

The coronavirus disease COVID-19 continues to spread at the regional and global levels. As of 18 March 2023, the global cumulative incidence reached 760 907 594 reported cases and 6 893 196 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 23 282 664 cases representing about 3.06% of the global count, with 349 828 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 (7 579 071; 32.55% of the Region's total), followed by Iraq (2 465 545; 10.59%) and Jordan (1 746 997; 7.51%). Islamic Republic of Iran also reported the highest number of total COVID-19 associated deaths (145 054; CFR 1.91%), followed by Pakistan (30 645; CFR 1.94%) and Tunisia (29 345; CFR 2.55%). The highest CFRs were reported by Yemen (18.07%), followed by Sudan (7.87%) 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 11, the Region reported an increase in cases by 33% as compared to the previous week (10 886 cases compared to 7920 cases). An increase by 10% was also observed for associated deaths (116 deaths in the current week compared to 105 deaths in the previous week).

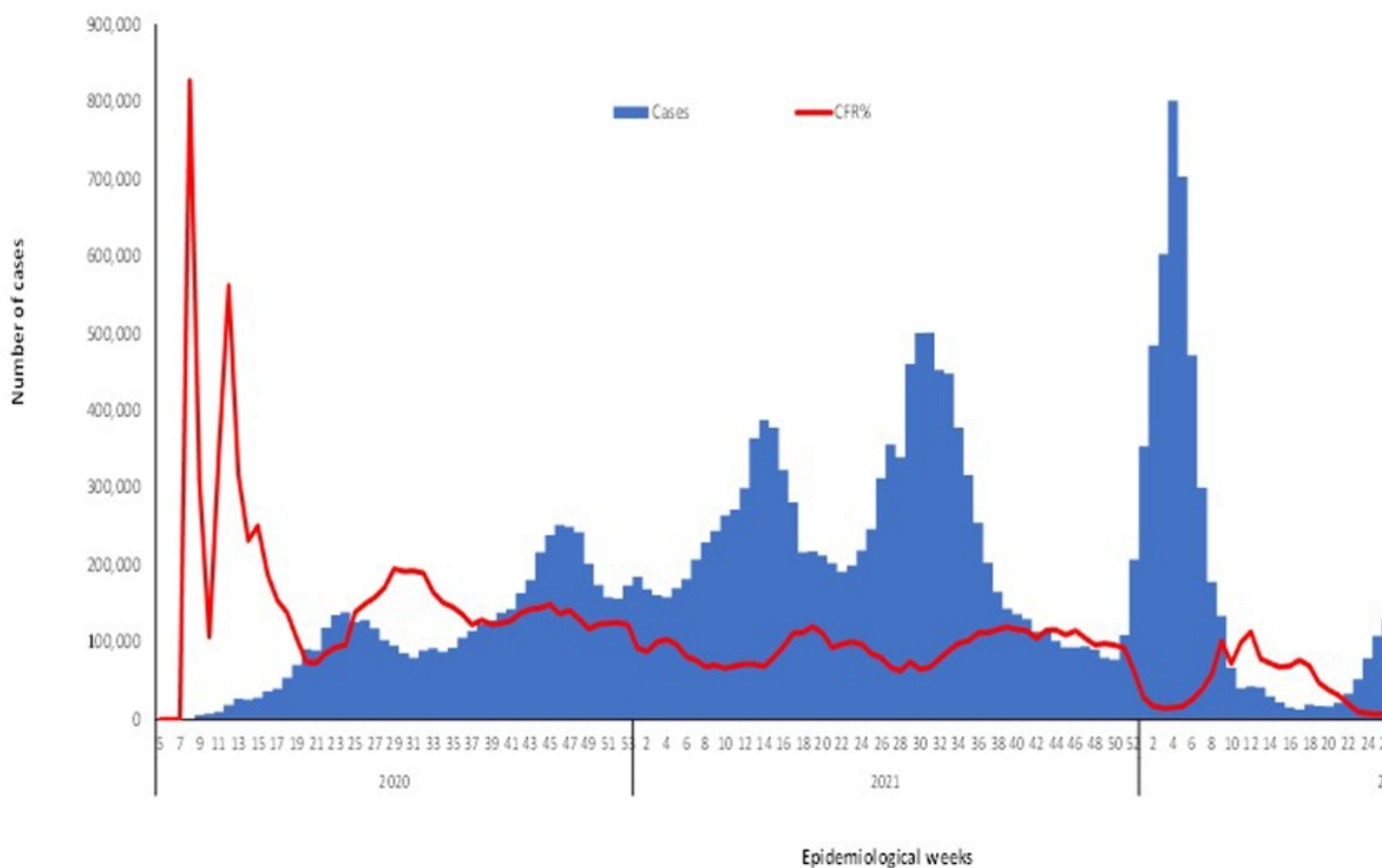
The weekly number of cases have decreased in 12 countries of the Region, while 9 out of 22 countries showed an increase in the number of cases as compared to the previous week. This week the number of COVID-19 associated deaths decreased in most of the countries of the Region except in 3 out of 22 countries as compared to the previous week.*

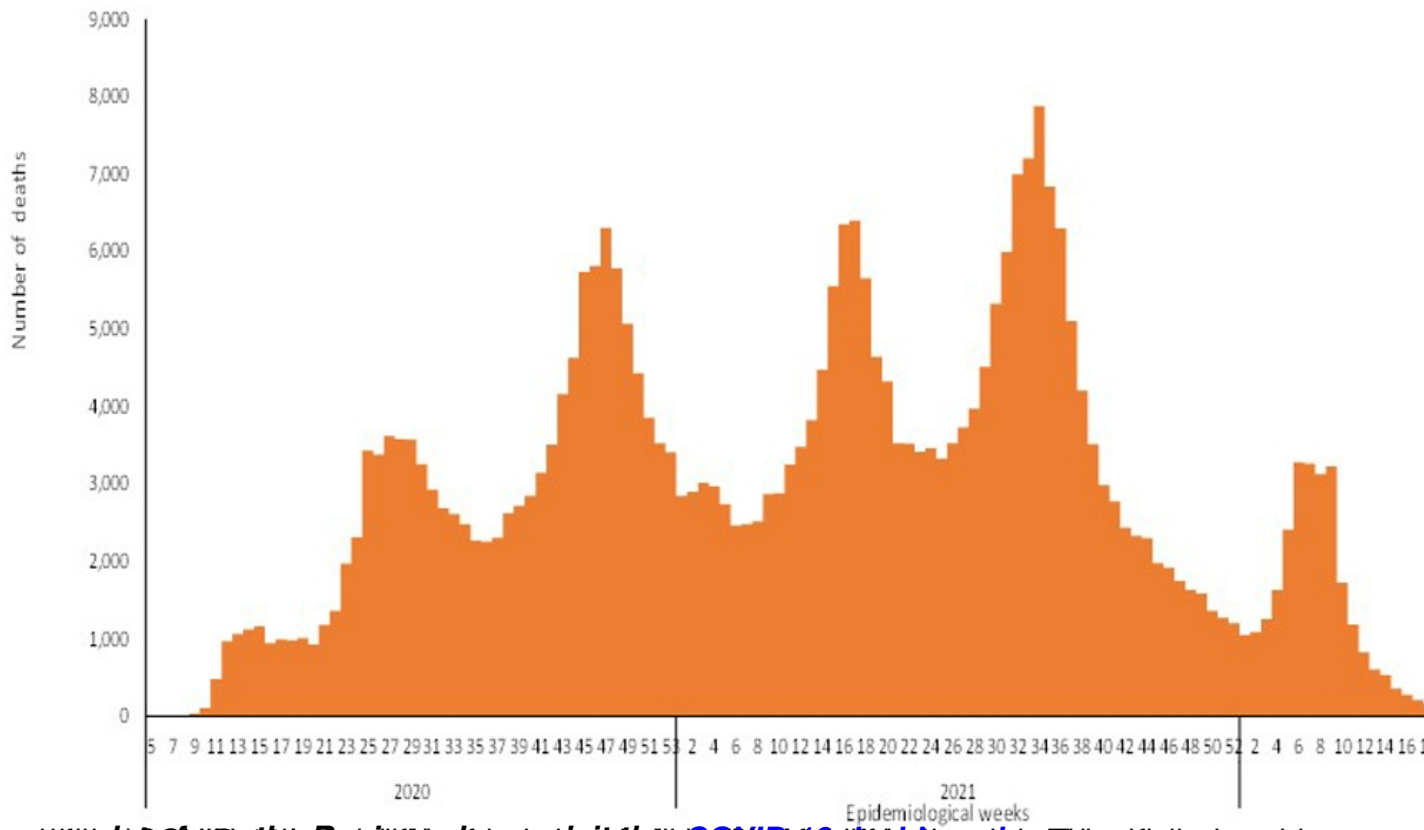
In terms of testing, a total of 445 906 616 laboratory tests were conducted since the start of the outbreak across the Region, including 374 066 tests in week 11, which shows a 13% increase as compared to the previous week when 331 941 tests were conducted. The highest number of PCR tests were reported from United Arab Emirates (199 569 240), followed by Islamic Republic of Iran (55 589 341) and Saudi Arabia (45 214 361). 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 879 224 431. Pakistan has administered the highest number of doses at 334 507 258, 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 (1 256 288) and Djibouti (388 484) administrated 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.





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