



## COVID-19 surveillance Weekly bulletin for Libya Epidemiological Week 11 (8 – 14 March)

Data as received from the National Center for Disease Center (NCDC)

Total tested	New tested	Total confirmed	New confirmed	Total recovered	New recovered	Total deaths	New deaths
808,251	32,242	146,080	6,422	132,697	5,819	4,202	114

### Highlights

- Out of the total 808,251 tests done since the beginning of the response, 146,080 were confirmed positive for SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19).
- Although slight improvement in testing is seen in the West (23% increase), testing continues to be West Tripoli-centric with very low levels of testing in the East and South during reporting week. (-See fig. 1)
- The positivity rate for Epi-Week 11 decreased to 17.9%, this may be attributable to low laboratory testing reported from the East (79% decrease).
- Community transmission is ongoing. The overall number of new cases reported shows a 16% increase compared to the prior week, with East reporting a 74% increase in new cases.
- Although the cumulative number of new deaths (114) increased by 46% when compared to last week, in Epi-Week 11, there were 1.7 deaths per 100,000 cases with a case fatality rate slightly increasing to 1.8%.
- West and East regions reported an increase in new deaths (Table 1), showing a 61% and a significant 300% increase, respectively.
- From the data analysis of Epi week 11, East Region is having the largest number of confirmed cases and deaths with the least number of tests performed (1% of the total tests performed in the country).
- Libya remains classified under community transmission with a verified circulation of Variant of Concern VOC 202012/01(B.1.1.7, UK Variant). In addition, on the 17<sup>th</sup> March, the Libyan authorities have confirmed the presence of VOC 202012/02(B.1.351, South African Variant) in 15 samples by NCDC Misrata.

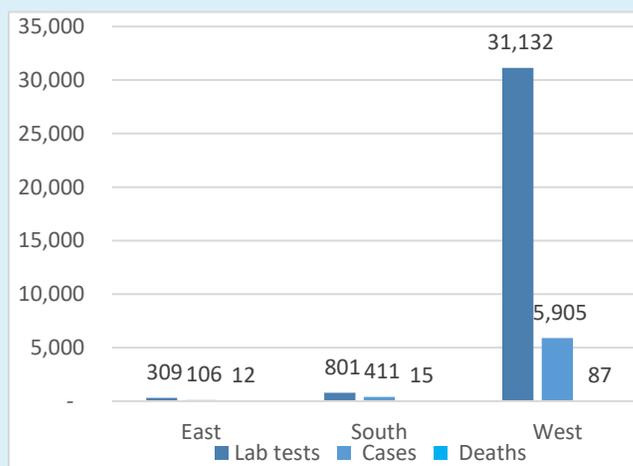


Fig. 1: Comparative bars by # tests, # cases and 3 deaths by region.

### Epidemiological situation:

	Positivity Rate	Case incidence per 100,000	Mortality rate per 100,000	Case Fatality Rate
Epi week 11	17.9	94.3	1.7	1.8%
Cumulative	18.1%	2145	35.3	1.6%

Region	New cases in the last 7 days (%)	Change in new cases in the last 7 days	Cumulative cases (%)	New deaths in the last 7 days (%)	Change in new deaths in the last 7 days	Cumulative deaths (%)	New lab tests are done in the last 7 days (%)	Change in new labs tests in the last 7 days	Cumulative lab tests (%)	Positivity rate	Cumulative positivity rate
West	5,905 (92%)	16%	134,188 (92%)	87 (76.3%)	61%	1,953 (81.3%)	31,132 (96.5%)	23.24%	755,158 (93.4%)	19	18
East	106 (1.6%)	74%	5807 (4%)	12 (10.5%)	300%	258 (10.7%)	309 (1%)	-78.7%	33,932 (4.2%)	34.3	17
South	411 (6.4%)	9%	6085 (4%)	6085 (4%)	-29%	191 (8%)	801 (2.5%)	-0.8%	19,161 (2.4%)	51.3	32
Libya	<b>6,422 (100%)</b>	<b>16%</b>	<b>146,080 (100%)</b>	<b>114 (100%)</b>	<b>46%</b>	<b>2,402 (100%)</b>	<b>32,242 (100%)</b>	<b>17%</b>	<b>808,251 (100%)</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>18</b>

Table 1: Cumulative and within last 7 days comparative positive COVID-19 cases, testing and deaths.

As seen in figure #2 below, Epi-week 11 shows that testing reached a new high with 32,242 tests performed, the surpass the highest testing week reported in Epi week 50 in 2020. Although in absolute numbers, appears that testing is on the right track, most resources remained concentrated in the West. If we focus on the West, even with the huge number of tests conducted, the positivity rate remains 19% signifying the need for more testing and continuous community transmission in the West, a more equitable distribution.

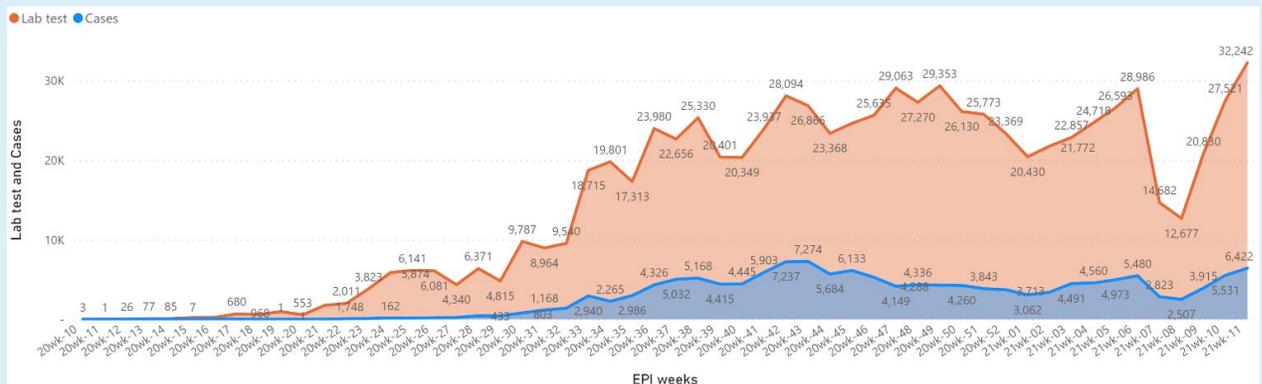


Fig. 2: Number of COVID-19 Laboratory tests performed vs confirmed positive cases per Epi-Week 2020-2021 calendars.

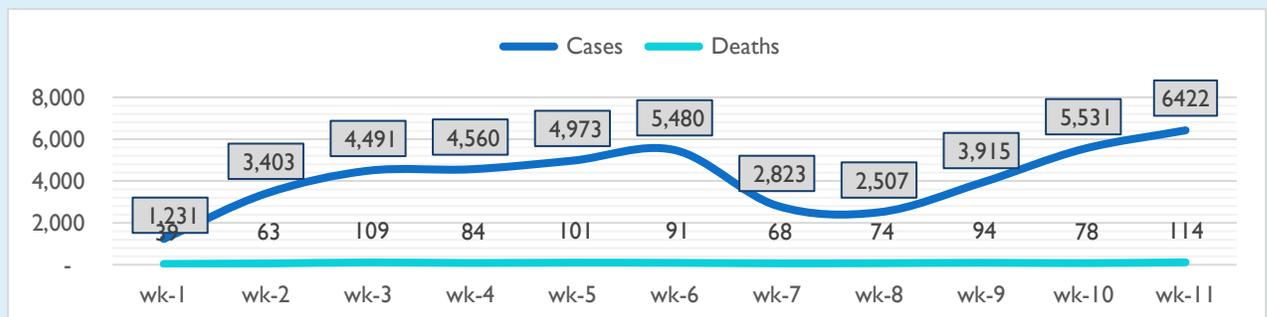


Fig. 3: Weekly COVID-19 cases and deaths, as of 14 March 2021 (Epi week 11)

Figure 3 above reflects the weekly number of cases and deaths for this year, reflecting the significant increase in both testing and the number of cases at the national level.

In the past week, 55% of all districts showed an increase in the number of new cases. The three districts reporting the highest number of new cases continue to be in Tripoli, with 3,015 (8% increase), Misrata 1018 (29% increase) and Aljara with 675 new cases, a 51% increase. It must be noted that Benghazi, Al Marj and Jabal al Akhdar districts reported no data in three weeks.

In terms of the number of confirmed cases in the percentage of change since last week, the highest increase has been seen in districts of Sirte (370% increase), Nalut (118%) and Aljara (51%) in West; Ghat (200% increase) and Ubari (127%) in the South; Derna (900%) and Ejdabia (440%) in the East. The highest case decrease has been seen in Tobruk in the East, and Wadi Ashaati and Murzuq in the South. The decrease in cases is assumed to be the cause of limited testing resources. See Table II below for absolute numbers.

Region	District	Cases		% increase / decrease		Deaths		% increase / decrease		Wk-11	
		wk-10	wk-11			wk-10	wk-11			Case incidence per 100,000	Mortality rate per 100,000
East	Al Jabal Al Akhdar	0	0	-	●	0	0	-	●	0	0
East	Alkufra	34	35	3	●	3	3	0	●	62	5
East	Almarj	0	0	-	●			-	●	0	0
East	Benghazi	0	0	-	●			-	●	0	0
East	Derna	0	9	900	●		2	200	●	4	1
East	Ejdabia	0	44	440	●		9	900	●	21	4
East	Tobruk	27	17	-37	●		1	100	●	8	0
South	Aljufra	32	27	-16	●		1	100	●	45	2
South	Ghat	0	2	200	●			-	●	7	0
South	Murzuq	16	7	-56	●			-	●	7	0
South	Sebha	246	220	-11	●	20	13	-35	●	131	8
South	Ubari	11	25	127	●			-	●	27	0
South	Wadi Ashshati	73	30	-59	●	1	1	0	●	31	1
West	Al Jabal Al Gharbi	433	527	22	●		6	600	●	143	2
West	Aljara	447	675	51	●	10	8	-20	●	122	1
West	Almargeb	189	185	-2	●	4	4	0	●	34	1
West	Azzawya	233	233	0	●	2	5	150	●	64	1
West	Misrata	788	1018	29	●	10	7	-30	●	150	1
West	Nalut	74	161	118	●	2	8	300	●	147	7
West	Sirt	10	47	370	●	2		-100	●	31	0
West	Tripoli	2790	3015	8	●	19	43	200	●	247	4
West	Zwara	128	145	13	●	5	3	-40	●	40	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5531</b>	<b>6422</b>			<b>78</b>	<b>114</b>			<b>94.3</b>	<b>1.7</b>



Table II: Comparative number and trends of COVID-19 positive cases and deaths in epi week 10 vs 11 by district

The positivity rate of the South Region increased from 47% to 51%, more than double the positivity rate of 19% for the West, while the positivity rate of the East region increased from 4.2% to 34.3%. This means higher transmission in the South while the East resumed lab data reporting.

## Implementing Antigen based Rapid Diagnostic Test (Ag-RDT) testing in Libya

Since the beginning of the year, COVID-19 cases continue to spread and be laboratory confirmed throughout the country. The increase PCR testing, had stretch the laboratory capacities in terms of number of tests available, reagents, etc. As the needs increased, the country has not been able to fully support these needs creating the need for a faster approach. During the month of February 2021, both national and regional laboratories under the NCDC, requested the WHO support for the use of Ag-RTDs. Although the National Strategy and plan of action did not include their use in the Libyan response. The Ag-RDTs use was approved by WHO and Libya had shown interest in implementing this approach. WHO country office decided to support the Ag-RDT use based on urgent needs (demand) and on the following criteria:

- There were areas/districts where PCR testing was not available or if available, the turnaround times were prolonged, and people had to travel large distances to get testing in specialized NCDC labs.
- Even where COVID -10 are available, infrastructure and HR issues cause occasional closure of these labs, including prolonged electricity outages, staff getting infected with COVID-19 and stoppage of pays for the healthcare staff and many a time due to stock-outs of reagents and consumables. areas with limited infrastructure, for example, locations without electricity.
- Contact tracing efficiency by RRTs is still not up to the mark and many contacts are not tested just because of long procedures related to lab testing and long turnaround times of more than 3 days even in the bigger labs.

## Current situation

- Libya started using Antigen Rapid Diagnostic Tests (Ag-RDTs) in NCDC labs and hospitals.
- Ag-RDTs manufactured by Vircell and Siemens-Healthineers use, are not WHO approved.
- The laboratories are not using a national algorithm demonstrating the steps to follow in the use of antigen based RDTs (that meet minimum performance criteria), and some hospitals/ isolation centers are using the makers/indigenous algorithm.
- As request by NCDC regional and national laboratories, WHO trained lab personnel on the use of approved Antigen-based RDTs. The training was completed in the East (Benghazi) Region, planned in the South (Sebha) during this month of March, need to be conducted in West (Tripoli)
- WHO-approved the procurement and distribution of 80,000 WHO-approved Ag-RDT.

## Proposed

- To revise the National testing strategy with the inclusion of Ag-RDT for the recommended WHO criteria usage and WHO-approved RDTs.
- To review COVID-19 testing capacities across Libya.
- To establish a national diagnostic committee.
- Encourage the use of WHO approved Ag-RDTs
- Complete Ag-RDT training in West and South for lab personnel on standard WHO training package
- Advocate on development of national algorithm and guidelines based on global WHO normative guidance and implementation guide
- Ensure country readiness for this testing strategy as per the checklist
- Decide reporting mechanism of these tests along with the current PCR test reporting
- The burden of COVID-19 in detention centers for IDPs, migrants, refugees is still unknown and WHO had planned to conduct mass screening in these vulnerable populations.

## New global COVID-19 WHO normative guidance made available this week.

- [How to monitor and report COVID-19 vaccine side effects](#)
- [Interim recommendations for the use of the Janssen Ad26.COV2.S \(COVID-19\) vaccine](#)
- [Background document on the Janssen Ad26.COV2.S \(COVID-19\) vaccine:](#)

## Links to important resources

- [Technical Guidance](#)
- [WHO Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Dashboard](#)
- [WHO COVID-19 Operational Updates](#)
- [WHO COVID-19 case definitions](#)
- [WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region Update](#)
- [COVID-19 Dynamic Infographic Dashboard for Libya](#)
- [National Center for Disease Control Libya Facebook page](#)
- [WHO Libya Facebook page](#)
- [WHO Libya Twitter handle](#)
- [Risk Communication and Community Engagement Resources and Updates](#)

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For more information, please visit [www.who.int](http://www.who.int) | [www.reliefweb.int](http://www.reliefweb.int) | [www.humanitarianresponse.info](http://www.humanitarianresponse.info)