

Current major event

COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan, 2022 Edition

Built around the aim of “sustaining an effective response to end the acute phase of the pandemic and transitioning to recovery in WHO’s Eastern Mediterranean Region,” the 2022 edition of the COVID-19 strategic preparedness and response plan (SPRP) was published as an update to the 2021 edition and paves the way forward for 2022.

Editorial note

The acute phase of the pandemic is still ongoing as more cases and deaths were reported in the first half of 2022, and some countries are suffering from record rates of hospitalization and death due to the Omicron variant of concern (VOC). In the first six months of 2022, high levels of infection continue to be observed globally, large proportions of populations remain unvaccinated, and the risk of new VOCs emerging is high.

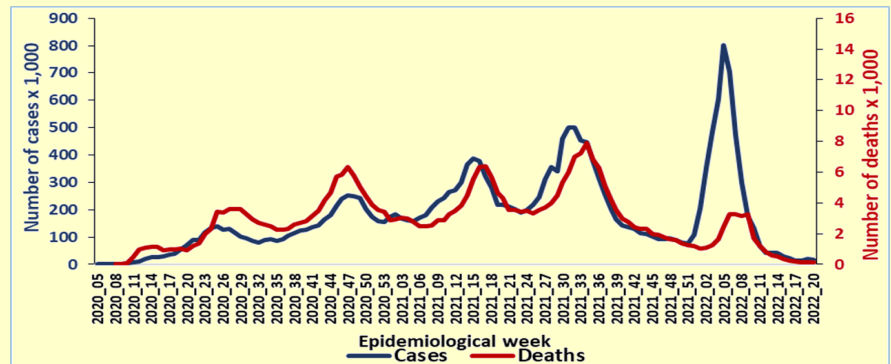
With the experience and lessons learned from 2020 and 2021, the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean has developed the [2022 edition of the SPRP](#). The document sets the goal and objectives that will guide the response in 2022, and the priority actions that WHO will undertake to sustain, strengthen, adapt and transition the COVID-19 response.

In 2020 and 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic took a toll on economies and health systems globally, and challenged local, national, regional and global capacities to prepare for and respond to public health threats. With nine major humanitarian emergencies in the Region, 102 million people needing humanitarian assistance (37% of the global total) and 32.3 million people forcibly displaced, the impact on Members States and populations in the Eastern Mediterranean Region was pronounced.

In order for the Region to successfully respond to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2022, the Incident Management Support Team for COVID-19 (IMST) in WHO’s Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean has anticipated three “best to worst” scenarios, which will all need:

- accelerating vaccine coverage, with a focus on reaching the WHO target of 70% of the population of all countries fully vaccinated by mid-2022, and recommending a booster dose for high-risk groups;
- supporting case management (through access to therapeutics, availability of medical oxygen, and intensive care unit capacity), including prioritizing the most vulnerable groups, especially those living in fragile, conflict-affected and vulnerable (FCV) countries;
- increasing adherence to public health and social measures, such as mask-wearing and limiting social gatherings; and

Weekly distribution of COVID-19 cases and deaths in the EMR January 2020 to 14 May 2022



Summary of the SPRP’s strategic objectives for COVID-19 in EMR in 2022

Objectives;

- Leadership, coordination and political investment
- Surveillance and laboratory diagnostics
- Vaccination
- Public health and social measures
- Risk communication and community engagement
- Clinical care and the protection of health workers
- Health systems and essential services
- Access to essential tools
- enhancing genomic sequencing and surveillance capacity nationally and sub-nationally, and monitoring variant circulation.

Special attention will be given to populations living in FCV countries where COVID-19 data is limited and response capacity is low. Six countries in the Region had not yet reached 10% of coverage (fully vaccinated) in 2021: Afghanistan, Djibouti, Somalia, Sudan, Syrian Arab Republic and Yemen. Main areas of focus in all countries will include ending the acute phase of the pandemic, health systems recovery and resilience, and health workforce development for a stronger response and lasting impact.

The goal set in the SPRP for 2022 is:

“Accelerate efforts to end the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic with an integrated, sustained and comprehensive response, while building the foundations for better preparedness and health systems recovery and resilience.”

The SPRP identifies key lessons learned from 2021 to leverage the COVID-19 response in 2022, based on each pillar of the IMST. It presents each pillar’s priority activities for COVID-19 preparedness and response for 2022, alongside the budget summary for all COVID-19 needs at regional and country levels. The SPRP also includes the regional monitoring and evaluation framework for 2022, aiming to assess progress towards its goals and strategic objectives.

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	[179 267 (7690), 4.3%]
Bahrain	[576 997 (1479), 0.3%]
Djibouti	[15 670 (189), 1.2%]
Egypt	[513 881 (24 690), 4.8%]
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	[7 227 683 (141 216) 2%]
Iraq	[2 326 356 (25 216), 1.1%]
Jordan	[1 696 359 (14 066), 0.8%]
Kuwait	[632 369 (2555), 0.4%]
Lebanon	[1 097 956 (10407), 0.9%]
Libya	[501 945 (6430), 1.3%]
Morocco	[1 165 706 (16 071), 1.4%]
occupied Palestinian territory (oPt)	[657 456 (5659), 0.9%]
Oman	[389 397 (4626), 1.2%]
Pakistan	[1 529 251 (30 376), 2.0%]
Qatar	[366 034 (677), 0.2%]
Saudi Arabia	[758 795 (9114) 1.2%]
Somalia	[26 518 (1361), 5.1%]
Sudan	[62 195 (4936), 7.9%]
Syrian Arab Republic	[55 869 (3150), 5.6%]
Tunisia	[1 041 789 (28 628), 2.7%]
United Arab Emirates	[902 161 (2302), 0.3%]
Yemen	[11 819 (2149), 18.2%]