

As of 18 November 2023, the global cumulative incidence of COVID-19 reached 771,983,111 reported cases and 7,002,988 associated deaths with a case-fatality ratio (CFR) of 0.91%. Meanwhile, the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) has reported a total of 23,404,528 cases representing 3.03% of the global count, with 351,754 associated deaths (CFR 1.5%). Most countries in the Region are in the community transmission phase. This report does not represent the accurate COVID-19 burden in the EMR given that updates are not regularly received from all 22 Member States (Table 1).

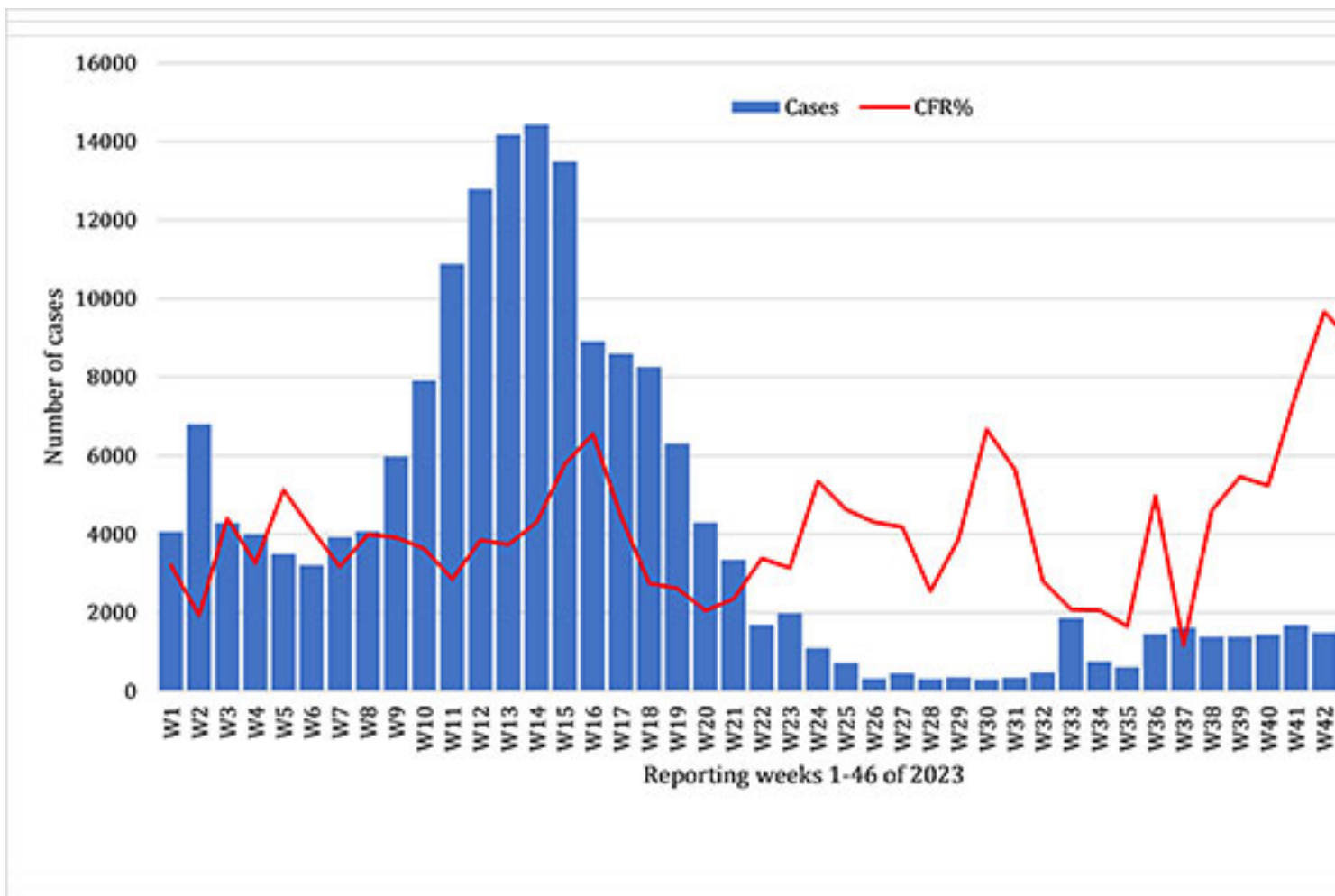
| Country | Indicator | Cumulative | Week 41 | Week 42 | Week 43 | Week 44 | Week 45 | Week 46 | Weekly Trend |
|---------|-----------|------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------------|
| Globl | Cases | 771983111 | 154948 | 147550 | 148234 | 146586 | 137217 | 159393 | |
| | Deaths | 7002988 | 1895 | 2765 | 1037 | 1025 | 831 | 956 | |
| | CFR | 0.91% | 1.22% | 1.87% | 0.70% | 0.70% | 0.61% | 0.60% | |
| EMR | Cases | 23404528 | 1721 | 1506 | 1643 | 1284 | 1266 | 908 | |
| | Deaths | 351754 | 45 | 50 | 51 | 56 | 33 | 27 | |
| | CFR | 1.5% | 2.6% | 3.3% | 3.1% | 4.4% | 2.6% | 3.0% | |

Table 1: COVID-19 cases, deaths, and CFR, global and EMR, as of 18 November 2023

During the epidemiological week 46 of 2023, a total of 908 lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases and 27 associated deaths (CFR: 1.97%) were reported from 4 Member States: Afghanistan (398 cases; 1 death), IR Iran (398 cases; 26 deaths), Kuwait (8 cases; 0 death) and Morocco (104 cases; 0 death). This indicates a 28% and 18% decrease in the number of cases and deaths respectively compared to week 44.

A total of 73,490 COVID-19 PCR tests were conducted this week in the 3 Member States (Positivity Rate: 1.24%) which indicates a 9% decrease in the number of tests compared to the previous week. This brings the cumulative number of COVID-19 laboratory tests in EMR to 450,204,429 (positivity rate 5.2%) since the start of the pandemic. The highest number of PCR tests were reported from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (200,761,593; 44.7%), followed by IR Iran (58,019,208; 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 (7,624,112; 32.57% of the Region’s total), followed by Iraq (2,465,545; 10.53%), and Jordan (1,746,997; 7.46%). IR Iran also reported the highest number of total COVID-19- associated deaths (146,688; 41.69% of the Region’s total) followed by Pakistan (30,656; 8.72%) and Tunisia (29,423; CFR 8.37%). The lowest CFRs in the region were reported by Qatar (0.13%), Bahrain (0.22), and the UAE (0.22%), while the highest CFRs were reported by Yemen (18.07%) followed by Sudan (7.89%) and Syria (5.51%) respectively.



Graph 1: Epidemiological curve of COVID-19 laboratory confirmed cases and CFR, EMR, January- November 2023

WHO Support to the Member States of the Region

The regional incident management support team (IMST) 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. The total number of doses administered as of 18 November 2023 in the 22 Member States is 902,709,401 and the average coverage of fully vaccinated population in the Region is 51%. The highest coverage rate of complete primary series was reported from the UAE (98%), followed by Qatar (97%), and Kuwait (77%) while the lowest coverage rate was reported by Yemen (3%) followed by Syria (13%) and Libya (18%), (Figure 2).

