

COVID-19: WHO EMRO Biweekly Situation Report #2

Epi Weeks 3-4 (17-30 January 2021)

SITUATION IN NUMBERS (As of midnight GMT+2, 30 January 2021)



10/22

Countries reporting increased cases



5 673 973

Total laboratory-confirmed cases



438

Shipments delivered to 107 countries



5 034 746

Total reported recovered cases



134 336

Total reported deaths

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- As of 30 January 2021, the Eastern Mediterranean Region reported over 5.67M confirmed COVID-19 cases and nearly 134,336 deaths.
- During this reporting period, the Region reported a decrease of 4.7% in cases when compared to the previous week. Similarly, a 1.7% decrease was also observed for associated deaths reported from Region.
- Eight countries surpassed the Regional Case Fatality Rate of 2.4%, Yemen (29.0%), Syrian Arab Republic (6.5%), Sudan (6.1%), Egypt (5.6%), Afghanistan (4.4%), Islamic Republic of Iran (4.1%), Tunisia (3.2%) and Somalia (2.7%).
- After the decline observed during late November and early December, there was an increase in reported cases during the first two weeks of January and afterwards a continuous decline has been noted. The reported deaths were showing a continuous decline during December 2020 but in 2021, there was some stabilization observed for the first four weeks.
- Serious public health and social measures, including introduction of vaccines, are implemented to tackle increases of cases.
- To date, 10 EMR countries and territory are affected by the UK variant.
- Targeting high-risk groups, vaccination against COVID-19 was kicked off in 9 EMR countries.

Map 1: COVID-19 cumulative incidence per 100,000 population and total deaths per country, in the Eastern Mediterranean Region from 29 January 2020 to 30 January 2021

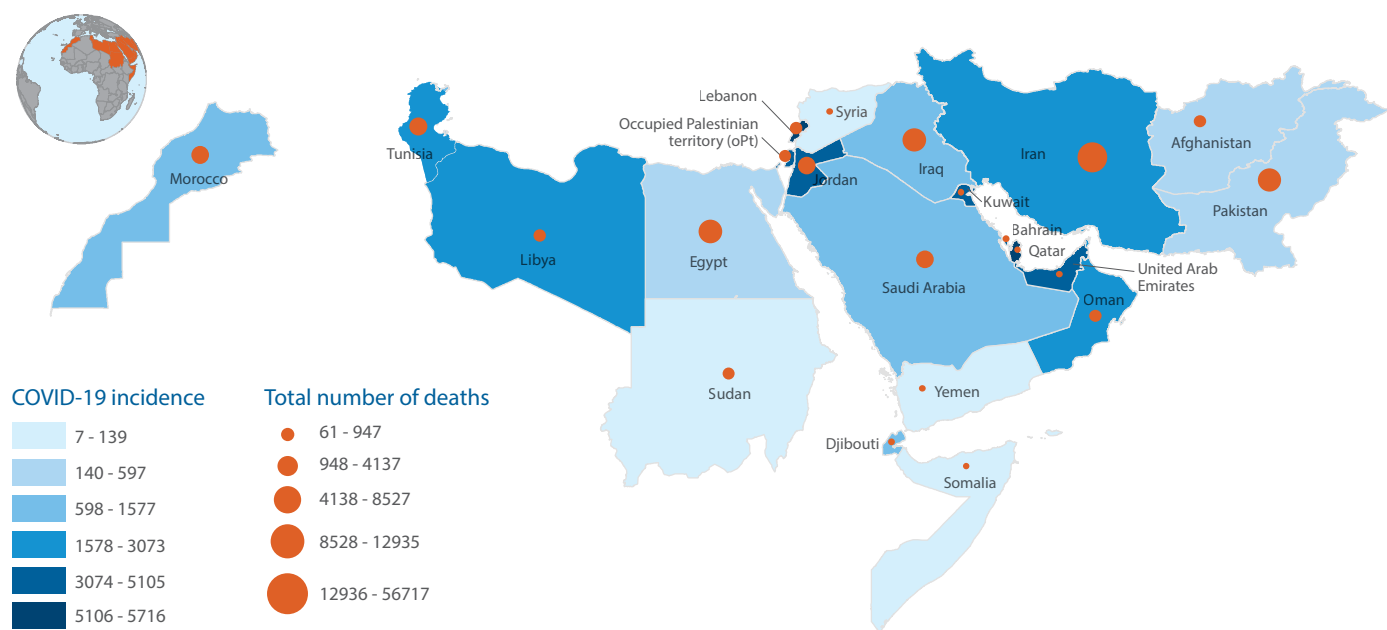
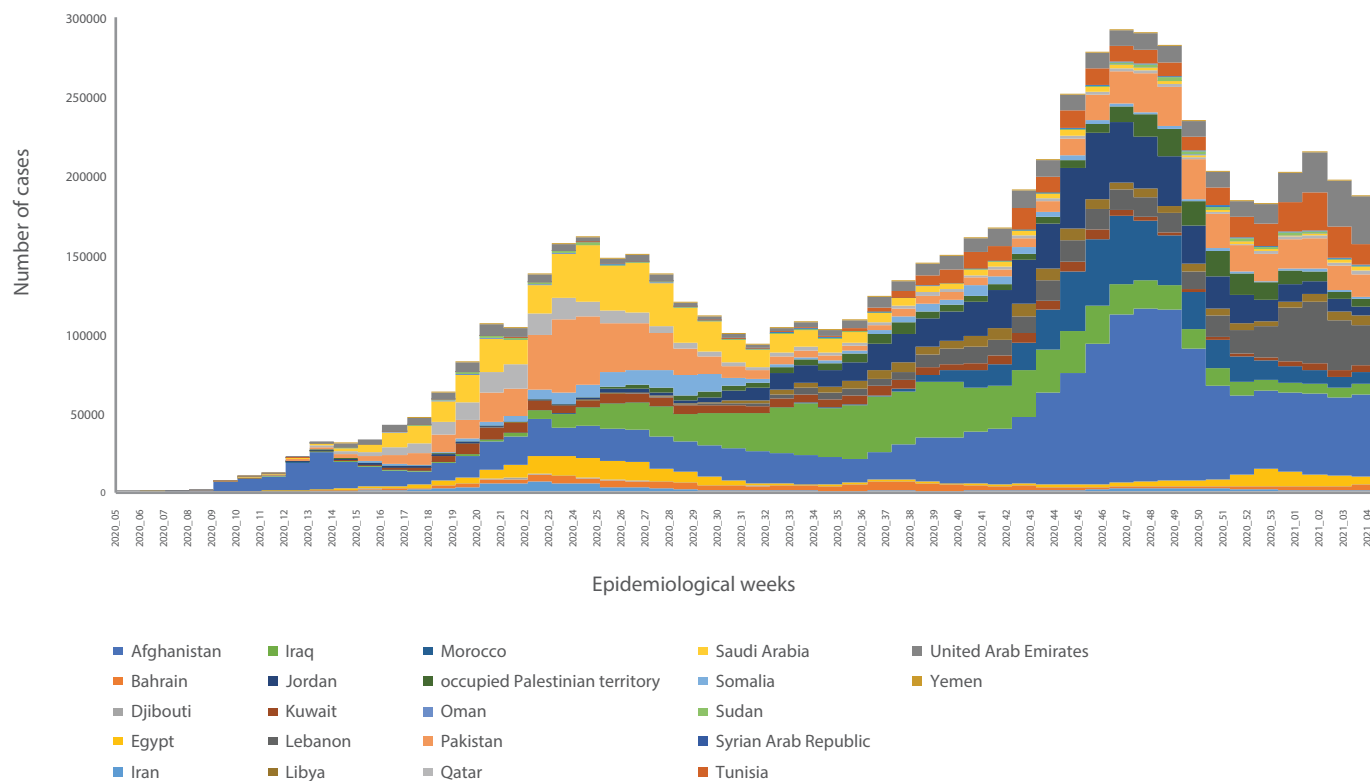


Table 1: Regional Epidemiological Situation (17 -30 January 2021)

Country	Confirmed Cases	Deaths	CFR	Recovered	Tests
Afghanistan	55059	2404	4.4%	47679	250602
Bahrain	102626	372	0.4%	98160	2701085
Djibouti	5931	62	1.0%	5845	107772
Egypt	165418	9263	5.6%	129293	2417396
Iran	1411731	57889	4.1%	1202893	9230376
Iraq	618922	13041	2.1%	590857	5586638
Jordan	325674	4304	1.3%	313551	3844913
Kuwait	164622	959	0.6%	157404	1520587
Lebanon	298913	3031	1.0%	178472	2600106
Libya	118631	1877	1.6%	98706	667079
Morocco	470691	8259	1.8%	448628	4883093
Occupied Palestinian territory	178516	2010	1.1%	167511	1016419
Oman	133728	1527	1.1%	126572	992745
Pakistan	544813	11657	2.1%	499974	7932196
Qatar	150984	248	0.2%	145668	1383668
Saudi Arabia	367813	6372	1.7%	359299	12258723
Somalia	4784	130	2.7%	3700	87376
Sudan	29449	1807	6.1%	21410	302529
Syrian Arab Republic	13998	916	6.5%	7481	55877
Tunisia	208885	6754	3.2%	157446	861204
United Arab Emirates	300661	838	0.3%	272769	25580460
Yemen	2124	616	29.0%	1428	19435
Total	5,673,973	134,336	2.4%	5,034,746	84,292,692

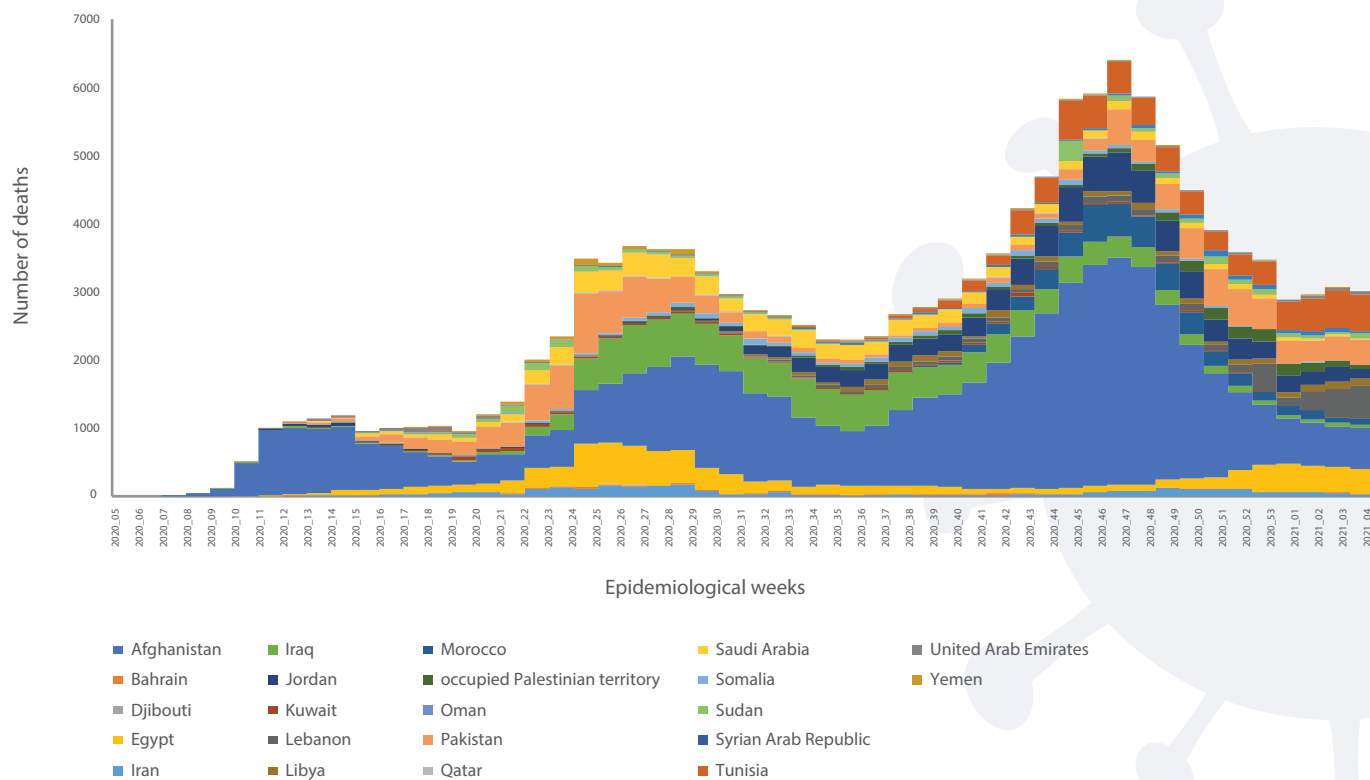
Graph 1: Weekly distribution of COVID-19 cases in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

26 January 2020 – 30 January 2021



Graph 2: Weekly distribution of COVID-19 deaths in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

26 January 2020 – 30 January 2021



IN FOCUS: NEW SARS-COV-2 VARIANTS

- To date, 10 EMR countries and territory are affected by the UK variant. Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Pakistan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates. The South African variant was reported in the UAE and Lebanon, while the Brazilian variant was reported in the UAE only.
- While these variants have demonstrated higher transmissibility, their impact on the future pandemic trajectory is currently unknown. Improving and expanding genetic sequencing capacity in the Region will allow to monitor the occurrence and spread of the new variants. In addition, expanding vaccination efforts while strengthening public health and social measures will contribute to the response.



As part of COVID-19 response, WHO supports improving national labs capacity in EMR countries.

REGIONAL RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS

Health Information Management and Surveillance: The third round of the COVID-19 risk assessment was completed for Egypt. The M&E framework has been updated with indicators for new COVID-19 IMST pillars.

Vaccines: The Regional Office continues to provide direct technical support to the Member States in strengthening the National Regulatory Authorities (NRAs).

Health Operations and Technical Expertise: The updated WHO Clinical Management guidance for COVID-19 was released and disseminate to all member states on 25 January, 2021.

International Health Regulations and Social Measures: National capacity-building activities were initiated in Morocco, Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon. In Lebanon, WHO is supporting innovative twinning project between 6 private and 12 public hospitals (Tripoli and Beirut) to build critical care capacity and improve specialization of healthcare workers.

Research and Knowledge Management: The National Institute of Health updated the COVID-19 Treatment Guidelines on the use of ivermectin for the treatment of COVID-19 due to insufficient data to recommend either for or against its use.

Logistics: The logistics hub in Dubai has intensified the distribution of personal protective equipment and 95% of the distribution to priority countries has been completed.



As part of a large-scale response, the Regional Office supports countries efforts with surveillance, rapid response teams, and case investigation activities.

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS

The Occupied Palestinian Territory

- Continued to witness a significant decrease in the numbers of newly confirmed COVID-19 cases in January 2021. WHO and partners, in close consultation with the Ministry of Health, continue to support lab testing capacity. WHO has mobilized additional testing kits to sustain testing capacity and to address temporary gaps in laboratory supplies in the Gaza Strip.
- WHO and UNICEF continue to support the Palestinian Authority in comprehensive planning and preparatory efforts to introduce of COVID-19 vaccines through the Gavi COVAX AMC facility. Palestine will benefit from a first wave allocation of some 37,000 doses of Pfizer/BioNTech vaccines through the COVAX AMC facility, with further allocations of substantial quantities of AstraZeneca vaccines also to be expected.

Jordan

- Reports around 1,000 cases per day. To date, Jordan has reported more than 325,000 cases and 4,304 deaths. Jordan has rapidly expanded its COVID-19 bed capacity, tripling from 1,500 to 4,300 (921 of which are ICU beds), with 4 new field hospitals built and 2,000 additional health professionals recruited. The Ministry of Health established 125 fixed surveillance sites (tests increased to up to 20,000 tests per day, on average).
- WHO worked with the government to develop the National Deployment and Vaccination Plan (NDVP), targeting 1.75 million people (with two doses of vaccines/each), prioritizing healthcare workers, the elderly population, people with co-morbidities, and essential workers. COVID-19 vaccination started on 13 January 2021 in 29 healthcare centers. Vaccination is free and voluntary for all people living in Jordan irrespective of the nationality and citizenship. Enrolment is done through an advanced electronic registration system. WHO procured 20 additional ultra-cold chain freezers, 2 refrigerator vehicles, 15 pickup vehicles, 300 tablets for recording/reporting, and trained 500 vaccinators.



Regional COVID-19 website: <http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/corona-virus/index.html>

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