

The coronavirus disease COVID-19 continues to spread at the regional and global levels. As of 25 February 2023, the global cumulative incidence reached 758 145 105 reported cases and 6 871 904 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 23 257 821 cases representing about 3.07% of the global count, with 349 519 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 (7 566 473; 32.54% of the Region's total), followed by Iraq (2 465 545; 10.60%) and Jordan (1 746 997; 7.51%). Islamic Republic of Iran also reported the highest number of total COVID-19 associated deaths (144 828; CFR 1.91%), followed by Pakistan (30 643; CFR 1.94%) and Tunisia (29 331; CFR 2.55%). The highest CFRs were reported by Yemen (18.07%), followed by Sudan (7.86%) 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 8, the Region reported a 4% increase in the number of cases as compared to the previous week (4076 cases compared to 3927 cases). An increase by 28% was also observed for associated deaths (59 deaths in the current week compared to 46 deaths in the previous week).

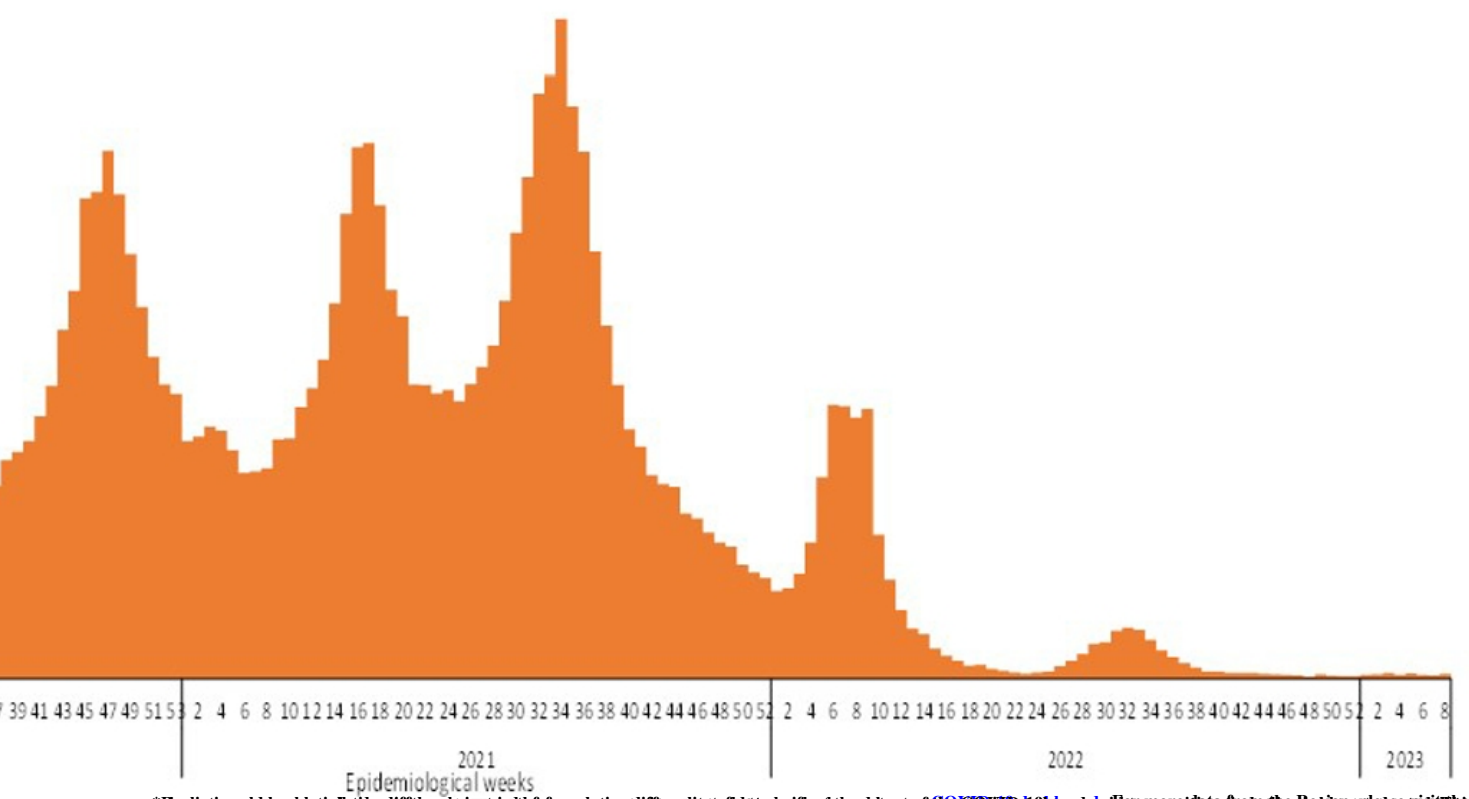
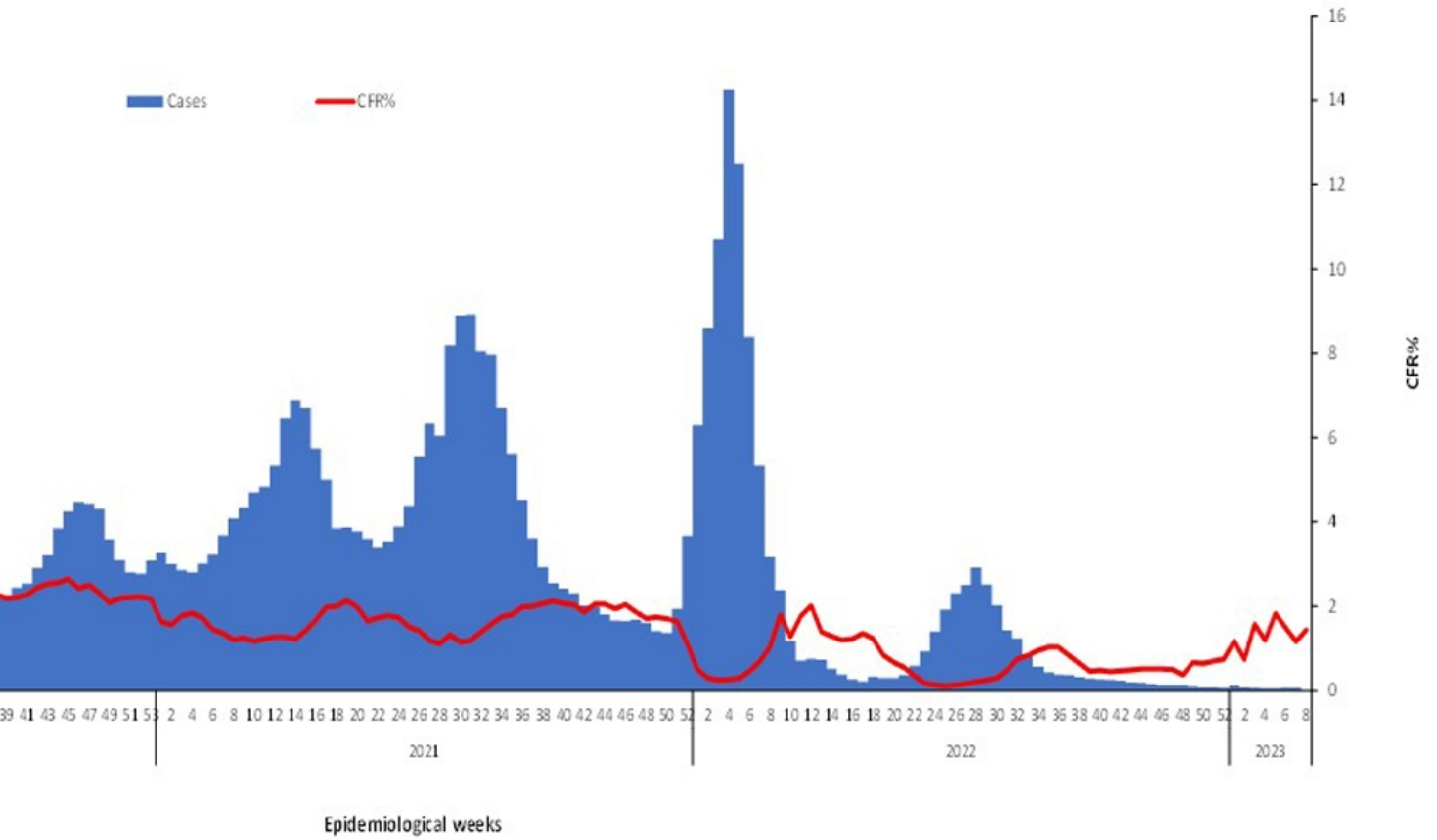
The weekly number of cases have decreased in most countries of the Region except in 8 out of 22 countries as compared to the previous week. This week the number of COVID-19 associated deaths also decreased in most of the countries of the Region except in 3 out of 22 countries as compared to the previous week.*

In terms of testing, a total of 444 830 127 laboratory tests were conducted since the start of the outbreak across the Region including 222 689 tests in week 8, which shows a 24% decrease as compared to the previous week when 293 195 tests were conducted. The highest number of PCR tests were reported from United Arab Emirates (199 148 334), followed by Islamic Republic of Iran (55 224 681) and Saudi Arabia (45 133 035). The average positivity rate for the Region is 5.23%. 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 876 493 324. Pakistan has administered the highest number of doses at 333 662 084, followed by Islamic Republic of Iran at 157 785 811 and Egypt at 105 493 060. On the other hand, Bahrain (3 476 633), Yemen (1 255 304) and Djibouti (386 619) 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 and trends in the number of deaths from COVID-19 in the Eastern Mediterranean Region of the World Health Organization (EMRO) are based on data reported by member states to the WHO Mortality Reporting System (MRS) and are subject to change as more data become available.