

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.

As of 31 July 2023, the Western Pacific Region has moved from a biweekly COVID-19 situation report to a monthly situation report. All future COVID-19 situation reports will be published the first week of the month until otherwise noted.

Regional overview

As of 31 July 2023, 205 846 101 cases with 415 641 deaths (proportion of fatal cases (PFC) 0.2%) have been reported. The overall case trend has been decreasing over the several weeks (Figures 1 and 2). This trend, however, should be interpreted with caution due to decreased testing and changes in reporting frequency in many countries.

In the previous 28 days, a total of 1 023 979 new cases with 667 new deaths (Table 1) were reported in 21 countries and areas: Australia 19 754, Brunei 458, Cambodia 17, China 8 141, Cook Islands 7, French Polynesia 4, Guam 111, Kiribati 1, the Republic of Korea 945 642, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) 248, Malaysia 2 424, Micronesia 12, Mongolia 19, New Zealand 14 543, Niue 2, Northern Mariana Islands 52, Palau 109, the Philippines 7 421, Singapore 23 768, Tokelau 57, and Viet Nam 1 189.

As of 24 July 2023, XBB.1.16 was the dominant variant, accounting for 22.2% of sequences in region.

Monthly country situation updates, as of 1 August 2023

- Over the past five weeks, Japan has reported an increasing trend in the number of cases and hospitalizations. Compared to an average of 6.1 cases reported per reporting facility from 19 to 25 June 2023, an average of 13.9 cases were reported from 17 to 23 July 2023 (68 601 total cases). Japan has also reported an rise in the number of hospitalizations; 4 751 hospitalizations were reported between 19 to 25 June 2023 compared to 8 983 between 17 to 23 July 2023.
- The Republic of Korea has also reported an increasing trend in the number of cases over the previous five weeks. The 28-day daily case average was 33 773 cases reported for 3 to 31 July 2023 compared to 16 910 reported cases 28-days prior (5 June to 3 July 2023). Deaths have remained low and stable (242 in the previous 28 days). Over the past week, there has been a low number of hospitalizations with an average of 74 new admissions daily.

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

A total of 23 336 sequences from 9 countries and areas were uploaded to GISAID from 28 June to 26 July 2023.

As of 17 July 2023, the EG.5 variant is now a Variant Under Monitoring by the WHO. EG.5 has shown an increasing trend in sequenced cases globally over the past four weeks. In the Western Pacific Region, it has been detected in 8 countries/areas and accounts for 11.2% of sequenced cases between 28 June to 26 July 2023.

Between 28 June to 26 July 2023, the distribution of Variants of Interest (VOI) and Variants Under Monitoring (VUM) among the 9 countries and areas was: 22.2% for XBB.1.16, 17.7% for XBB.1.9.1, 11.4% for XBB.1.5, 11.2% for EG.5, 9.5% for BA.5, 7.1% for XBB, 5.9% for XBB.2.3, 3.8% for CH.1.1, 3.3% for BA.2.75, 3.0% for BA.1, 1.6% for BA.2, and 1.2 % for XBB.1.9.2.

Deployments

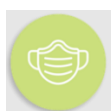
COVID-19
response

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

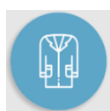
Supplies and logistics for health care workers shipped to 42 destinations in the Western Pacific Region (as of 27 March 2023)



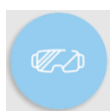
37 764 374
surgical masks



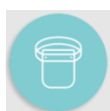
6 492 719
particulate
respirators



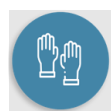
2 069 199
medical gowns



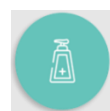
369 336
goggles



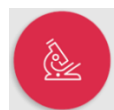
1 408 324
face shields



9 104 960
pairs of gloves



38 189
alcohol-based
hand rub (100mL)



782 344
laboratory tests



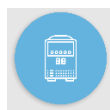
1 998 669
point of care tests



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 31 July 2023 10:00 (GMT+8)

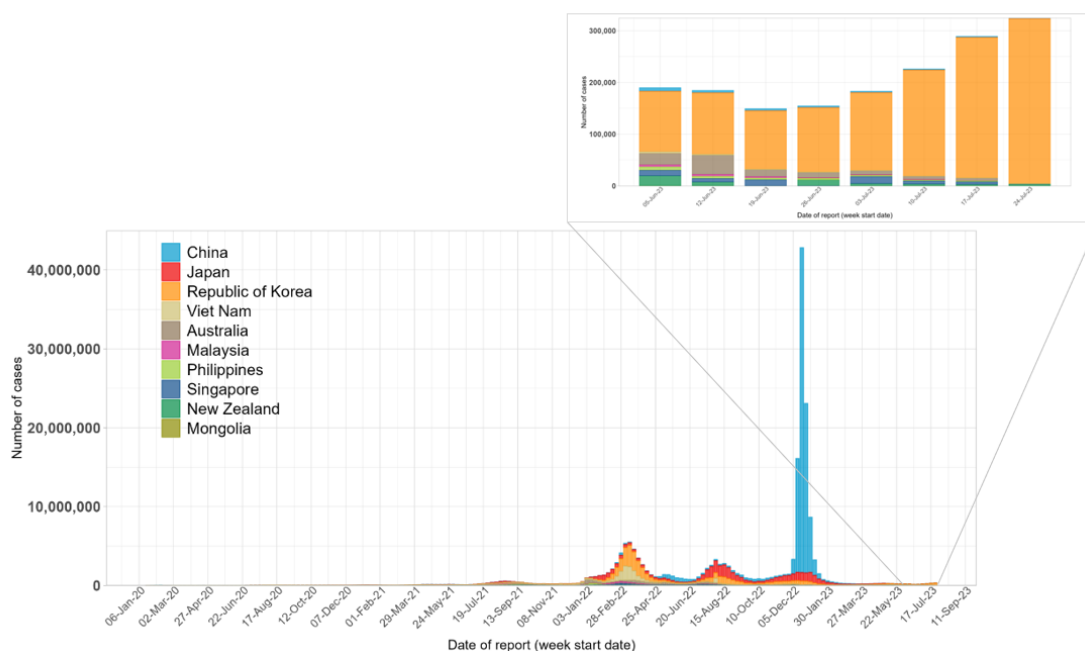
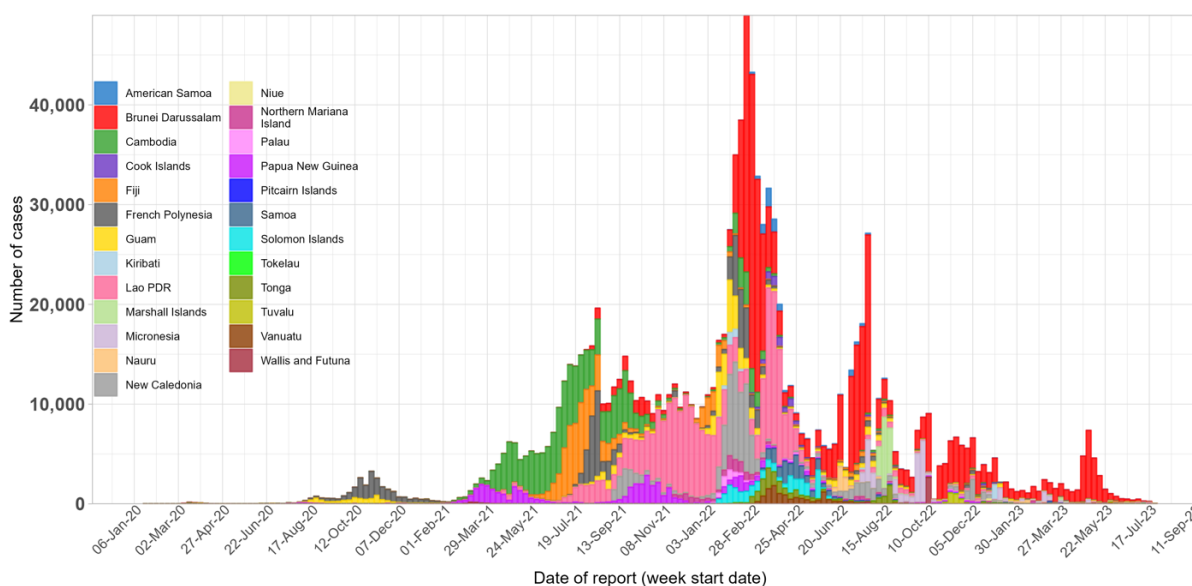


Figure 2. Epidemic curve of confirmed COVID-19 cases in countries or areas with the lowest number of cases, as of 31 July 2023 10:00 (GMT+8)



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

External Situation Report #156

4 August 2023

Period of Report: As of 31 July 2023, 10:00 (GMT+8)

Table 1. Countries or areas with reported laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths, covering the period from 3 July to 31 July 2023, as of 31 July 2023 (GMT+8)

Country or area	New cases (cumulative)	New deaths (cumulative)	Change (28-day average of cases)
American Samoa	0 (8 332)	0 (34)	0
Australia	19 754 ¹ (11 560 270)	151 ¹ (22 482)	-2 297.82
Brunei Darussalam	458 ¹ (310 019)	1 ¹ (163)	-27.14
Cambodia	17 (138 937)	0 (3 056)	-3.43
China	8 141 ¹ (99 300 040)	73 ¹ (121 563)	-374.75
Cook Islands	7 ¹ (7 151)	0 ¹ (2)	-0.32
Fiji	0 ¹ (69 047)	0 ¹ (885)	-4.5
French Polynesia	4 ¹ (78 617)	0 ¹ (649)	-0.46
Guam	111 (51 786)	2 (415)	-2.54
Japan	0 ¹ (33 803 572)	0 ¹ (74 694)	0
Kiribati	1 (5 082)	0 (24)	-1.54
Korea, Republic of	945 642 (33 201 796)	242 (35 313)	16863
Lao PDR	248 (218 739)	0 (671)	0.79
Malaysia	2 424 ¹ (5 121 920)	9 (37 181)	-439.29
Marshall Islands	0 ¹ (16 098)	0 ¹ (17)	0
Micronesia (Federated States of)	12 ¹ (26 472)	0 ¹ (65)	0.36
Mongolia	19 ¹ (1 010 954)	0 ¹ (2 284)	-31.5
Nauru	0 ¹ (5 393)	0 ¹ (1)	0
New Caledonia	0 ¹ (80 064)	0 ¹ (314)	0
New Zealand	14 543 (2 360 435)	81 (3 219)	-871.64
Niue	2 ¹ (822)	0 ¹ (0)	-0.04
Northern Mariana Islands	52 ¹ (14 096)	0 ¹ (41)	-1.57
Palau	109 ¹ (6 122)	0 ¹ (9)	3.82
Papua New Guinea	0 ¹ (46 864)	0 ¹ (670)	0
Philippines	7 421 (4 172 920)	108 (66 592)	-345.61
Pitcairn Islands	0 ¹ (4)	0 ¹ (0)	0
Samoa	0 ¹ (16 775)	0 ¹ (31)	-1.14
Singapore	23 768 ¹ (2 534 940)	0 ¹ (1 872)	-163.04
Solomon Islands	0 ¹ (21 611)	0 ¹ (153)	0
Tokelau	57 ¹ (80)	0 ¹ (0)	1.39
Tonga	0 (16 819)	0 (12)	-0.07
Tuvalu	0 ¹ (2 943)	0 ¹ (1)	-1.14
Vanuatu	0 (12 019)	0 (14)	0
Viet Nam	1 189 (11 621 812)	0 (43 206)	-156.54
Wallis and Futuna	0 ¹ (3 550)	0 ¹ (8)	0
Total	1 023 979 (205 846 101)	667 (415 641)	12 145.29

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

¹ Countries reported no or partial data for the 28-day period ²Japan no longer reports case numbers as of 8 May 2023.

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

External Situation Report #156

4 August 2023

Period of Report: As of 31 July 2023, 10:00 (GMT+8)

Table 2. Countries or areas in the Western Pacific Region that have reported currently circulating Variants of Concern, as of 26 July 2023 10:00 (GMT+8)

Country or area	Omicron Sub-lineage									
	BA.5*	BA.2.75*	XBB^	XBB.1.5	XBB.1.16	XBB.1.9.1	XBB.1.9.2	EG.5	CH.1.1	BQ.1*
American Samoa	X								X	
Australia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Brunei Darussalam	X	X	X		X					X
Cambodia	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X
China	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Guam	X								X	X
Japan	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Kiribati	X									
Lao PDR	X									
Malaysia	X	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			X
New Zealand	X	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	X	X	X
Republic of Korea	X	X	X							X
Samoa	X									
Singapore	X	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	X	X	

*Includes sub-variants. ^Includes sub-variants not specified on the table. 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](#).

Strategic Communication

The Regional Office actively supports country offices in testing messages to ensure data-driven and audience-focused risk communication and has completed the administration process for continuing to engage a vendor to provide technical support for message testing on COVID-19 and other emergency topics.

Messages for the public

On WPRO social media, published posts on stopping the spread of misinformation, country partnerships for COVID-19 response, WHO response to health emergencies, the pandemic accord, COVID-19 vaccination and risk-based COVID-19 measures for workplaces, places of worship, and sport events (FIFA). Content on the Director-General's visit to Mongolia and the country's COVID-19 response was also published.

Facebook and X (formerly Twitter) posts:

- **Misinformation.** We all have a role to play in stopping the spread of harmful misinformation. [Facebook](#) / [X \(Twitter\)](#)
- **Country partnerships.** We thank the EU Delegation to Mongolia for their valuable support to the COVID-19 response in Mongolia. [Facebook](#) / [X \(Twitter\)](#)
- With support from the Government of Japan, WHO has worked with IOM Cambodia, UNFPA Cambodia, and UNICEF Cambodia to keep returning migrants safe from COVID-19 in three border provinces in Cambodia. [Facebook](#) / [X \(Twitter\)](#)
- **Director-General's visit to Mongolia.** Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus started his two-day visit to Mongolia meeting with country officials and health workers. "WHO is proud to continue supporting Mongolia's efforts for health system strengthening, and emergency preparedness and response," the WHO Director-General said. [Facebook](#) / [X \(Twitter\)](#)
- **Healthy emergency response.** The Western Pacific Region is vulnerable to outbreaks and other emergency health hazards – from SARS to dengue, to COVID-19 and more. [Facebook](#) / [X \(Twitter\)](#)
- With countries and partners in the Western Pacific and South-East Asia regions, WHO is developing a new bi-regional action framework for health security, building on lessons from COVID-19 and other emergencies. [Facebook](#) / [X \(Twitter\)](#)
- Lessons from SARS and other outbreaks have helped WHO to continuously strengthen health security. When COVID-19 emerged, WHO supported countries to respond quickly and strategically. [Facebook](#) / [X \(Twitter\)](#)
- **Pandemic accord.** Pandemics know no borders. The 194 countries that make the WHO have agreed to draft an agreement for stronger collaboration and action to respond faster and better during health emergencies. [Facebook](#) / [X \(Twitter\)](#)

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

External Situation Report #156

4 August 2023

Period of Report: As of 31 July 2023, 10:00 (GMT+8)

- A pandemic accord will be determined by governments themselves, as sovereign nations. [Facebook](#) / [X \(Twitter\)](#) Countries are leading the process to negotiate a #PandemicAccord to prevent a repeat of COVID-19. [Facebook](#) / [X \(Twitter\)](#)
- **COVID-19 vaccination.** Today, more than 30 diseases are vaccine-preventable... Vaccines were critical in ending COVID-19 as a global health emergency. [Facebook](#) / [X \(Twitter\)](#)
- Live your life while protecting yourself and those around you from the coronavirus...Get all the recommended doses of the COVID-19 vaccine including booster doses. [Facebook](#) / [X \(Twitter\)](#)
- **COVID-19 risk management.** Do you own or manage a restaurant or an eatery? Keep in mind these tips to reduce everyone's risk of catching COVID-19. [Facebook](#) / [X \(Twitter\)](#)
- #LiveLifeSafely. Here are ways employers and staff can continue to keep everyone safe from COVID-19 in the workplace. [Facebook](#) / [X \(Twitter\)](#)
- #LiveLifeSafely and reduce COVID-19 risk in places of worship. [Facebook](#) / [X \(Twitter\)](#)
- Planning to watch a sport event but feeling unwell? Stay home and consider watching online or on TV. [Facebook](#) / [X \(Twitter\)](#)