

Overall strategy

The World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Office for the Western Pacific (the Regional Office) encourages Member States to continue to suppress transmission of COVID-19 in order to avoid exceeding health system capacities and to protect vulnerable populations. A risk-based approach using the following tools is recommended: COVID-19 vaccination, calibrated public health and social measures, strengthened health system capacity, early detection and targeted response, and international border measures.

Regional overview

As of 24 April 2023, 202 621 191 cases with 410 281 deaths (proportion of fatal cases (PFC) 0.2%) have been reported. The overall trend has been decreasing since mid-January 2023 and have stabilized since mid-March 2023 with a slight increase over the past 3 weeks (Figures 1 and 2).

In the previous 14 days, a total of 405 811 new cases with 582 new deaths (Table 1) were reported in 22 countries and areas: Australia 28 365, Brunei Darussalam 2 178, Cambodia 5, China 3 368, Cook Islands 9, Fiji 1, French Polynesia 39, Guam 85, Japan 123 972, Kiribati 11, the Republic of Korea 165 526, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) 32, Malaysia 9 966, Mongolia 27, New Caledonia 5, New Zealand 23 798, Northern Mariana Islands 15, Palau 2, Papua New Guinea 1, the Philippines 5 032, Singapore 26 072, and Viet Nam 17 032.

- As of 15 April 2023, BA.5 variant was the dominant variant, accounting for 53.4% of sequences. The XBB.1.16, now designated a variant under interest as of 17 April 2023, accounts for 1.9% of sequences submitted in the region.

Biweekly country situation updates

- Viet Nam continues to report a large increase in cases. From 10 April to 23 April, 17 032 cases were reported compared to the previous two weeks, in which Viet Nam reported 532 cases. With this influx of cases, hospitalizations have increased. The number of severe cases remains low, and two deaths have been reported over the past month.
- An increasing trend in cases and hospitalizations has been observed in Malaysia. Between 13 March through 26 March, 5 297 cases were reported, which increased to 9 723 reported cases between 27 March and 9 April. Hospitalizations in Malaysia also have been increasing since mid-March. A 48% increase in hospitalizations was observed between 27 March and 9 April compared to the previous two weeks.

SARS-CoV-2 Variants of Interest and Variants Under Monitoring in the Region

A total of 18 591 sequences from 9 countries and areas were uploaded to GISAID from 2 April to 15 April 2023.

For weeks 12 and 13 (2 April to 15 April 2023) the distribution of Variants of Interest (VOI) and Variants Under Monitoring (VUM) among the 9 countries and areas was 53.4% for BA.5, 7.2% for XBB*, 6.9% for XBB.1.5, 6.3% for BA.2, 4.2% for BA.2.75, 3.7% for CH.1.1, 3.1% for BQ.1, and 1.9% for XBB.1.16.

*XBB accounts for all XBB apart from the variants of interest: XBB.1.5 and XBB.1.16.

Deployments COVID-19 response

564	534	18	1	16
total deployments	deployments completed	actively supporting country offices	actively supporting the Regional Office	currently supporting remotely

Supplies and logistics for health care workers shipped to 42 destinations in the Western Pacific Region (as of 27 March 2023)



37 764 374
surgical masks



6 492 719
particulate
respirators



2 069 199
medical gowns



369 336
goggles



1 408 324
face shields



9 104 960
pairs of gloves



38 189
alcohol-based
hand rub (100mL)



782 344
laboratory tests



1 998 669
point of care tests



3 730 390
swab kits



706
ICU ventilators



3 198
oxygen
concentrators



30 155
pulse oximeters



333 490
rapid antigen tests

Figure 1. Epidemic curve of confirmed COVID-19 cases in countries and areas with the highest number of cases, as of 24 April 2023 10:00 (GMT+8)

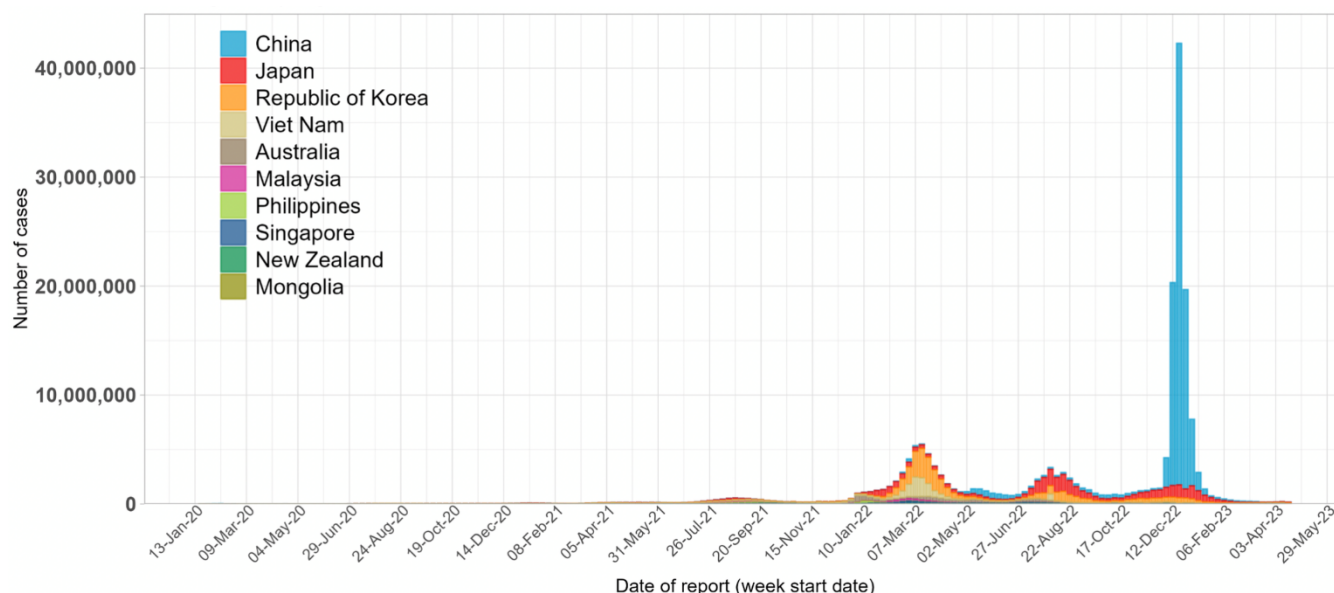
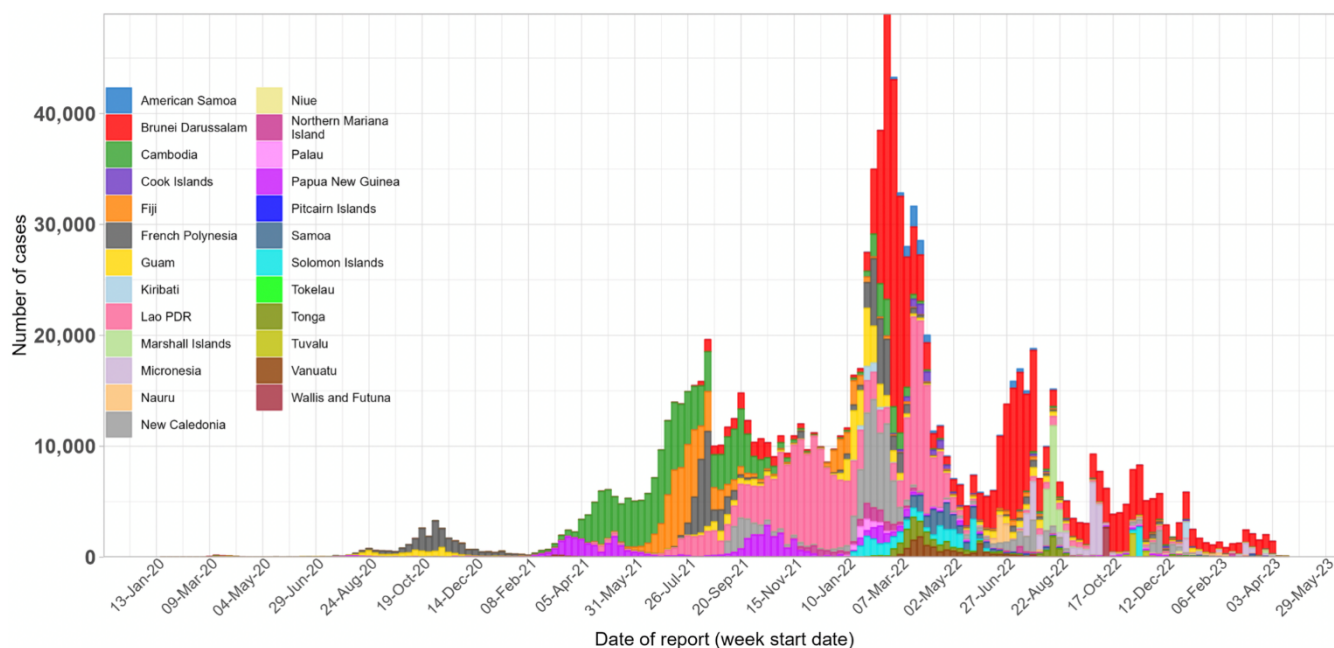


Figure 2. Epidemic curve of confirmed COVID-19 cases in countries or areas with the lowest number of cases, as of 24 April 2023 10:00 (GMT+8)



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

External Situation Report #150

24 April 2023

Period of Report: As of 24 April 2023, 10:00 (GMT+8)

Table 1. Countries or areas with reported laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths, covering the period from 10 April 2023 to 23 April 2023, as of 24 April 2023 (GMT+8)

Country or area	New cases (cumulative)	New deaths (cumulative)	Change (14-day average of cases)
American Samoa	0 ¹ (8 329)	0 ¹ (34)	-0.21
Australia	28 365 ¹ (11 210 651)	97 ¹ (20 119)	-1 833.14
Brunei Darussalam	2 178 ¹ (286 610)	2 ¹ (155)	-35.57
Cambodia	5 (138 731)	0 (3 056)	014
China	3 368 ¹ (99 244 445)	18 ¹ (120 923)	73.14
Cook Islands	9 ¹ (7 059)	0 ¹ (2)	-0.29
Fiji	1 ¹ (68 918)	0 ¹ (883)	-0.36
French Polynesia	39 ¹ (78 417)	0 ¹ (649)	-8.57
Guam	85 ¹ (51 110)	0 ¹ (413)	3.0
Japan	123 972 (33 647 899)	280 (74 376)	1559.29
Kiribati	11 ¹ (5 025)	6 ¹ (24)	0.79
Korea, Republic of	165 526 (31 083 586)	95 (34 427)	1494.71
Lao PDR	32 (218 069)	0 (641)	2.0
Malaysia	9 966 (5 066 877)	29 (37 011)	165.93
Marshall Islands	0 ¹ (16 081)	0 ¹ (17)	-25.57
Micronesia (Federated States of)	0 ¹ (26 049)	1 ¹ (64)	-24.71
Mongolia	27 ¹ (1 007 993)	0 ¹ (2 136)	-0.14
Nauru	0 ¹ (5 393)	0 ¹ (1)	0
New Caledonia	5 ¹ (80 057)	0 ¹ (314)	-1.07
New Zealand	23 394 (2 240 441)	0 (2 716)	207.29
Niue	0 ¹ (747)	0 (0)	0
Northern Mariana Islands	15 (13 814)	0 ¹ (41)	-0.79
Palau	2 ¹ (5 999)	0 ¹ (9)	0.14
Papua New Guinea	1 ¹ (46 838)	0 ¹ (670)	-0.07
The Philippines	5302 (4 088 985)	24 (66 444)	130.07
Pitcairn Islands	0 ¹ (4)	0 ¹ (0)	0
Samoa	0 ¹ (16 737)	0 ¹ (31)	-4.43
Singapore	26 072 (2 340 779)	0 (1 722)	-1311.14
Solomon Islands	0 ¹ (24 575)	0 ¹ (153)	0
Tokelau	0 ¹ (5)	0 ¹ (0)	0
Tonga	0 ¹ (16 814)	0 ¹ (12)	0
Tuvalu	0 ¹ (2 779)	0 ¹ (0)	0
Vanuatu	0 ¹ (12 014)	0 ¹ (14)	0
Viet Nam	17 032 (11 544 778)	0 (43 187)	1178.29
Wallis and Futuna	0 ¹ (3 427)	0 ¹ (7)	0
Total	405 811 (202 621 191)	582 (410 281)	1543.57

Table 2. Countries or areas in the Western Pacific Region that have reported currently circulating Variants of Concern, as of 15 April 2023 10:00 (GMT+8)

Country or area	Omicron Sub-lineage ³								
	BA.5*	BA.2.75*	BF.7*	XBB [^]	XBB.1.5	XBB.1.16	CH.1.1	BQ.1*	XBF
American Samoa	X						X		X
Australia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Brunei Darussalam	X	X		X		X		X	
Cambodia	X	X	X	X				X	
China	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Guam	X						X	X	X
Japan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Kiribati	X								
Lao PDR	X								
Malaysia	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Marshall Islands		X						X	
Micronesia (Federated States of)	X	X			X			X	
Mongolia	X							X	
New Zealand	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
Northern Mariana Islands	X	X			X			X	
Palau	X							X	
Papua New Guinea	X	X		X				X	
The Philippines	X	X		X	X	X		X	
Republic of Korea	X	X		X				X	
Samoa	X								
Singapore	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Solomon Islands	X								
Tonga	X								
Vanuatu	X								
Viet Nam	X	X		X		X	X		

*Includes sub-variants. ^Includes sub-variants, except for XBB.1.5 and XBB.1.16 (Variants of Interest) and reported separately. GISAID submission data is subject to change.

Key information and announcements

Information and planning

The Regional Office continues to monitor COVID-19 incidence in countries and areas across the Region. Updated information is available on the [dashboard for the Western Pacific Region](#).

Strategic Communication

The Regional Office continues to support COVID-19 strategic communications in countries and areas across the Region, including developing health messages and campaigns, monitoring and responding to mis- and disinformation through social listening, gathering behavioural insights and media relations.

Messages for the public

- On social media, published posts about public health and safety measures, post-COVID condition, vaccination and staying safe during holidays like Ramadan and Easter.
- Facebook
 - [Children 🧒🧒🧒 under 5 are at greater risk of severe disease or complications following infection with influenza](#). During the #COVID19 pandemic, it is more important than ever to protect children from #flu.
 - [Post COVID-19 condition can affect people of all ages](#), including those who had only mild or no symptoms during their initial COVID-19 infection. However, the risk is higher for people who have suffered from severe #COVID19.
 -
- Twitter
 - [Sadly, people are still getting ill and dying from #COVID19 every week](#). It's important to assess your risk based on where you are, what you're doing, your health and vaccination status, and take appropriate protective measures. #LiveLifeSafely
 - [Post COVID-19 condition can affect people of all ages](#), including those who had only mild or no symptoms during their initial COVID-19 infection. However, the risk is higher for people who have suffered from severe #COVID19.