of the Region's total cases), followed by Iraq (2 464 997; 10.62%) and Jordan (1 746 997; 7.52%). Islamic Republic of Iran also reported the highest number of total COVID-19 associated deaths (144 673; CFR 1.91%), followed by Pakistan (30 635; CFR 1.94 %) and Tunisia (29 279; 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 Qatar (0.14%), United Arab Emirates and Bahrain (0.22% for both).

During epidemiological week 51, the Region reported a decrease in cases by 25% when compared to the previous week (4364 cases compared to 5803 cases). A decrease by 18% was also observed for associated deaths (31 deaths in the current week compared to 38 deaths in the previous week).

The weekly number of cases have decreased in all countries of the Region except in Islamic Republic of Iran and Oman 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 Islamic Republic of Iran, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia as compared to the previous week.*

In terms of laboratory testing, a total of 442 089 855 tests were conducted since the start of the outbreak across the Region including 241 837 tests in week 51, which shows a 26% decrease as compared to the previous week when 326 227 tests were conducted. The highest number of PCR tests were reported from United Arab Emirates (197 814 314), followed by Islamic Republic of Iran (54 719 070) and Saudi Arabia (44 913 868). The average positivity rate for the Region is 5.25%. WHO recommends a positivity rate of around 3% to 12% as a general benchmark indicating adequate testing, which was achieved in most of the countries of the Region.

Meanwhile, COVID-19 vaccination continues across the Region. The total number of doses administered so far in the 22 countries of the Region is 844 957 683. Pakistan has administered the highest number of doses (317 080 887), followed by Islamic Republic of Iran (154 773 070) and Egypt (100 993 230). On the other hand, Bahrain (3 476 633), Yemen (1 238 962) and Djibouti (338 051) administrated the lowest number of COVID-19 vaccine doses in the Region.**

Supporting countries in the Region

Through the regional incident management support team, WHO/EMRO 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 in accordance to the International Health Regulations (2005), research, health systems strengthening, and immunization, essential health services among others.



