

The coronavirus disease COVID-19 continues to spread at the regional and global levels. As of 17 December 2022, the global cumulative incidence reached 648 889 162 reported cases and 6 660 713 associated deaths at a case-fatality ratio (CFR) of 1.03%. Meanwhile, the 22 countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) have reported a total of 23 213 974 cases, representing about 3.58% of the global count, with 349 018 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 (7 560 389; 32.57% of the Region's total), followed by Iraq (2 464 997; 10.62%) and Jordan (1 746 997; 7.53%). Islamic Republic of Iran also reported the highest number of total COVID-19 associated deaths (144 661; 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 United Arab Emirates (0.22%), Bahrain (0.22) and Qatar (0.14%).

During epidemiological week 50, the Region reported a decrease in cases by 25% when compared to the previous week (5803 cases compared to 7736 cases). A decrease by 27% was also observed for associated deaths (38 deaths in the current week compared to 52 deaths in the previous week).

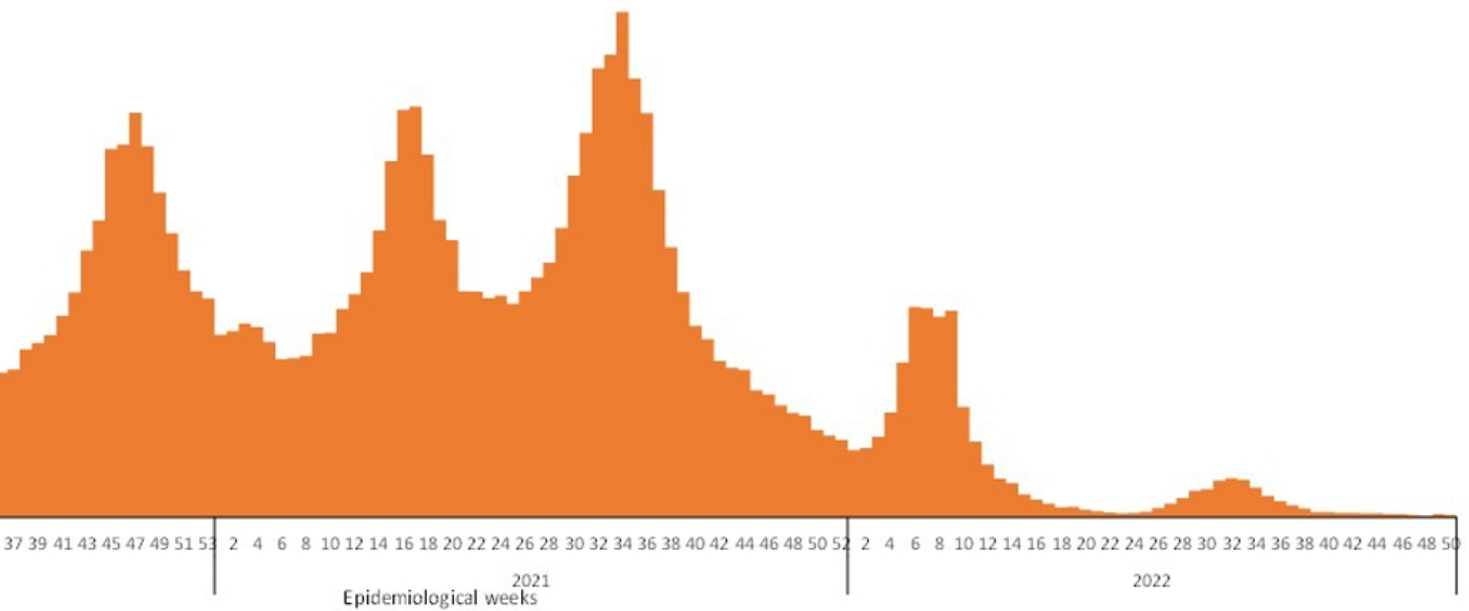
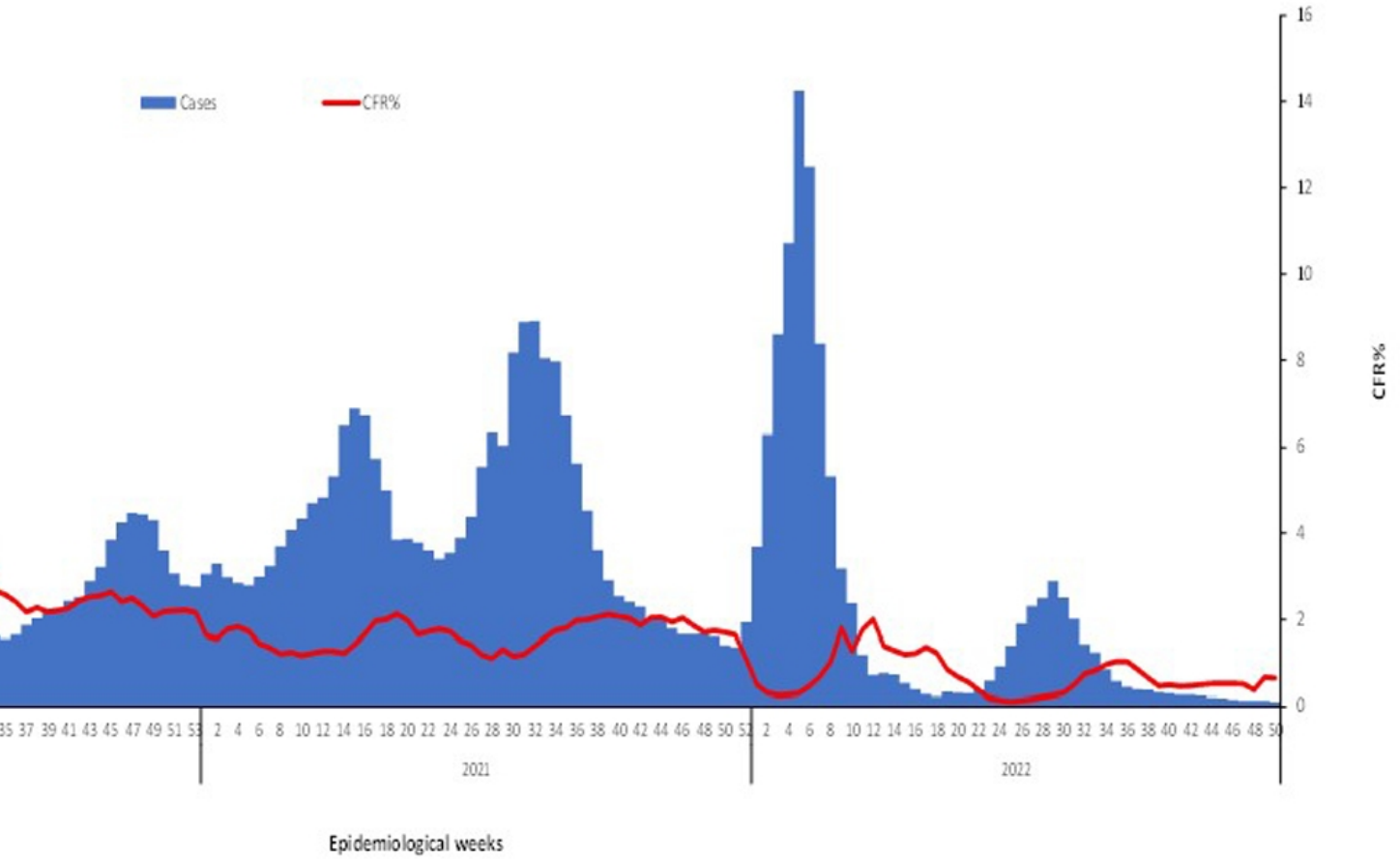
The weekly number of cases have decreased in all countries of the Region except in 5 out of 22 countries as compared to the previous week. This week the number of COVID-19 associated deaths also decreased in all countries of the Region except in 4 out of 22 countries as compared to the previous week.*

In terms of testing, a total of 441 848 018 laboratory tests were conducted since the start of the outbreak across the Region including 326 227 tests in week 50, which shows a 7% decrease as compared to the previous week when 351 477 tests were conducted. The highest number of PCR tests were reported from United Arab Emirates (197 674 533), followed by Islamic Republic of Iran (54 675 179) and Saudi Arabia (44 886 295). 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 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 844 326 757. Pakistan has administered the highest number of doses at 317 080 887, followed by Islamic Republic of Iran at 154 762 976 and Egypt at 100 993 230. On the other hand, Bahrain (3 476 024), Yemen (1 238 962) and Djibouti (338 051) administered the lowest number of COVID-19 vaccine 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 number of deaths reported to the WHO. The number of cases is based on the number of deaths reported to the WHO. The number of cases is based on the number of deaths reported to the WHO.