

The coronavirus disease COVID-19 continues to spread at the regional and global levels. As of 21 November 2020, the global cumulative incidence reached 56 982 476 reported cases and 1 361 847 associated deaths with a case fatality ratio (CFR) of 2.4%. Meanwhile, the 22 countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) have reported a total of 3 796 649 cases, which represent about 6.7% of the global count, with 96 354 associated deaths (CFR 2.5%). 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 (841 308 cases; 22.2% of the Region's total), followed by Iraq (533 555; 14.1%) and Pakistan (371 508; 9.8%). Islamic Republic of Iran also reported the highest number of total associated deaths (44 327; CFR 5.8%) followed by Iraq (11 925; CFR 2.2%) and Pakistan (7603; CFR 2%). The highest CFRs were reported by Yemen (29.2%) followed by Sudan (7.5%), while the lowest CFRs were reported by Qatar (0.2%) followed by United Arab Emirates (0.3%) and Bahrain (0.4%).

During epidemiological week 47, the Region reported a 10.5% increase in cases when compared to the previous week (246 059 cases compared to 238 951 cases). Similarly, a 5.7% increase was observed for associated deaths (6142 deaths compared to 5812 deaths). The weekly trend per capita showed a slight increase as compared to the previous week (519/100 000 compared to 485/100 000).

Jordan, Iran and Morocco reported a relative increase in COVID-19 activity. The cumulative number of cases in Jordan increased from 141 305 to 178 161 (26% increase compared to the previous weeks), Iran from 749 525 to 841 308 (12% increase) and Morocco from 288 211 to 320 962 (11% increase). Jordan had the largest relative increase in deaths (27%) followed by Tunisia (16%) and Morocco (12%).

In terms of testing, a total of 54 144 260 laboratory PCR tests were conducted since the start of the outbreak across the Region including 2 467 114 tests in week 47, which shows a 5% decrease compared to the previous week (2 600 220). The highest number of PCR tests were reported from United Arab Emirates (15.7 million), followed by Saudi Arabia (9.2 million) and Islamic Republic of Iran (5.7 million). The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain are performing the highest rate of testing per capita (158 412 /100 000 and 115 358/100 000, respectively). The average positivity rate for the Region is 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

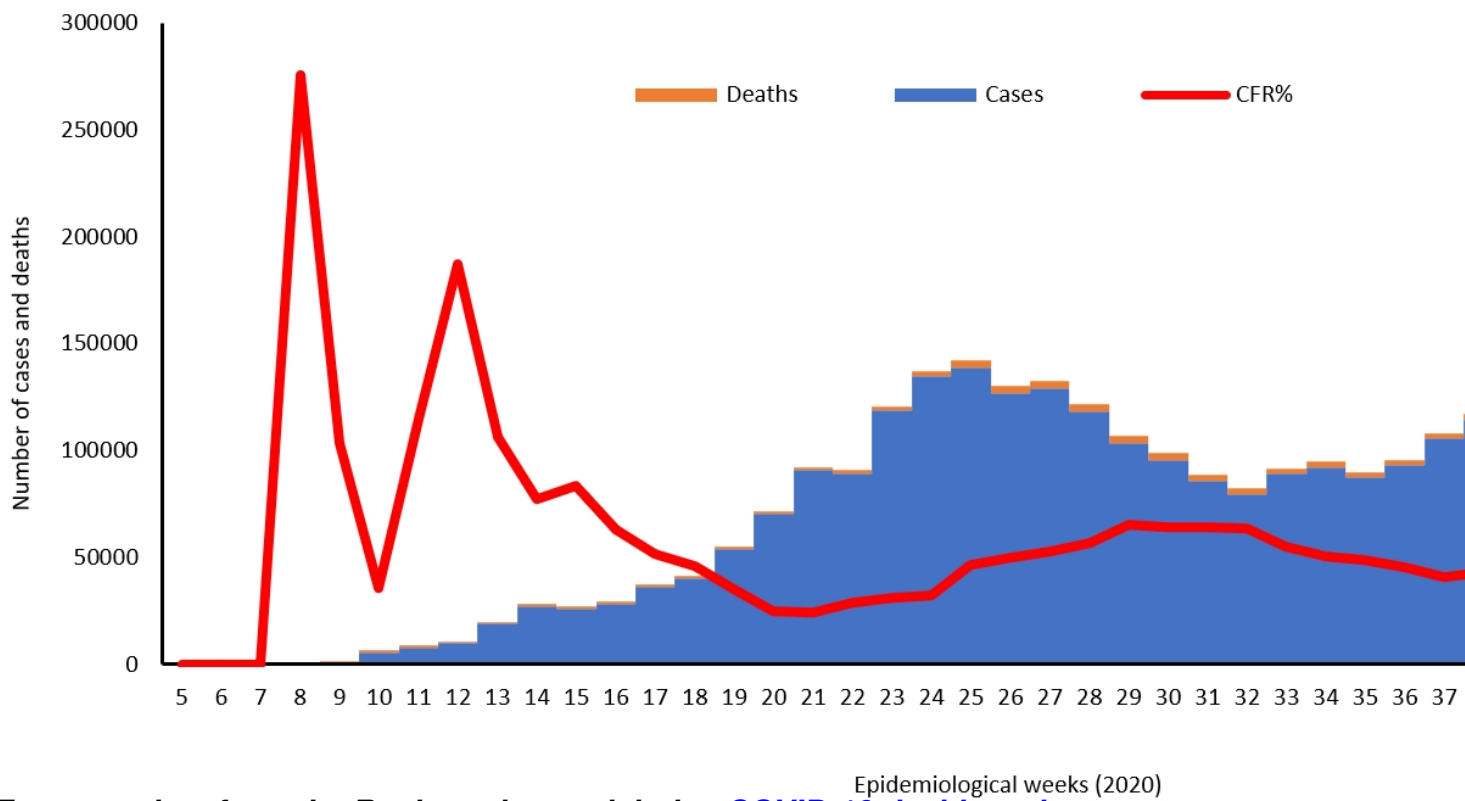
The regional incident management support team continues to coordinate the response and provide technical support to countries and partners in the Region in the areas of coordination and partnership, surveillance, laboratory capacity, clinical management, infection prevention and control, risk communication and community engagement, points of entry according to the International Health Regulations (2005), research, health systems, and essential health services among others. Activities this week included:

organizing a virtual meeting on the implementation of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) into policies, programmes and practices during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic with the participation of 48 health care professionals from Afghanistan, Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, occupied Palestinian territories, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan and Tunisia;

launching a training series for UNRWA staff on infection prevention and control in response to increasing number of COVID-19 cases;

releasing two WHO document on the technical specifications of personal protective equipment as well as priority medical devices list for the COVID-19 response and the associated technical specifications; and

issuing a conditional recommendation against the use of remdesivir in hospitalized patients, regardless of disease severity, as there is currently no evidence that remdesivir improves survival and other outcomes in these patients.



Epidemiological weeks (2020)

For more data from the Region, please visit the [COVID-19 dashboard](#) or [WHO EMRO](#)