

The coronavirus disease COVID-19 continues to spread at the regional and global levels. As of 12 September 2020, the global cumulative incidence reached 28 329 790 reported cases and 911 877 associated deaths with a case fatality ratio (CFR) of 3.2%. Meanwhile, the 22 countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) have reported a total of 2 101 676 cases, which represent about 7.4% of the global count, with 55 012 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 (399 940 cases; 19% of the Region's total), followed by Saudi Arabia (325 050; 15.5%) and Pakistan (301 481; 14.3%). Islamic Republic of Iran also reported the highest number of total associated deaths (23 029; CFR 5.8%) followed by Iraq (7941; CFR 2.8%) and Pakistan (6379; CFR 2.1%). The highest CFRs were reported by Yemen (29%) followed by Sudan (6.2%), while the lowest CFRs were reported by Qatar (0.2%) followed by Bahrain (0.4%).

During epidemiological week 37, the Region reported a 14.2% increase in cases when compared to the previous week (105 370 cases compared to 92 294 cases). Similarly, a 2.7% increase was observed for associated deaths (2302 deaths compared to 2242 deaths). The weekly trend per capita showed a slight increase as compared to the previous week (287/100 000 compared to 260 /100 000).

Libya, Tunisia and Jordan reported a relative increase in COVID-19 activity. The cumulative number of cases in Libya increased from 17 094 to 22 348 (31% increase compared to the previous week), Tunisia from 4776 to 6635 (31% increase) and Jordan from 2353 to 3062 (30% increase). Jordan had the largest relative increase in deaths (38%) followed by Libya (30%) and Lebanon (22%).

In terms of testing, a total of 30 666 343 laboratory PCR tests were conducted since the start of the outbreak across the Region including 2 350 696 tests in week 37, which shows a 23% increase compared to the previous week (1 907 679). The highest number of PCR tests were reported from United Arab Emirates (8 million), followed by Saudi Arabia (5.6 million) and Islamic Republic of Iran (3.5 million). The United Arab Emirates and Bahrain are performing the highest rate of testing per capita (81 319/100 000 and 72 885/100 000, 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.

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 areas of coordination and partnership, surveillance, laboratory capacity, clinical management, infection prevention and control, risk communication, points of entry according to the International Health Regulations (2005), research, health system, essential health services and others. Activities this week included:

publishing new interim guidance on antigen-detection in the diagnosis of SARS-CoV-2 infection using rapid immunoassays;

publishing new interim guidance on diagnostic testing for SARS-CoV-2;

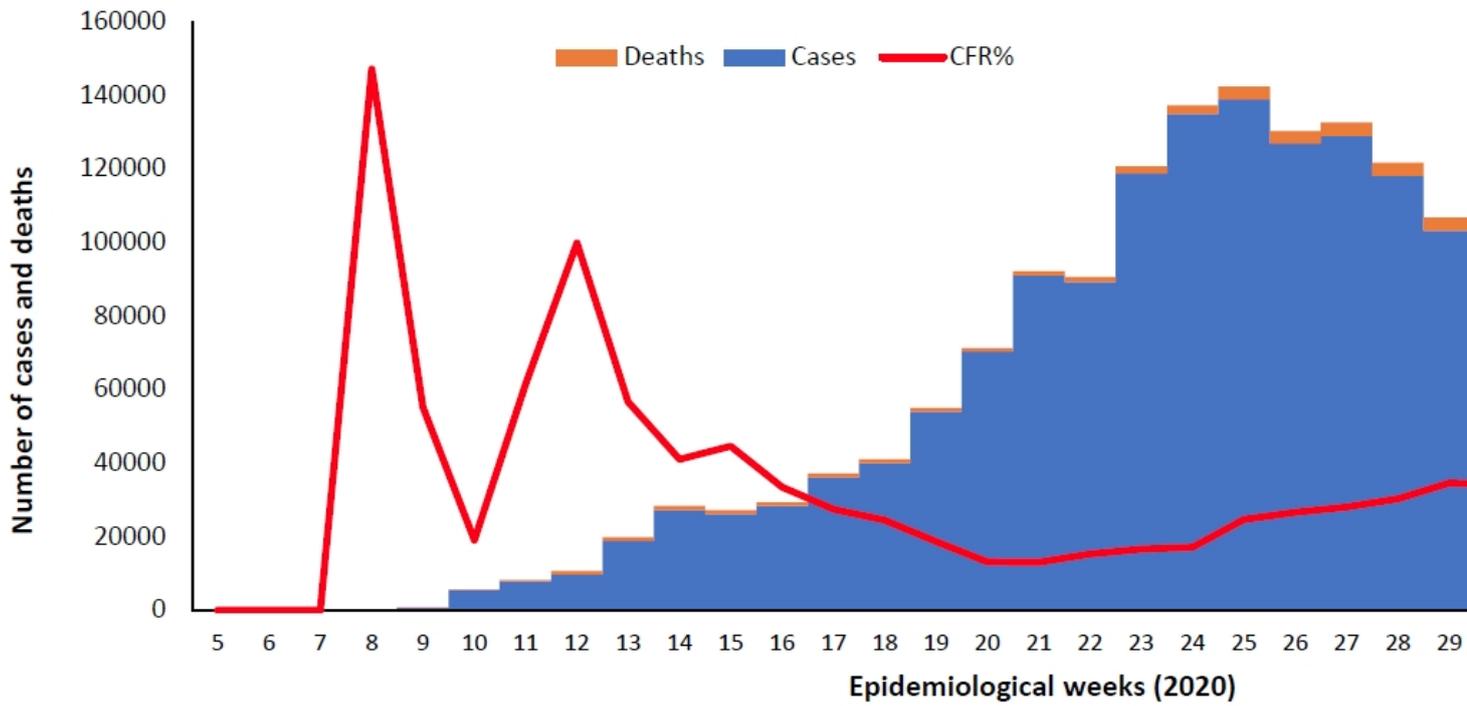
holding online trainings for health and security frontline workers on remote and face-to-face services for GBV survivors in Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan, Somalia, Sudan and Syria;

releasing the 16th partners SitRep on health of refugees and migrants;

updating the interim guidance on health of refugees and migrants in the context of COVID-19 by the regional office;

conducting country-tailored COVID-19 clinical management training sessions for Jordan;

providing technical support to Somalia as part of capacity building for hospital management.



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