



Overall strategy

On 5 May 2023, the WHO Director-General declared that COVID-19 no longer constitutes a Public Health of international Concern (PHEIC) and that it is no longer a global health emergency. Despite the termination of the (PHEIC), COVID-19 remains a global health threat.

This means that it is time for those Member States who have not already done so, to shift from emergency mode to the sustained management of COVID-19 taking a risk-based approach using the following recommended tools: 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 5 June 2023, 204 088 022 cases with 412 605 deaths (proportion of fatal cases (PFC) 0.2%) have been reported. The overall trend has been decreasing over the past two weeks after several weeks of increasing cases (Figures 1 and 2). This trend, however, should be interpreted with caution due to decreased testing, alongside a lack of reporting and delays in many countries.

In the previous 14 days, a total of 349,997 new cases with 321 new deaths (Table 1) were reported in 22 countries and areas: Australia 36 375, Brunei Darussalam 1 353, Cambodia 62, China 11 457, Cook Islands 22, French Polynesia 9, Guam 133, Kiribati 10, the Republic of Korea 234 593, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) 69, Malaysia 5 801, Mongolia 708, New Caledonia 6, New Zealand 11 384, Niue 15, Northern Mariana Islands 18, Papua New Guinea 12, the Philippines 20 773, Singapore 14 851, Vanuatu 3, Viet Nam 12 313 and Wallis and Futuna 42.

As of 28 May 2023, XBB.1.9.1 variant was the dominant variant, accounting for 21.7% of sequences in region. XBB.1.5 became a variant under interest on 16 April and continues to increase in proportion among sequenced cases.

Biweekly country situation updates

- Mongolia has reported a rise in cases since the beginning of April. In the past two weeks there were 708 cases reported compared to 390 reported cases two weeks prior. Hospitalizations had also increased in April, however now seeing a declining trend. No reports of hospital strains have been observed. Additionally, no deaths have been reported since December 2022.
- Tuvalu reported an increase in cases, with 132 confirmed cases from 26 May –2 June 2023. Of these cases two were hospitalized with mild-moderate symptoms. There have been no reports of severe cases or deaths during this reporting period. Samples have been collected to be sent to the reference laboratory in Melbourne, Australia for whole genome sequencing.
- Following several weeks of increasing case trends, Viet Nam has reported a declining number of cases over the past four weeks. The 14-day daily case average was 880 during the last two weeks of May, a 50% decrease compared to the first two weeks of May. Despite the recent

surge in cases, there have been no changes in the proportion of severe cases, or strain on the health system.

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

A total of 9,250 sequences from 8 countries and areas were uploaded to GISAID from 15-28 May 2023.

For weeks 20 and 21 (15-28 May 2023) the distribution of Variants of Interest (VOI) and Variants Under Monitoring (VUM) among the 8 countries and areas was 21.7% for XBB1.9.1, 21.2% for XBB.1.16 17.5 % for XBB.1.5, 9.0% for XBB.1.9.2, 6.1% for XBB.2.3, 5.8% for XBB, 5.1% for CH.1.1, 3.5% for BA.1, 3.5% for BA.5, 2.8% for BA.2.75, and 0.7% for BQ.1

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 5 June 2023 10:00 (GMT+8)

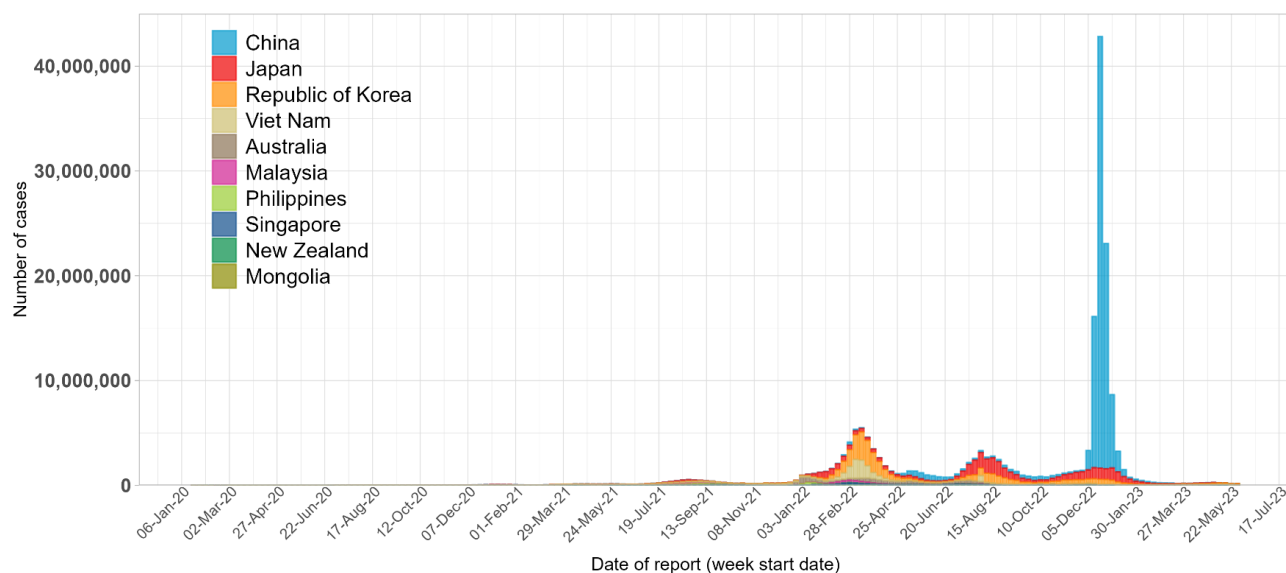


Figure 2. Epidemic curve of confirmed COVID-19 cases in countries or areas with the lowest number of cases, as of 5 June 2023 10:00 (GMT+8)

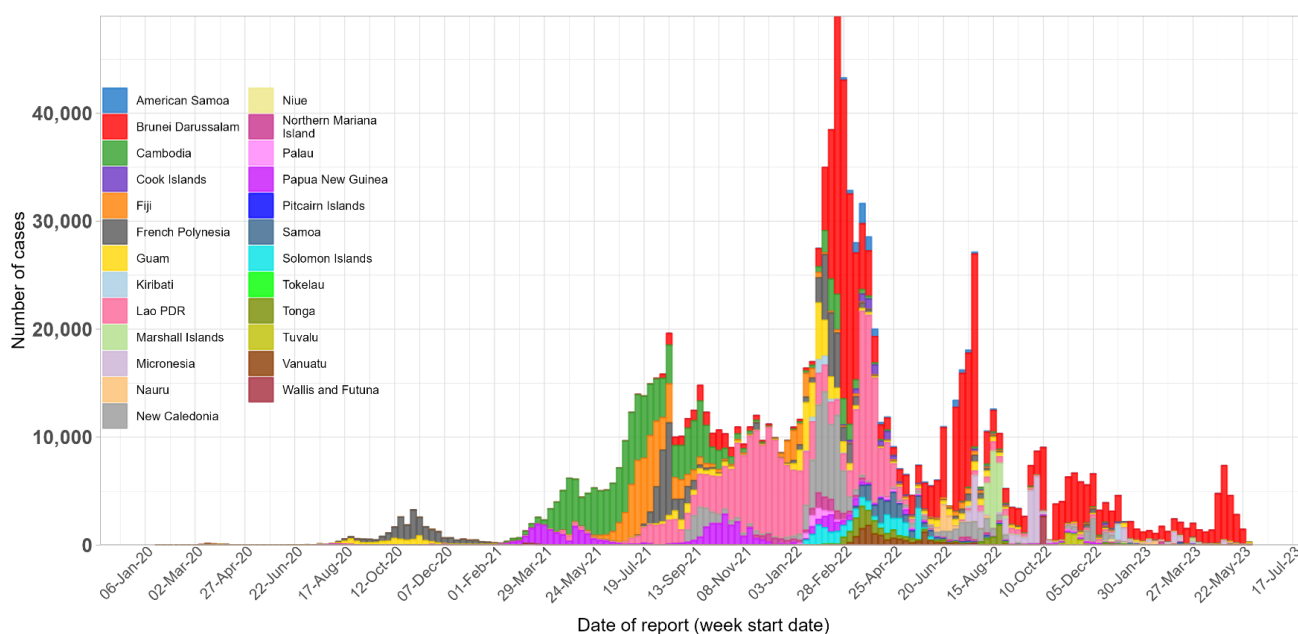


Table 1. Countries or areas with reported laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths, covering the period from 22 May to 04 June 2023, as of 04 June 2023 (GMT+8)

| Country or area | New cases (cumulative) | New deaths (cumulative) | Change (14-day average of cases) |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| American Samoa | 0 (8 331) | 0 (34) | 0 |
| Australia | 36 375 ¹ (11 420 039) | 17 ¹ (21 063) | -3115.57 |
| Brunei Darussalam | 1 353 (307 686) | 0 (161) | -391.07 |
| Cambodia | 62 (138, 803) | 0 (3 056) | 4.00 |
| China | 11 457 ¹ (99 273 266) | 129 ¹ (121 236) | 148.07 |
| Cook Islands | 22 (7 128) | 0 (2) | -1.21 |
| Fiji | 0 (68 921) | 0 (883) | 0.00 |
| French Polynesia | 9 (78 590) | 0 (649) | -1.93 |
| Guam | 133 (51 573) | 0 (413) | -4.79 |
| Japan | 0 ² (33 803 572) | ¹⁰² (74 694) | -724.50 |
| Kiribati | 10 ¹ (5 037) | 0 ¹ (24) | 0.57 |
| Korea, Republic of | 234 593 (31 782 676) | 0 (34 815) | -1970.00 |
| Lao PDR | 69 (218 265) | 0 (671) | -3.00 |
| Malaysia | 5 801 (5 100 249) | 0 ((37 087) | -657.93 |
| Marshall Islands | 0 (16 081) | 0 (17) | 0 |
| Micronesia (Federated States of) | 0 (26 453) | 1 (65) | -26.64 |
| Mongolia | 708 (1 010 034) | 0 (2 136) | -25.21 |
| Nauru | 0 ¹ (5 393) | 0 ¹ (1) | 0 |
| New Caledonia | 6 ¹ (80 064) | 3 ¹ (314) | 0 |
| New Zealand | 11 384 (2 306 943) | 0 (2 942) | -853.29 |
| Niue | 15 ¹ (817) | 0 ¹ (0) | 1 |
| Northern Mariana Islands | 18 ¹ (13 935) | 0 ¹ (41) | -1.93 |
| Palau | 9 ¹ (6 009) | 0 ¹ (9) | -0.64 |
| Papua New Guinea | 0 ¹ (46 864) | 0 ¹ (670) | 0 |
| The Philippines | 20 773 (4 148 401) | 13 (66 476) | -290.50 |
| Pitcairn Islands | 0 ¹ (4) | 0 ¹ (0) | 0 |
| Samoa | 0 ¹ (16 743) | 0 ¹ (31) | 0 |
| Singapore | 14 851 (2 474 308) | 0 (1 722) | -2 158.00 |
| Solomon Islands | 0 ¹ (21 611) | 0 ¹ (153) | 0 |
| Tokelau | 0 ¹ (5) | 0 ¹ (0) | 0 |
| Tonga | 0 (16 817) | 0 (12) | 0 |
| Tuvalu | 0 ¹ (2 779) | 0 ¹ (0) | 0 |
| Vanuatu | 3 (12 019) | 0 (14) | 0.21 |
| Viet Nam | 12 313 (11 615 051) | 7 (43 206) | -1038.71 |
| Wallis and Futuna | 42 ¹ (3 550) | 0 ¹ (7) | -2.79 |
| Total | 349 997 (204 088 022) | 321 (412 605) | -11 091.86 |

Note: Data continues to be collected and may change according to Member States' reports.

¹ Countries reported no or partial data for the 14-day period ² Japan no longer reports case numbers as of 8 May 2023.

Table 2. Countries or areas in the Western Pacific Region that have reported currently circulating Variants of Concern, as of 4 June 2023 10:00 (GMT+8)

| Country or area | Omicron Sub-lineage ³ | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------|------------------|---------|----------|-----------|-----------|--------|-------|
| | BA.5* | BA.2.75* | XBB [^] | XBB.1.5 | XBB.1.16 | XBB.1.9.1 | XBB.1.9.2 | CH.1.1 | BQ.1* |
| American Samoa | 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 | X |
| Guam | 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 | X |
| Marshall Islands | | X | | | | | | | X |
| Micronesia (Federated States of) | X | X | | X | | | | | X |
| Mongolia | X | | | X | X | X | X | | X |
| New Zealand | X | 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 | | | 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 | X | | X | |

*Includes sub-variants. ^Includes sub-variants, except for XBB.1.5. XBB.1.5 is a Variant of Interest and is reported separately. Note: 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](#).

Partner Coordination

The Global Outbreak and Response Network (GOARN) Strategy Implementation Workshop and the 33rd GOARN Steering Committee meeting was held from 8 May to 12 May 2023 in Amman, Jordan. The primary aim of the GOARN Strategy Implementation Workshop was to prioritize activities according to four strategic themes. Participants developed collaborative plans to support the global and regional outbreak preparedness, readiness and response activities.

The 33rd GOARN Steering Committee reflected on the challenges and opportunities for GOARN in a 2023 context, clarified GOARN governance structure and membership, and applied discussions from the strategy workshop to decision making and execution by GOARN partners. For the first time, the first day of the Steering Committee was open for observation by attendees of the Strategy Implementation Workshop.

The Western Pacific was represented by nine partners from five Member States: Australia, China, Japan, Singapore, and Fiji.

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 strengthening emergency preparedness in PICS, emergency response during the 76th World Health Assembly and how countries reduced the impact of COVID-19 as part of the social media awareness for the WHO Results Report.

- Facebook
 - [Cambodia KH has been able to reduce the impact of the pandemic by scaling up local preparedness and #COVID19 vaccination](#). With WHO's technical support, 70% of Cambodia's population was vaccinated by September 2021, 8 months ahead of the global target.
 - [A healthy pregnancy reduces risks of #preterm birth](#). WHO recommends: 📺 Quality and respectful antenatal care, including early ultrasound 🗣️ Counselling on optimal



nutrition 🧑🍳 Preventing tobacco and substance use 🧑🏠 Vaccination to reduce risks of flu and #COVID19 #BornTooSoon

- [#Nauru NR is acting to counter the dual crises of environmental degradation and #COVID19 by using new environmentally-friendly technology to manage medical waste](#). Learn more: <https://bit.ly/3C9e96p> #WorldEnvironmentDay

- Twitter

- [Driven by the heightened demand during the pandemic](#), Pacific nations have been working with @WHO and partners to strengthen their laboratory health services to detect #COVID19 and other diseases. Check out our latest photo story to see how: <https://t.co/EU32FNluOI>
- [Cambodia has been able to reduce the impact of the #pandemic by scaling up local preparedness and #COVID19 vaccination](#), thanks to the support of all of @WHO's partners, including the European Union. Learn more in our latest Results Report: <https://t.co/w1wRs0jPfx>
- [Dr Babatunde Olowokure, Regional Emergency Director, talks about the different ways the Western Pacific Region responded to the #COVID19 pandemic](#). At #WHA76, he stresses the importance of leadership in preparing for and preventing future threats.