

The coronavirus disease COVID-19 continues to spread at the regional and global levels. As of 2 January 2021, the global cumulative incidence reached 82 583 037 reported cases and 1 818 919 associated deaths with a case fatality ratio (CFR) of 2.2%. Meanwhile, the 22 countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) have reported a total of 4 982 559 cases, which represent about 6% of the global count, with 122 181 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 (1 237 474 cases; 24.8% of the Region's total), followed by Iraq (597 033; 12%) and Pakistan (486 634; 9.8%). Islamic Republic of Iran also reported the highest number of total associated deaths (55 438; CFR 4.5%) followed by Iraq (12 829; CFR 2.1%) and Pakistan (10 311; CFR 2.1%). The highest CFRs were reported by Yemen (29%) followed by Sudan (6.3%), while the lowest CFRs were reported by Qatar (0.2%) followed by United Arab Emirates (0.3%) and Bahrain (0.4%).

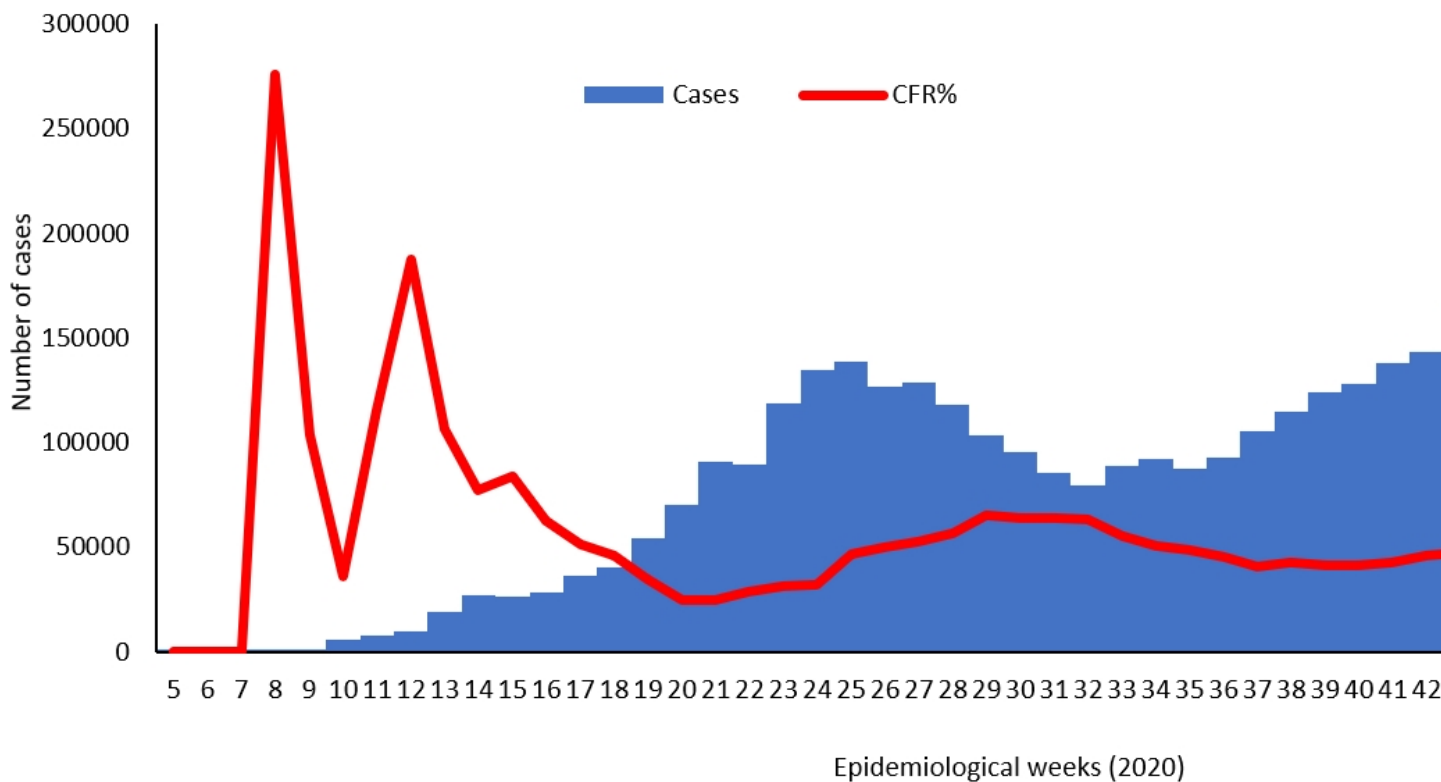
During epidemiological week 53, the Region reported a decrease of 0.1% in cases when compared to the previous week (155 300 cases compared to 156 728 cases). Similarly, a 12.3% decrease was observed for associated deaths (3046 deaths compared to 3474 deaths).

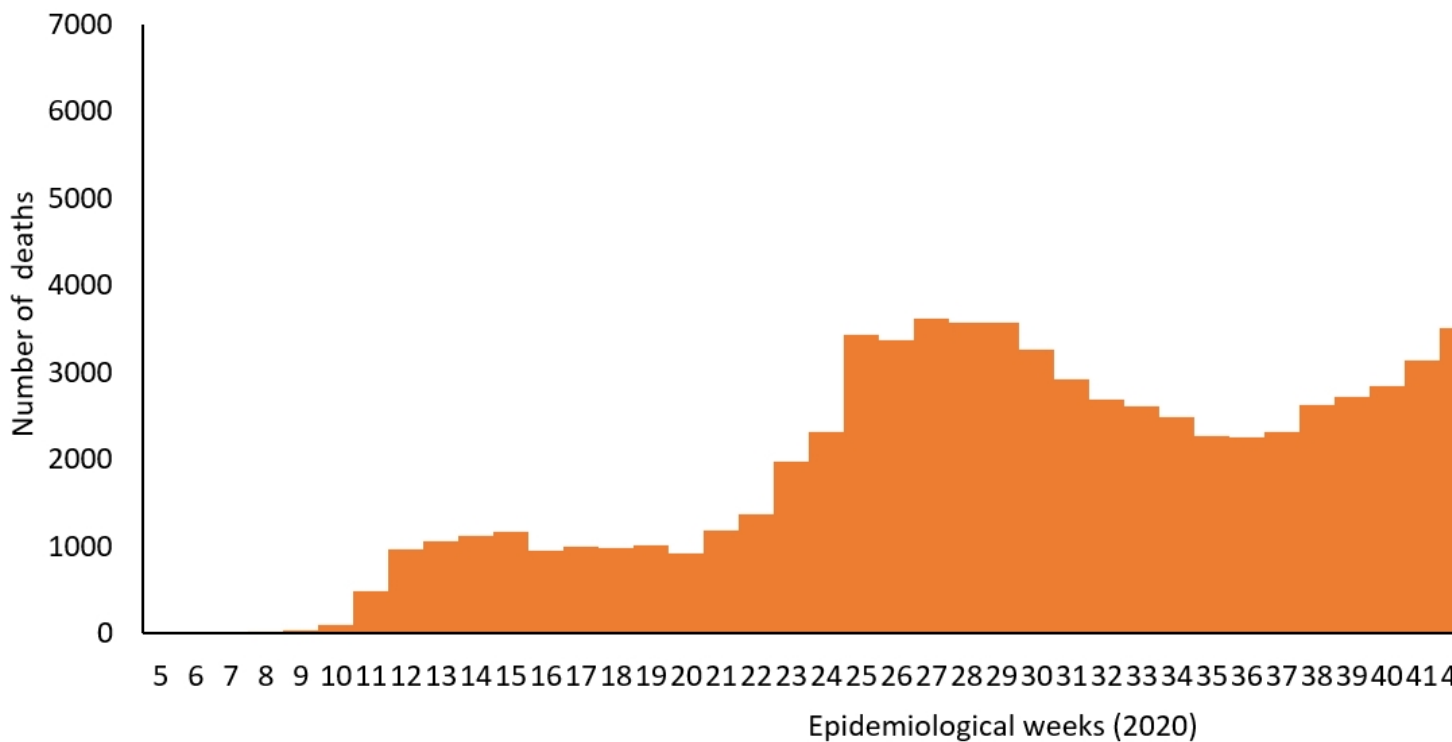
Lebanon, Tunisia and Egypt reported a relative increase in COVID-19 activity in week 53. The cumulative number of cases increased from 169 472 to 186 408 in Lebanon (10% weekly increase), from 131 592 to 143 544 in Tunisia (9.1% weekly increase), and from 131 315 to 140 878 in Egypt (7% weekly increase). Occupied Palestinian territory, Syria and Tunisia had the largest relative increase in deaths.

In terms of testing, a total of 70 629 404 laboratory PCR tests were conducted since the start of the outbreak across the Region including 2 745 111 tests in week 53, which shows a 3% decrease compared to the previous week (2 658 034). The highest number of PCR tests were reported from United Arab Emirates (21.2 million), followed by Saudi Arabia (11.1 million) and Islamic Republic of Iran (7.7 million). The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain are performing the highest rates of testing per capita (2142/1000 and 1400/1000, respectively). The average positivity rate for the Region is 7.1%. 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.





[For more data from the Region, please visit the COVID-19 dashboard/WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region](#)