

The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in the Eastern Mediterranean Region was reported in United Arab Emirates on 29 January 2020. Since the reporting of the two confirmed COVID-19 death cases were reported in Qom City in Islamic Republic of Iran on 19 February 2020, other cases began being reported in countries in the Region. As of 16 February 2021, 6 047 981 COVID-19 cases have been confirmed in countries of the Region with 140 127 associated deaths.

As of 16 February 2021, the number of reported cases in Syria has reached 14 951 including 984 deaths. Between 19 February 2020 and 16 February 2021 more than 80 000 cases were tested for COVID-19 including travellers. The national capacity for preparedness and response is considered at level 2 out of 5 (based on IHR annual report 2019, where 5 is the highest capacity). This indicates a limited capacity that requires technical and operational support.

The overall goal of Syria's strategic preparedness and response plan for COVID-19 is to reduce morbidity and mortality resulting from COVID-19 among the population of Syria by scaling up the country's preparedness and response operations. It includes; strengthening readiness to rapidly identify, diagnose and treat cases; identifying and following-up of contacts; ensuring infection prevention and control measures in healthcare settings; implementing health measures for travellers; increasing awareness, knowledge and understanding; promoting adaption and continued practice of positive prevention and health-seeking behaviors in the population through risk communication and community engagement; and ensuring continuity of essential health care and vaccination among high-risk groups (health care workers, elderly people above 55 years of age and people with co-morbidities).

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