

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has been spreading for the past 6 months, and it continues to accelerate at regional and global levels. As of 11 July 2020, 12 322 395 cases and 556 335 associated deaths with a case-fatality rate (CFR) of 4.5% have been reported globally. The 22 countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region have reported 1 267 177 cases, which represent about 10.3% of the global count, with 30 474 associated deaths (CFR 2.4%). Most countries in the Region are in the community transmission phase.

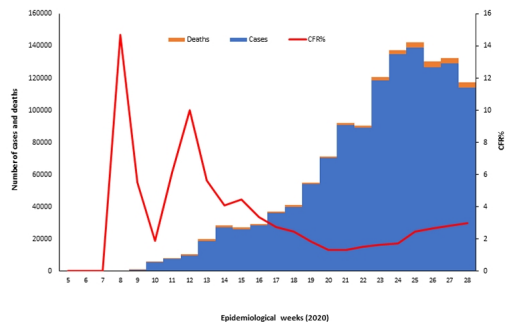
During epidemiological week 28, the Region reported 113 948 cases, which represents an 11.6% decrease when compared to the 128 955 cases reported during the previous week. The number of associated deaths also decreased by 6%, dropping from 3621 deaths during week 27 to 3401 deaths during week 28. About 67% of new cases recorded this week were reported from Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Islamic Republic of Iran and Iraq, while the occupied Palestinian territory, Syrian Arab Republic and Libya recorded the largest relative increase in deaths this week.

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 (255 117 cases; 20% of the Region's total), followed by Pakistan (246 351; 19%) and Saudi Arabia (229 480; 18%). Islamic Republic of Iran also reported the highest number of total associated deaths (12 635; CFR 41%) followed by Pakistan (5123; CFR 17%) and Egypt (3702; CFR 12%). The highest CFR was reported from Yemen (26%) followed by Sudan (6%), while the lowest CFR was reported from Qatar (0.1%), followed by Bahrain (0.3%).

In terms of testing, 14 214 102 laboratory PCR tests were conducted in week 28 across the Region, which represents a 13% decrease when compared to the number of tests performed in the previous week. The highest number of PCR tests were reported from United Arab Emirates (3.8 million), followed by Saudi Arabia (2.2 million) and Islamic Republic of Iran (1.9 million). The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain are performing the highest rate of testing in terms of testing per capita (38 722/100 000 and 38 142/100 000 respectively). The average positivity rate for the Region is 9%. 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.

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, points of entry according to the International Health

Regulations (IHR 2005), research, health system, essential health services and others. WHO has also developed and disseminated technical documents to help guide countries' strategies and policies to manage this pandemic. It recommends that countries must sustain or strengthen key public health measures, such as testing suspected cases; tracing contacts; isolating cases while closely monitoring them, including those under home isolation; admitting high-risk cases to hospitals early; and implementing public health and social measures (including hand washing, mask use, and physical distancing).



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