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INFECTIOUS DISEASE OUTBREAKS

SITUATION REPORT | Epidemiological week #51-2023

No. 51 (17 - 23 Dec 2023)

Disease Outbreaks	ARI (Jan - Dec 23)	COVID-19 (Feb 20 - Dec 23)	AWD (Jan - Dec 23)	Measles (Jan - Dec 23)	CCHF (Jan - Dec 23)	Dengue fever (Jan - Dec 23)
Cumulative Cases <small>(Data from 591 (96.4%) out of 613 surveillance sentinel sites)</small>	1,343,807	230,392	219,753	25,392	1,236	1,452
Death (CFR %)	2,728 (0.2)	7,972 (3.5)	100 (0.05)	64 (0.3)	114 (9.2)	1 (0.1)

Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) (1 Jan-23 Dec 2023)



***1,343,807**
Total ARI Cases



***2,728**
Total Deaths



****3,223**
Samples tested for influenza



****154**
Lab confirmed influenza cases



4.8
Influenza test positivity rate

*Currently ARI related data (morbidity and mortality) are reported from 613 surveillance sentinel sites across 34 provinces in the country.

**Currently, there are 10 functional influenza surveillance sentinel sites for both ILI and SARI in ten provinces of Afghanistan. At each site, there is one trained influenza surveillance assistant, collecting specimen and epidemiological data from 4 ILI and 6 SARI cases per week in ARI season and sending them to National Influenza Center (NIC) for testing.

Table 1: Summary of the ARI outbreak in the last eight weeks (29 Oct - 23 Dec 2023)

Indicators	W44	W45	W46	W47	W48	W49	W50	W51	Trend lines
Suspected cases	27,383	30,007	32,133	32,434	34,056	34,762	34,514 *	33,673	
Suspected deaths	48	57	56	51	77	59	65	84	
CFR (%)	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	

*Data entry error was experienced in the number of ARI cases during week 50-2023 and was corrected from 34,739 to 34,514.

- The epi curve shows an increase in ARI cases since the 3rd week of September 2023, which could be linked to the change of the season to cold weather across the country (Figure 1).
- During week 51-2023, 33,673 cases of ARI-pneumonia and 84 associated deaths were reported, which shows stabilization in the number of ARI cases.
- Since Jan 2023, a total of 1,343,807 ARI-pneumonia cases and 2,728 deaths were reported from 34 provinces. Out of the total cases, 826,391 (61.5%) were under-five children and 664,886 (49.5%) were females. The cumulative incidence by province is shown in Figure 2.
- Out of total deaths, 2,240 (82.1%) were under-five children and 1,252 (45.9%) were females.
- The current number of cases is higher than the average number of cases reported during the three preceding years (2020-2022), the higher number in 2023 could be explained by the improvement in reporting due to enhancement of the surveillance system and expansion of surveillance sentinel sites. (Figure 3).

Figure 1. The epidemiological curve of ARI Pneumonia cases in Afghanistan, 01 Jan – 23 Dec 2023 (N=1,343,807)

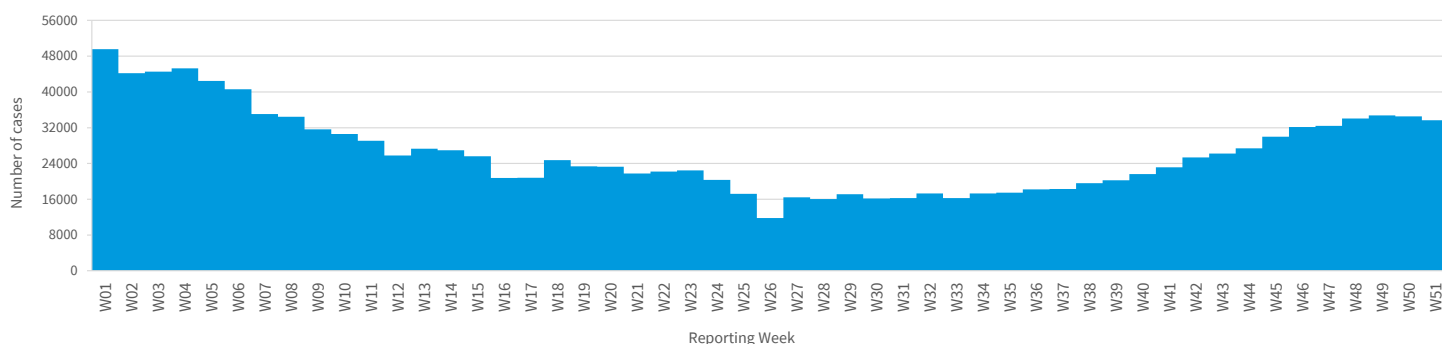


Figure 2. ARI pneumonia cumulative incidence per 10,000 population by province, Afghanistan 01 Jan – 23 Dec 2023

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ARI pneumonia cumulative incidence per 10,000 population by province as of 23 Dec 2023

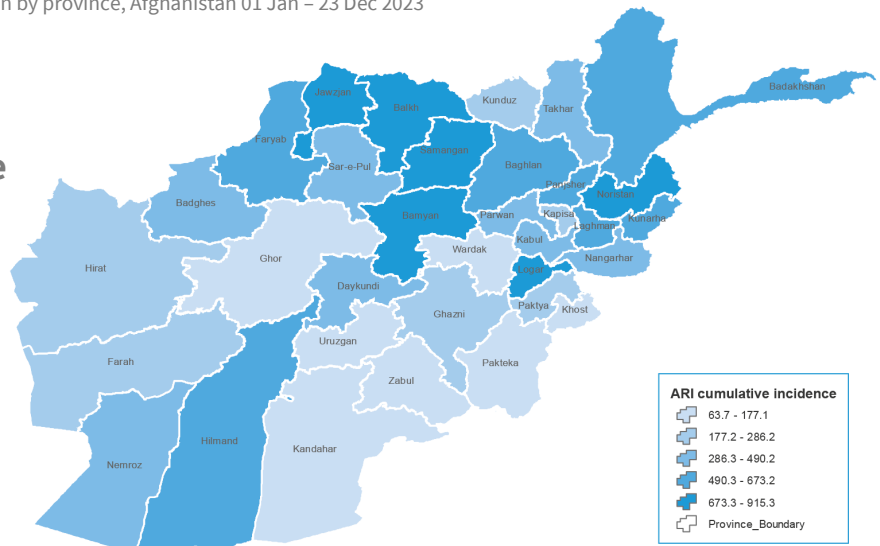
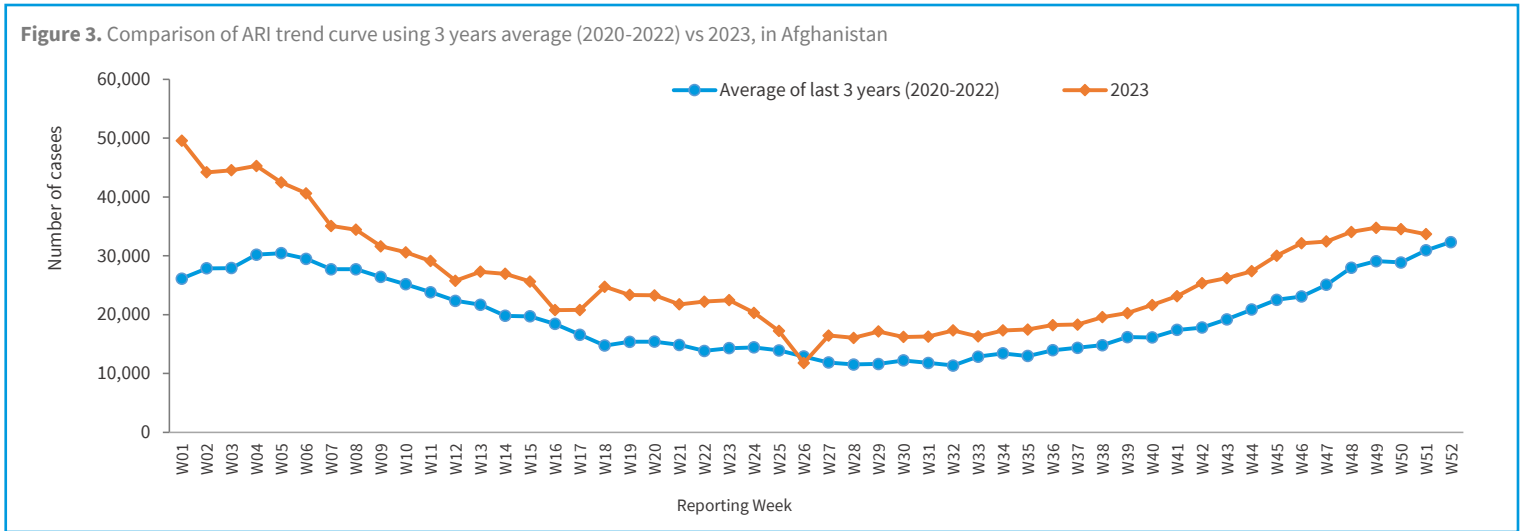


Figure 3. Comparison of ARI trend curve using 3 years average (2020-2022) vs 2023, in Afghanistan



Response to acute respiratory infection outbreak

Surveillance

- Emergency Preparedness and Response Committees (EPR) are active at the provincial level.
- Surveillance support teams (SSTs) are actively participating in outbreak investigation and response activities in 34 provinces.
- Supervisory visits have been conducted in different provinces to strengthen early detection and timely response to ARI outbreaks.

Lab and supplies

Since Jan 2023:

- A total of 500 viral transport media (VTM) for collection of samples from SARI and ILI cases have been delivered to the 10 influenza sentinel sites.
- A total of 10 influenza assistants (1 per each sentinel site) have been trained on specimen collection, storage, and lab transportation for testing and confirmation.
- A total of 1,500 influenza A/B PCR kits and consumables have been supplied to the National Influenza Center (NIC).
- As a part of preparedness and response to the ARI outbreak, a total of 4,720 kits of COVID-19 RDTs were prepo-

sitioned in Kabul WHO warehouse and will be distributed to regional sub-offices for quick differential diagnosis of ARI.

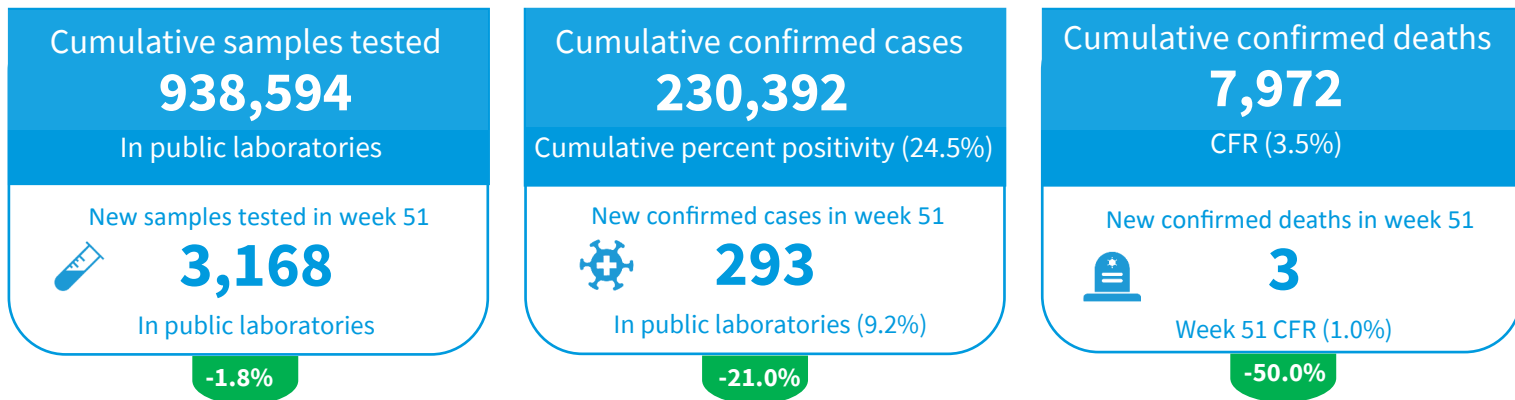
Case management

- Since Jan 2023, a total of 1,411 HCWs have been trained on ARI case management from all 8 regions.
- As a part of the winter preparedness and response plan to ARI outbreak in 2023, a total of 397 case management kits have been prepositioned in WHO main office and regional sub-offices.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

- During November 2023, a 9-day RCCE campaign was conducted by WHO as part of the winterization plan in Badakhshan province, covering awareness on winter-related diseases including ARI. Thirty-five social mobilizers, including 17 women, have been trained and deployed in their respective districts to implement the campaign activities.
- Since Jan 2023, a total of 500,000 IEC materials have been distributed as part of this RCCE campaign among targeted communities in 34 provinces.

COVID-19 (24 Feb 2020 – 23 Dec 2023)



Key: ● Increasing ● Decreasing ● No change

COVID-19 Vaccination highlights

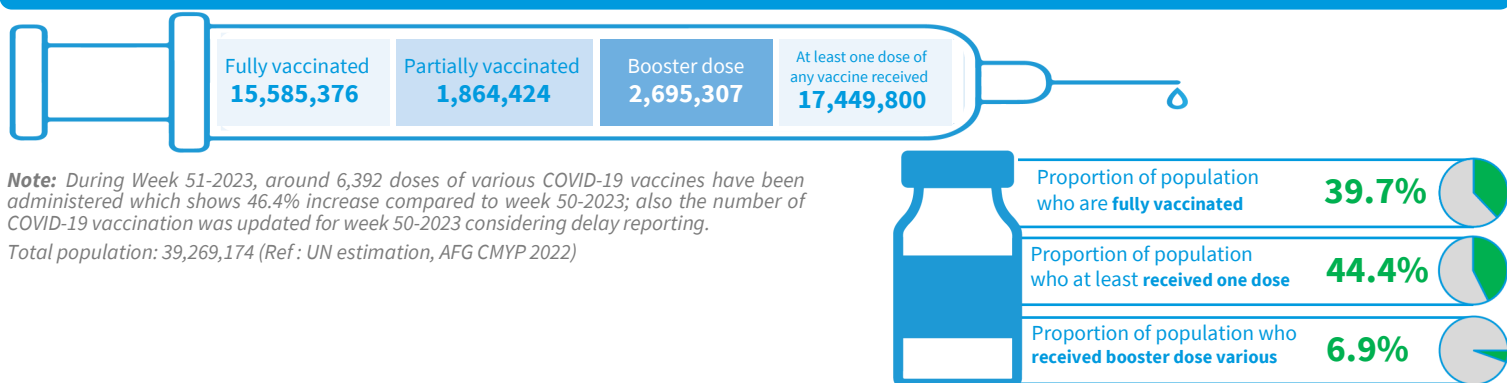


Table 2: Summary of COVID-19 indicators in the last 8 weeks in Afghanistan (29 Oct - 23 Dec 2023)

Indicators	W44	W45	W46	W47	W48	W49	W50	W51	Trend line
Samples tested (in public Labs)	3,217	3,250	3,532	3,020	2,720	3,508	3,227 *	3,168	
Confirmed cases	330	397	404	279	289	334	371 *	293	
Percent positivity (%)	10.3	12.2	11.4	9.2	10.6	9.5	11.5	9.2	
Deaths	1	3	4	1	2	0	6	3	
CFR (%)	0.3	0.8	1.0	0.4	0.7	0.0	1.6	1.0	

*A delayed reporting was experienced during week 50-2023, the number of samples tested was modified from 3,079 to 3,227 and the number of confirmed cases was modified from 348 to 371.

- The epidemiological curve indicates a stabilization in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases since the 3rd week of June 2023, which could be attributed to a decrease in attendance of infected individuals to healthcare facilities and an improvement in vaccination coverage among eligible populations across the country (44.4%).
- In week 51-2023, a total of 3,168 samples were tested in public labs, of which 293 samples were positive for COVID-19 (positivity rate 9.2%) with 3 associated deaths. The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases shows a 21.0% decrease compared to week 50-2023 while the number of deaths decreased from 6 to 3 (Figures 4-5).
- The three COVID-19-associated deaths were reported from 3 provinces: Kabul (1), Kunar (1), and Nangarhar (1).
- Since the beginning of the pandemic in Feb 2020, a total of 938,594 samples have been tested for COVID-19 through public laboratories.
- During week 51-2023, among 293 confirmed cases 6.8% (20 cases) were hospitalized, whereas none of the 20 hospitalized cases (0.0%) were admitted to ICU (Figure 6).

Response:

- Since Jan 2023, a total of 31,300 COVID-19 RDT tests have been distributed to all 34 provincial NDSR offices.
- Since Jan 2023, a total of 3 ID NOW instruments have been installed and 2,000 tests of COVID-19 ID NOW have been delivered to the CPHL-Kabul for rapid diagnosis of COVID-19. Also, on-the-job training related to ID NOW instrument utilization and maintenance has been provided to the staff of 8 labs across the country.

Figure 4. The epidemiological curve of confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths in Afghanistan Feb 2020 – 23 Dec 2023

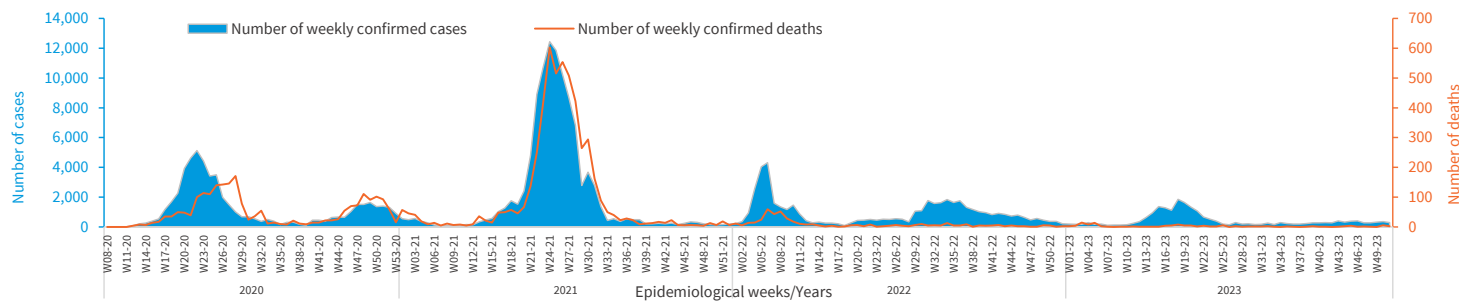


Figure 5. The epidemiological curve of confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths in Afghanistan 01 Jan – 23 Dec 2023

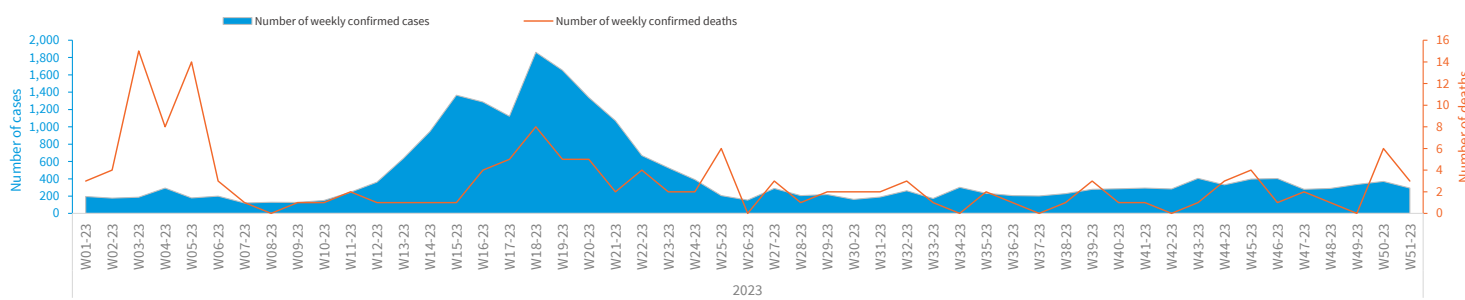
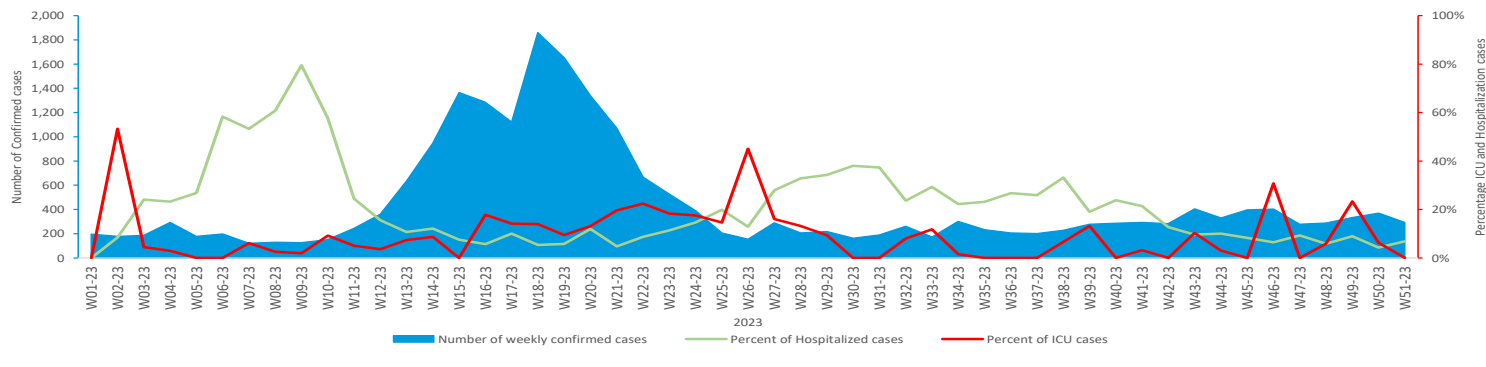


Figure 6. The weekly proportion of hospitalized and ICU cases out of newly confirmed COVID-19 cases in Afghanistan as of 01 Jan – 23 Dec 2023



Acute Watery Diarrhea (AWD) with Dehydration Outbreak (01 Jan to 23 Dec 2023)

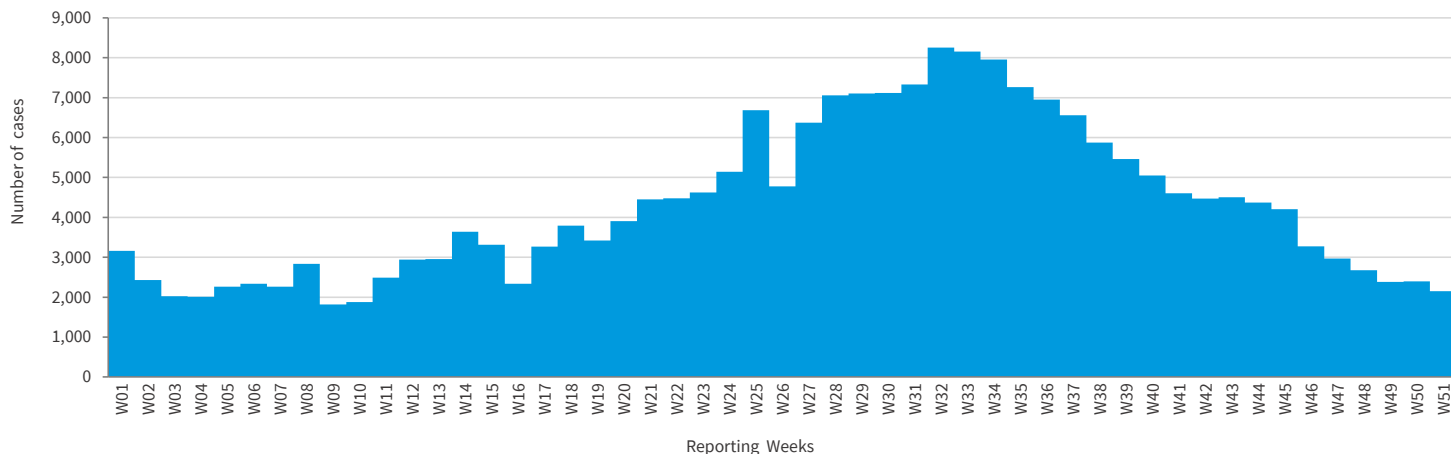
Table 3: Summary of the AWD with Dehydration outbreak in the last eight weeks (29 Oct - 23 Dec 2023)

Indicators	W44	W45	W46	W47	W48	W49	W50	W51	Trend line
Suspected cases	4,372	4,207	3,272	2,969	2,676	2,382	2,395	2,148	
Suspected deaths	0	1	0	0	2	4	1	0	
CFR (%)	0.00	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.07	0.17	0.04	0.00	

- The epi-curve of AWD with dehydration cases shows a decreasing trend since the 4th week of August 2023. This decline could be explained by seasonal changes, the conclusion of the summer season in the country.
- During week 51-2023; 2,148 AWD with dehydration cases and no associated deaths were reported from 126 districts which shows a 10.3% decrease in the number of suspected cases compared to the previous week (Figures 7 & 8).
- Since Jan 2023, a total of 219,753 AWD with dehydration cases were reported, out of which 125,439 (57.1%) were under-five children and 109,417 (49.8%) were females.
- During week 51-2023, no new district reported an alert of AWD with dehydration and the number of districts reported AWD with dehydration remained at 334.
- A total of 6,015 rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) were conducted among AWD with dehydration cases since the beginning of 2023 among them 1316 samples came positive (21.9%).



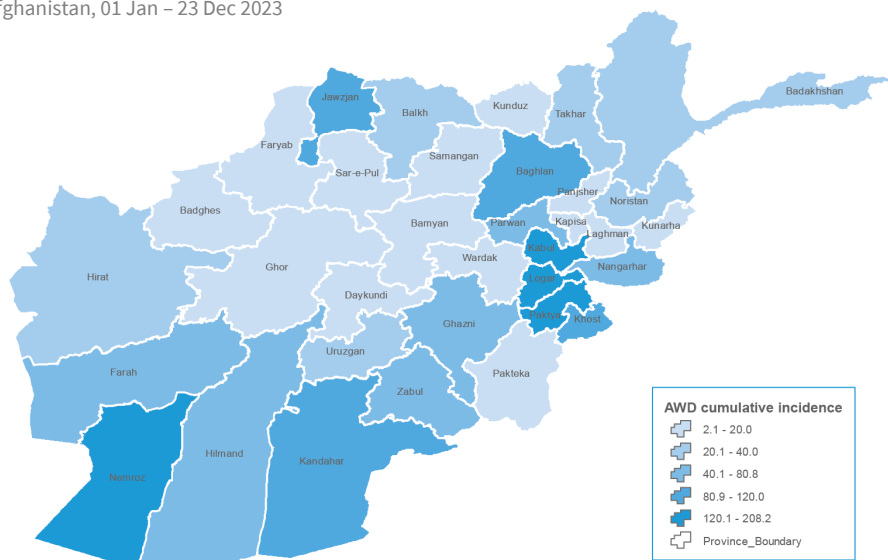
Figure 7. The epidemiological curve of AWD with dehydration cases in Afghanistan 01 Jan – 23 Dec 2023 (N=219,753)



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AWD with dehydration cumulative incidence per 10,000 population by province as of 23 Dec 2023

Figure 8. AWD with dehydration cumulative incidence per 10,000 population by province in Afghanistan, 01 Jan – 23 Dec 2023



Preparedness and response to the AWD Outbreak

Leadership and Coordination

- Emergency Preparedness and Response Committees (EPR) are active at the provincial level.
- An integrated AWD preparedness plan has been developed jointly between Health and WASH clusters and endorsed by the Ministry of Public Health.

Surveillance

- Since Jan 2023, a total of 867 MDs and CHSs including 67 females have been trained on EBS procedures in 5 provinces: Nangarhar (total=240, 1 female), Kandahar (total=144, 22 females), Badakhshan (total=152, 4 females), Herat (total=205, 17 females) and Bamyan (total=126, 23 females).
- Surveillance support teams (SSTs) are actively participating in outbreak investigation and response activities in 34 provinces.
- Supervisory visits have been conducted in different provinces to strengthen early detection and timely response to AWD outbreaks.

Case Management

- During week 51-2023, a total of 14 AWD case management kits have been distributed to infectious disease

hospitals in 4 regions (South, East, North, and North-east).

- Since Jan 2023, a total of 621 case management kits (different modules) for AWD with dehydration have been delivered to WHO sub-offices to respond to this outbreak.
- Since Jan 2023, 34 SST lab focal points have been trained on AWD sample collection, transportation, and proper use of RDT for the screening of AWD with dehydration cases in Kandahar and Nangarhar provinces.
- Since Jan 2023, a total of 887 HCWs have been trained on AWD case management from 7 regions (Central, Central Highland, West, North, North-east, East, and South-east).

Laboratory and Supplies

- Since Jan 2023, a total of 12,325 RDT kits of AWD with dehydration and 6,400 Cary Blairs media have been supplied to 34 provinces.
- Seven public health laboratories including CPHL, IDH, and 5 RRLs (Kandahar, Paktya, Nangarhar, Balkh, and Herat regional reference labs) have the testing/confirmation capacity for AWD with dehydration and are supplied with diagnostic kits.

WASH

During the first two weeks of December (01-15 Dec 2023), the following activities were conducted as WASH response:

- Chlorination of almost 7,000 wells in 9 provinces (Badghis, Ghazni, Kabul, Kandahar, Khost, Logar, Wardak, Paktya, and Zabul) which supported 124,000 people.
- Distribution of aqua tabs and soap in the South region (Kandahar and Uruzgan) which benefited 185,000 individuals.
- Installation of handwashing facilities in 5 provinces (Ghazni, Kandahar, Khost, Logar, and Paktya) supported 14,000 individuals.
- Hygiene Kits distributions in 18 provinces (Badakhshan, Badghis, Balkh, Daikundi, Ghazni, Kabul, Kandahar, Khost, Kunar, Laghman, Logar, Wardak, Nangarhar, Paktika, Paktya, Takhar, Uruzgan and Zabul) reached 110,000 individuals.
- Household water treatment promotion campaigns in 6 provinces (Badghis, Balkh, Kabul, Kandahar, Khost, and Kunar) benefited 2,000 people.
- Hygiene Promotion sessions in 18 provinces (Badakhshan, Badghis, Balkh, Ghazni, Hirat, Kabul, Kandahar, Khost, Kunar, Kunduz, Laghman, Logar, Wardak, Nangarhar, Paktika, Paktya, Uruzgan and Zabul) reached 102,000 individuals.

- Installation/rehabilitation of latrines in 11 provinces (Badakhshan, Badghis, Balkh, Ghazni, Kabul, Kandahar, Khost, Kunar, Logar, Paktika, and Paktya) supported 1,800 individuals.
- Rehabilitation or new set-up of water supply system in 13 provinces (Badghis, Balkh, Ghazni, Hirat, Kabul, Kandahar, Khost, Kunar, Logar, Wardak, Nangarhar, Paktya and Zabul) supported 12,500 individuals.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

- In Oct 2023, a 7-day RCCE campaign was conducted by WHO and MoPH in Herat province to raise awareness of the earthquake-affected communities regarding the prevention and control of infectious diseases including AWD with dehydration in seven districts. A total of 80 social mobilizers, including 40 women, have been trained and deployed to the respective districts for the implementation of campaign activities.
- Since Jan 2023, a total of 357 (including 117 females) MoPH staff have been trained on RCCE strategies and outbreak response.
- Since Jan 2023, a total of 380,000 information, education and communication (IEC) materials (200,000 posters and 180,000 brochures) on AWD were printed and distributed among targeted communities in 34 provinces.

Measles Outbreak

(01 Jan to 23 Dec 2023)

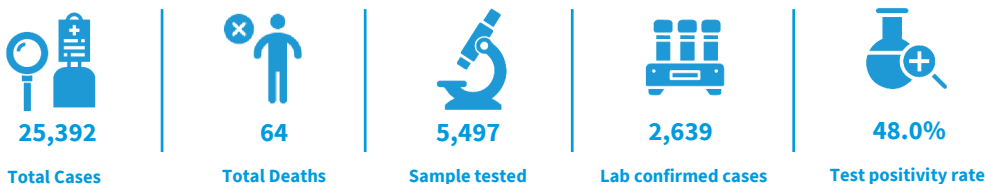


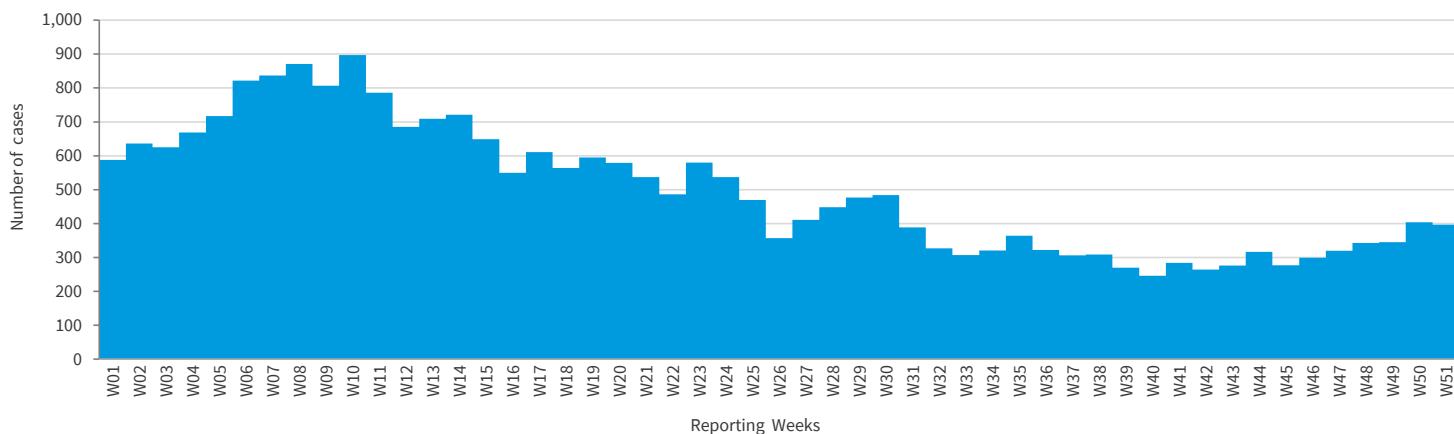
Table 4: Summary of the suspected measles outbreak in the last eight weeks (29 Oct - 23 Dec 2023)

Indicators	W44	W45	W46	W47	W48	W49	W50	W51	Trend line
Suspected cases	317	277	299	320	343	345	404	397	
Suspected deaths	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	
CFR (%)	0.3	0.0	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	

- The epidemiological curve of suspected measles cases demonstrates a rising trend since the third week of November 2023, which could be explained by increased community transmission exacerbated by the winter season and low immunization coverage (Figure 9).
- During week 51-2023, a total of 397 suspected cases with no measles-associated deaths were reported which shows stabilization in the number of suspected measles cases compared to the previous week.
- Since Jan 2023, a total of 25,392 suspected measles cases and 64 deaths (CFR=0.3%) were reported. Among suspected measles cases 18,115 (71.3%) were under-five children and 11,968 (47.1%) were females.
- Out of 64 measles-related deaths, 59 deaths (92.2%) were among under 5 children and 28 deaths (43.8%) were among females.
- All deaths were reported from 15 provinces across the country, more than three-quarters (49, 76.6%) of the deaths were reported from 5 provinces (Helmand, Samangan, Kandahar, Kunar, and Nangarhar) (Figure 10).



Figure 9. The epidemiological curve of suspected measles cases in Afghanistan, 01 Jan to 23 Dec 2023 (N=25,392)



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Suspected measles cumulative incidence per 10,000 population by province as of 23 Dec 2023

Figure 10. Suspected measles cumulative incidence per 10,000 population by province in Afghanistan 01 Jan –23 Dec 2023

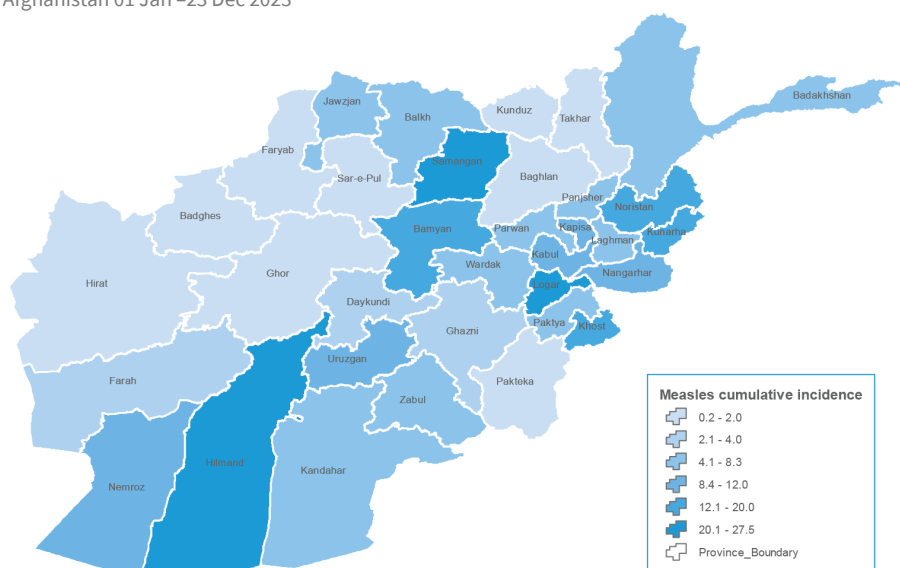
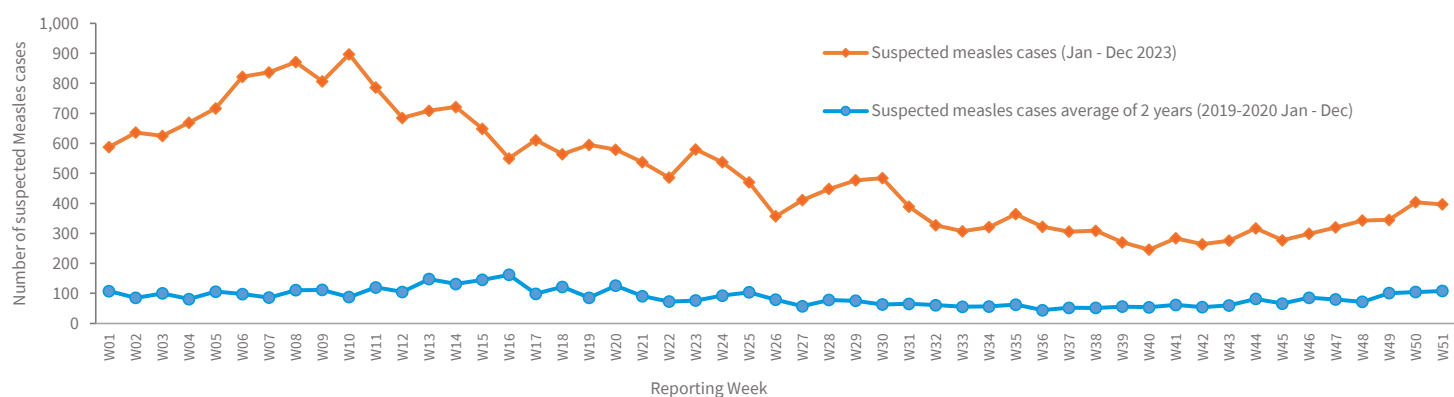


Figure 11. Comparison of suspected measles trend curve using 2 years average (2019-2020) vs Jan-Dec 2023, Afghanistan



Comparing the 2023 trend with the trend for the average number of suspected cases reported during 2019-2020; reveals that despite efforts to control the outbreak, measles cases are still occurring at a higher rate this year as compared to the endemic level during 2019-2020 (Figure 11).

Preparedness and response to the Measles Outbreak

- During week 51-2023, a total of 576 children aged 9-59 months were vaccinated against measles in Deh Mazang district of Kabul province as part of the measles outbreak response activities by the implementing NGOs. This brings the total number of children aged 9-59 months vaccinated against measles to 13,746 since the beginning of the year in the country.
- Since Jan 2023, a total of 200,000 information, education and communication (IEC) materials on measles have been printed and distributed among targeted communities in the country.

Outbreak of Crimean Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) (01 Jan to 23 Dec 2023)

Table 5: Summary of the CCHF outbreak in the last eight weeks (29 Oct – 23 Dec 2023)

Indicators	W44	W45	W46	W47	W48	W49	W50	W51	Trend line
Suspected cases	11	11	7	7	5	3	0	2	
Suspected deaths	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
CFR (%)	27.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	

- The epi-curve for Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) indicates a decreasing trend in the number of suspected CCHF cases since 3rd week of September 2023. This decline could be attributed to seasonal changes towards winter and response activities. (Figures 12 & 13).
- During week 51-2023, two new suspected CCHF cases only were reported with no associated deaths (Table 5).
- Since the beginning of 2023, the total numbers of suspected CCHF cases and associated deaths are 1,236 and 114, respectively (CFR 9.2%).
- The CCHF-associated deaths were reported from 15 provinces, more than half of which were reported from 2 provinces: Kabul (52, 45.6%) and Balkh (16, 14.0%) (Figure 14).
- Out of the total cases, 1,233 (99.8%) were above 5 years of age and 387 (31.3%) were females.
- In total, 1,098 samples of suspected CCHF cases were tested since the beginning of 2023, of which 383 samples were positive (positivity = 34.9%).

Figure 12. The epidemiological curve of CCHF cases in Afghanistan 01 Jan – 23 Dec 2023, (N=1,236)

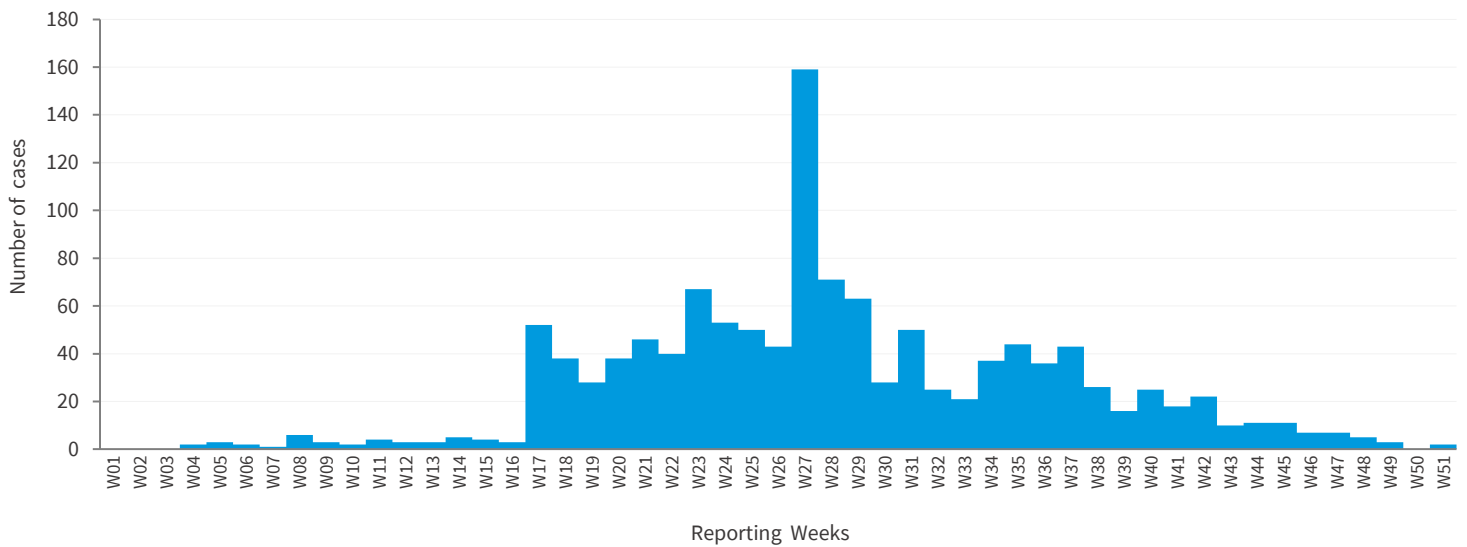
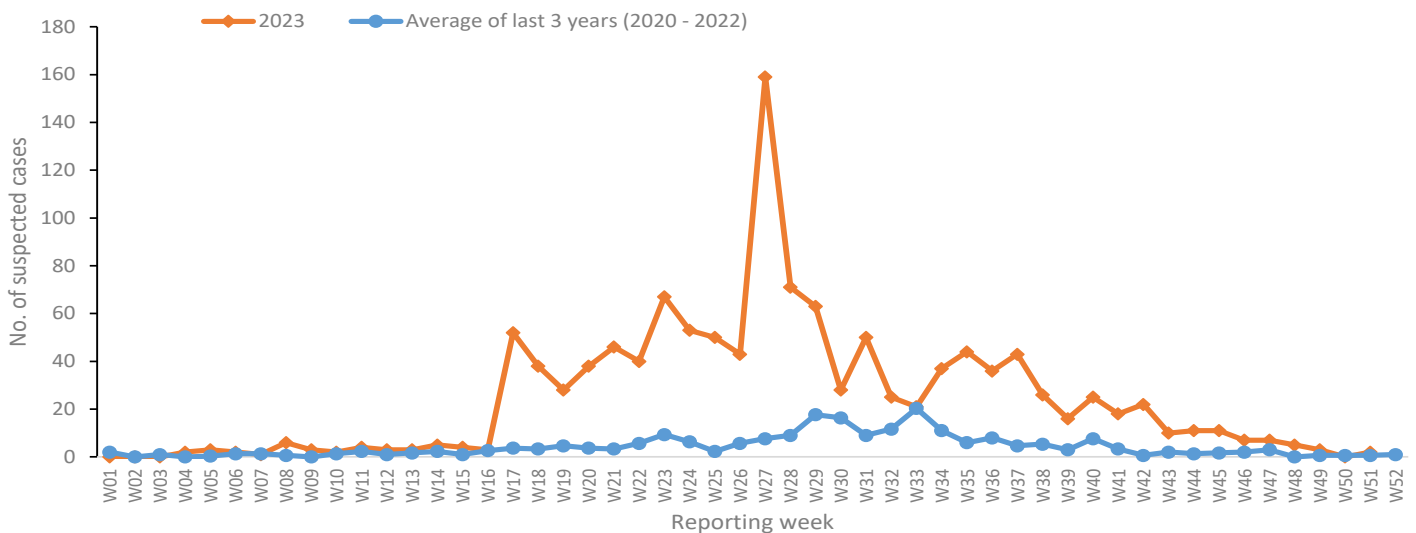


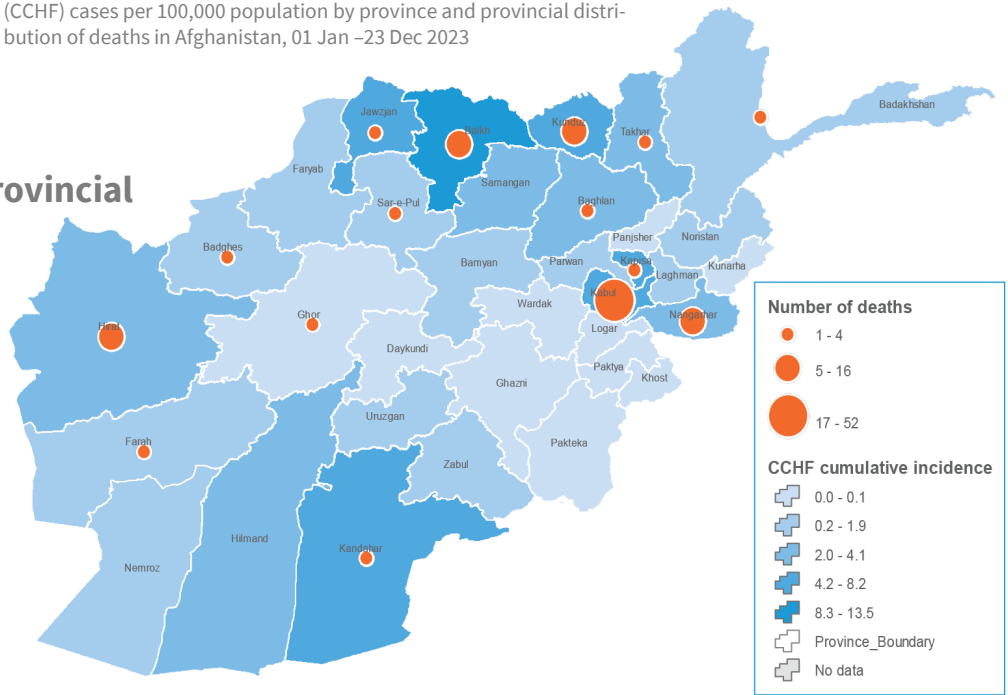
Figure 13. Comparison of trend curves for suspected CCHF cases using 3 years average (2020-2022) vs Jan-Dec 2023, Afghanistan



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Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) cases cumulative incidence per 100,000 population by province and provincial distribution of deaths as of 23 Dec 2023

Figure 14. Cumulative incidence of Crimean-Congo Hemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) cases per 100,000 population by province and provincial distribution of deaths in Afghanistan, 01 Jan –23 Dec 2023



Response to CCHF outbreak during 2023

Coordination and leadership

- A national 2-day workshop was conducted in Kabul-Afghanistan focused on implementing the One Health approach and involved various stakeholders, including experts from organizations like WHO, FAO, MoPH, NEPA, MAIL, Dairy Form Union, and Kabul University's veterinary department. The workshop covered six key areas: leadership and governance, multisectoral coordination, environmental health, zoonotic disease, food safety, and antimicrobial resistance, highlighting existing structures, gaps, and challenges. The main recommendations from the workshop included securing government support and creating a strategic national plan, along with establishing a national-level Technical Working Group (TWG).

Surveillance

- As part of the UN-to-UN agreement technical training was conducted in early December 2023 for 70 veterinarians from Kabul by the Food Agriculture Organization (FAO) on case definition, use of PPE, ticks sample collection, storage, and transportation to Central Veterinary Diagnostic and Research Laboratory (CVDRL) for confirmation.
- Surveillance support teams (SSTs) are actively participating in outbreak investigation and response activities in 34 provinces.

Laboratory and supplies

- Since Jan 2023, a total of 455 printed copies of the updated CCHF treatment algorithm were supplied to 8 provinces (Nangarhar, Kandahar, Herat, Balkh, Bamyan, Badakhshan, Paktya and Kunduz).
- A total of 14 CCHF PCR kits have been distributed to CPHL, IDH and 5 RRLs across the country since the beginning of 2023.
- On-the-job training has been conducted for the staff in 6 regional reference laboratories; the capacities have been built to utilize the PCR and ELISA technologies for laboratory confirmation of CCHF.

Case management

- Since Jan 2023, a total of 319 HCWs (including 10 females) have been trained on case management of CCHF from Southeast, East and West regions.
- A total of 150 oral ribavirin (antiviral medicine) courses (each course containing 84 tablets), and 200 personal protective equipment for infection prevention and control have been supplied to the North region since the beginning of 2023.
- A total of 5,000 double bags were donated by WHO to Balkh, Herat, Kandahar, Kabul IDH, and Nangarhar provinces to support CCHF case management.

Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

- Since Jan 2023, a total of 350,000 Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials on CCHF have been printed and distributed to affected communities in the country.

Dengue Fever Outbreak (01 Jan to 23 Dec 2023)

1,452
Total Cases

1
Total Deaths

894
Sample tested

336
Lab confirmed cases

37.6%
Test positivity rate

Table 6: Summary of the Dengue fever outbreak in the last eight weeks (29 Oct - 23 Dec 2023)

Indicators	W44	W45	W46	W47	W48	W49	W50	W51	Trend line
Suspected cases	50	69	56	34	50	77	33	61	
Deaths	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
CFR (%)	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	

- Overall, the epidemiological curve depicts a rising trend in suspected dengue fever cases starting from the last week of Aug 2023; this is the peak season for vector activities as reported during 2021 and 2022 outbreaks (Figures 15 & 16).
- During week 51-2023, 61 suspected cases of dengue fever were reported only from Nangarhar province which shows 84.8% increase in the number of suspected dengue fever cases compared to the week 50-2023.
- Since Jan 2023, a total of 1,452 suspected cases of dengue fever and one death were reported (Figure 17), out of which, 697 (48.0%) were females and 1,418 (97.7%) were over 5 years of age.
- Since Jan 2023, a total of 894 samples have been collected, out of which 336 were confirmed (positivity= 37.6%).

Figure 15. The epidemiological curve of dengue fever cases in Afghanistan 1 Jan – 23 Dec 2023 (N=1,452)

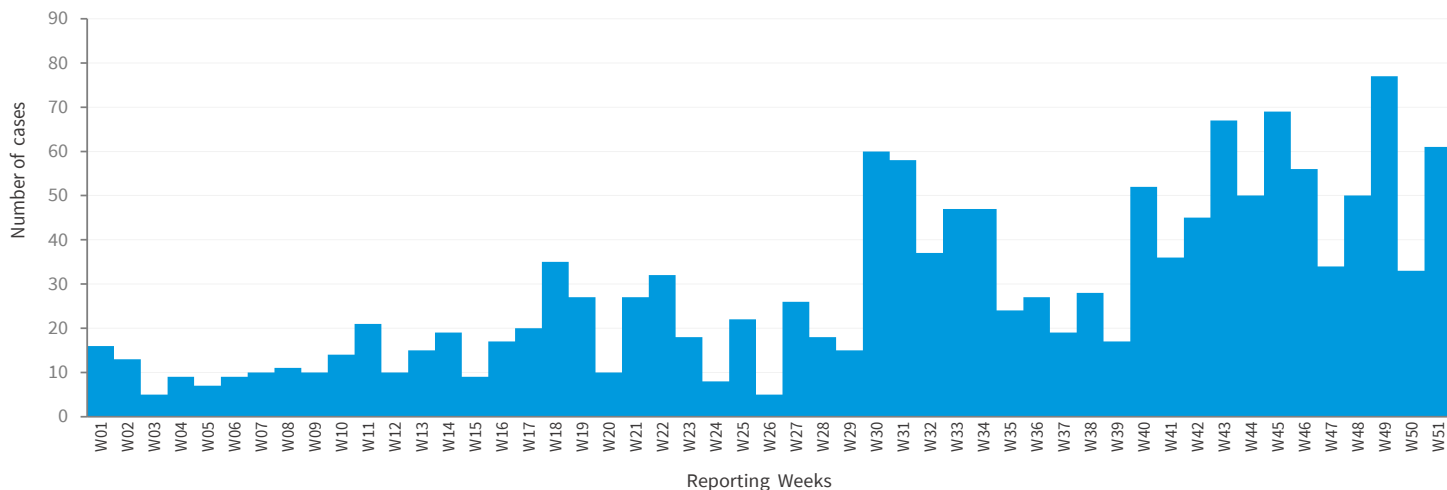


Figure 16. Comparison of trend curves for suspected dengue fever cases using 3 years average (2020-2022) vs Jan-Dec 2023, Afghanistan

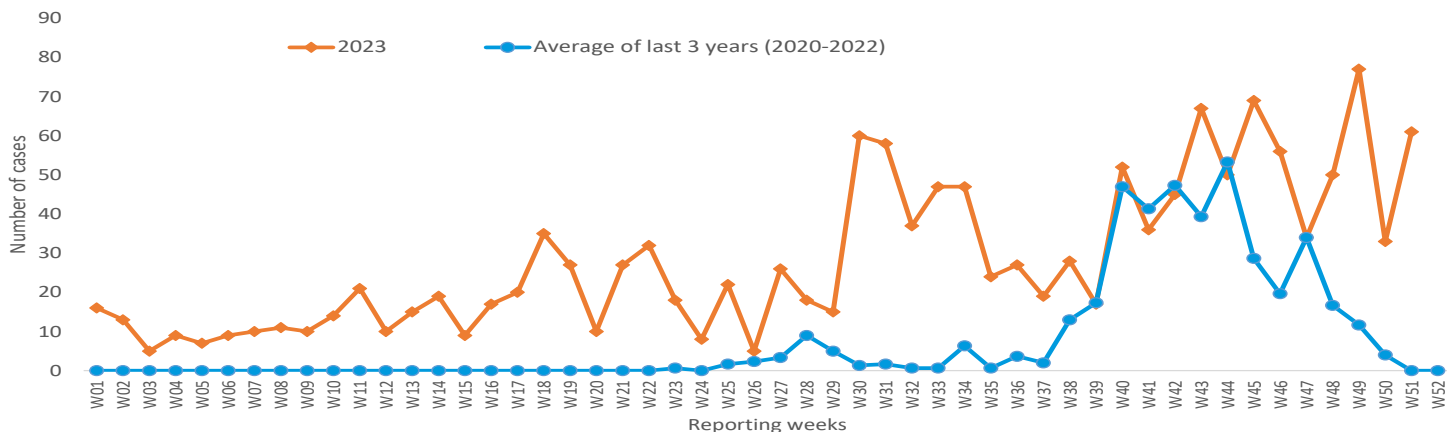
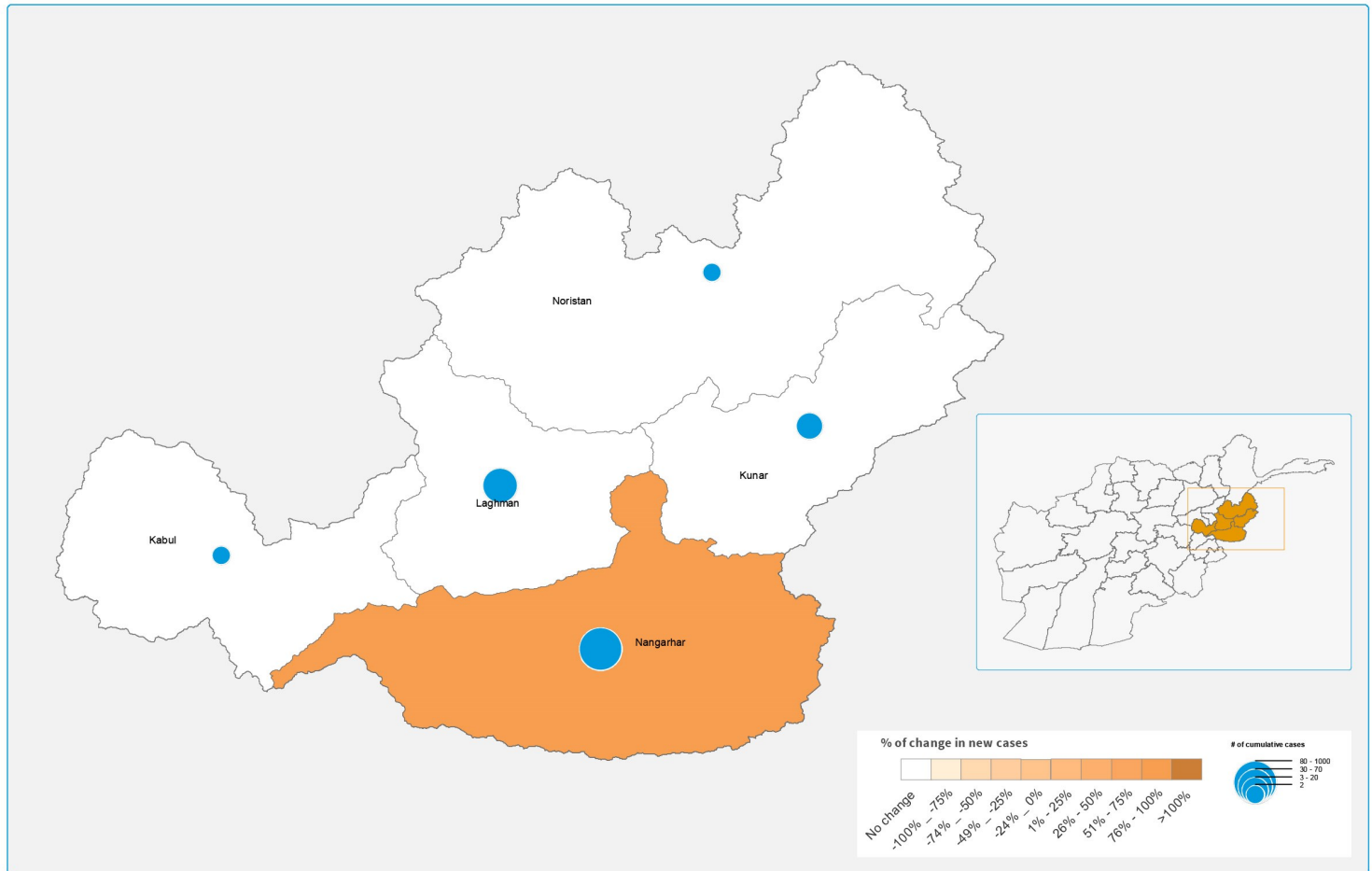


Figure 17. Geographical distribution of suspected dengue fever cases and percent change of new cases in Afghanistan, Jan - Dec 2023



Geographical distribution of suspected dengue fever cases in Afghanistan and weekly percent of changes
(between weeks 50 and 51, 2023)



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the World Health Organization (WHO) concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries, the lines on map represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement. Sources: MoPH, WHO, AGCHO. Creation date: 23 Dec 2023.

Response to the dengue fever outbreak

- Since Jan 2023, a total of 283 Kits (10 tests/kit) of dengue fever were delivered to 5 provinces (Nangarhar 273 kits, Laghman 3 kits, Kunar 3 kits, Nuristan 2 kits, and Kabul 2 kits).
- Since Jan 2023, a total of 450 printed copies of the dengue fever treatment algorithm have been delivered to 8 provinces (Nangarhar, Kandahar, Herat, Balkh, Bamyán, Badakhshan, Paktya and Kunduz) provinces.
- Since Jan 2023, a total of 10 PCR kits have been distributed to Nangarhar RRL.
- Since Jan 2023, a total of 320 HCWs have been trained on dengue case management in the East region.

Note: MOPH is the source of epidemiological data

Case definition & alert/outbreak thresholds

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