

## Current major event

### Update on measles outbreak in Afghanistan

The Ministry of Public Health in Afghanistan has reported 2498 suspected measles cases with 87 associated deaths since the beginning of year (case-fatality ratio of 3.5%). This recent outbreak has been reported from all the provinces of the country.

#### Editorial note

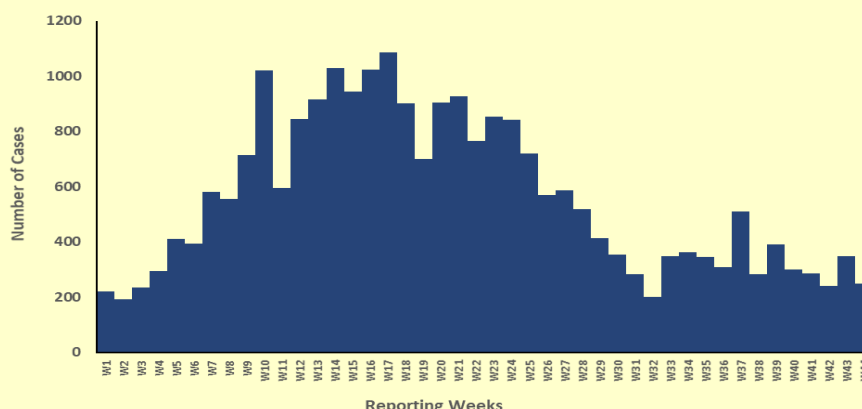
Measles is caused by a virus in the paramyxovirus family and is normally passed through direct contact and through the air. The virus infects the respiratory tract before spreading to the rest of the body.

A sudden rise in reported cases was observed at the start of the year. A total of 2498 suspected cases and 87 associated deaths (CFR 3.5%) were reported from all 20 provinces of the country. Available data from the past indicates that the country has experienced multiple measles outbreaks every year. The overall measles vaccination coverage rate in Afghanistan is below the international standard.

During 2021, cases were reported from the northern, southern and eastern regions, with the most affected provinces being Helmand (5634; 22.5%), Kabul (2160; 8.6%), Paktya (1996; 8%) and Kandahar (1831; 7.3%) (*see table*). In addition, 87 associated deaths were reported from four provinces, with the highest CFR reported from Parwan (16.7%) followed by Faryab (3.1%), Jawzjan (3%) and Ghor (2.7%). According to available data, 80% of the cases reported were under 5 years of age. Since the start of the current outbreak, a total of 3217 samples were tested and 2397 were reported as positive by the six reporting laboratories. The ministry in coordination with WHO and partners has planned a nationwide measles vaccination campaign which will be implemented in 2022. The initial duration for this campaign will be 15 days including the pre-campaign training. The target population will be children aged 9–59 months for measles and those above six months for Vitamin A. Community awareness about measles was raised in affected provinces.

A weak immunization programme in the country and inadequate surveillance due to lack of access to health services in security-compromised areas are leading to low population immunity against measles resulting in the excessive build-up of susceptible children.

Trend of measles suspected cases, weeks 1–44, 2021, Afghanistan



Suspected measles cases during 2021

Province	Suspected Measles cases	Suspected Measles death
Badakhshan	479	-
Badghis	235	-
Baghlan	33	-
Balkh	1287	3
Bamyan	127	-
Dykundi	21	-
Farah	258	-
Faryab	32	1
Ghazni	1326	-
Ghor	1045	25
Helmand	5634	-
Hirat	351	3
Jawzjan	360	11
Kabul	2160	7
Kandahar	1831	-
Kapisa	128	-
Khost	728	-
Kunar	150	-
Kunduz	362	1
Laghman	5	-
Logar	1250	-
Nangarhar	931	8
Nimroz	113	1
Nooristan	9	-
Paktika	1507	8
Paktya	1996	7
Panjsher	3	-
Parwan	12	2
Samangan	184	4
Sar-e-Pul	34	-
Takhar	38	-
Urozgan	472	5
Wardak	1049	-
Zabul	877	2

Measles is almost entirely preventable through two doses of a safe and effective vaccine. In the current situation, it is imperative to implement nationwide supplementary immunization campaigns to address immunity gaps and interrupt transmission, in addition to increasing social mobilization activities to enhance acceptance and the participation of the local communities in the campaigns.

### 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	[156 397 (7287), 4.7%]
Bahrain	[277 041 (1393), 0.5%]
Djibouti	[13 491 (186), 1.4%]
Egypt	[336 582 (19 011), 5.6%]
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	[5 980 260 (127 173), 2.1%]
Iraq	[2 061 939 (23319), 1.1%]
Jordan	[873 707 (11 114), 1.3%]
Kuwait	[412 821 (2462), 0.6%]
Lebanon	[645 805 (8540), 1.3%]
Libya	[360 914 (5207), 1.4%]
Morocco	[947 307 (14 706), 1.6%]
occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)	[455 491 (4716), 1%]
Oman	[304 354 (4112), 1.4%]
Pakistan	[1 276 711 (28 538), 2.2%]
Qatar	[239 995 (611), 0.3%]
Saudi Arabia	[548 890 (8803), 1.6%]
Somalia	[22 693 (1294), 5.7%]
Sudan	[40 433 (2995), 7.4%]
Syrian Arab Republic	[44 899 (2613), 5.8%]
Tunisia	[713 308 (25 276), 3.5%]
United Arab Emirates	[740 362 (2139), 0.3%]
Yemen	[9858 (1907), 19.3%]