

As of 2 September 2023, the global cumulative incidence of COVID-19 reached 770,090,297 reported cases and 6,972,616 associated deaths with a case-fatality ratio (CFR) of 0.91%. Meanwhile, the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) has reported a total of 23,389,586 cases representing 3.04% of the global count, with 351,405 associated deaths (CFR 1.5%). Most countries in the Region are in the community transmission phase. This report doesn't represent an accurate COVID-19 situation in the EMR given that updates are not received from all 22 Member States regularly.

During epidemiological week 35 of 2023, a total of 608 lab-confirmed COVID-19 cases and 4 associated deaths were reported from 5 Member States (CFR: 0.66%). This indicates a 19% and 33% decrease in the number of cases and deaths compared to week 34. No updates were received from 17 Member States during week 35. The weekly number of cases has decreased in all the reporting Member States except in Morocco which reported a 92% increase in the number of cases compared to the previous week. The number of COVID-19-associated deaths decreased in IR Iran (67%) however, Afghanistan reported an increase (100%) in the number of COVID-19-associated deaths in week 35. A total of 15,795 COVID-19 laboratory tests were conducted in week 35 in 5 Member States (Positivity Rate: 0.03%) which indicates a 69% decrease in the number of tests compared to the previous week. This brings the cumulative number of COVID-19 laboratory tests in EMR to 449,285,866 since the start of the outbreak. The highest number of PCR tests were reported from the United Arab Emirates (200,761,593; 44.7%), followed by the Islamic Republic of Iran (IR Iran) (57,111,210; 12.7%), and Saudi Arabia (45,484,848; 10.1%). The average positivity rate for the Region in 2022 is 4.1% (ranging from 0.3%-10.9%). 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.

Since the beginning of the outbreak, the country that has reported the highest number of total cases in the Region is IR Iran (7,613,757; 32.55% of the Region's total), followed by Iraq (2,465,545; 10.54%) and Jordan (1,746,997; 7.47%). IR Iran also reported the highest number of total COVID-19-associated deaths (146,329; CFR 1.92%) followed by Pakistan (30,656; CFR 1.94 %) and Tunisia (29,423; CFR 2.55%). The lowest CFRs were reported by the United Arab Emirates (0.22%), Bahrain (0.22), and Qatar (0.13%) while the highest CFRs were reported by Yemen (18.07%) followed by Sudan (7.89%) and Syria (5.51%) respectively.

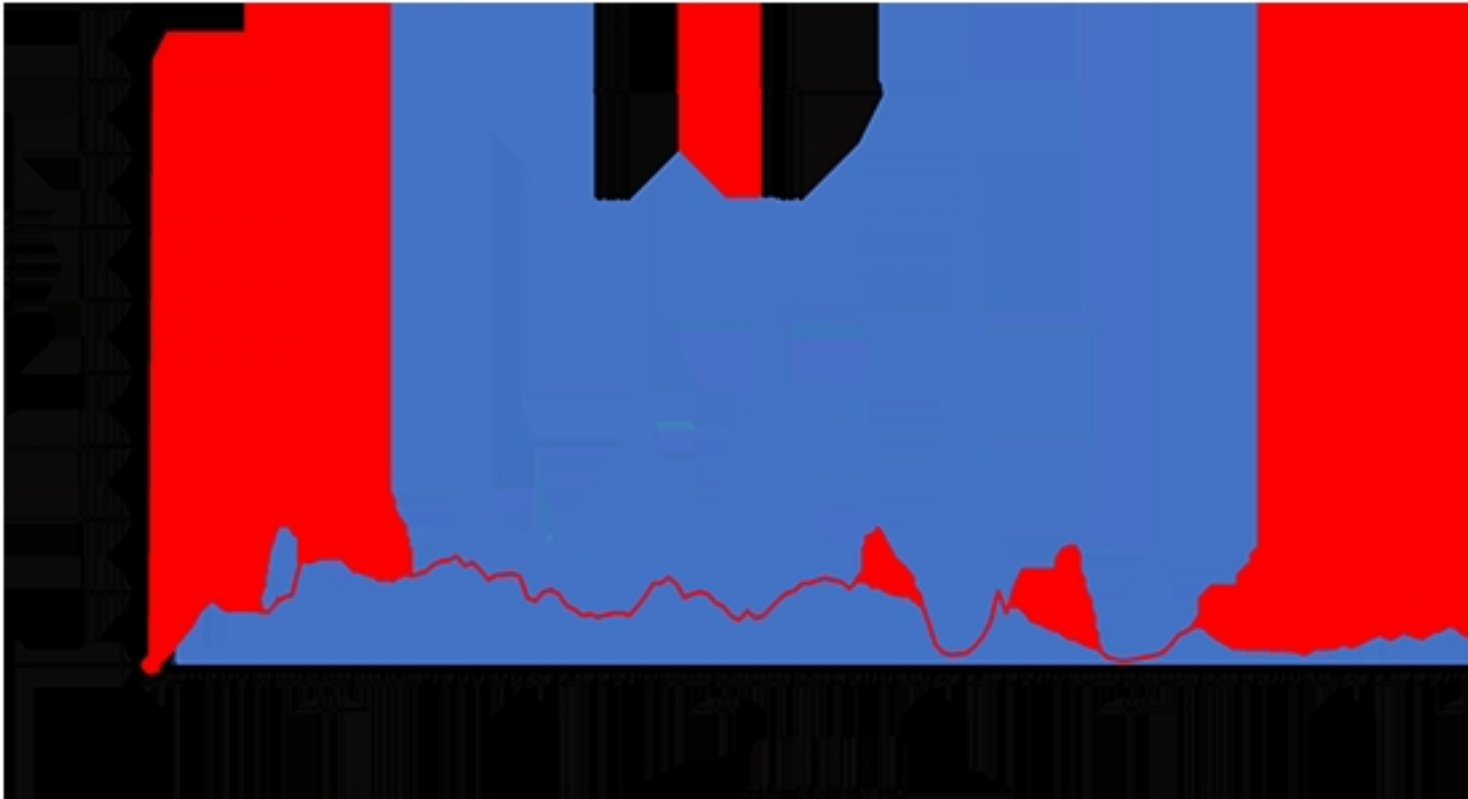


Figure 1. COVID-19 situation updates for week 35 (27 August- 02 September 2023)

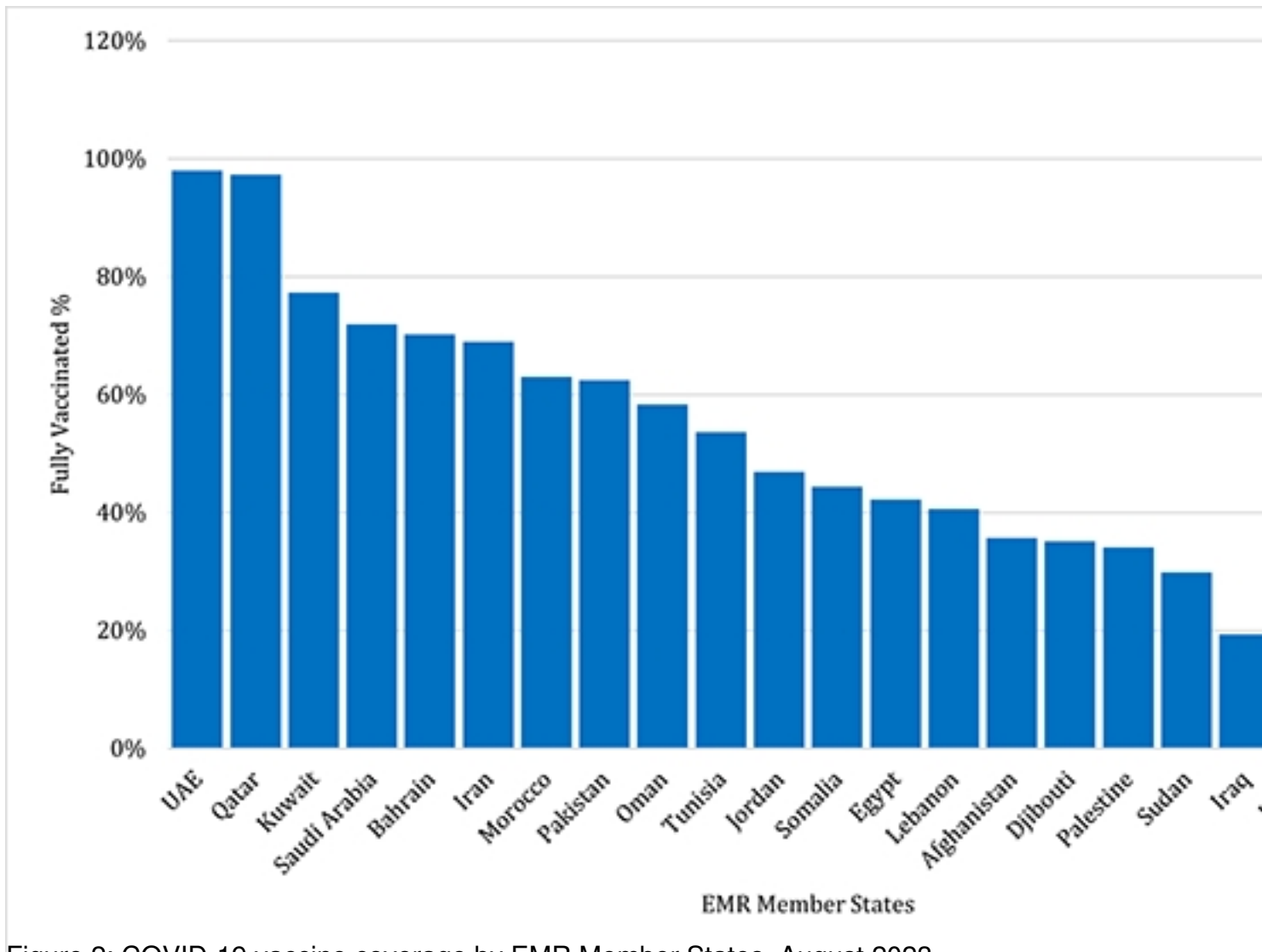


Figure 2: COVID-19 vaccine coverage by EMR Member States, August 2023
For more data from the Region, please visit the COVID-19 dashboard.

*The data on vaccination is obtained from several sources including media reports and country websites for ministries of health.

* We are currently reporting on weekly relative differences instead of cumulative differences to better reflect the extent of the COVID-19 pandemic as we are witnessing a decline in the reported cases. In addition, to a change in the frequency and quality of data sharing, countries started to move to weekly aggregate data, and less information is shared by countries. Subscribe to the monthly infectious hazard preparedness newsletter of WHO’s Health Emergencies Programme for the latest data and analysis on epidemic- and pandemic-prone diseases, as well as news on outbreak preparedness and response within WHO’s Eastern Mediterranean Region.

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