

Current major event

The seventh meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee on the COVID-19 pandemic

Based on the current situation, the Emergency Committee and the WHO Director-General determined on 15 April 2021 that the COVID-19 pandemic remains a public health emergency of international concern (PHEIC). The WHO Director-General will reconvene the Emergency Committee within three months or earlier.

Editorial note

The seventh meeting of the Emergency Committee, convened by the WHO Director-General under the International Health Regulations (2005) (IHR) regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, took place on Thursday, 15 April 2021. The Committee unanimously agreed that the COVID-19 pandemic still constitutes an extraordinary event that continues to adversely affect the health of populations around the world, poses a risk of international spread and interference with international traffic, and requires a coordinated international response.

The Secretariat presented WHO's implementation of the Committee's 15 January 2021 advice, recent global and regional epidemiological trends, updates on the *WHO-convened Global Study of Origins of SARS-CoV-2*, the global COVID-19 vaccine, WHO's impact assessment, and WHO actions related to health measures in relation to international traffic (see box above).

The Committee noted that many of the past recommendations remain relevant to current global response efforts, and gave advice to the WHO Secretariat and temporary recommendations to States Parties. Advice and recommendations covered COVID-19 vaccination, SARS-CoV-2 variants, health measures in relation to international traffic, the origin of SARS-CoV-2, One Health, risk communications and community engagement, and risk management. Essential health services and health systems strengthening were also covered as extensions and updates of previous advice and temporary recommendations.

Advice to the WHO Secretariat included: promoting global solidarity and equitable vaccine access by encouraging States Parties and manufacturers to support the COVAX Facility; supporting States Parties to

The Secretariat presented on the following topics

- Progress made on WHO's implementation of the 15 January 2021 advice to the Secretariat.
- Recent global and regional epidemiological trends; the tracking, monitoring and assessment process for SARS-CoV-2 variants; updates on the mission to understand SARS-CoV-2 origins; and the actions that WHO is taking to ensure a coordinated response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Global COVID-19 vaccine rollout and equity, the impact of vaccines on asymptomatic infection and transmission, and vaccine performance against variants of concern.
- WHO's assessment of the impact of SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern on public health interventions.
- An overview of WHO actions related to health measures in relation to international traffic.

Source: [https://www.who.int/news/item/19-04-2021-statement-on-the-seventh-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-\(2005\)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-coronavirus-disease-\(covid-19\)-pandemic](https://www.who.int/news/item/19-04-2021-statement-on-the-seventh-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-(2005)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-coronavirus-disease-(covid-19)-pandemic)

strengthen their epidemiological and virologic surveillance; updating the WHO December 2020 risk-based guidance for reducing SARS-CoV-2 transmission related to international travel based on current science and best practices; proceeding with rapid implementation of the recommendations in the *WHO-convened Global Study of Origins of SARS-CoV-2* report; promoting One Health approaches to better understand and reduce the risk of spill-over of emerging infections; and working with partners to support States Parties in strengthening their essential health services.

Temporary recommendations to States Parties included: contributing to global solidarity efforts to increase equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines and ancillary supplies by supporting the COVAX Facility; strengthening epidemiological and virologic surveillance as part of a comprehensive strategy to control COVID-19 and leverage existing systems such as the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS) and relevant networks for systematic sharing of data and specimens; not requiring proof of vaccination as a condition of entry to a territory/state; strengthening the regulation of wet markets and discouraging the sale or import of wild animals that pose a high risk of transmission of novel pathogens; supporting global research efforts to better understand critical unknowns about SARS-CoV-2 including the origin of the virus; communicating about COVID-19 vaccinations clearly and consistently; and maintaining essential health services with sufficient funding, supplies, and human resources.

The Director-General accepted the advice of the Committee to WHO and issued the Committee's advice to States Parties as Temporary Recommendations under the IHR (2005).

Update on outbreaks

in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

COVID-19 in 22 EMR countries

Current public health events of concern [cumulative N° of cases (deaths), CFR %]

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19): 2019-2021

Afghanistan	[59 015 (2592), 4.4%]
Bahrain	[170 335 (620), 0.4%]
Djibouti	[10 746 (132), 1.2%]
Egypt	[221 570 (12 998), 5.9%]
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	[2 377 039 (69 120), 2.9%]
Iraq	[1 025 288 (15 217), 1.5%]
Jordan	[700 423 (8563), 1.2%]
Kuwait	[265 404 (1511), 0.6%]
Lebanon	[519 615 (7118), 1.4%]
Libya	[175 286 (2996), 1.7%]
Morocco	[509 037 (8988), 1.8%]
occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)	[319 100 (3419), 1.1%]
Oman	[185 278 (1942), 1%]
Pakistan	[795 627 (17 117), 2.2%]
Qatar	[201 496 (418), 0.2%]
Saudi Arabia	[411 263 (6887), 1.7%]
Somalia	[13 459 (689), 5.1%]
Sudan	[33 797 (2333), 6.9%]
Syrian Arab Republic	[21 999 (1526), 6.9%]
Tunisia	[300 342 (10 304), 3.4%]
United Arab Emirates	[508 925 (1569), 0.3%]
Yemen	[6109 (1176), 19.3%]