

SITUATION IN NUMBERS (As of midnight GMT+2, 17 July 2021)



10

Countries reporting biweekly increase in numbers of cases



6

Countries reporting biweekly increase in numbers of deaths



11 807 423

Total laboratory-confirmed cases



10 780 434

Total reported recovered cases



226 687

Total reported deaths



182 026 059

Total tests performed



An additional 1.2 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines reached Pakistan, bringing the total number of doses delivered through the COVAX Facility to 5 million.

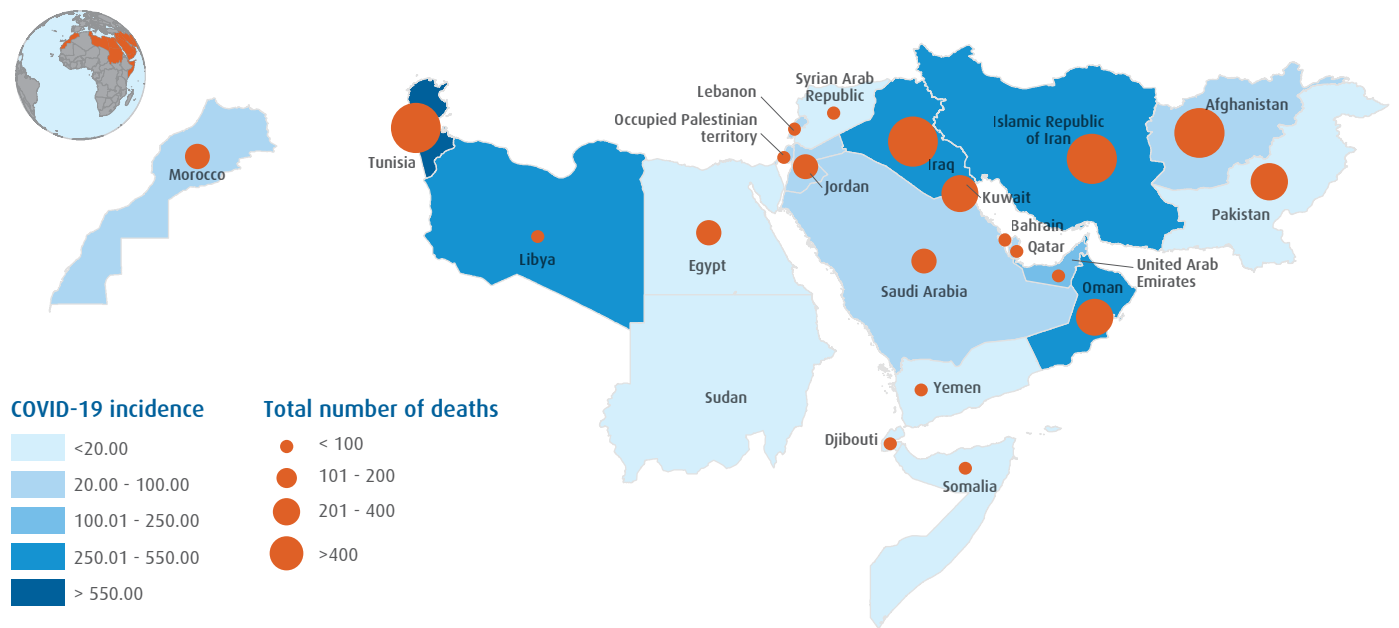
Credit: WHO Pakistan

EPIDEMIOLOGICAL HIGHLIGHTS

- **COVID-19 cases and deaths:** As of 17 July 2021, the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) has reported 11,807,423 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 226,687 deaths since the start of the pandemic.
- **Epidemiological trend:** during the reporting period and compared to the two previous weeks:
 - The number of reported cases has increased by 42%.
 - Deaths have increased by 12%.
 - Testing rates have stabilized.
 - An increase in cases and deaths was reported by 10 and 6 countries respectively.
 - A decrease in both cases and deaths was reported by 8 countries.
- **COVID-19 testing:** The total number of tests in the Region has reached 182,026,059 with a median cumulative positivity ratio of 9.6% (range from 1.1% to 30.8%).
- **SARS-CoV-2 variants:**
 - Nineteen countries in the Region have officially reported the detection of the **Alpha variant of concern (VOC):** Afghanistan, Bahrain, Djibouti, Egypt, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, the occupied Palestinian territory, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates.
 - During the reporting period, Kuwait reported the detection of the **Beta VOC**, bringing the total number of countries having reported the detection of this VOC to fourteen: Bahrain, Djibouti, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Oman, the occupied Palestinian territory, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates.
 - **Three** countries have officially reported the **Gamma VOC:** Jordan, Pakistan, and the United Arab Emirates.
 - During the reporting period, Afghanistan and Iraq confirmed the detection of the **Delta VOC**, bringing the total to of countries having reported the detection of this VOC to fifteen: Afghanistan, Bahrain, the Islamic Republic of Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, the occupied Palestinian territory, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and the United Arab Emirates.

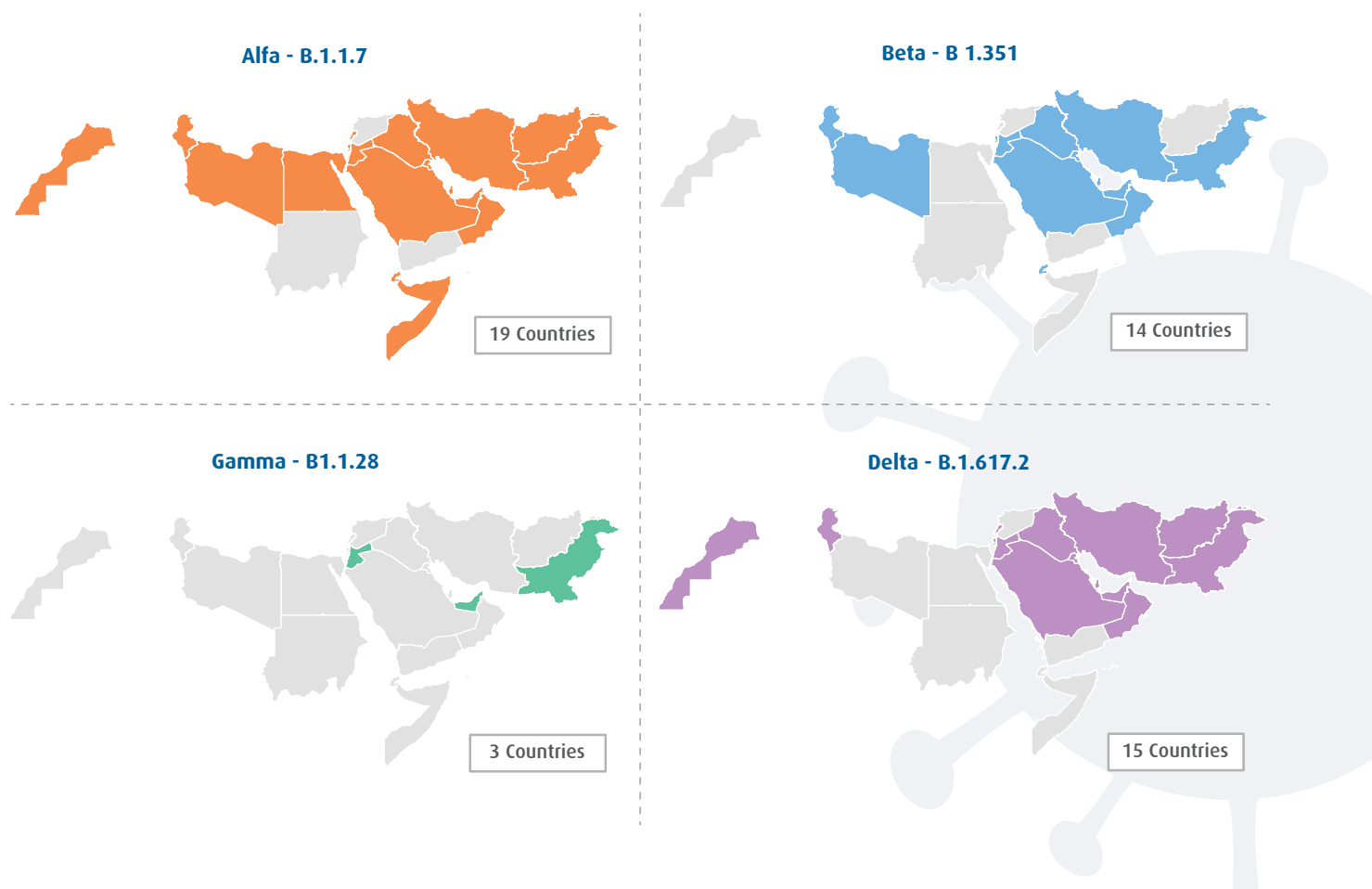
Map 1: COVID-19 bi-weekly attack rate per 100,000 population and number of new deaths per country in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

04 - 17 July 2021



Map 2: Countries reporting SARS-CoV-2 variants of concern (VOCs) and variants of interest (VOIs) in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

As of 17 July 2021



IN FOCUS: COVID-19 SITUATION IN TUNISIA

- Tunisia reported a regular increase in the number of reported cases since week 19, with a weekly upsurge from week 24 to 27. The daily average number of cases increased from 1,882 in week 23 to 7,712 in week 27. The number of deaths has increased over the past five weeks, with the daily average number of deaths rising from 51 in week 22 to 144 in week 27.
- In parallel, there was a significant increase in the number of tests conducted daily over the past three weeks, reaching 13.1 per 1000 population during week 27. However, the testing positivity ratio remained very high (35%), as there was no change in the testing strategy.
- Tunisia has officially reported the detection of three SARS-CoV-2 VOCs: Alpha, Beta and Delta.
- Vaccination rates are increasing, especially among people older than 60, but coverage is still low, with 12.7% of the population having received at least one dose of the vaccine, and 6% being fully vaccinated.
- Oxygen beds are at 90% occupancy and beds in intensive care units are at 95% occupancy. In some governorates, hospital bed occupancy has reached beyond 100%.
- Public health measures have been strengthened, including the suspension of social events and closure of businesses.
- WHO provided additional oxygen concentrators and generators to hospitals, as well as medical supplies, tests, reagents and personal protective equipment, and supports the provision of additional vaccine doses. WHO reached out to its network of partners to consider the deployment of international emergency medical teams for surge support in the areas of intensive and critical care, and infection prevention and control.

Table 1: Epidemiological situation in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

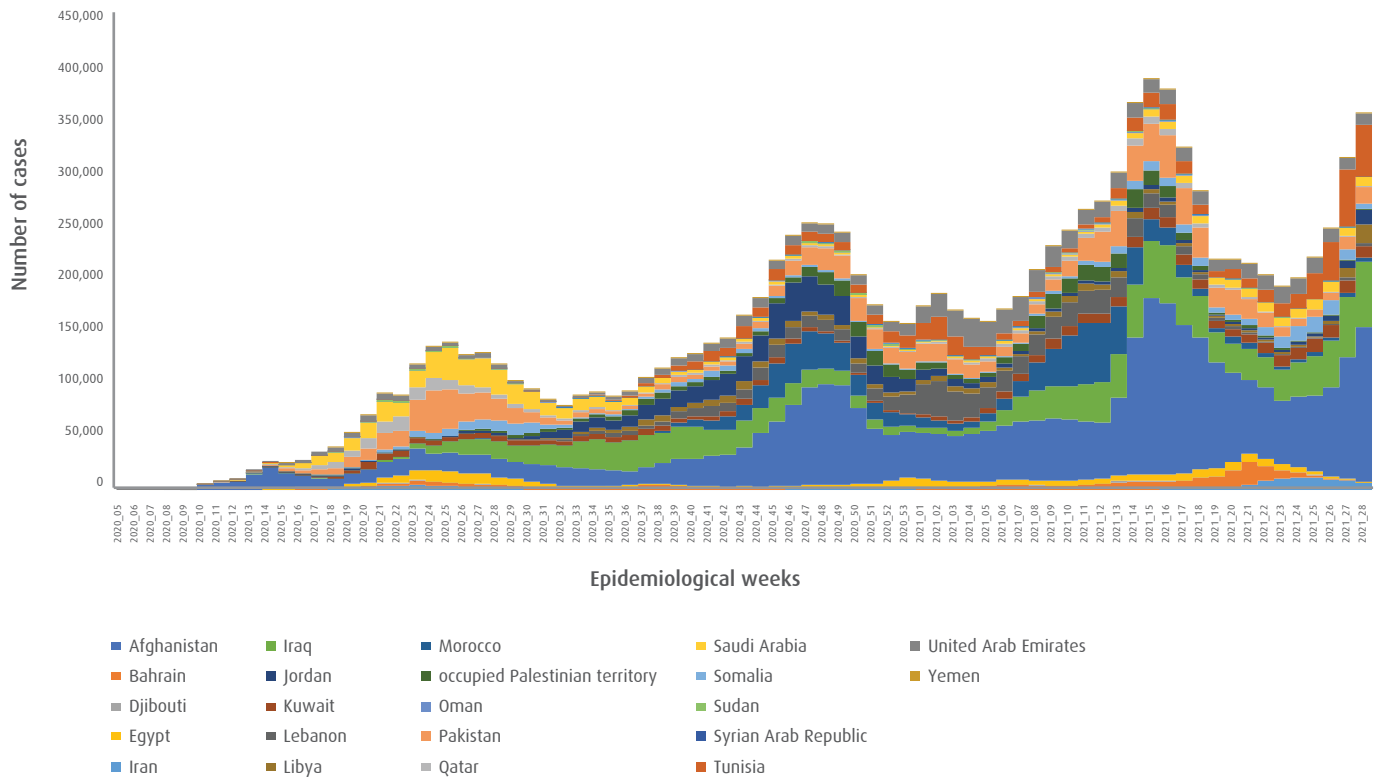
04 - 17 July 2021

Country	New Confirmed Cases	Total Confirmed Cases	New Deaths	Total Deaths	CFR	Total recovered	Total Tests
Afghanistan	215,552	141,489	930	6,213	4.4%	88,613	679,575
Bahrain	1,510	267,796	22	1,380	0.5%	265,521	5,257,729
Djibouti	18	11,622	0	155	1.3%	11,459	184,533
Egypt	1,733	283,636	197	16,439	5.8%	223,213	3,126,841
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	260,042	3,501,079	2,339	86,966	2.5%	3,118,348	24,968,443
Iraq	117,803	1,483,014	508	17,789	1.2%	1,348,303	12,467,303
Jordan	7,933	760,550	118	9,887	1.3%	742,730	8,210,864
Kuwait	22,555	384,573	206	2,211	0.6%	365,507	3,224,296
Lebanon	5,129	550,492	25	7,884	1.4%	535,216	5,325,898
Libya	26,453	221,495	70	3,281	1.5%	183,436	1,225,576
Morocco	21,543	555,488	119	9,434	1.7%	530,801	6,619,410
Occupied Palestinian territory	1,149	344,482	17	3,855	1.1%	339,098	1,947,669
Oman	15,148	289,042	260	3,498	1.2%	263,752	1,986,264
Pakistan	26,962	989,275	373	22,781	2.3%	919,163	15,393,974
Qatar	1,707	224,160	7	599	0.3%	222,011	2,259,089
Saudi Arabia	16,909	508,521	200	8,063	1.6%	489,553	23,644,943
Somalia	139	15,085	6	781	5.2%	7,268	206,051
Sudan*	339	37,138	16	2,776	7.5%	30,867	475,025
Syrian Arab Republic	208	25,827	19	1,904	7.4%	21,911	79,630
Tunisia	102,602	546,233	2,150	17,527	3.2%	432,241	2,096,314
United Arab Emirates	21,572	659,449	65	1,896	0.3%	637,267	62,457,571
Yemen	51	6,977	7	1,368	19.6%	4,156	189,061
Total	667,057	11,807,423	7,654	226,687	1.9%	10,780,434	182,026,059

*Sudan last reported as of 15 July 2021

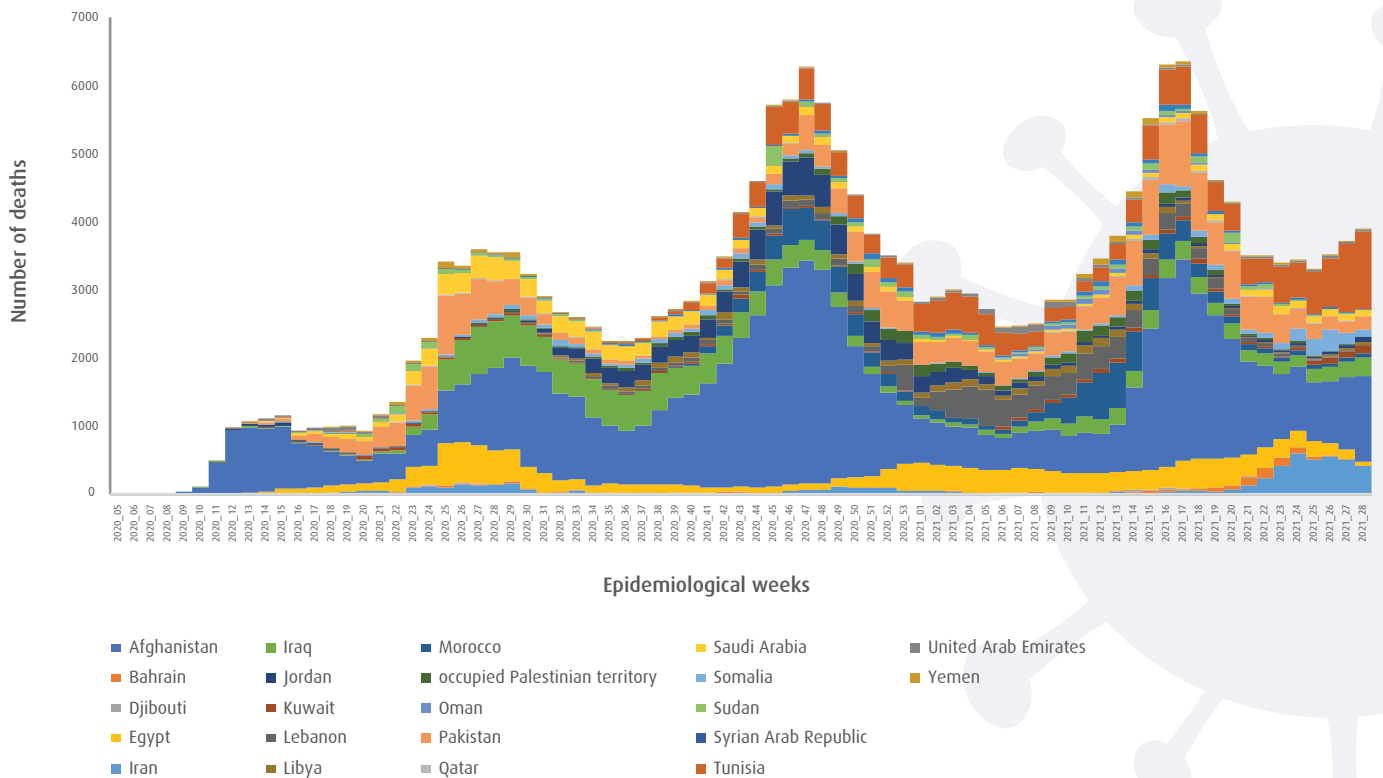
Graph 1: Weekly distribution of COVID-19 cases in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

26 January 2020 – 17 July 2021



Graph 2: Weekly distribution of COVID-19 deaths in the Eastern Mediterranean Region

26 January 2020 – 17 July 2021



REGIONAL RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS

Operations Support and Logistics

- Accelerated the dispatch of health commodities globally to support Unity Studies and Solidarity Vaccine Trials.
- Moved on average 110 metric tons of supplies per week, with USD 27.6 million in health commodities received, USD 19.8 million dispatched, and USD 5.2 million pending immediate release.
- Supported Yemen with charter flights and a charter vessel, carrying medicines and medical supplies worth USD 6 million to Sana'a and Aden.

Health Operations and Technical Expertise

Laboratory Diagnostics

- Conducted a mission to Sudan from 5 to 11 July to technically support COVID-19 laboratory surveillance and other laboratory-related issues.
- Organized a meeting for the directors of National Influenza Centres in the EMR on 15 July to discuss challenges including regarding the integrated surveillance of influenza and SARS-CoV-2 from detection to sequencing.
- Supported the successful shipment of COVID-19 samples from Yemen for the first time to the regional reference laboratory in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, for sequencing.

Infection Prevention and Control (IPC)

- Trained 41 national IPC officers on IPC auditing and 44 national IPC officers on the COVID-19 risk assessment/surveillance among health care workers tool in Iraq.
- Drafted the extended use policy in case of severe shortage of respirators, in response to poor supply chain management in some districts in Afghanistan.
- Reviewed and updated national IPC COVID-19 guidelines for Sudan.

Clinical Management

- Briefed Member States on the latest WHO therapeutics update from 6 July: strong recommendation made for interleukin-6 receptor blockers (tocilizumab and sarilumab) for severe and critical COVID-19 cases, combined with corticosteroids.
- Revised training materials on oxygen therapy and fire safety, including a checklist for hospital managers following the second oxygen-related explosion at a COVID-19 hospital in Iraq on 12 July. A training is planned, involving all hospitals in Iraq.
- Conducted an intensive care unit assessment and developed recommendations following the mission to Gaza, occupied Palestinian territory.

Health Information Management and Surveillance

- Developed new maps with COVID-19 weekly attack rates, weekly COVID-19 mortality, and VOC geographical distribution.
- Analyzed the relationship between the pandemic's trends and the detection of the Delta VOC in selected countries.

International Health Regulations and Social Measures

- Implemented the community-centered contact tracing project in Afghanistan and Tunisia through a risk communication and community engagement training on community outreach, including in hard-to-reach areas.
- Disseminated the updated guidance on Safe Eid al Adha practices in the context of COVID-19 in English, Arabic, and French.
- Communicated updated guidance documents on international travel in the context of COVID-19 with EMR countries, including policy considerations and technical considerations for implementing a risk-based approach to international travel in the context of COVID-19.

Research and Knowledge Management

- Prepared the second round of the serosurvey in Lebanon with improved methodology.
- Cleaned preliminary data from the Jordan health care worker case control study and presented the analyses for the main questions in a technical discussion.
- Received Unity Study results from four EMR countries to submit to WHO headquarters for the global meta-analysis.
- Published several articles on COVID-19 in the Eastern Mediterranean Health Journal, including “Progress on the health-related Sustainable Development Goals in Eastern Mediterranean Region countries: getting back on track in the time of COVID-19” and “COVID-19, the economic crisis, and the Beirut blast: what 2020 meant to the Lebanese health-care system”.

COVID-19 Vaccine

- Monitored vaccine supply, utilization, and coverage, as well as fund availability and utilization.
- Provided support to Syria for the COVID-19 vaccine Post Introduction Evaluation (‘mini cPIE’).
- Assessed country readiness for the allocation of additional doses.

COUNTRY HIGHLIGHTS- From the field

Afghanistan receives its second shipment of COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX Facility



Amid its third wave of COVID-19, Afghanistan has received 1.48 million doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. This delivery is the first of two shipments of a total of 3 312 100 doses of Johnson & Johnson vaccine allocated to Afghanistan through the COVAX Facility, with the remaining doses set to arrive later this month. In March 2021, Afghanistan received a batch of 468 000 doses of the COVISHIELD (AstraZeneca) vaccine through the COVAX Facility. Over 909 829 people have been vaccinated, and vaccination rates remains low.

Continue reading:

<http://www.emro.who.int/afg/afghanistan-news/afghanistan-receives-second-shipment-of-covid-19-vaccines-through-the-covax-facility.html>

Regional COVID-19 website: <http://www.emro.who.int/health-topics/corona-virus/index.html>

For more information, contact emrgonCoV@who.int