

As of 07 October 2023, the global cumulative incidence of COVID-19 reached 771,310,198 reported cases and 6,988,717 associated deaths with a case-fatality ratio (CFR) of 0.90%. Meanwhile, the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) has reported a total of 23,397,075 cases representing 3.03% of the global count, with 351,519 associated deaths (CFR 1.5%).

Most countries in the Region are in the community transmission phase. This report does not reflect the accurate COVID-19 burden in the EMR given that updates are not regularly received from all 22 Member States.

During the epidemiological week 40 of 2023, a total of 1,445 lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases- including 27 associated deaths (CFR: 1.87%)- were reported from 4 Member States: Afghanistan, the Islamic Republic of Iran (IR Iran), Kuwait, and Morocco. This indicates a 1% decrease and no change in the number of cases and deaths respectively compared to the previous week. The weekly number of cases decreased by 18% in one reporting country (Kuwait) compared to the previous week. On the other hand, the number of COVID-19-associated deaths increased by 8% in one reporting country (IR Iran).

A total of 86,285 COVID-19 PCR confirmatory tests were conducted this week (Positivity Rate: 1.67%) which indicates a 9% increase in the number of weekly tests compared to the previous week. This brings the cumulative number of COVID-19 laboratory tests conducted in EMR since the start of the pandemic to 449,696,905 (positivity rate 5.2%) with the highest number of PCR tests reported from the United Arab Emirates (200,761,593; 44.7%), followed by IR Iran (57,542,684; 12.8%), and Saudi Arabia (45,484,848; 10.1%).

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.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, the highest number of total cases in the Region was reported by IR Iran (7,618,727; 32.56% of the Region's total), followed by Iraq (2,465,545; 10.54%), and Jordan (1,746,997; 7.47%). IR Iran also reported the highest number of total COVID-19- associated- deaths (146,436; 41.66% of the Region's total), followed by Pakistan (30,656; 8.72 %) and Tunisia (29,423; 8.37). The lowest CFRs in the Region were reported by Qatar (0.13%), the United Arab Emirates (0.22%), and Bahrain (0.22%), while the highest CFRs were reported by Yemen (18.07%) followed by Sudan (7.89%) and Syria (5.51%) respectively.□

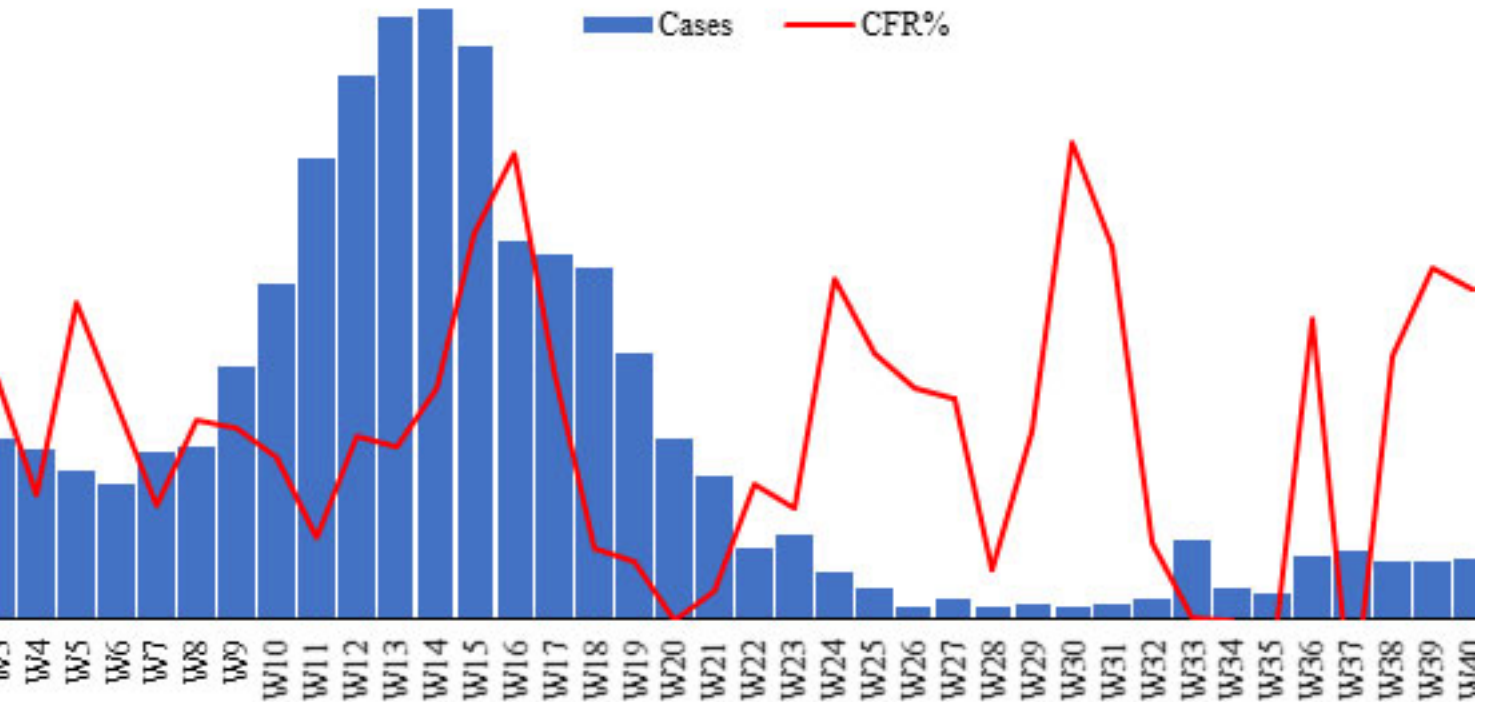


Figure 1: Epidemiological curve of COVID-19 laboratory confirmed cases and CFR, EMR, January-October 2023
WHO Support to the Member States of the Region

The regional incident management support team continues to coordinate the response and provide technical support to the Member States 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. Furthermore, COVID-19 vaccination continues to be provided across the Region. As of 7 October 2023, a total of 901,266,411 doses were administered in all 22 Member States with an average coverage of fully vaccinated population of 51%. The highest coverage rate of complete primary series was reported from the United Arab Emirates (98%), followed by Qatar (97%), and Kuwait (77%) while the lowest coverage rate was reported from Yemen (3%) followed by Syria (13%), and Libya (18%), (Figure 2).

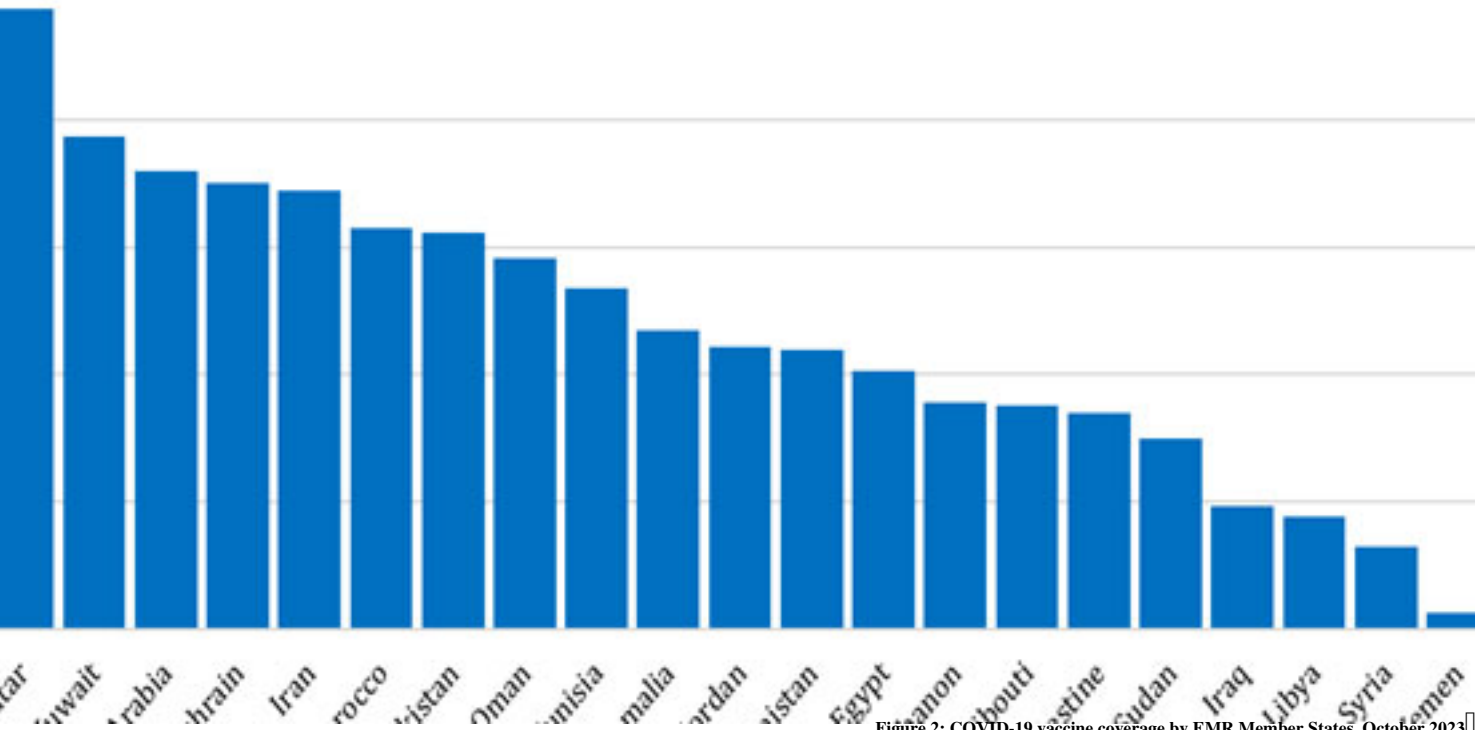


Figure 2: COVID-19 vaccine coverage by EMR Member States, October 2023. For more data from the Region, please visit the COVID-19 dashboard.

*The data on vaccination is obtained from several sources including media reports and country websites for ministries of health.

* We are currently reporting on weekly relative differences instead of cumulative differences to better reflect the extent of the COVID-19 pandemic as we are witnessing a decline in the reported cases. In addition, to a change in the frequency and quality of data sharing, countries started to move to weekly aggregate data, and less information is shared by the monthly infectious hazard preparedness newsletter of WHO’s Health Emergencies Programme for the latest data and analysis on the epidemic- and [Subscribe](#) countries. pandemic-prone diseases, as well as news on outbreak preparedness and response within WHO’s Eastern Mediterranean Region.

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