

Current major event

Release of the 2020 progress report of the COVID-19 Incident Management Support Team

The 2020 progress report for COVID-19 response in the Region was published by the Incident Management Support Team (IMST). It summarizes IMST activities and achievements over the past year, while paving the way for the response as the pandemic evolves.

Editorial note

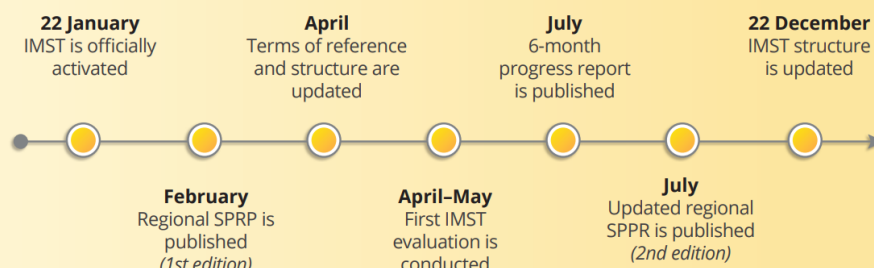
Since its establishment on 22 January 2020, a week before the reporting of the first case of COVID-19 in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, the IMST, composed of eight pillars, or key technical and operational groups, has coordinated the COVID-19 response by providing strategic, operational and technical support to countries in the Region.

The IMST's achievements in regional capacity building, coordination and guidance made the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean a central player and a global asset in successfully responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over US\$ 483 million were mobilized for the COVID-19 response in the Region in 2020, meaning that the Regional Office had secured the highest amount of funds and had the highest utilization rate of funds received among the WHO regions. A record-breaking value of supplies was dispatched, with the WHO logistics hub in Dubai serving as the largest repository of medical equipment and supplies in the world (*see table*).

Moreover, the involvement of 10 countries from the Region in the global Solidarity trial and the establishment of two regional reference laboratories were significant accomplishments of the Health Operations and Technical Expertise pillar of the IMST in 2020. Despite pre-existing emergencies in the Region, SARS-CoV-2 genetic sequencing capacities were scaled up to 11 countries in 2020. Twelve sero-epidemiological surveys for COVID-19 were supported in seven countries of the Region.

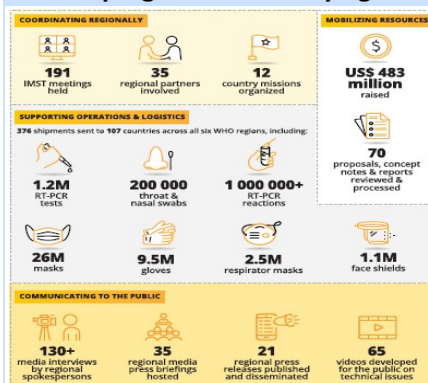
Coordination, one of IMST's core functions, was maintained through a regional network of 35 entities including United Nations agencies, nongovernmental organizations, donors and academia. For improved and timely information sharing, the Health Information Management and Surveillance pillar established sets of indicators, tools and reporting mechanisms to analyse and disseminate epidemiological COVID-19 data, preparing over 650 daily epidemiological updates in 2020. Providing up-to-date information to the general public, especially regarding hygiene etiquette and to fight misinformation, was made possible through over 130 media interviews by regional spokespersons. Reach was expanded through social media, with over 184 000 more Twitter followers and almost 1.9 million new Facebook

2020 timeline: Regional IMST for COVID-19



Source: <https://applications.emro.who.int/docs/9789290226765-eng.pdf>

IMST progress in 2020: key figures



followers in 2020.

Technical guidance was provided to countries on a regular basis, which were tailored to the regional situation through interim guidance documents, review and assessment missions to countries, training courses and webinars. In 2020, over 18 000 primary health care physicians received online training, and over 2180 health care providers were trained on sexual and reproductive health and/or maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health. Interactive dashboards were created, such as the Eastern Mediterranean Region Travel Measures platform, a true innovation to track public health and social measures and potentially associated rises and falls in COVID-19 cases and deaths. For this, the establishment of the modelling team was especially useful, and was a unique endeavour to assist countries in implementing the most effective measures nationally and sub-nationally.

Over a year after the activation of the IMST, the Regional Office continues to support countries to leverage and sustain effective response capacities to suppress transmission, reduce exposure and minimize the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in countries of the Eastern Mediterranean Region, while acting to build resilient health systems, as set in the Region's COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan for 2021.

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	[115 751 (4730), 4.1%]
Bahrain	[264 995 (1341), 0.5%]
Djibouti	[11 600 (155), 1.3%]
Egypt	[280 005 (16 062), 5.7%]
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	[3 157 983 (83 711), 2.7%]
Iraq	[1 321 232 (17 061), 1.3%]
Jordan	[749 319 (9718), 1.3%]
Kuwait	[349 923 (1919), 0.5%]
Lebanon	[544 291 (7841), 1.4%]
Libya	[192 470 (3187), 1.7%]
Morocco	[529 224 (9273), 1.8%]
occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)	[342 481 (3826), 1.1%]
Oman	[260 506 (2925), 1.1%]
Pakistan	[954 743 (22 211), 2.3%]
Qatar	[221 590 (588), 0.3%]
Saudi Arabia	[482 003 (7760), 1.6%]
Somalia	[14 892 (775), 5.2%]
Sudan	[36 620 (2754), 7.5%]
Syrian Arab Republic	[25 365 (1864), 7.3%]
Tunisia	[407 017 (14 654), 3.6%]
United Arab Emirates	[624 814 (1792), 0.3%]
Yemen	[6906 (1358), 19.7%]