The coronavirus disease COVID-19 continues to spread at the regional and global levels. As of 26 September 2020, the global cumulative incidence reached 32 429 965 reported cases and 985 823 associated deaths with a case fatality ratio (CFR) of 3%. Meanwhile, the 22 countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) have reported a total of 2 340 215 cases, which represent about 7.2% of the global count, with 60 345 associated deaths (CFR 2.6%). 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 (443 086 cases; 18.9% of the Region's total), followed by Iraq (345 969; 14.8%) and Saudi Arabia (332 790; 14.2%). Islamic Republic of Iran also reported the highest number of total associated deaths (25 394; CFR 5.7%) followed by Iraq (8935; CFR 2.6%) and Pakistan (6457; CFR 2.1%). The highest CFRs were reported by Yemen (28.9%) followed by Sudan (6.1%), while the lowest CFRs were reported by Qatar (0.2%) followed by Bahrain (0.3%).

During epidemiological week 39, the Region reported a 7.2% increase in cases when compared to the previous week (122 749 cases compared to 114 473 cases). Similarly, a 2.7% increase was observed for associated deaths (2692 deaths compared to 2620 deaths). The weekly trend per capita showed a slight increase as compared to the previous week (320/100 000 compared to 303/100 000).

Jordan, Tunisia and Lebanon reported a relative increase in COVID-19 activity. The cumulative number of cases in Jordan increased from 4540 to 8061 (78% increase compared to the previous two weeks), Tunisia from 10 732 to 15 178 (34% increase) and Lebanon from 28 297 to 35 228 (20% increase). Jordan had the largest relative increase in deaths (43%) followed by Tunisia (20%) and Lebanon (16%).

In terms of testing, a total of 34 780 980 laboratory PCR tests were conducted since the start of the outbreak across the Region including 2 110 858 tests in week 39, which shows a 1% increase compared to the previous week (2 085 641). The highest number of PCR tests were reported from United Arab Emirates (9.3 million), followed by Saudi Arabia (6.3 million) and Islamic Republic of Iran (3.9 million). The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain are performing the highest rate of testing per capita (94 241/100 000 and 82 186/100 000, respectively). The average positivity rate for the Region is 6.7%. 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.

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 (IPC), risk communication, points of entry according to the International Health Regulations (2005), research, health systems, and essential health services among others. Activities this week included:

holding virtual technical guidance meetings to support Afghanistan, Egypt, Lebanon, Sudan and United Arab Emirates and to support and maintain reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health services;

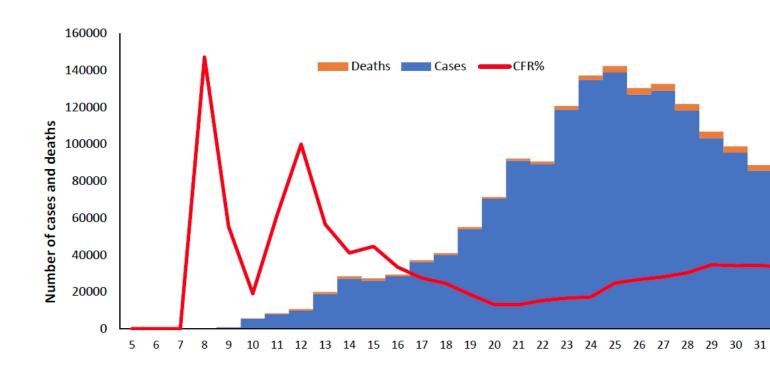
organizing the 5th meeting of the regional taskforce of COVID-19 and migration;

organizing a Facebook live session on mental health and psychosocial support for parents, teachers and children on returning to school;

marking World Patient Safety Day through two webinars on IPC and health workers safety in the context of COVID-19 in collaboration with the Saudi Patient Safety Center (150 participants) and the Ministry of Health in Oman (120 participants);

sending a multidisciplinary support mission to Afghanistan to evaluate and provide support for

COVID-19 response.



Epidemiological weeks (2020)

For more data from the Region, please visit the COVID-19 dashboard.

<u>Subscribe</u> to the monthly infectious hazard preparedness newsletter of WHO's Health Emergencies Programme for 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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