

COVID-19 Epidemiological Update

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Key highlights

- SARS-CoV-2 PCR percent positivity, as detected in integrated sentinel surveillance as part of the Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS) and reported to FluNet was around 11% during the week ending on 3 March 2024.
- Globally, JN.1 was the most reported variant of interest (VOI, now reported by 115 countries), accounting for 90.3% of sequences in week 9 compared to 89.4% in week 6. Its parent lineage, BA.2.86, has been declining and accounted for 2.2% of sequences in week 9 compared to 3.0% in week 6. An [updated risk evaluation for JN.1](#) was published on 9 February 2024, with an overall evaluation of low additional public health risk at the global level based on available evidence. WHO is currently tracking several SARS-CoV-2 variants: five VOIs – XBB.1.5, XBB.1.16, EG.5 BA.2.86 and JN.1; and three variants under monitoring (VUMs): XBB, XBB.1.9.1, and XBB.2.3.
- Globally, during the 28-day period from 5 February to 3 March 2024, 76 countries reported COVID-19 cases and 46 countries reported COVID-19 deaths. Note that this does not reflect the actual number of countries where cases or deaths occur, as many countries have stopped or changed the frequency of reporting.
- From the available data, the number of reported cases and deaths have decreased during the 28-day period, with over 292 000 new cases and 6200 new deaths, a decrease of 44% and 51%, respectively, compared to the previous 28 days (8 January to 4 February 2024). Trends in the number of reported new cases and deaths should be interpreted with caution due to decreased testing and sequencing, alongside reporting delays in many countries. According to estimates obtained from wastewater surveillance, clinical detection of cases underestimates the real burden from 2 to 19-fold.
- During the 28-day period from 5 February to 3 March 2024, 44 and 31 countries provided data at least once on COVID-19 hospitalizations and admissions to an intensive care unit (ICU), respectively. From the available data, over 78 000 new hospitalizations and 500 new ICU admissions were reported during the 28-day period. Amongst the countries reporting these data consistently over the current and past reporting period, there was an overall decrease of 34% and 61% in new hospitalizations and new ICU admissions, respectively.
- The [global WHO COVID-19 dashboard](#) has been updated and adapted with a new interface on 22 December 2023 to support WHO and Member States' work to transition from COVID-19 as an emergency to longer-term disease management, as outlined in WHO's COVID-19 [2023-2025 Updated Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan](#). The new dashboard will progressively incorporate more components throughout 2024. The link of the previous Global WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) Dashboard will still be active and redirect users to the new one from 22 December onward.

For the latest data and other updates on COVID-19, please see:

- [WHO Monthly Operational Update and past editions of the Epidemiological Update on COVID-19](#)
- [WHO COVID-19 detailed surveillance data dashboard](#)
- [WHO COVID-19 policy briefs](#)
- [COVID-19 surveillance reporting requirements update for Member States](#)
- [Summary Tables of COVID-19 vaccine effectiveness \(VE\) studies and results \(last updated 7 March 2024\)](#)
- [Forest Plots displaying results of COVID-19 VE studies \(last updated 11 March 2024\)](#)
- [Special focus WEU on interpreting relative VE \(29 June 2022, pages 6-8\)](#)
- [Neutralization plots \(last updated 11 March 2024\)](#)
- [WHO COVID-19 VE Resources](#)
- [Immunization Analysis and Insights](#)

Global overview

Data as of 3 March 2024

Globally, the number of reported cases is an unreliable indicator of SARS-CoV-2 circulation. Among countries reporting data (n=76), the number of new weekly cases decreased by 44% during the 28-day period of 5 February to 3 March 2024 as compared to the previous 28-day period, with over 292 000 new cases reported (Figure 1, Table 1). The number of new weekly deaths decreased by 51% as compared to the previous 28-day period, with over 6200 new fatalities reported from 46 countries. As of 3 March 2024, over 774 million confirmed cases and over 7 million deaths have been reported globally. According to estimates obtained from viral loads in wastewater surveillance, clinical detection of cases underestimated the real burden 2 to 19-fold.^{1,2,3}

Reported cases do not accurately represent infection rates due to the reduction in testing and reporting globally. During this 28-day period, only 32% (76 of 234) of countries reported at least one case to WHO. It is important to note that this statistic does not reflect the actual number of countries where cases exist. Additionally, data from the previous 28-day period are continuously being updated to incorporate retrospective changes made by countries regarding reported COVID-19 cases and deaths. Data presented in this report are therefore incomplete and should be interpreted considering these limitations. Some countries continue to report high burdens of COVID-19, including increases in newly reported cases and, more importantly, increases in hospitalizations and deaths – the latter of which are considered more reliable indicators given reductions in testing. Global and national data on SARS-CoV-2 PCR percent positivity are available on [WHO's integrated influenza and other respiratory viruses surveillance dashboard](#). Recent data (epidemiological week nine, 26 February to 3 March 2024) from sentinel sites show that the SARS-CoV-2 PCR percent positivity from reporting countries averages approximately 11.4% (Figure 2).

As many countries discontinue COVID-19-specific reporting and integrate it into respiratory disease surveillance, WHO will use all available sources to continue monitoring the COVID-19 epidemiological situation, especially data on illness and impact on health systems. COVID-19 remains a major threat, and WHO urges Member States to maintain, not dismantle, their established COVID-19 infrastructure. It is crucial to sustain early warning, surveillance and reporting, variant tracking, early clinical care provision, administration of vaccine to high-risk groups, improvements in ventilation, and regular communication.

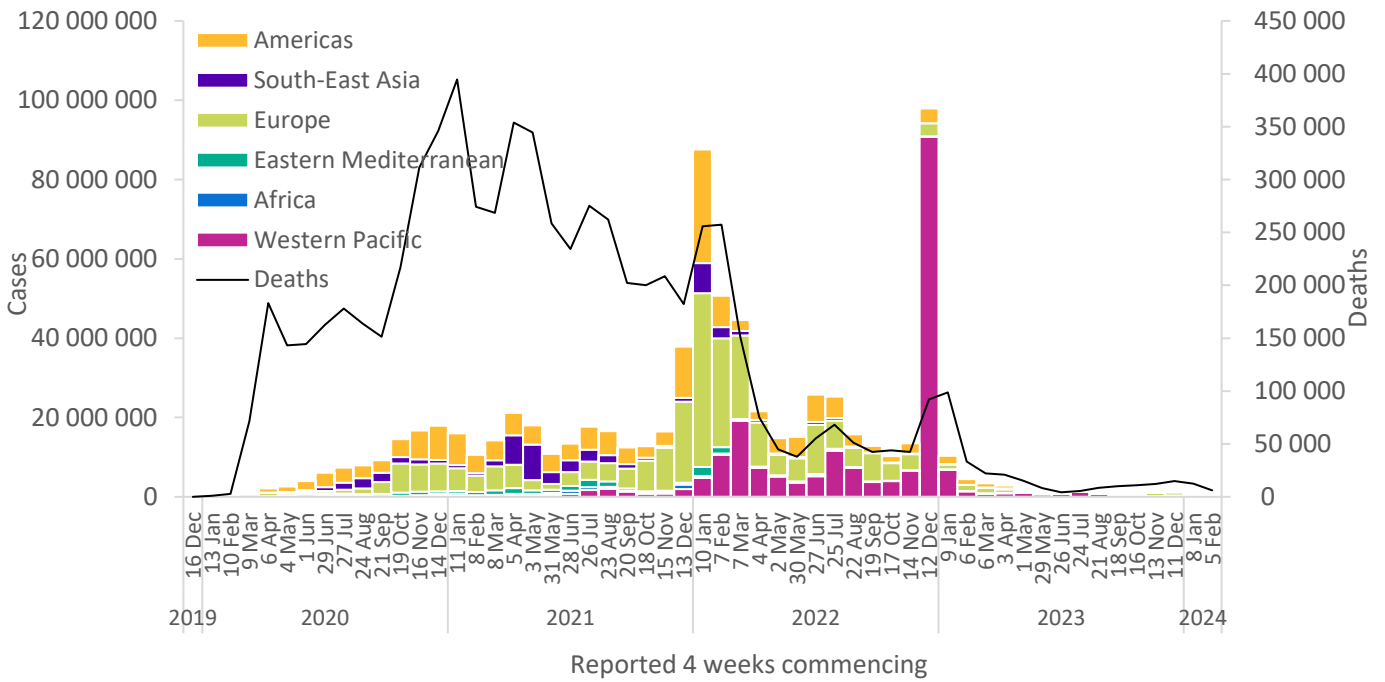
1 Show us the data: global COVID-19 wastewater monitoring effectors, equity, and gaps

2. Capturing the SARS-CoV-2 infection pyramid within the municipality of Rotterdam using longitudinal sewage surveillance

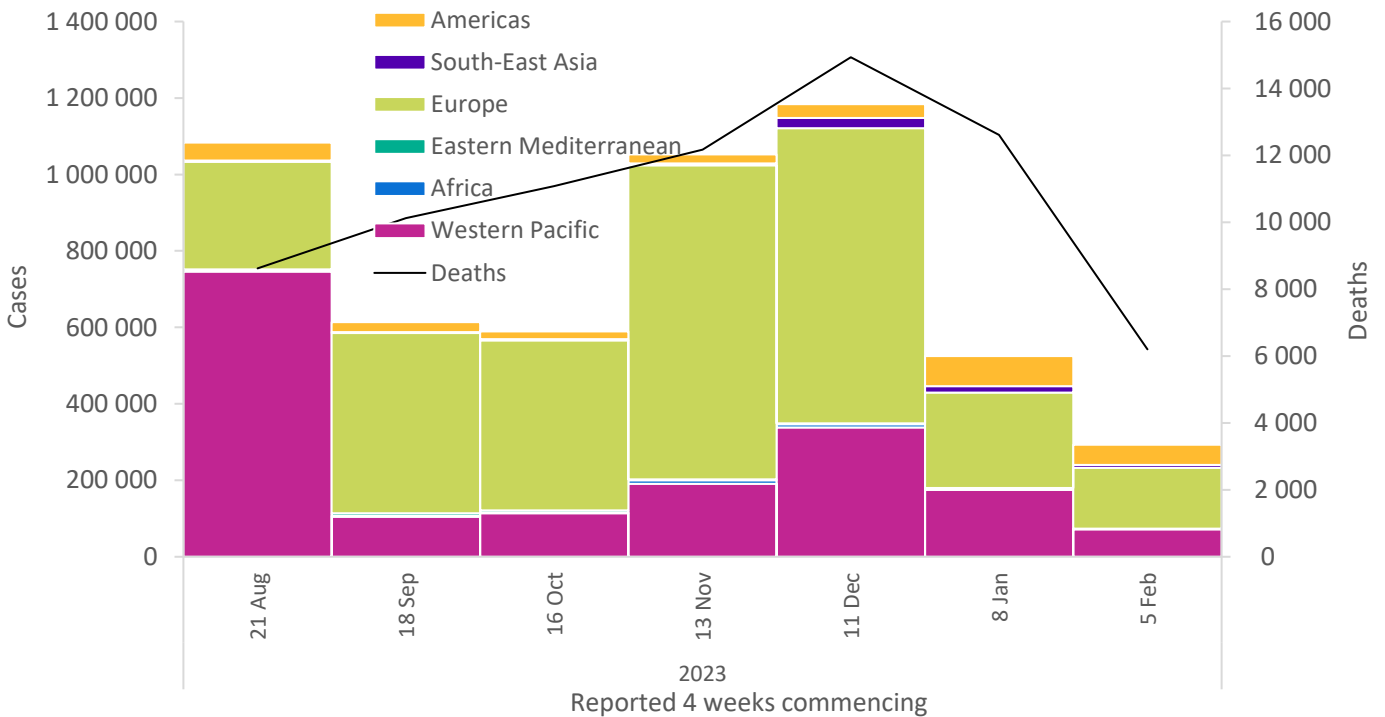
3. Omicron COVID-19 Case Estimates Based on Previous SARS-CoV-2 Wastewater Load, Regional Municipality of Peel, Ontario, Canada

Figure 1. COVID-19 cases and global deaths by 28-day intervals reported by WHO Region, as of 3 March 2024 (A); 21 August 2023 to 3 March 2024 (B)**

A



B



**See Annex 1: Data, table, and figure note

At the regional level, the number of newly reported 28-day cases decreased across all WHO regions: the African Region (-87%), the Western Pacific Region (-59%), the South-East Asia Region (-51%), the Eastern Mediterranean Region (-48%), the European Region (-36%), and the Region of the Americas (-33%). The number of newly reported 28-day deaths also decreased across the six regions: the European Region (-69%), the Eastern Mediterranean Region (-67%), the South-East Asia Region (-60%), the Western Pacific Region (-54%), the Region of the Americas (-45%), and the African Region (-33%).

At the country level, the highest numbers of new 28-day cases were reported from the Russian Federation (108 115 new cases; +5%), Australia (29 564 new cases; -24%), Chile (25 908 new cases; +72%), New Zealand (19 632 new cases; -16%), and Argentina (15 400 new cases; -45%). The highest numbers of new 28-day deaths were reported from United States of America (4756 new deaths; -45%), the Russian Federation (241 new deaths; -53%), Australia (156 new deaths; -37%), Italy (154 new deaths; -77%), and Chile (128 new deaths; +24%).

Table 1. Newly reported and cumulative COVID-19 confirmed cases and deaths, by WHO Region, as of 3 March 2024**

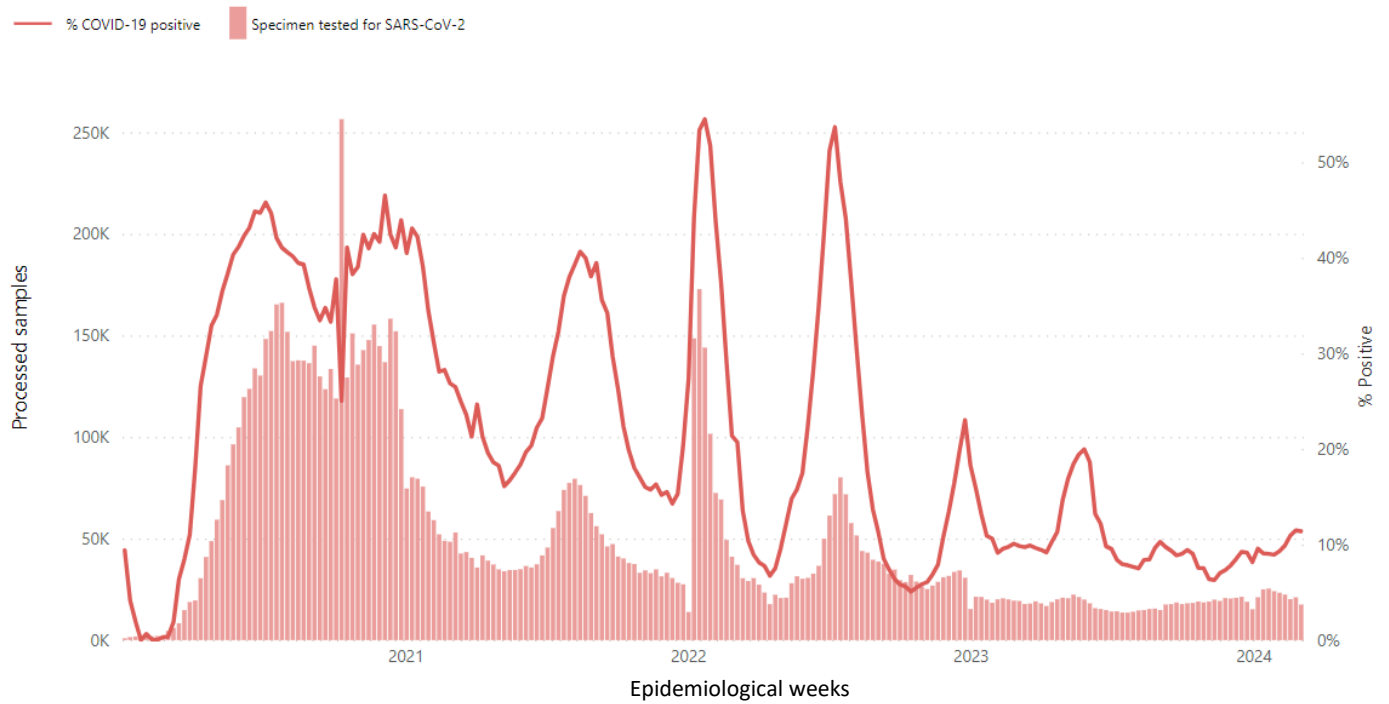
WHO Region	New cases in last 28 days (%)	Change in new cases in last 28 days *	Cumulative cases (%)	New deaths in last 28 days (%)	Change in new deaths in last 28 days *	Cumulative deaths (%)	Countries reporting cases in the last 28 days	Countries reporting deaths in the last 28 days
Europe	159 182 (54%)	-36%	279 108 534 (36%)	831 (13%)	-69%	2 270 552 (32%)	31/61 (51%)	22/61 (36%)
Western Pacific	71 569 (24%)	-59%	208 261 679 (27%)	272 (4%)	-54%	420 294 (6%)	9/35 (26%)	3/35 (9%)
Americas	52 307 (18%)	-33%	193 207 023 (25%)	5 011 (81%)	-45%	3 010 208 (43%)	19/56 (34%)	11/56 (20%)
South-East Asia	7 998 (3%)	-51%	61 266 196 (8%)	66 (1%)	-60%	808 507 (11%)	6/10 (60%)	5/10 (50%)
Eastern Mediterranean	1 362 (0%)	-48%	23 413 732 (3%)	15 (0%)	-67%	351 931 (5%)	4/22 (18%)	3/22 (14%)
Africa	337 (0%)	-87%	9 576 323 (1%)	6 (0%)	-33%	175 502 (2%)	7/50 (14%)	2/50 (4%)
Global	292 755 (100%)	-44%	774 834 251 (100%)	6 201 (100%)	-51%	7 037 007 (100%)	76/234 (32%)	46/234 (20%)

*Percent change in the number of newly confirmed cases/deaths in the past 28 days, compared to 28 days prior. Data from previous weeks are updated continuously with adjustments received from countries.

**See [Annex 1: Data, table, and figure notes](#)

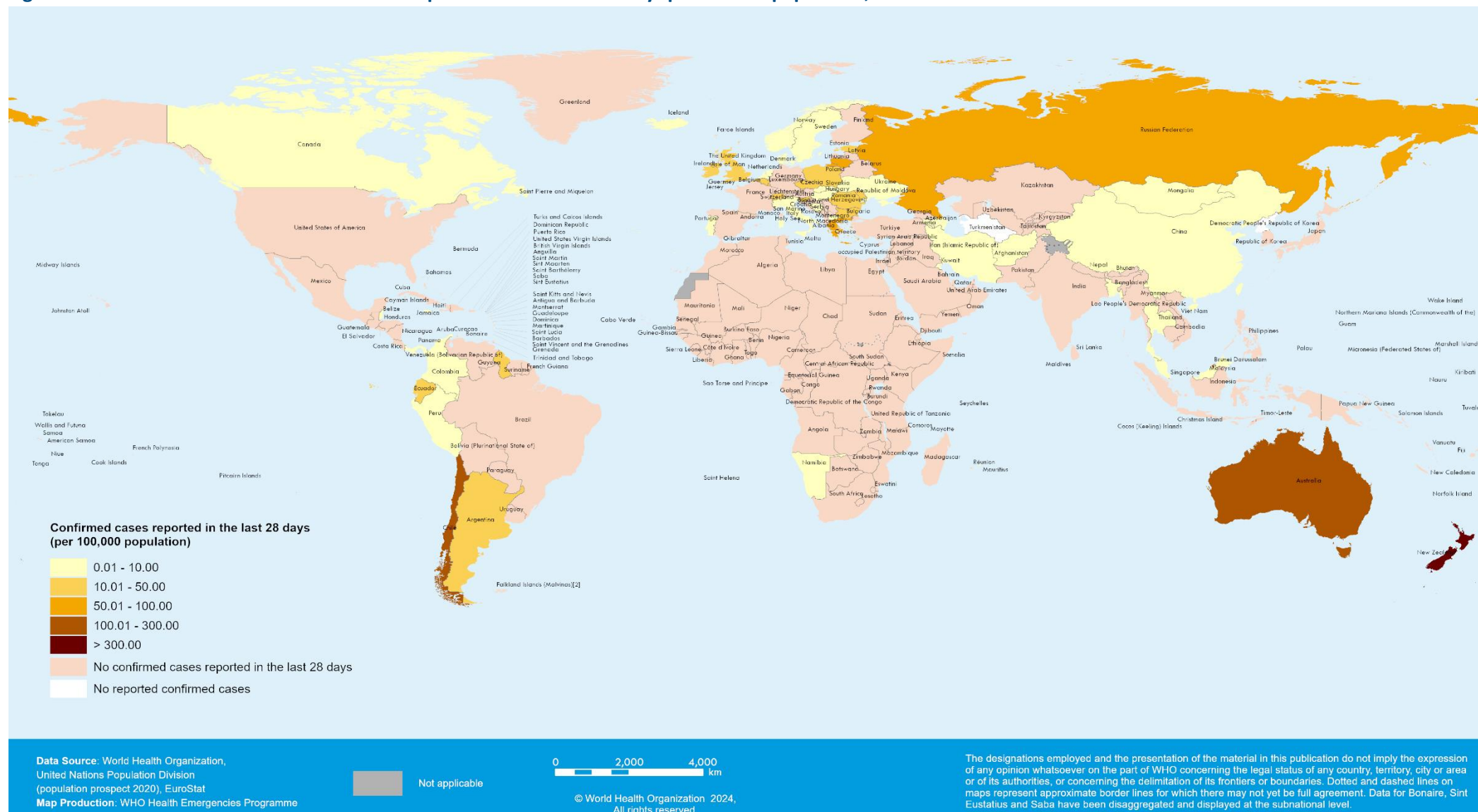
Figure 2. SARS-CoV-2 specimens tested, and test positivity rates reported to FluNet from sentinel sites; 5 February to 3 March 2024

SARS-CoV-2 tested specimens reported to FluNet from countries, areas and territories



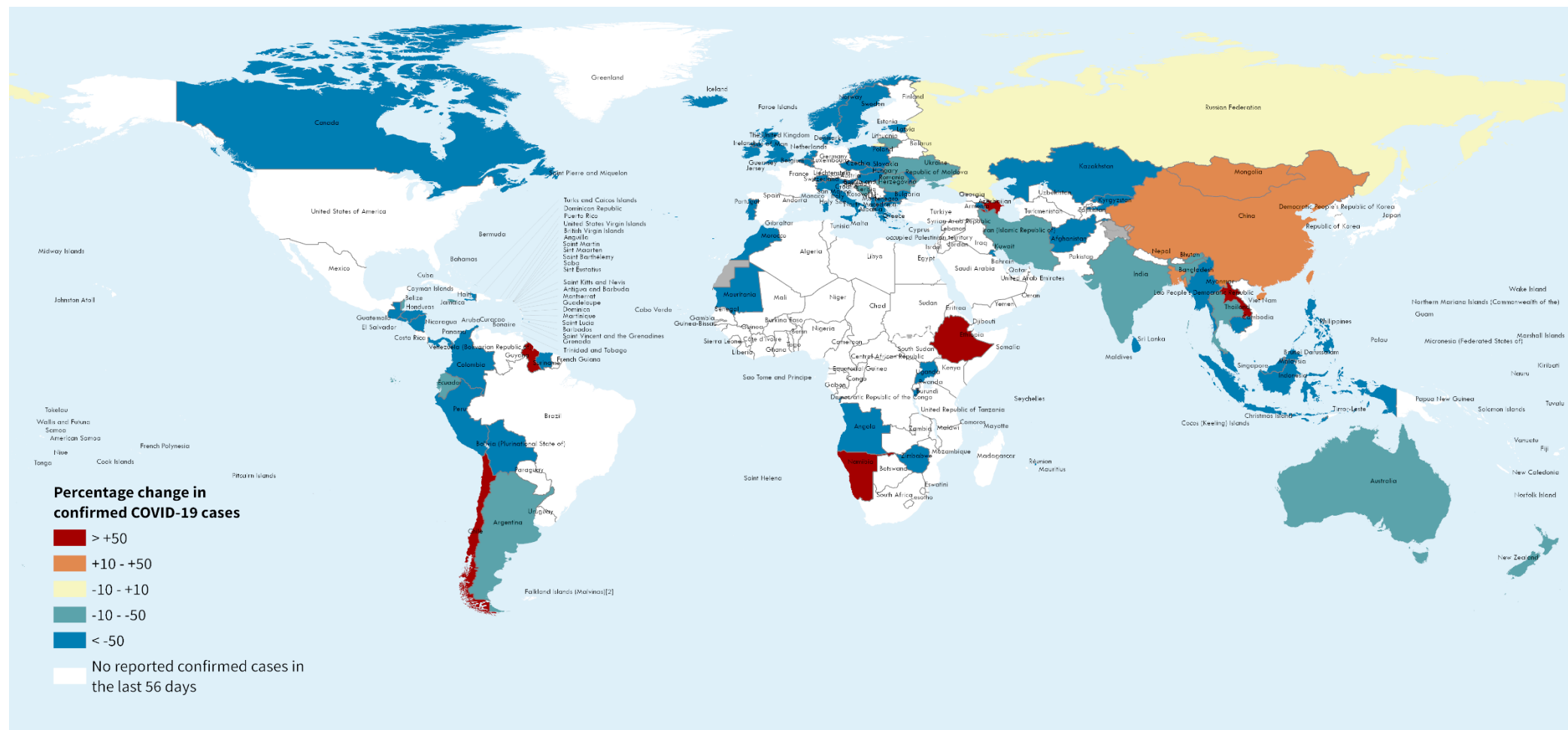
Source: *Influenza and SARS-CoV-2 surveillance data from GISRS reported to FluNet; WHO Global Influenza Programme*

Figure 3. Number of confirmed COVID-19 cases reported over the last 28 days per 100 000 population, as of 3 March 2024**



**See [Annex 1: Data, table, and figure notes](#)

Figure 4. Percentage change in confirmed COVID-19 cases over the last 28 days relative to the previous 28 days, as of 3 March 2024**



Data Source: World Health Organization

Map Production: WHO Health Emergencies Programme

Not applicable

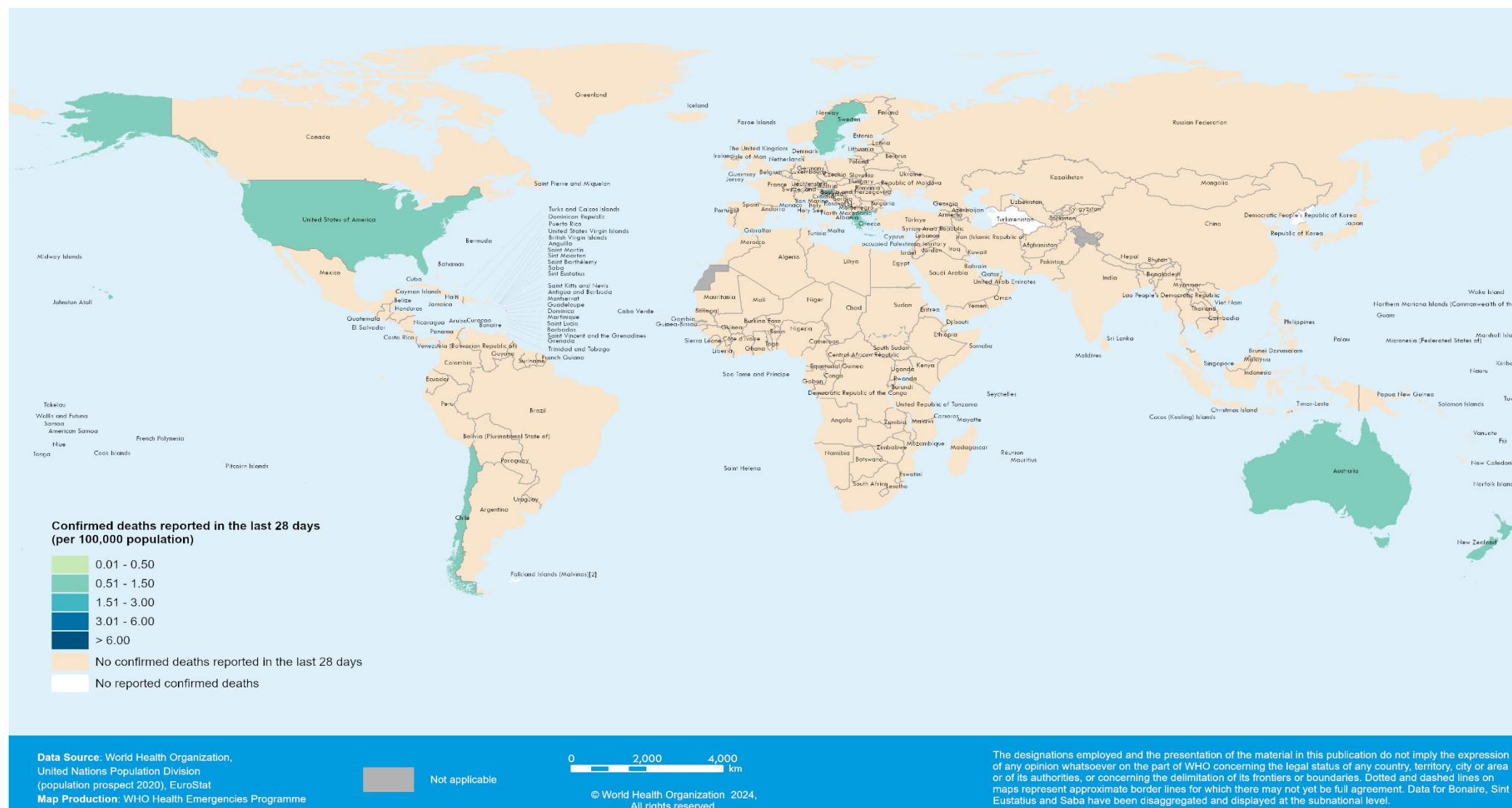
0 2,500 5,000 km

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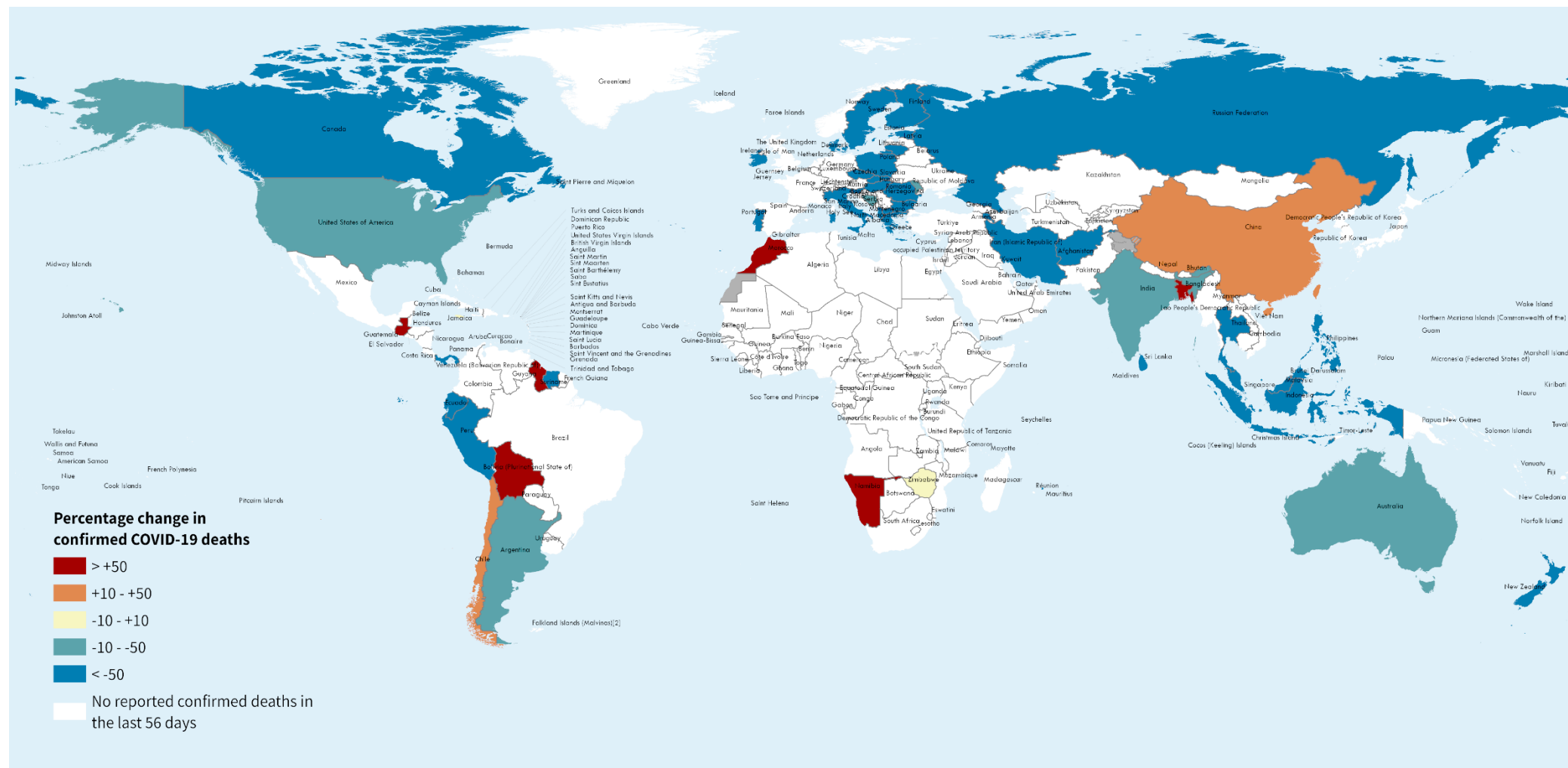
**See [Annex 1: Data, table, and figure notes](#)

Figure 5. Number of COVID-19 deaths reported over the last 28 days per 100 000 population, as of 3 March 2024 **



**See [Annex 1: Data, table, and figure notes](#)

Figure 6. Percentage change in confirmed COVID-19 deaths over the last 28 days relative to the previous 28 days, as of 3 March 2024**

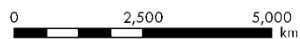


Data Source: World Health Organization

Map Production: WHO Health Emergencies Programme



Not applicable



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**See Annex 1: Data, table, and figure notes

Hospitalizations and ICU admissions

At the global level, during the 28 days from 5 February to 3 March 2024, a total of 78 038 new hospitalizations and 500 new intensive care unit (ICU) admissions were reported from 44 and 31 countries, respectively (Figure 7). Amongst the countries reporting these data consistently over the current and past reporting period, there was an overall decrease of 34% and 61% in new hospitalizations and new ICU admissions, respectively compared to the previous 28 days (8 January to 4 February 2024) (Table 2 and 3). Note that the absence of reported data from some countries to WHO does not imply that there are no COVID-19-related hospitalizations in those countries. The presented hospitalization data are preliminary and might change as new data become available. Furthermore, hospitalization data are subject to reporting delays. These data also likely include both hospitalizations with incidental cases of SARS-CoV-2 infection and those due to COVID-19 disease.

New hospitalizations

During the 28-day period from 5 February to 3 March 2024, 44 (19%) countries reported data to WHO on new hospitalizations at least once (Figure 7). The Region of the Americas had the highest proportion of countries reporting data on new hospitalizations (22 countries; 39%), followed by the European Region (15 countries; 26%), the South-East Asia Region (two countries; 20%), and the African Region (five countries; 10%). No country in the Eastern Mediterranean shared data during the period. Hospitalization data from the Western Pacific Region is not reflected in this report. The number of countries that consistently[§] reported new hospitalizations for the period was 15% (34 countries) (Table 2).

Among the 34 countries consistently reporting new hospitalizations, 4 (12%) countries registered an increase of 20% or greater in hospitalizations during the past 28 days compared to the previous 28-day period: Guatemala (7 vs 4; +75%), Chile (534 vs 353; +51%), Namibia (11 vs 8; +38%), and Bangladesh (105 vs 79; +33%). The highest numbers of new hospital admissions were reported from the United States of America (70 385 vs 100 549; -30%), Greece (1252 vs 2989; -58%), and Argentina (998 vs 1742; -43%).

[§] “Consistently” as used here refers to countries that submitted data for new hospitalizations and intensive care unit admissions for the eight consecutive weeks (for the reporting and comparison period).

Table 2. Number of new hospitalization admissions reported by WHO regions, 5 February to 3 March 2024 compared to 8 January to 4 February 2024

Region	Countries reported at least once in the past 28 days		Countries reported consistently in the past and previous 28 days*		
	Number of countries (percentage)**	Number of new hospitalizations	Number of countries (percentage)**	Number of new hospitalizations	Percent change in new hospitalizations
Africa	5/50 (10%)	12	4/50 (8%)	12	-29%
Americas	22/56 (39%)	74 105	18/56 (32%)	72 374	-31%
Eastern Mediterranean	0/22 (<1%)	N/A ⁺	0/22 (<1%)	N/A	N/A
Europe	15/61 (25%)	3647	10/61 (16%)	2974	-60%
South-East Asia	2/10 (20%)	274	2/10 (20%)	274	-72%
Western Pacific	0/35 (<1%)	N/A	0/35 (<1%)	N/A	N/A
Global	44/234 (19%)	78 038	34/234 (15%)	75 634	-34%

*Percent change is calculated for countries reporting consistently both in the past 28 days and the previous 28 days (comparison period).

**Number of countries reported / total number of countries in the region (percentage of reporting).

⁺ N/A represents not available or applicable.

New ICU admissions

Across the six WHO regions, during the 28 days from 5 February to 3 March 2024, a total of 31 (13%) countries reported data to WHO on new ICU admissions at least once (Figure 8). The European Region had the highest proportion of countries reporting data on new ICU admissions (12 countries; 20%), followed by the Region of the Americas (11 countries; 20%), the African Region (Seven countries; 14%), and the South-East Asia (one country; 10%). No country in the Eastern Mediterranean Region shared data during the period. ICU admission data from the Western Pacific Region is not reflected in this report. The proportion of countries that consistently reported new ICU admissions for the period was 8% (19 countries) (Table 3).

Among the 19 countries consistently reporting new ICU admissions, one (5%) country showed an increase of 20% or greater in new ICU admissions during the past 28 days compared to the previous 28-day period: Chile (42 vs 19; +121%). The highest numbers of new ICU admissions were reported from Ecuador (230 vs 491; -53%), Italy (48 vs 200; -76%), and Chile (42 vs 19; +121%).

Table 3. Number of new ICU admissions reported by WHO regions, 5 February to 3 March 2024 compared to 8 January to 4 February 2024

Region	Countries reported at least once in the past 28 days		Countries reported consistently in the past and previous 28 days*		
	Number of countries (percentage)**	Number of new ICU admissions	Number of countries (percentage)**	Number of new ICU admissions	Percent change in new ICU admissions
Africa	7/50 (14%)	0	4/50 (8%)	0 [#]	N/A
Americas	11/56 (20%)	332	7/56 (13%)	282	-50%
Eastern Mediterranean	0/22 (<1%)	N/A ⁺	0/22 (<1%)	N/A	N/A
Europe	12/61 (20%)	137	7/61 (11%)	85	-74%
South-East Asia	1/10 (10%)	31	1/10 (10%)	31	-77%
Western Pacific	0/35 (<1%)	N/A	0/35 (<1%)	N/A	N/A
Global	31/235 (13%)	500	19/235 (8%)	398	-61%

*Percent change is calculated for countries reporting consistently both in the past 28 days and the previous 28 days (comparison period).

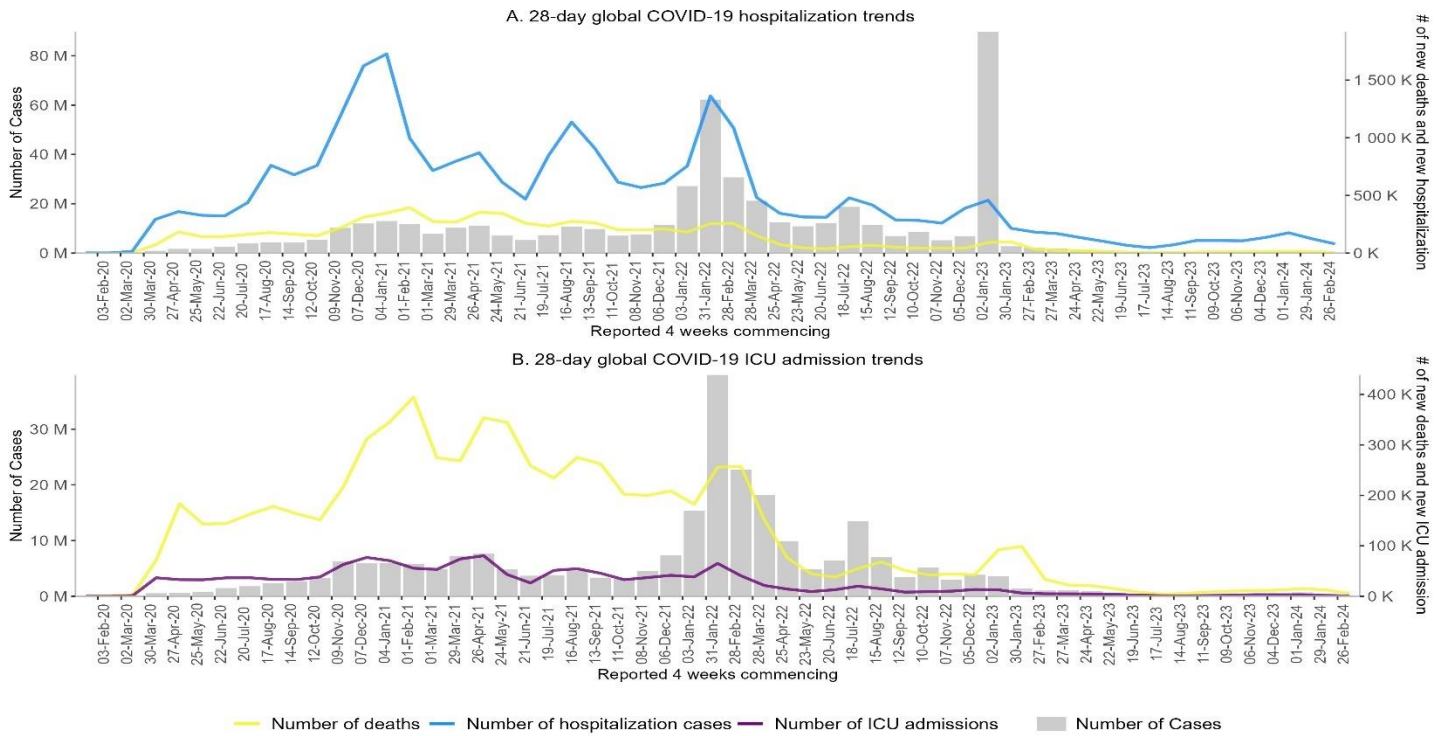
**Number of countries reported / total number of countries in the region (percentage of reporting).

⁺ N/A represents data not available or applicable.

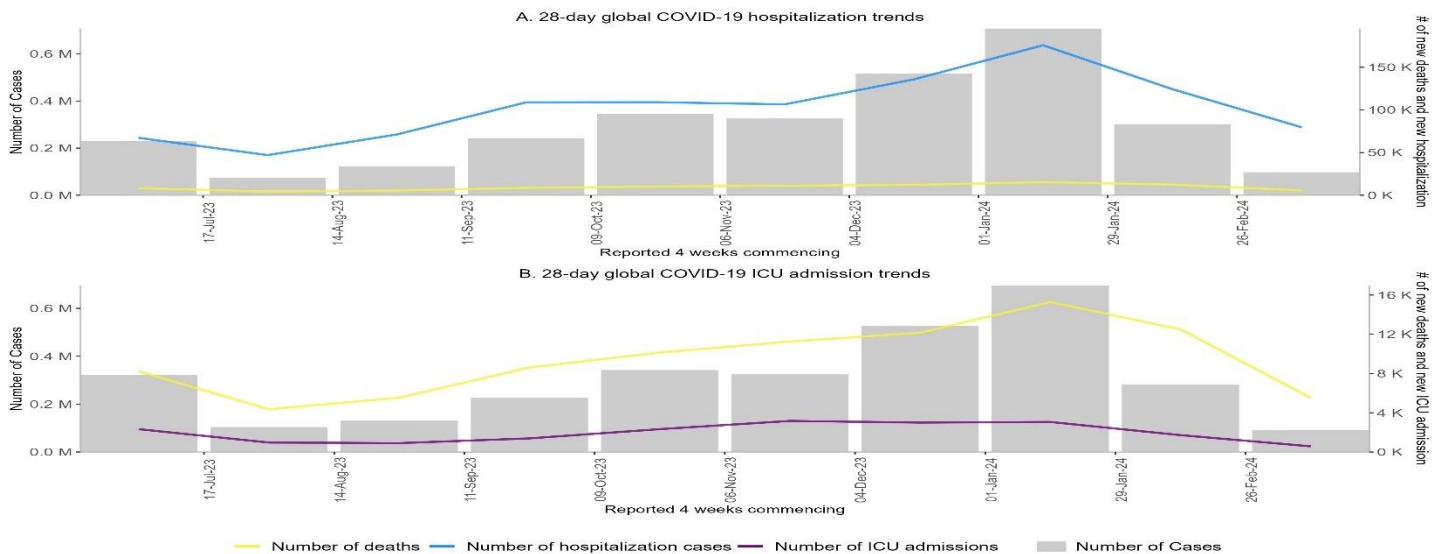
[#] WHO emphasizes the importance of maintaining reporting and encourages countries to report the absence of new admissions (“zero reporting”) if there are no new hospital or ICU admissions during the week.

Figure 7. 28-day global COVID-19 new hospitalizations and ICU admissions, from 03 February 2020 to 3 March 2024 (A); and from 23 May 2023 to 3 March 2024 (B)

A



B



Note: Recent weeks are subject to reporting delays and data might not be complete, thus the data should be interpreted with caution. Cases included in grey bars are only from countries reporting hospitalizations or ICU admissions, respectively.

Severity indicators

The ICU-to-hospitalization ratio and death-to-hospitalization ratio have been key indicators for understanding COVID-19 severity throughout the pandemic. The ICU-to-hospitalization ratio is used to assess the proportion of patients requiring ICU admission in relation to the total number of hospitalizations. The death-to-hospitalization ratio is used to assess the proportion of deaths in relation to hospitalized patients.

These indicators are subject to the same limitations mentioned above and their calculations are limited to the countries reporting all relevant data elements (hospitalizations, ICU admissions and deaths) in a given reporting period. It should be noted that there may be differences in reporting among countries. For instance, in some countries, hospitalization data may include ICU admissions, whereas in others, ICU admissions may be reported separately. Furthermore, it is important to consider that some deaths might have occurred outside of hospital facilities.

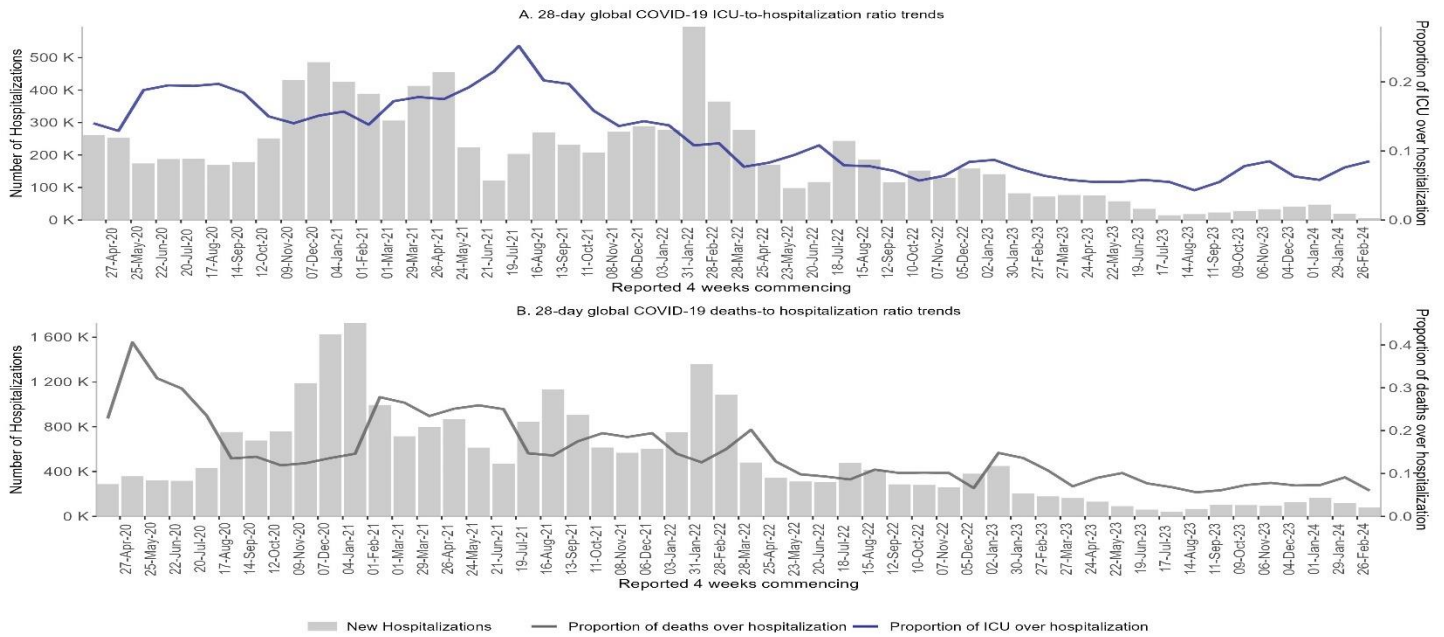
Overall, the ICU-to-hospitalization ratio has been decreasing since the peak in July 2021 when the ratio was 0.26, dropping below 0.15 since the beginning of 2022, and around 0.05 since the start of 2023 (Figure 8). The trend has been increasing marginally in recent weeks. This suggests that a slightly increasing proportion of new hospitalizations require intensive care.

Similarly, the death-to-hospitalization ratio has been showing a general decline since July 2021. Since January 2023, it has remained under 0.15, varying between 0.06 to 0.14. This is an encouraging trend indicating a lower mortality risk among hospitalized individuals.

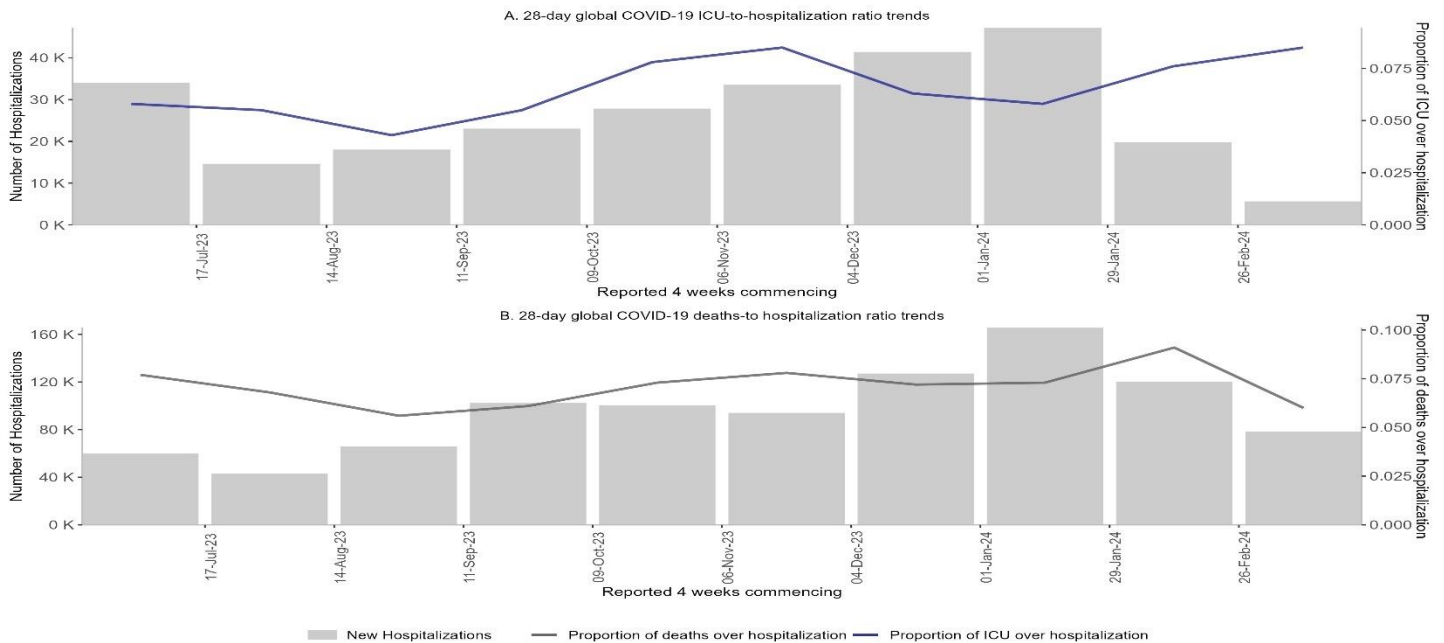
Please note that the causes for these decreases cannot be directly interpreted from these data, but likely include a combination of increases in infection-derived or vaccine-derived immunity, improvements in early diagnosis and clinical care, reduced strain on health systems, and other factors. It is not possible to infer a decreased intrinsic virulence amongst newer SARS-CoV-2 variants from these data.

Figure 8. COVID-19 ICU-to-hospitalization ratio and death-to-hospitalization ratio, from 31 March 2020 to 3 March 2024 (A), and 23 May 2023 to 3 March 2024 (B)

A



B



Note: Recent weeks are subject to reporting delays and should not be interpreted as a declining trend. The ICU ratio figure is created from the data of the countries reported both new hospitalizations and new ICU admissions. The death ratio figure is created from the data of the countries that reported both new hospitalization and new deaths.

Source: [WHO COVID-19 Detailed Surveillance Dashboard](https://www.who.int/dashboards/covid19)

SARS-CoV-2 variants of interest and variants under monitoring

Geographic spread and prevalence

Globally, during the 28-day period from 5 February to 3 March 2024, 14 764 SARS-CoV-2 sequences were shared through GISAID. In comparison, in the two previous 28-day periods, there were 52 965 and 85 807 sequences shared, respectively. The data are periodically retrospectively updated to include sequences with earlier collection dates, so the number of submissions in a given time period may change.

WHO is currently tracking several SARS-CoV-2 variants, including:

- Five variants of interest (VOIs): XBB.1.5, XBB.1.16, EG.5, BA.2.86 and JN.1
- Three variants under monitoring (VUMs): XBB, XBB.1.9.1, and XBB.2.3

Table 4 shows the number of countries reporting VOIs and VUMs, and their prevalence from epidemiological week 6 (5 to 11 February 2024) to week 9 (26 February to 3 March 2024). The VOIs and VUMs exhibiting increasing trends are highlighted in yellow, those that have remained stable are highlighted in blue, and those with decreasing trends are highlighted in green.

Globally, JN.1 is the most reported VOI (now reported by 115 countries), accounting for 90.3% of sequences in week 9 compared to 89.4% in week 6 (Figure 10, Table 4). Its parent lineage, BA.2.86, is declining and accounted for 2.2% of sequences in week 9 compared to 3.0% in week 6 (Figure 10, Table 4). An [updated risk evaluation for JN.1](#) was published on 9 February 2024, with an overall evaluation of low additional public health risk at the global level based on available evidence.

The other VOIs, XBB.1.5, XBB.1.16 and EG.5, have either decreased or been stable in global prevalence during the same period: XBB.1.5 was stable and accounted for 0.6% of sequences in weeks 6 and 9; For XBB.1.6, there were reported sequences in week 9, a decrease from 0.2% in week 6; EG.5 accounted for 2.2% of sequences in week 9, a decrease from 2.7% in week 6 (Figure 10, Table 4).

All VUMs have shown a decreasing trend over the reporting period (Table 4).

Sufficient sequencing data to calculate variant prevalence at the regional level during weeks 6 to 9 were available from three WHO regions: the Region of the Americas, the Western Pacific Region, and the European Region (Table 5). Among the VOIs, JN.1 was the most reported variant and showing an increasing trend in all the four regions. The other VOIs and all the VUMs in all four regions observed decreasing or stable trends.

With declining rates of testing and sequencing globally (Figure 10), it is increasingly challenging to estimate the severity impact of emerging SARS-CoV-2 variants. There are currently no reported laboratory or epidemiological reports indicating any association between VOIs/VUMs and increased disease severity. Low and unrepresentative levels of SARS-CoV-2 genomic surveillance, as shown in Figure 9 and Figure 10, continue to pose challenges in adequately assessing the variant landscape.

Table 4. Weekly prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 VOIs and VUMs, week 06 of 2024 to week 09 of 2024

Lineage	Countries [§]	Sequences [§]	2024-06	2024-07	2024-08	2024-09
VOIs						
XBB.1.5	143	376257	0.6	0.6	0.3	0.6
XBB.1.16	131	125595	0.2	0.3	0.3	-
EG.5	112	210190	2.7	2.0	1.8	2.2
BA.2.86	87	19610	3.0	2.3	2.0	2.2
JN.1	115	128526	89.4	91.4	92.5	90.3
VUMs						
XBB	147	107842	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3
XBB.1.9.1	128	98613	0.1	0.0	0.1	-
XBB.2.3	120	51594	0.6	0.4	0.2	0.8
Unassigned	75	29804	0.1	0.1	0.4	-

[§] Number of countries and sequences are since the emergence of the variants.

* Includes descendant lineages, except those individually specified elsewhere in the table. For example, XBB* does not include XBB.1.5, XBB.1.16, EG.5, XBB.1.9.1, and XBB.2.3.

Table 5. Weekly prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 VOIs and VUMs by WHO regions, week 6 to week 9 of 2024

Lineage (week 06-2024 to 09-2024)	AMRO	AFRO [‡]	EMRO [‡]	EURO	SEARO	WPRO
VOIs						
XBB.1.5*	↓	Insufficient Data	Insufficient Data	↓	Insufficient Data	↓
XBB.1.16*	↓	Insufficient Data	Insufficient Data	↓	Insufficient Data	↓
EG.5*	↓	Insufficient Data	Insufficient Data	↓	Insufficient Data	↓
BA.2.86*	↓	Insufficient Data	Insufficient Data	↓	Insufficient Data	↓
JN.1*	↑	Insufficient Data	Insufficient Data	↑	Insufficient Data	↑
VUMs						
XBB*	↓	Insufficient Data	Insufficient Data	↓	Insufficient Data	↓
XBB.1.9.1*	↓	Insufficient Data	Insufficient Data	↓	Insufficient Data	↓
XBB.2.3*	↓	Insufficient Data	Insufficient Data	↓	Insufficient Data	↓

↑ Increasing trend
 ↓ Decreasing trend
 ↔ Stable trend

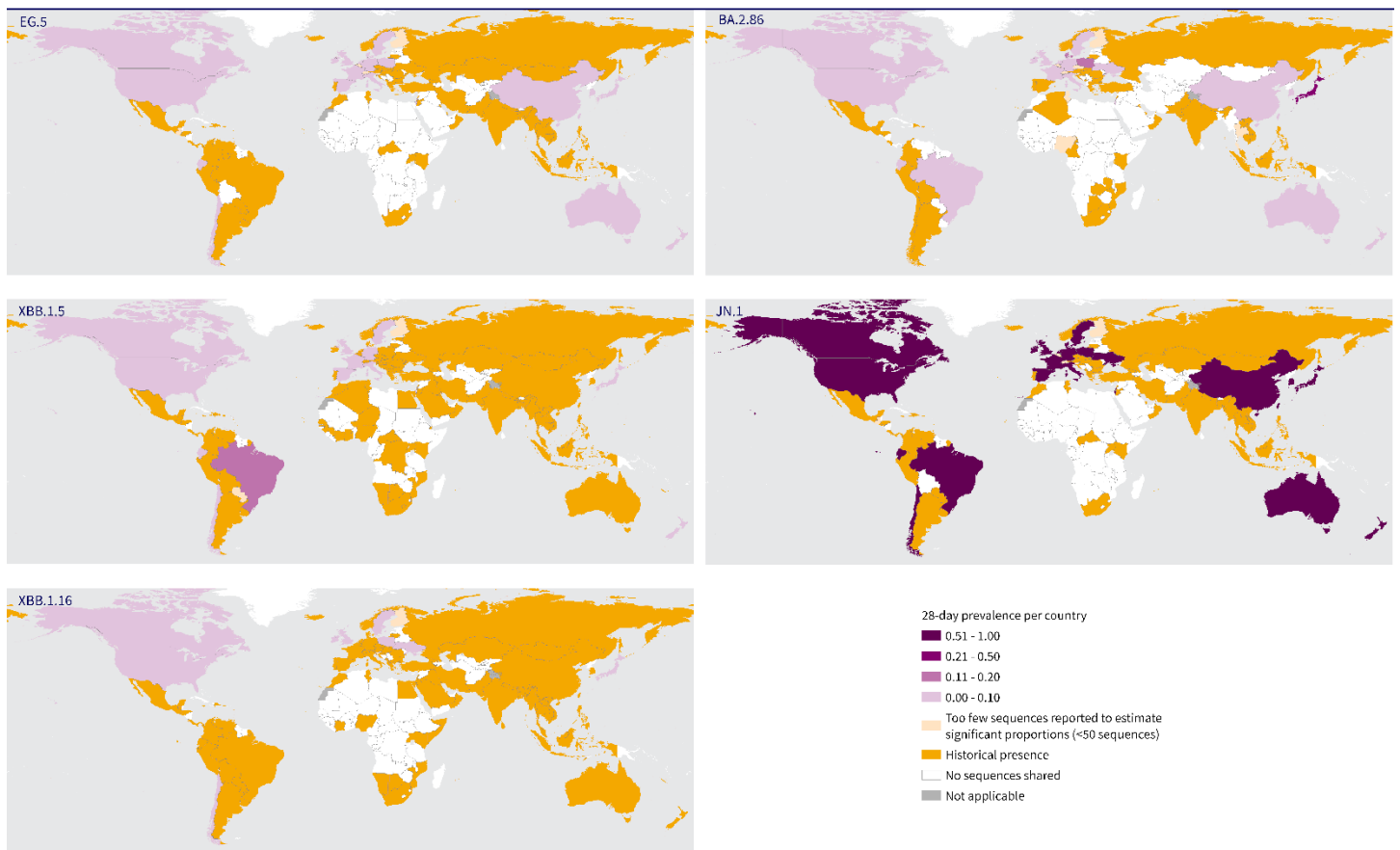
Insufficient Data
 Most Prevalent variant(s)

* Includes descendant lineages, except those individually specified elsewhere in the table. For example, XBB* does not include XBB.1.5, XBB.1.16, EG.5, XBB.1.9.1, and XBB.2.3.

[‡] due to the small numbers of sequences submitted in these regions, it has not been possible to determine trends for the VOIs and VUMs in these regions; this is also represented by the shaded cells in the table

Figure 9. Global 28-day prevalence of EG.5, XBB.1.5, XBB.1.16, BA.2.86, and JN.1, 5 February to 3 March 2024 **

Global 28-day prevalence of EG.5, XBB.1.5, XBB.1.16, BA.2.86 and JN.1 (05 February 2024 to 03 March 2024)



The designations employed and the presentation of the material in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of WHO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Dotted and dashed lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement.

Data Source: World Health Organization's, Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data
Map Production: WHO Health Emergencies Programme
Map Date: 14 March 2024

World Health Organization
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* Reporting period to account for delay in sequence submission to GISAID.

+ Historical presence indicates countries previously reporting sequences of VOIs but have not reported within the period from 5 February to 3 March 2024

Figure 10. The (A) number and (B) percentage of SARS-CoV-2 sequences, from 5 February to 3 March 2024

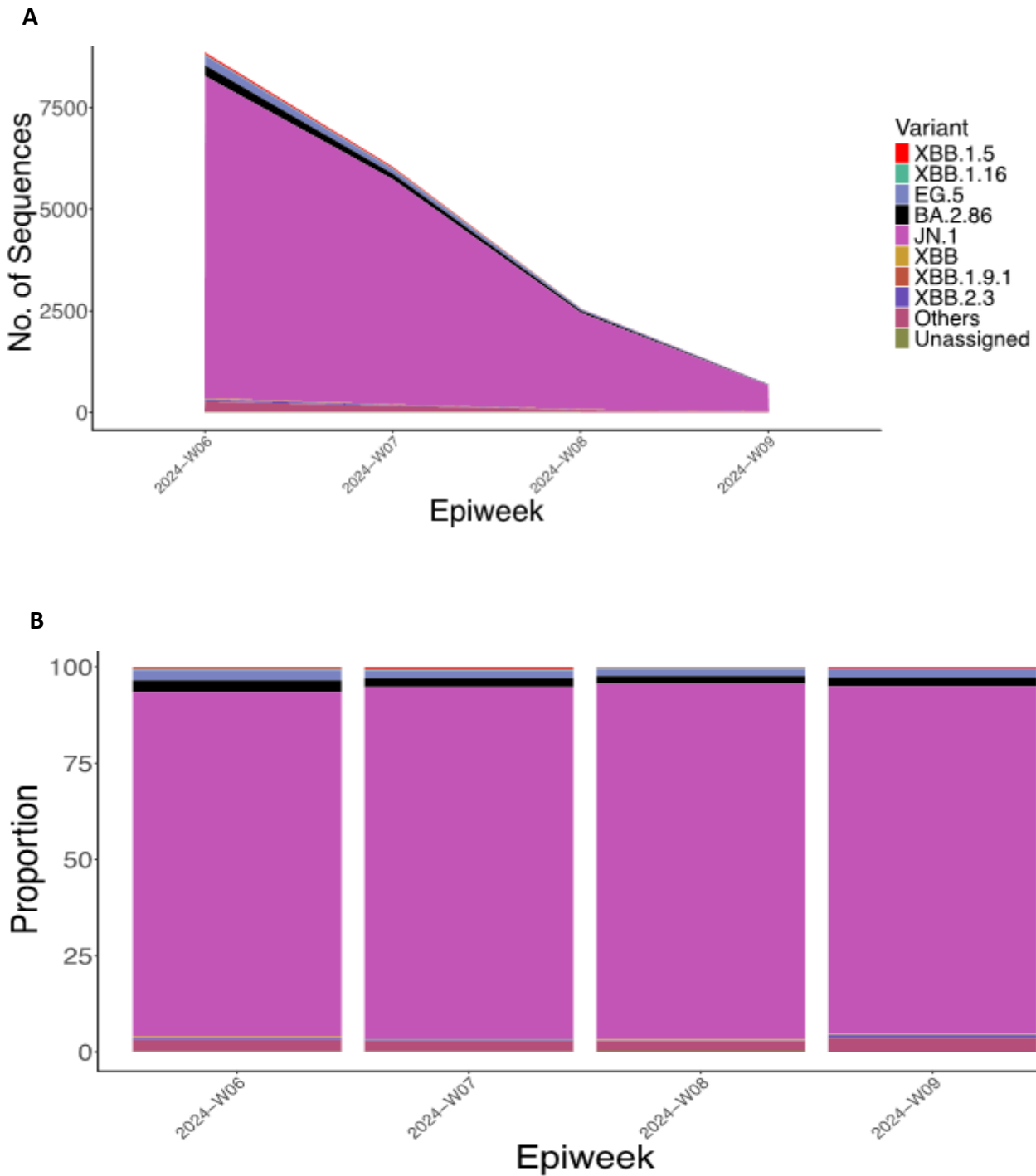


Figure 10. Panel A shows the number, and Panel B the percentage, of all circulating variants since July to December 2023. The variants shown here include descendent lineages, except for the descendent lineage(s) listed here. The *Unassigned* category includes lineages pending for a PANGO lineage name designation, whereas the *Other* category includes lineages that are assigned but not listed here. Source: SARS-CoV-2 sequence data and metadata from GISAID, from 5 February to 3 March 2024.

Additional resources

- [Tracking SARS-CoV-2 Variants](#)
- [WHO Global COVID-19 Dashboard Variants Section](#)
- [WHO statement on updated tracking system on SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern and variants of interest](#)
- [SARS-CoV-2 variant risk evaluation framework, 30 August 2023](#)
- [WHO JN.1 Updated Risk Evaluation, 9 February 2024](#)
- [WHO BA.2.86 Initial Risk Evaluation, 21 November 2023](#)
- [WHO EG.5 Updated Risk Evaluation, 21 November 2023](#)
- [WHO XBB.1.5 Updated Risk Assessment, 20 June 2023](#)
- [WHO XBB.1.16 Updated Risk Assessment, 5 June 2023](#)

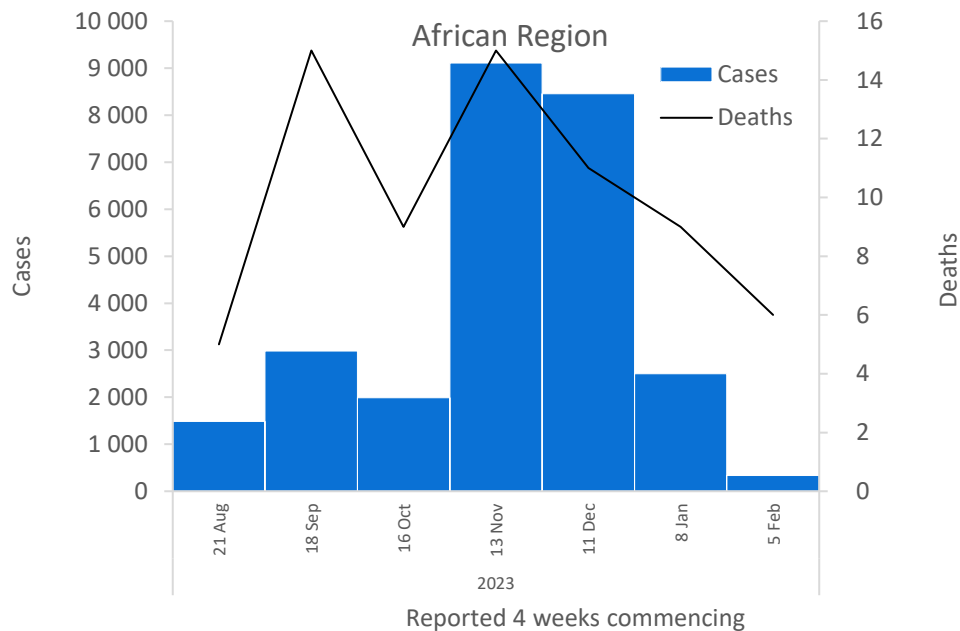
WHO regional overviews

Data for 5 February to 3 March 2024

African Region

The African Region reported over 337 new cases, an 87% decrease as compared to the previous 28-day period. One (2%) of the 50 countries for which data are available reported increases in new cases of 20% or greater, with the highest proportional increases observed in Namibia (109 vs 28 new cases; +289%). The highest numbers of new cases were reported from Mauritius (129 new cases; 10.1 new cases per 100 000; -93%), Namibia (109 new cases; 4.3 new cases per 100 000; +289%), and Ethiopia (40 new cases; <1 new case per 100 000; no case reported the previous 28-day period).

The number of new 28-day deaths in the Region decreased by 33% as compared to the previous 28-day period, with 6 new deaths reported. The highest numbers of new deaths were reported from Namibia (3 new deaths; <1 new death per 100 000; no death reported the previous 28-day period), and Zimbabwe (3 new deaths; <1 new death per 100 000; similar to the previous 28-day period).

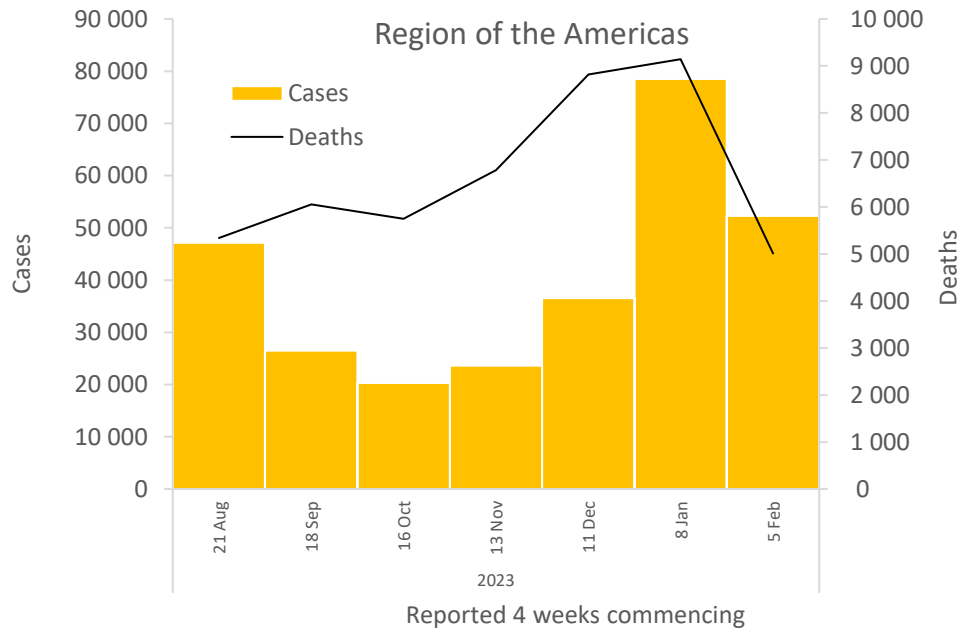


Updates from the [African Region](#)

Region of the Americas

The Region of the Americas reported over 52 000 new cases, a 33% decrease as compared to the previous 28-day period. Two (4%) of the 56 countries for which data are available reported increases in new cases of 20% or greater, with the highest proportional increases observed in Guyana (178 vs 84 new cases; +112%), and Chile (25 908 vs 15 092 new cases; +72%). The highest numbers of new cases were reported from Chile (25 908 new cases; 135.5 new cases per 100 000; +72%), Argentina (15 400 new cases; 34.1 new cases per 100 000; -45%), and Canada (3766 new cases; 10 new cases per 100 000; -68%).

The number of new 28-day deaths in the Region decreased by 45% as compared to the previous 28-day period, with 5011 new deaths reported. The highest numbers of new deaths were reported from the United States of America (4756 new deaths; 1.4 new deaths per 100 000; -45%), Chile (128 new deaths; <1 new death per 100 000; +24%), and Peru (53 new deaths; <1 new death per 100 000; -74%).

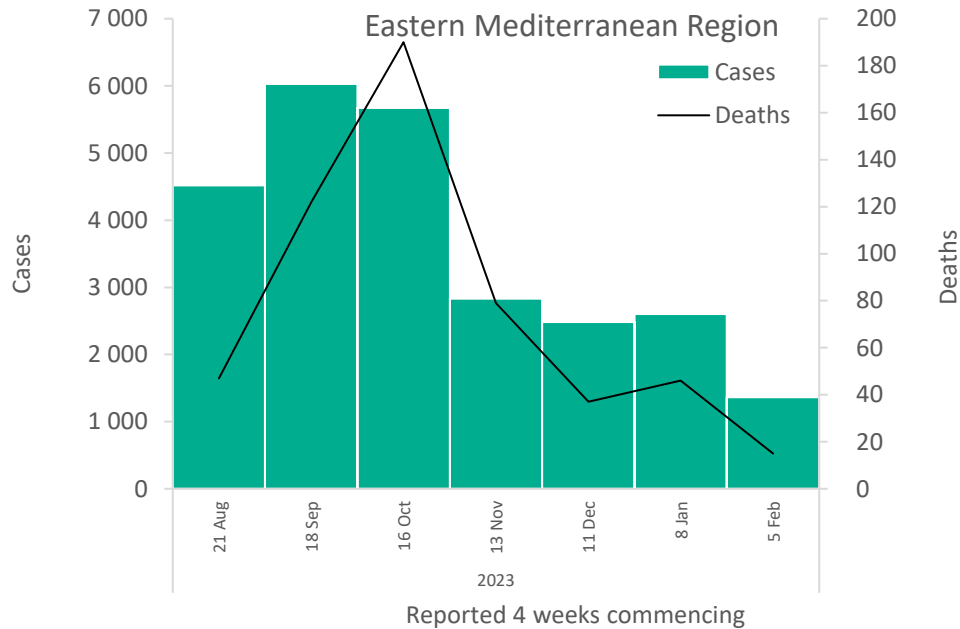


Updates from the Region of the Americas

Eastern Mediterranean Region

The Eastern Mediterranean Region reported over 1362 new cases, a 48% decrease as compared to the previous 28-day period. No country has reported increases in new cases of 20% or greater compared to the previous 28-day period. The highest numbers of new cases were reported from the Islamic Republic of Iran (659 new cases; <1 new case per 100 000; -25%), Afghanistan (446 new cases; 1.1 new cases per 100 000; -51%), and Morocco (144 new cases; <1 new case per 100 000; -68%).

The number of new 28-day deaths in the Region decreased by 67% as compared to the previous 28-day period, with 15 new deaths reported. The highest numbers of new deaths were reported from the Islamic Republic of Iran (12 new deaths; <1 new death per 100 000; -68%), Morocco (2 new deaths; <1 new death per 100 000; +100%), and Afghanistan (1 new death; <1 new death per 100 000; -88%).

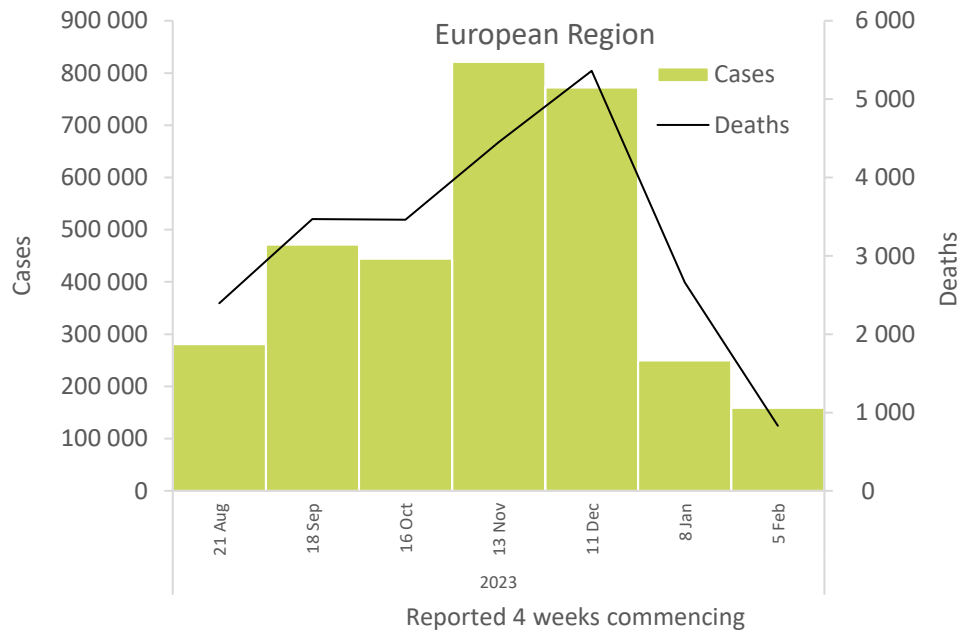


Updates from the [Eastern Mediterranean Region](#)

European Region

The European Region reported over 159 000 new cases, a 36% decrease as compared to the previous 28-day period. One (2%) of the 62 countries for which data are available reported increases in new cases of 20% or greater, with the highest proportional increases observed in Azerbaijan (486 vs 258 new cases; +88%). The highest numbers of new cases were reported from the Russian Federation (108 115 new cases; 74.1 new cases per 100 000; +5%), the United Kingdom (10 175 new cases; 15 new cases per 100 000; -59%), and Greece (9141 new cases; 85.3 new cases per 100 000; -66%).

The number of new 28-day deaths in the Region decreased by 69% as compared to the previous 28-day period, with 831 new deaths reported. The highest numbers of new deaths were reported from the Russian Federation (241 new deaths; <1 new death per 100 000; -53%), Italy (154 new deaths; <1 new death per 100 000; -77%), and Sweden (103 new deaths; 1 new death per 100 000; -67%).

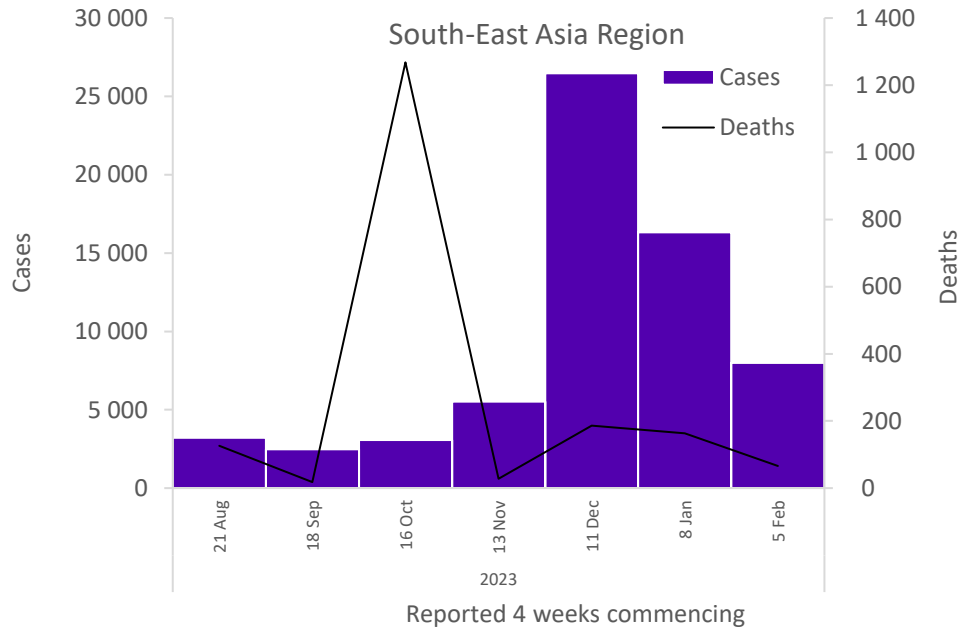


Updates from the [European Region](#)

South-East Asia Region

The South-East Asia Region reported just under 7998 new cases, a 51% decrease as compared to the previous 28-day period. One (9%) of the 11 countries for which data are available reported increases in new cases of 20% or greater, with the highest proportional increases observed in Bangladesh (1 291 vs 888 new cases; +45%). The highest numbers of new cases were reported from India (4073 new cases; <1 new case per 100 000; -49%), Thailand (1982 new cases; 2.8 new cases per 100 000; -26%), and Bangladesh (1291 new cases; <1 new case per 100 000; +45%).

The number of new 28-day deaths in the Region decreased by 60% as compared to the previous 28-day period, with 66 new deaths reported. The highest numbers of new deaths were reported from India (41 new deaths; <1 new death per 100 000; -34%), Thailand (14 new deaths; <1 new death per 100 000; -59%), and Bangladesh (9 new deaths; <1 new death per 100 000; +80%).

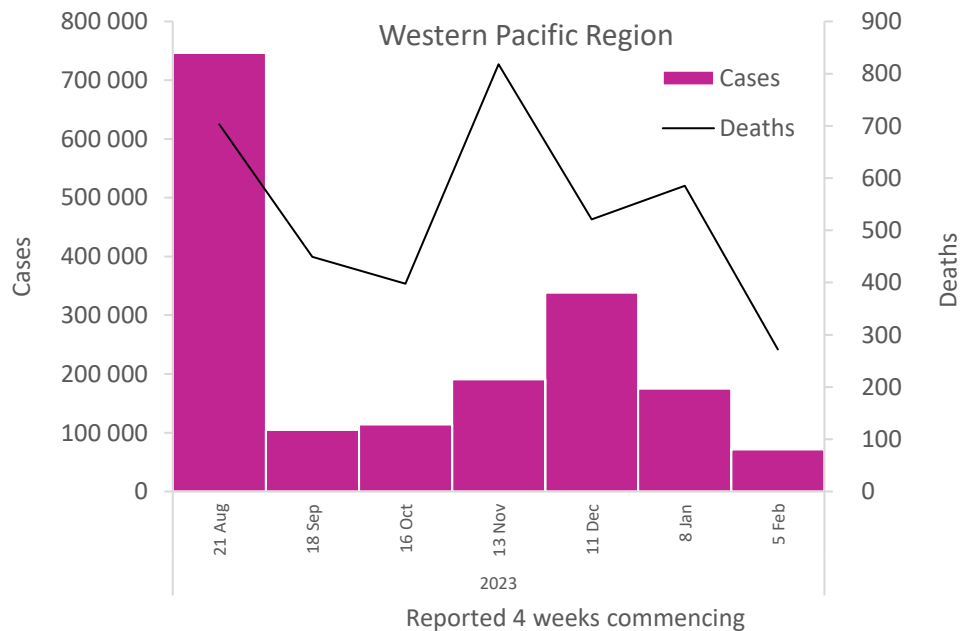


Updates from the [South-East Asia Region](#)

Western Pacific Region

The Western Pacific Region reported over 71 000 new cases, a 59% decrease as compared to the previous 28-day period. Three (9%) of the 35 countries for which data are available reported increases in new cases of 20% or greater, with the highest proportional increases observed in Lao People's Democratic Republic (31 vs 11 new cases; +182%), China (7 502 vs 5 493 new cases; +37%), and Mongolia (34 vs 25 new cases; +36%). The highest numbers of new cases were reported from Australia (29 564 new cases; 115.9 new cases per 100 000; -24%), New Zealand (19 632 new cases; 407.1 new cases per 100 000; -16%), and Singapore (11 860 new cases; 202.7 new cases per 100 000; -76%).

The number of new 28-day deaths in the Region decreased by 54% as compared to the previous 28-day period, with 272 new deaths reported. The highest numbers of new deaths were reported from Australia (156 new deaths; <1 new death per 100 000; -37%), New Zealand (69 new deaths; 1.4 new deaths per 100 000; -52%), and China (47 new deaths; <1 new death per 100 000; +24%).



Updates from the [Western Pacific Region](#)

Annex 1. Data, table, and figure notes

Data presented are based on official laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths reported to WHO by country/territories/areas, largely based upon WHO [case definitions and surveillance guidance](#). While steps are taken to ensure accuracy and reliability, all data are subject to continuous verification and change, and caution must be taken when interpreting these data as several factors influence the counts presented, with variable underestimation of true case and death incidences, and variable delays to reflecting these data at the global level. Case detection, inclusion criteria, testing strategies, reporting practices, and data cut-off and lag times differ between countries/territories/areas. In some instances, reporting frequencies between national and subnational level might be different and retrospectively completed. Differences are to be expected between information products published by WHO, national public health authorities, and other sources.

A record of historic data adjustment is available upon request by emailing epi-data-support@who.int. Please specify the countries of interest, time period, and purpose of the request/intended usage. Prior situation reports will not be edited; see covid19.who.int for the most up-to-date data.

'Countries' may refer to countries, territories, areas or other jurisdictions of similar status. The designations employed, and the presentation of these materials, do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of WHO concerning the legal status of any country, territory, or area or of its authorities, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries. Dotted and dashed lines on maps represent approximate border lines for which there may not yet be full agreement. Countries, territories, and areas are arranged under the administering WHO region. The mention of specific companies or of certain manufacturers' products does not imply that they are endorsed or recommended by WHO in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned. Errors and omissions excepted; the names of proprietary products are distinguished by initial capital letters.

Annex 2. SARS-CoV-2 variants assessment and classification

WHO, in collaboration with national authorities, institutions and researchers, routinely assesses if variants of SARS-CoV-2 alter transmission or disease characteristics, or impact the effectiveness of vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics or public health and social measures (PHSM) applied to control disease spread. Potential variants of concern (VOCs), variants of interest (VOIs) or variants under monitoring (VUMs) are regularly assessed based on the risk posed to global public health.

The classifications of variants will be revised as needed to reflect the continuous evolution of circulating variants and their changing epidemiology. Criteria for variant classification, and the lists of currently circulating and previously circulating VOCs, VOIs and VUMs, are available on the [WHO Tracking SARS-CoV-2 variants website](#). National authorities may choose to designate other variants and are strongly encouraged to investigate and report newly emerging variants and their impact.

WHO continues to monitor SARS-CoV-2 variants, including descendent lineages of VOCs, to track changes in prevalence and viral characteristics. The current trends describing the circulation of Omicron descendent lineages should be interpreted with due consideration of the limitations of current COVID-19 surveillance. These include differences in sequencing capacity and sampling strategies between countries, changes in sampling strategies over time, reductions in tests conducted and sequences shared by countries, and delays in uploading sequence data to GISAID.