

## Current major event

### Infectious disease outbreaks in the Region during 2021

Ten major emerging infectious diseases outbreaks occurred in the Eastern Mediterranean Region during 2021 in addition to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. These outbreaks included poliomyelitis, acute watery diarrhoea/cholera, dengue fever, diphtheria, Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

### Editorial note

In 2021, 23 794 reported cases and 893 associated deaths resulted from emerging infectious disease outbreaks in the WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region other than the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

**Acute watery diarrhoea (AWD):** Between 12 September and 31 December, a total of 4915 cases of AWD had been reported in Afghanistan. Of these cases, 94.1% are from Kabul province (including Kabul city and Sarobi district), with a total of eight associated deaths (CFR 0.16%) being reported (six from Kabul city and two from Sarobi district).

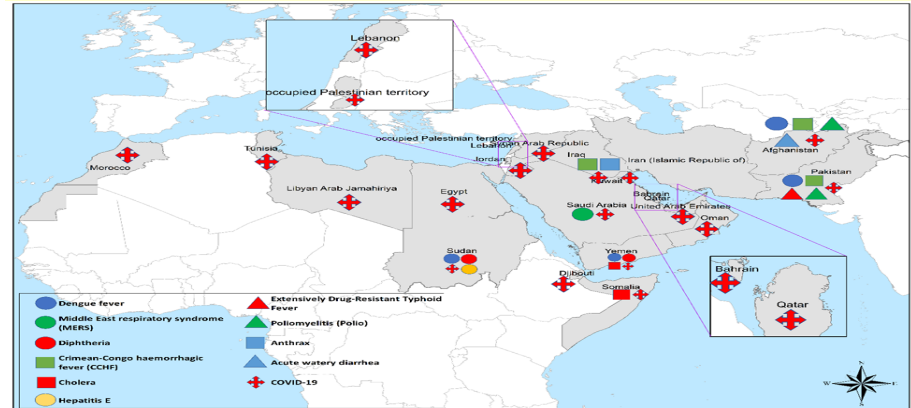
**Cholera:** The cholera outbreak in Somalia continued into 2021 with 4577 suspected cases including 36 associated deaths giving a case-fatality ration (CFR) of 0.8% during the year. Most of the cases were from the Banadir region. The cholera outbreak in Yemen also continued into 2021 with the cumulative number of suspected cholera cases reported from January to April 2021 being 25 956 with 16 associated deaths (CFR 0.06%).

**Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever (CCHF):** CCHF continued to be reported in 2021 in Afghanistan where it is endemic. A total of 87 cases were reported with 5 deaths (CFR 5.7%) from January to December. Most of the cases were reported from Herat (36%) of the reported cases) and Kabul (23%) provinces. In neighbouring Pakistan a total of 28 confirmed cases were reported. In Iraq, 45 suspected cases with 13 associated deaths (CFR 29%) were reported since week 19 of 2021, among which 16 cases and deaths were laboratory confirmed. Most of the cases were reported from Thi Qar governorate (80%).

**Dengue fever:** Afghanistan experienced a surge in cases since 12 September 2021 with 761 suspected cases reported from Nangarhar province with one associated death leading to a CFR of 0.13%. In Pakistan the number of suspected dengue cases were 256 226 from January to 18 November, while total laboratory-confirmed cases were 41 500. The total reported deaths was 228 with CFR 0.09%. Punjab province reported 45% of all cases, the highest in the country. Meanwhile Sudan reported a total of 738 cases and four deaths (CFR 0.54%) from 5 October. In Yemen a total of 1061 cases, including 66 deaths (CFR 6.2%) were reported from 14 governorates during epidemiological weeks 1–47.

**Diphtheria:** On 16 February, Sudan reported five probable diphtheria cases in South Darfur state. Investigation teams found 14 more probable cases and 11 deaths among children under 15 years of age in Buram locality. Three cases were confirmed

## Countries of the Region reporting infectious disease outbreaks in 2021



### Disease outbreaks in Afghanistan, 2021

Diseases/ syndromes	Cases	Deaths
Acute watery diarrhoea	4915	8
Dengue fever	761	1
Measles	30 199	108
Polio	4	-
CCHF	86	5

by culture in February. In Yemen, a total of 7874 suspected diphtheria cases were reported including 700 that were laboratory-confirmed, with 500 related deaths (CFR 6.3%).

**Extensively drug-resistant (XDR) typhoid fever:** Pakistan continued to report XDR typhoid until August 2021. A total of 2348 cases were reported from different districts of Sindh province, bringing the total reported since 2016 to 21 198.

**Hepatitis E:** Sudan reported since week 22 with a total of 1944 cases including 24 associated deaths, with a CFR of 1.23%. Of the total reported cases, Gedarf state represented 74.2% followed by South Darfur at 18%. Hepatitis E cases reported from Ethiopian refugee camps constitute 70.7% of all cases in Sudan. Of the total deaths, 87.5% were reported from North Darfur state with a CFR of 25.3%.

**Measles:** Afghanistan reported 30 199 suspected measles cases with 108 associated deaths since the beginning of year giving a CFR of 3.6%. This outbreak has been reported from all the provinces of the country. In total, 2458 out of 3362 samples collected were laboratory-confirmed.

**Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS):** MERS cases continued to be reported sporadically throughout 2021 with a total of 12 laboratory-confirmed cases and one associated death (CFR 8.3%). Saudi Arabia reported 11 cases and one death while United Arab Emirates report one case during 2021.

**Poliomyelitis (polio):** The Eastern Mediterranean Region reported five cases of wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Fifty four cases of circulating vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) were detected in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia and Yemen, while 87 cVDPV2 isolates were found in sewage water samples in Afghanistan, Egypt, Islamic Republic of Iran, Pakistan and Somalia.

The Regional Office continued to provide technical support to the affected countries to contain the outbreaks through the application of science-based public health interventions.

## 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): 2019–2022

Afghanistan	[158 381 (7373), 4.7%]
Bahrain	[290 572 (1397), 0.5%]
Djibouti	[14 177 (189), 1.3%]
Egypt	[392 857 (21 964), 5.6%]
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	[6 205 997 (131 878), 2.1%]
Iraq	[2 097 540 (24 207), 1.2%]
Jordan	[1 079 781 (12 876), 1.2%]
Kuwait	[433 919 (2471), 0.6%]
Lebanon	[774 180 (9283), 1.2%]
Libya	[393 447 (5788), 1.5%]
Morocco	[1 002 084 (14 911), 1.5%]
occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)	[472 910 (4978), 1.1%]
Oman	[307 722 (4118), 1.3%]
Pakistan	[1 304 058 (28 969), 2.2%]
Qatar	[270 651 (618), 0.2%]
Saudi Arabia	[578 753 (8893), 1.5%]
Somalia	[24 261 (1335), 5.5%]
Sudan	[48 606 (3347), 6.9%]
Syrian Arab Republic	[50 502 (2926), 5.8%]
Tunisia	[743 838 (25 665), 3.5%]
United Arab Emirates	[785 625 (2174), 0.3%]
Yemen	[10 197 (1986), 19.5%]