

# COVID-19 CASES IN THE GAZA STRIP

Weekly epidemiological bulletin from (14/02 TO 20/022021) AND (21/02 TO 27/02)

DATA SOURCES: MINISTRY OF HEALTH (MOH) DAILY REPORTS ON COVID-19 IN GAZA STRIP

## GENERAL

Reporting Period	Weekly cases		Cumulative	
	14-02-21 20-02-21	21-02-21 27-02-21	Cumulative since 23/8/2020	
# of samples tested	<b>total</b>	12,628	11,524	369,345
# of positive cases	<b>total</b>	885	780	55,179
# of closed cases	<b>total</b>	52,469	53,441	
# recovered cases (%closed)		51,926 (99%)	52,891 (99%)	
# reported deaths (%closed)		543 (1%)	550 (1%)	
Classification of positive cases by severity*	<b>Mild</b>	875	750	
	<b>Moderate</b>	3	19	
	<b>Severe</b>	4	8	
	<b>Critical</b>	3	3	
Positivity rates (weekly)	<b>total</b>	7.01%	6.77%	14.9% (overall)
	<b>contacts</b>	16.0%	21.8%	
	<b>suspect</b>	24.0%	17.0%	
	<b>surveillance</b>	2.2%	1.6%	

\* The reported classification of positive cases by severity reflects the status at first day of admission at the last day of the reporting week. This classification may change over time according to progression of COVID-19 infection among patients.

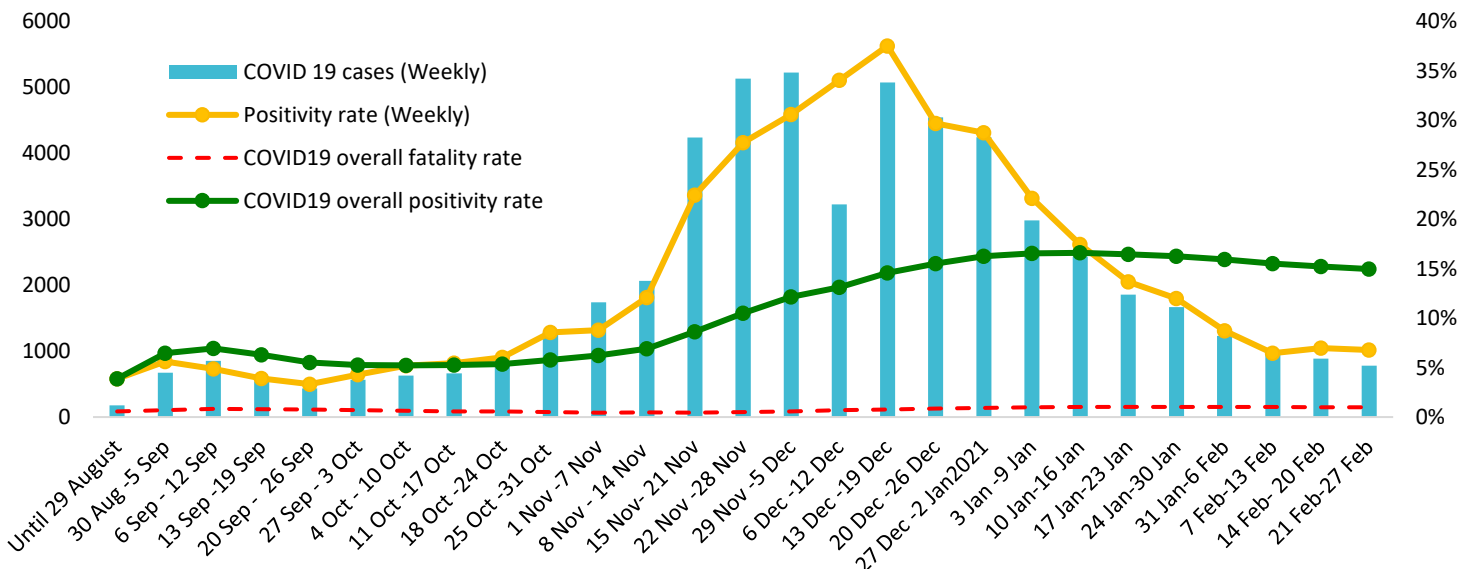
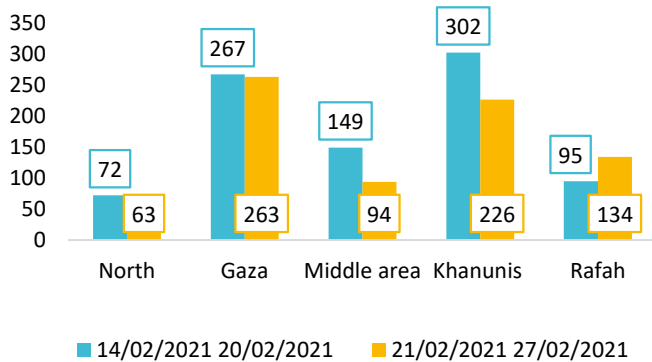
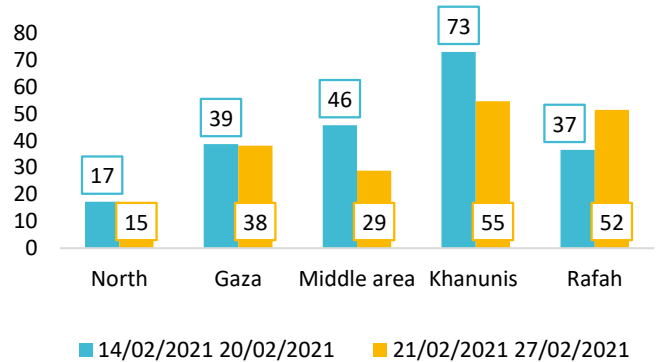


Figure 1: Reported weekly COVID-19 cases, weekly positivity rates, overall positivity rates and overall fatality rates

- Gradual decrease in overall and weekly positivity rates, as well as number of newly reported COVID-19 cases reported during the past weeks (Figure 1).
- Total number of conducted tests decreased to 11,524 between 21-27 February from 12,628 between 14-20 February 2021.
- Newly reported COVID-19 cases and incidence per 10,000 populations decreased in all Gaza Strip districts except for Rafah (Figures 2 and 3).



**Figure 2: Newly reported weekly COVID-19 cases in Gaza Strip districts**

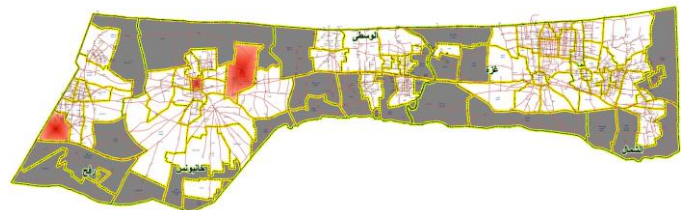


**Figure 3: Incidence of weekly COVID-19 reported cases per 100,000 population in Gaza Strip districts**

- Number of red coded areas remains the same with 3 red coded areas present both on 16 February and 23 February 2021. As presented in figure 4, all red coded areas on 23 February were located at Khanunis and Rafah districts.



**16 February 2021**

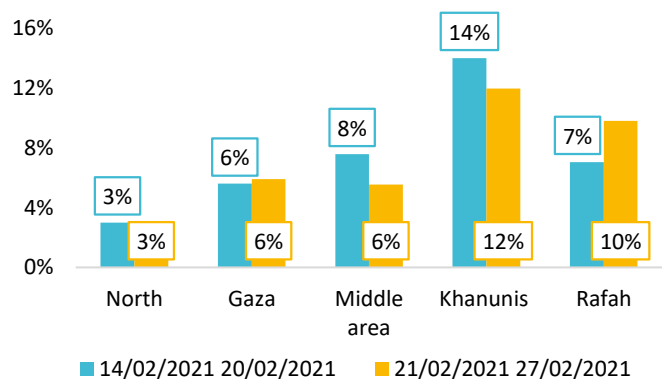


**23 February 2021**

**Figure 4: Geographical distribution of newly reported COVID-19 cases (7 days average) in Gaza Strip neighborhoods**

## POSITIVITY RATES

- Decrease in weekly COVID-19 positivity rates to 6.77% between 21-27 February from 7.00% between 14-20 February 2021 (Table on page 1).
- Decrease in weekly positivity rates in North, Gaza and Middle area and Khanunis districts, with an increase in Rafah district between 21-27 February 2021 (Figure 5).
- Weekly positivity rates decreased among two testing categories (suspected cases and surveillance) with increase among contacts (Table on page 1).
- Overall positivity rate up to 27 February 2021 continued to decrease and reached 14.9%.



**Figure 5: COVID-19 weekly positivity rates distributed by districts**

## DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 CASES AMONG AGE GROUPS AND GENDER

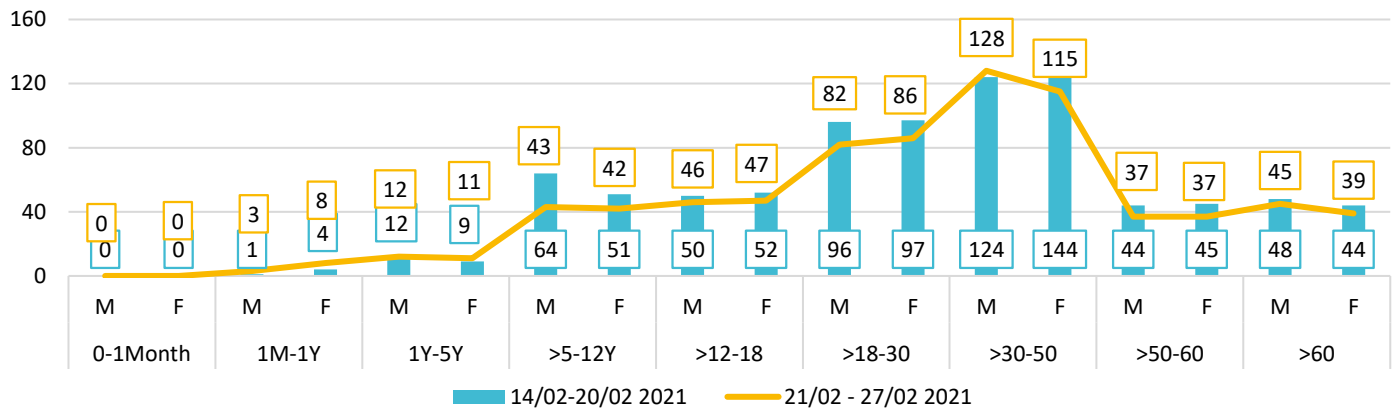


Figure 6: Weekly newly reported COVID-19 cases distributed by age groups and gender

- Decrease in reported cases among most age groups and genders, except for males aged >30-50 years when comparing the two reporting weeks. (Figure 6).
- Highest reported COVID-19 cases among people aged 18 to 50 between 14-20 February and 21-27 February 2021.

## DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 DEATHS

- Seven COVID-19 deaths were reported between 21-27 February compared to six between 14-20 February 2021.
- Majority of deaths were reported among people aged 60 years and older, with deaths among males increasing from 1 to 4 between the two reporting weeks.
- Two deaths were reported in younger age group (females >12-18 years and >30-50) between 21-27 February 2021.
- Total reported deaths since the start of COVID-19 outbreak in Gaza until 27 February 2021 reached 550 with an accumulative COVID-19 fatality rate of 1%. Out of 550 COVID-19 reported deaths, 314 were male (57%), and 236 female (43%).

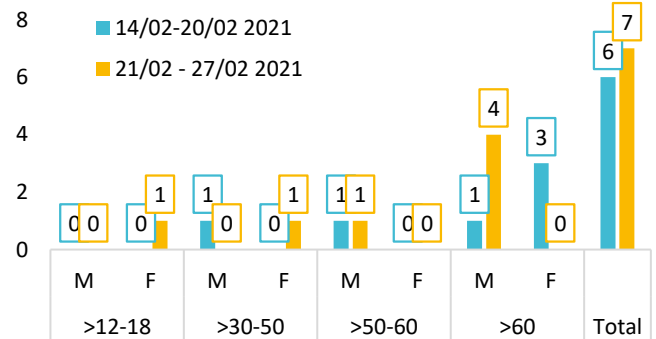


Figure 7: Distribution of reported COVID-19 deaths by age groups and gender

## DISTRIBUTION OF COVID-19 CASES BY SEVERITY

- Cumulative moderate cases admitted to hospitals increased to 27 on 27 February compared to 13 cases on 20 February 2021.
- Cumulative severe cases admitted to hospitals decreased to 16 cases on 27 February compared to 18 cases on 20 February 2021.
- Cumulative critical cases admitted to hospitals increased to 8 cases on 27 February compared to 3 on 20 February 2021.
- Increase in cumulative admitted critical cases needs to be closely monitored.

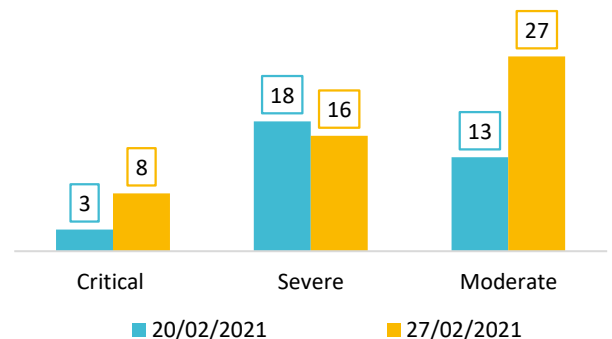


Figure 8: Classification of cumulative hospital admitted COVID-19 patients by severity

## HEALTH SYSTEM CAPACITY (COVID-19 MANAGEMENT)

- Increase in total bed occupancy rate to 12% on 27 February 2021 with 9% on 20 February 2021.
- Slight increase in high dependency and ICU occupancy rate between 20 and 27 February 2021, in line with the increase in cumulative number of hospital-admitted COVID-19 patients in critical condition (Figure 9).

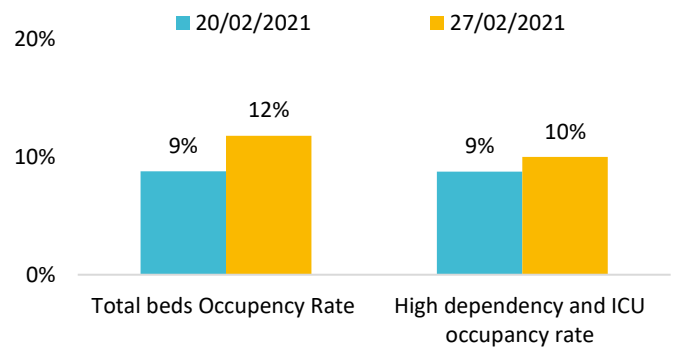


Figure 9: Occupancy rates of COVID-19 beds classified by type of bed

## HEALTH CARE WORKERS INFECTIONS

- Decrease in total number of active COVID-19 cases among health care workers to 45 on 27 February from 51 on 20 February 2021 (Figure 10).
- Decrease in newly reported COVID-19 infections among health workforce to 14 between 21-27 February from 31 between 14-20 February 2021 (Figure 11).
- Fluctuation in number of newly infected health care workers with COVID-19 in the last four weeks, may reflect underreporting.
- Over 70% of newly infected workers between 21-27 February work at hospitals (Figure 11).

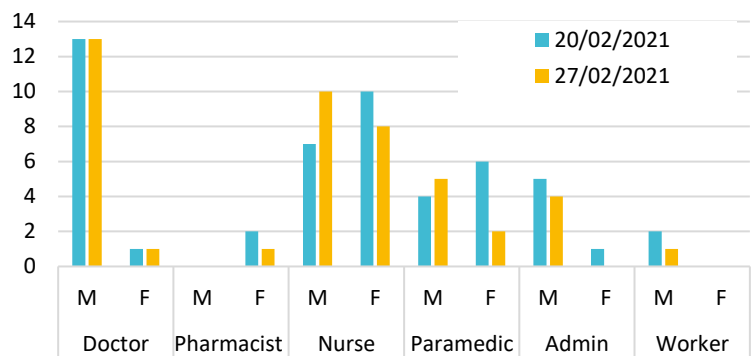


Figure 10: Active reported COVID-19 cases among health workforce distributed

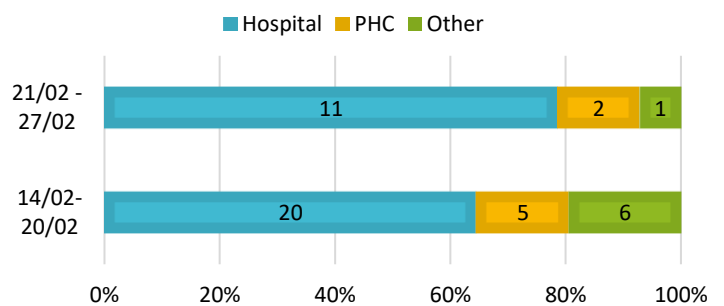


Figure 11: Distribution of newly weekly reported COVID-19 cases among health workforce distributed by work setting

## COVID-19 VACCINATION

- National vaccination campaign was launched in Gaza Strip on 22 February 2021 in parallel with established specific vaccine distribution criteria for elders with chronic health conditions, health care workers and other patients with life-threatening health conditions. Gaza health authorities received the first batch of COVID-19 vaccines from the Palestinian Authorities (2,000 doses) and a donation from the United Arab Emirates (20,000 doses).
- Gaza Ministry of Health (MOH) developed vaccination registration application “Sehaty” to allow community members to register their interest in receiving COVID-19 vaccination. Up to date over 11,000 people registered in the application.
- Up to 28 February 2021, 593 frontline health workers received COVID-19 vaccinations at 6 vaccination centres. Three centres are MOH/Primary health care clinics (Hala elShawa, Qarara and Sabha clinics) and three UNRWA clinics (Rafah, Burajj and Sheikh Rodwan).

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continuing decrease in newly reported COVID-19 cases and positivity rates since the last seven reporting weeks.
- Increase in number of admitted COVID-19 patients in critical condition requires close monitoring.
- Authorities in Gaza eased most social preventive measures and declared the re-opening of wedding halls and sport clubs. Clear monitoring, strong surveillance and trend analysis, and contact tracing should remain in place to evaluate the results of easing the measures during the coming weeks, combined with maintaining strict adherence to COVID-19 mitigation measures.
- Protection of the most vulnerable COVID-19 patients such as elderly and patients with known co-morbidities remains vital. The process of early hospital admission for these groups should be enforced to provide early supportive care to prevent the deterioration of their health conditions and late access to lifesaving care.
- Fluctuations in reported numbers of COVID-19 infection among health care workers during the last weeks may reflect inconsistent testing for health care workers. Further monitoring is required.
- Strengthening of Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE) efforts to address vaccine hesitancy among the population and raise awareness of the urgency to get vaccinated including for those previously infected by COVID-19 in view of the unknown duration of immunity and the risk of re-infection.
- RCCE messaging on public health measures among the broader population need to be urgently stepped up in an effort to prevent a potential resurgence in cases in light of the easing of restrictions.