

The coronavirus disease COVID-19 continues to spread at the regional and global levels. As of 1 May 2021, the global cumulative incidence reached 150 999 864 reported cases and 3 173 685 associated deaths with a case fatality ratio (CFR) of 2.1%. Meanwhile, the 22 countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) have reported a total of 9 153 376 cases, which represent about 6.1% of the global count, with 183 619 associated deaths (CFR 2%). 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 (2 516 157 cases; 27.5% of the Region's total), followed by Iraq (1 070 366; 11.7%) and Pakistan (829 933; 9.1%). Islamic Republic of Iran also reported the highest number of total associated deaths (72 090; CFR 2.9%) followed by Pakistan (18 070; CFR 2.2%) and Iraq (15 498; CFR 1.4%). The highest CFRs were reported by Yemen (19.4%) followed by Syrian Arab Republic (7%), while the lowest CFRs were reported by Qatar (0.2%) followed by United Arab Emirates (0.3%) and Bahrain (0.4%).

During epidemiological week 17, the Region reported a decrease in cases of 14.7% when compared to the previous week (322 223 cases compared to 377 571 cases). On the other hand, an increase of 0.5% was observed for associated deaths (6384 deaths compared to 6354 deaths).

Islamic Republic of Iran, Bahrain, and Pakistan reported a relative increase in COVID-19 activity in week 16. The cumulative number of cases increased from 2 377 039 to 2 516 157 in Islamic Republic of Iran (5.9% weekly increase), from 170 335 to 177 997 in Bahrain (4.5% weekly increase) and from 795 627 to 829 933 in Pakistan (4.3% weekly increase). Qatar, Djibouti, and Pakistan had the largest relative increase in deaths.

In terms of testing, a total of 132 576 052 laboratory PCR tests were conducted since the start of the outbreak across the Region including 3 971 875 tests in week 17, which shows a 1% increase compared to the previous week when 3 924 519 tests were conducted. The highest number of PCR tests were reported from United Arab Emirates (44.3 million), followed by Saudi Arabia (16.9 million) and Islamic Republic of Iran (15.9 million). The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain are performing the highest rates of testing per capita (4480/1000 and 2415/1000, respectively). The average positivity rate for the Region is 6.9%. 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.

Meanwhile, COVID-19 vaccination continues across the Region. The total number of doses administered so far in the 22 countries is 40 946 189. The United Arab Emirates has administered the highest number of doses at 10 634 693, followed by Saudi Arabia at 9 557 948 and Morocco at 9 315 844. On the other hand, the total number of administered doses in Sudan is 140 227, in Somalia is 117 567, in Libya is 61 212, in Djibouti is 13 042, in Yemen is 5132, and in Syria is 2500.*

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.



