

The coronavirus disease COVID-19 continues to spread at the regional and global levels. As of 6 May 2023, the global cumulative incidence reached 765 655 126 reported cases and 6 939 901 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 23 364 240 cases, representing about 3.05% of the global count, with 351 133 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 (7 609 922; 32.58% of the Region's total), followed by Iraq (2 465 545; 10.56%) and Jordan (1 746 997; 7.48%). Islamic Republic of Iran also reported the highest number of total COVID-19 associated deaths (146 165; CFR 1.92%), followed by Pakistan (30 656; CFR 1.94%) and Tunisia (29 398; CFR 2.55%). The highest CFRs were reported by Yemen (18.07%), followed by Sudan (7.89%) 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 18, the Region reported a decrease in cases by 4% when compared to the previous week (8262 cases compared to 8601 cases). A decrease by 38% was also observed for associated deaths (85 deaths in the current week compared to 138 deaths in the previous week).

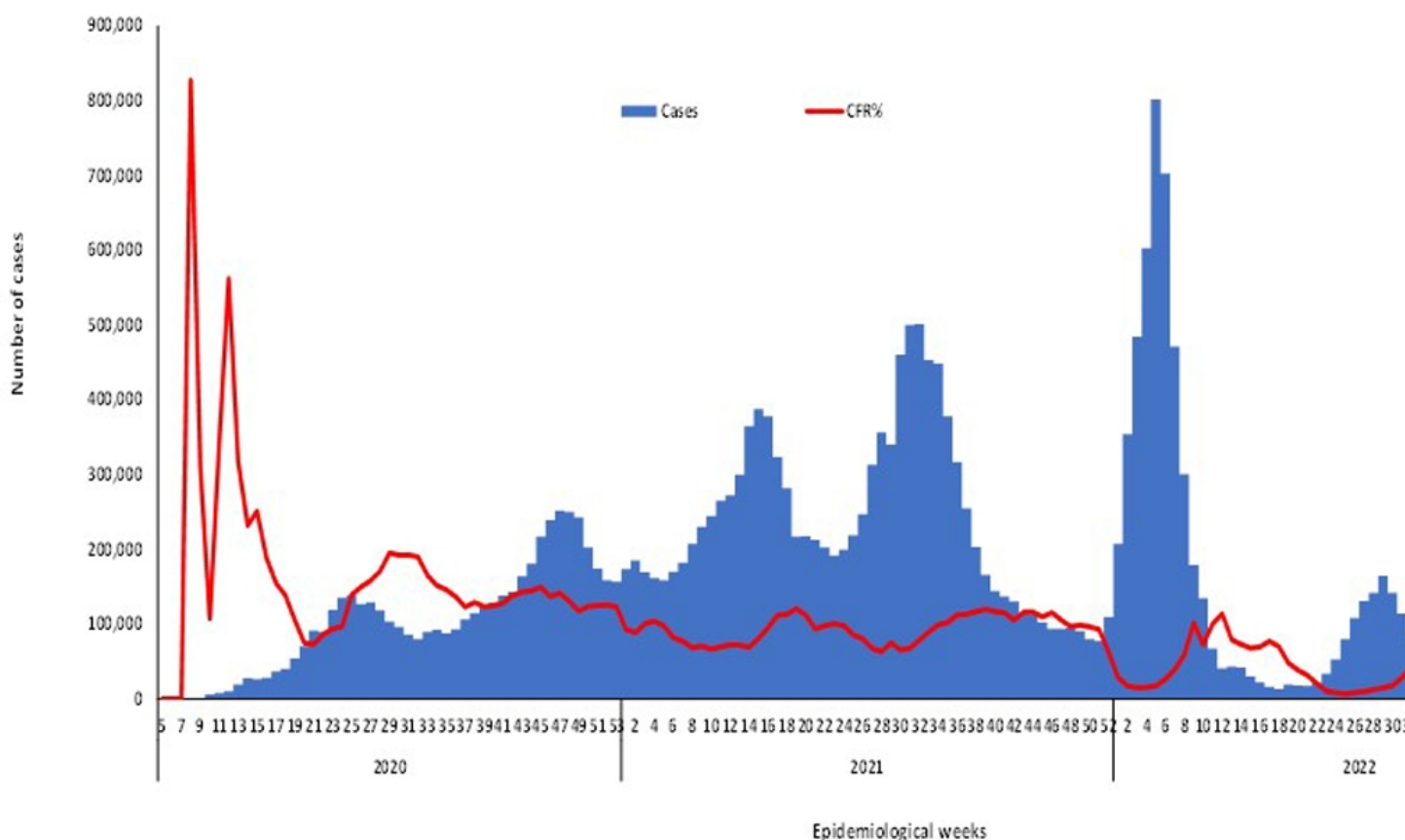
The weekly number of cases have decreased in all countries of the Region except in 6 out of 22 countries as compared to the previous week. This week the number of COVID-19 associated deaths also decreased in all countries of the Region except in 2 out of 22 countries as compared to the previous week.\*

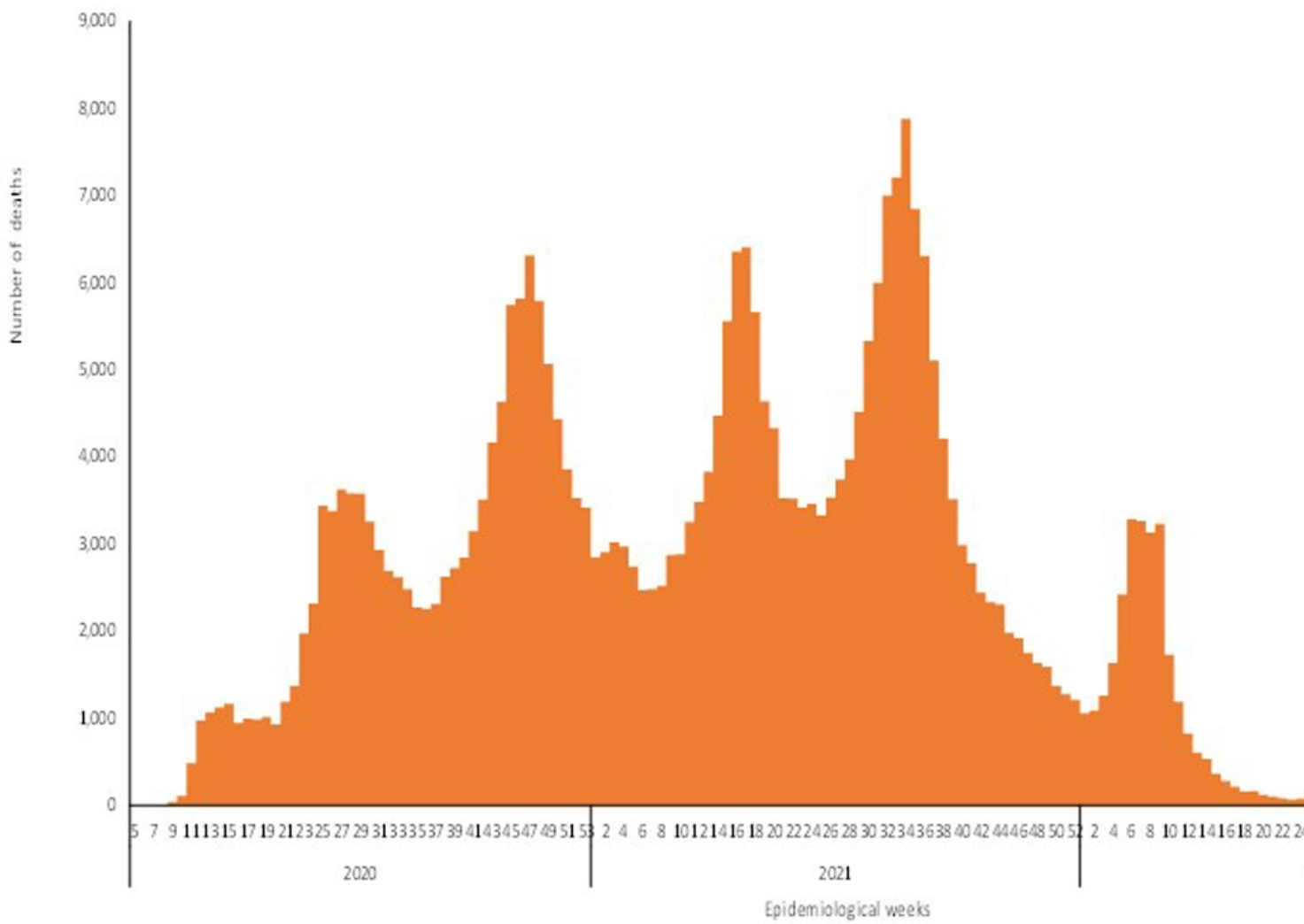
In terms of testing, a total of 448 221 169 laboratory tests were conducted since the start of the outbreak across the Region including 271 293 tests in week 18, which shows a 1% decrease as compared to the previous week when 274 764 tests were conducted. The highest number of PCR tests were reported from United Arab Emirates (200 490 942), followed by Islamic Republic of Iran (56 452 715) and Saudi Arabia (45 484 848). The average positivity rate for the Region is 5.21%. 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 893 302 922. Pakistan has administered the highest number of doses at 338 508 314, followed by Islamic Republic of Iran at 155 363 678 and Egypt at 112 284 725. On the other hand, Bahrain (3 476 633), Yemen (1 275 368) and Djibouti (392 703) 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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