

The coronavirus disease COVID-19 continues to spread at the regional and global levels. As of 29 April 2023, the global cumulative incidence reached 765 024 417 reported cases and 6 936 283 associated deaths at a case-fatality ratio (CFR) of 0.91%. Meanwhile, the 22 countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) have reported a total of 23 355 978 cases, representing about 3.05% of the global count, with 351 048 associated deaths (CFR 1.50%). 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 (7 608 468; 32.58% of the Region's total), followed by Iraq (2 465 545; 10.56%) and Jordan (1 746 997; 7.48%). Islamic Republic of Iran also reported the highest number of total COVID-19 associated deaths (146 097; CFR 1.92%), followed by Pakistan (30 656; CFR 1.94%) and Tunisia (29 398; CFR 2.55%). The highest CFRs were reported by Yemen (18.07%), followed by Sudan (7.89%) 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 17, the Region reported a decrease in cases by 4% when compared to the previous week (8601 cases compared to 8915 cases). A decrease by 33% was also observed for associated deaths (138 deaths in the current week compared to 206 deaths in the previous week).

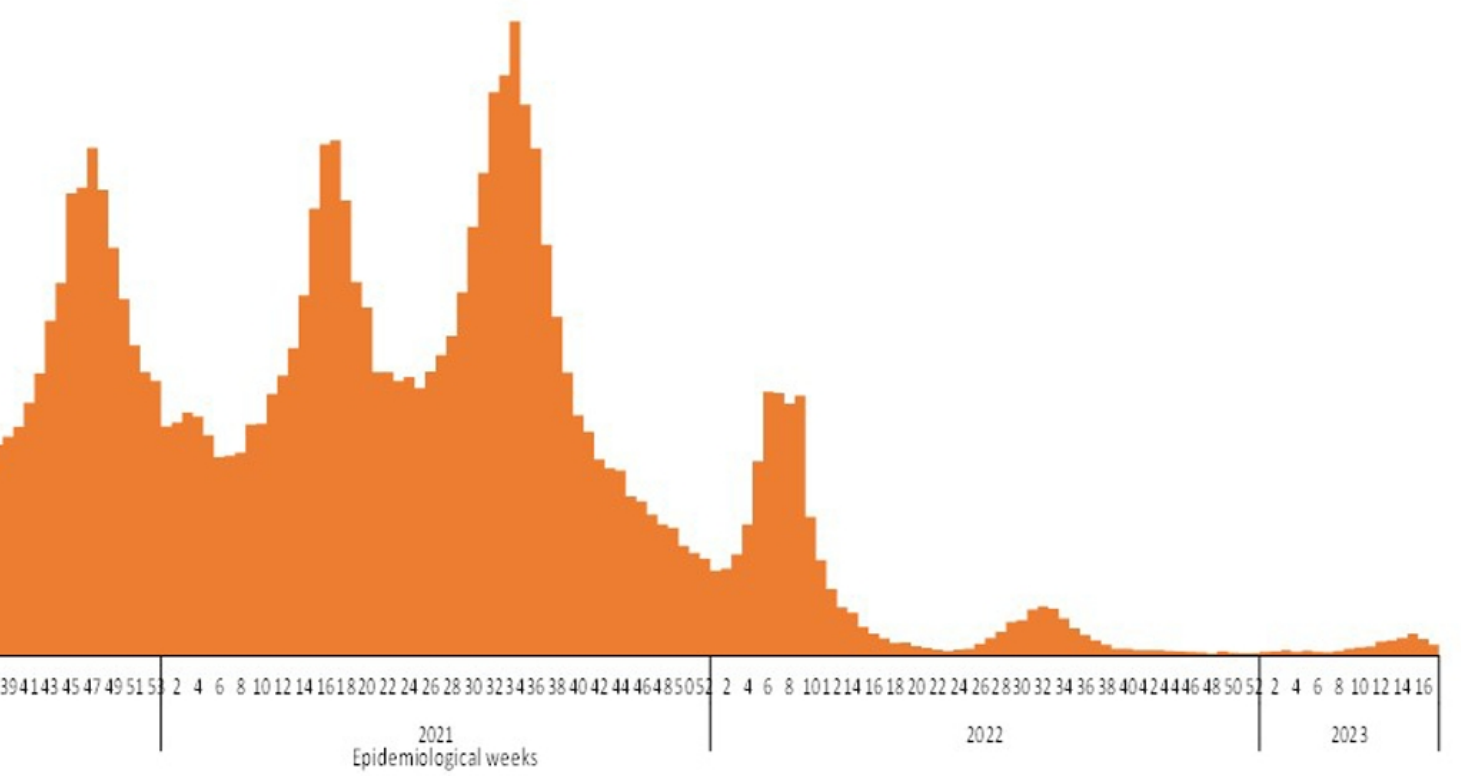
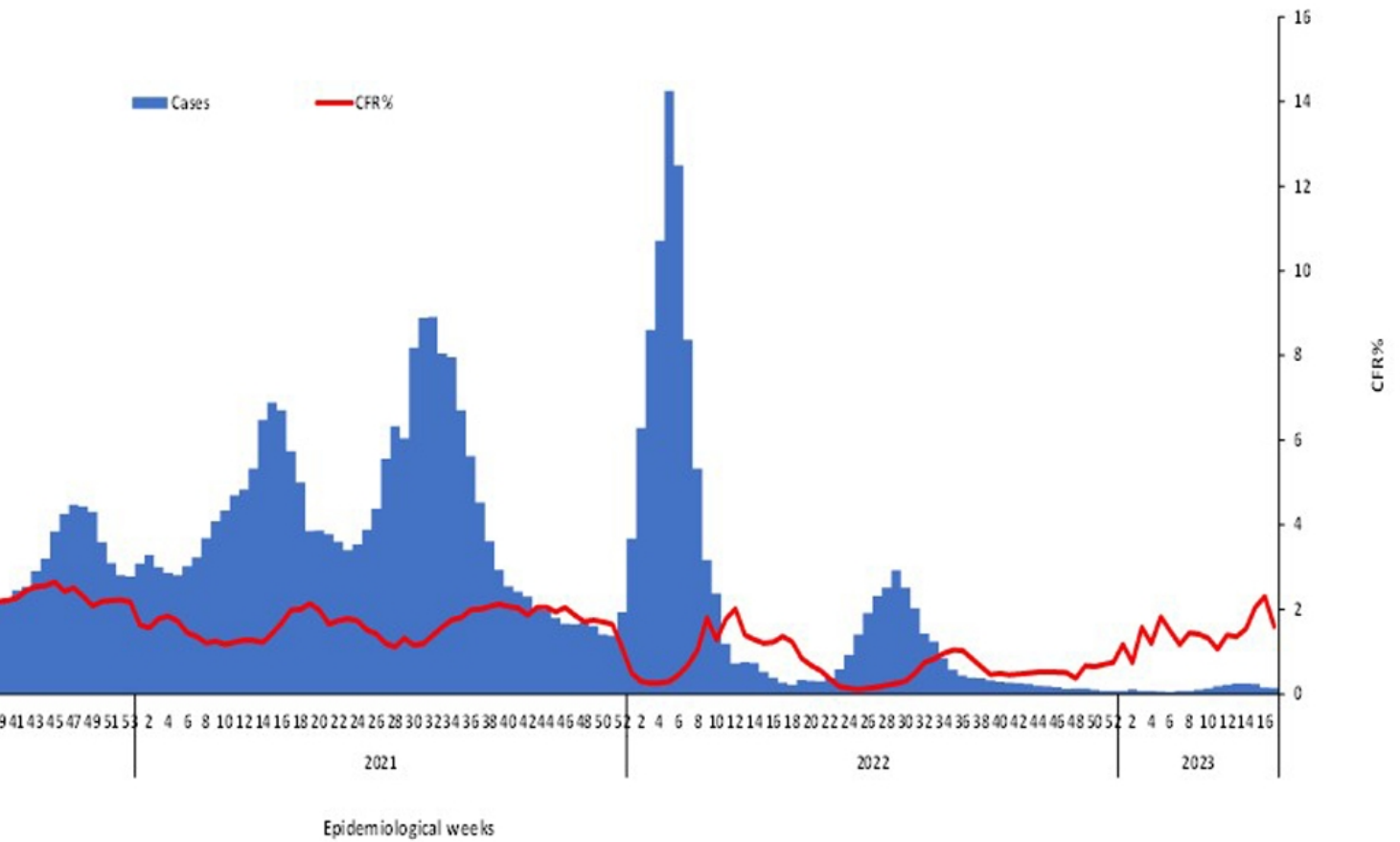
The weekly number of cases have decreased in all countries of the Region except in 6 out of 22 countries as compared to the previous week. This week the number of COVID-19 associated deaths also decreased in all countries of the Region except in 2 out of 22 countries as compared to the previous week.*

In terms of testing, a total of 447 949 876 laboratory tests were conducted since the start of the outbreak across the Region including 274 764 tests in week 17, which shows a 6% decrease as compared to the previous week when 291 966 tests were conducted. The highest number of PCR tests were reported from United Arab Emirates (200 350 841), followed by Islamic Republic of Iran (56 369 029) and Saudi Arabia (45 446 928). The average positivity rate for the Region is 5.22%. 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 891 550 914. Pakistan has administered the highest number of doses at 338 508 314, followed by Islamic Republic of Iran at 155 194 752 and Egypt at 111 558 825. On the other hand, Bahrain (3 476 633), Yemen (1 275 368) and Djibouti (392 703) administered 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.



* Reporting of COVID-19 cases is based on the weekly epidemiological data from the Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean Region, WHO, and is subject to change as more data become available.