

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 systems capacities and 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.

Key highlights

- New cases of COVID-19 were reported in 20 countries or areas in the Western Pacific Region (WPR) within the past seven days (Australia 10 318, Brunei Darussalam 136, Cambodia 152, China 664, Cook Islands 1, Fiji 45, French Polynesia 13, Guam 54, Japan 809, the Republic of Korea 37 136, Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) 8 344, Malaysia 35 217, Mongolia 1 888, New Caledonia 132, New Zealand 795, Northern Mariana Islands 327, Papua New Guinea 465, the Philippines 2 685, Singapore 5 863, and Viet Nam 99 441).
- Eight countries or areas in the WPR that had previously reported cases have reported no new cases within the past seven days: (American Samoa (8 days), Marshall Islands (385 days), Palau (59 days), Samoa (296 days), Solomon Islands (242 days), Tonga (39 days), Vanuatu (42 days), and Wallis and Futuna (215 days)).
- Seven Pacific Island countries and areas have not reported a case to date: (Kiribati, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Niue, Pitcairn Islands, Tokelau, and Tuvalu).

Epi update

COVID-19

Member States

20

countries or areas reporting cases
in the past 7 days

Cases

204 485

past 7 days

Deaths

3 302

past 7 days

15

countries or areas reporting ZERO
cases for more than 7 days

10 455 868

cumulative cases

145 533

cumulative deaths

Deployments

COVID-19
response

388

total
deployments

314

deployments
completed

22

actively supporting
country offices

22

actively supporting
regional office

30

currently supporting
remotely

Supplies and logistics for health care workers shipped to 38 destinations in the Western Pacific Region (as of 8 December 2021)



14 476 900
surgical masks



3 915 174
Particulate
respirators



962 830
medical gowns



329 471
goggles



1 145 749
face shields



4 162 500
pairs of gloves



23 940
alcohol-based
hand rub (100mL)



682 312
laboratory tests



1 638 470
point of care tests



3 146 440
swab kits



485
ICU ventilators



2 525
oxygen concentrators

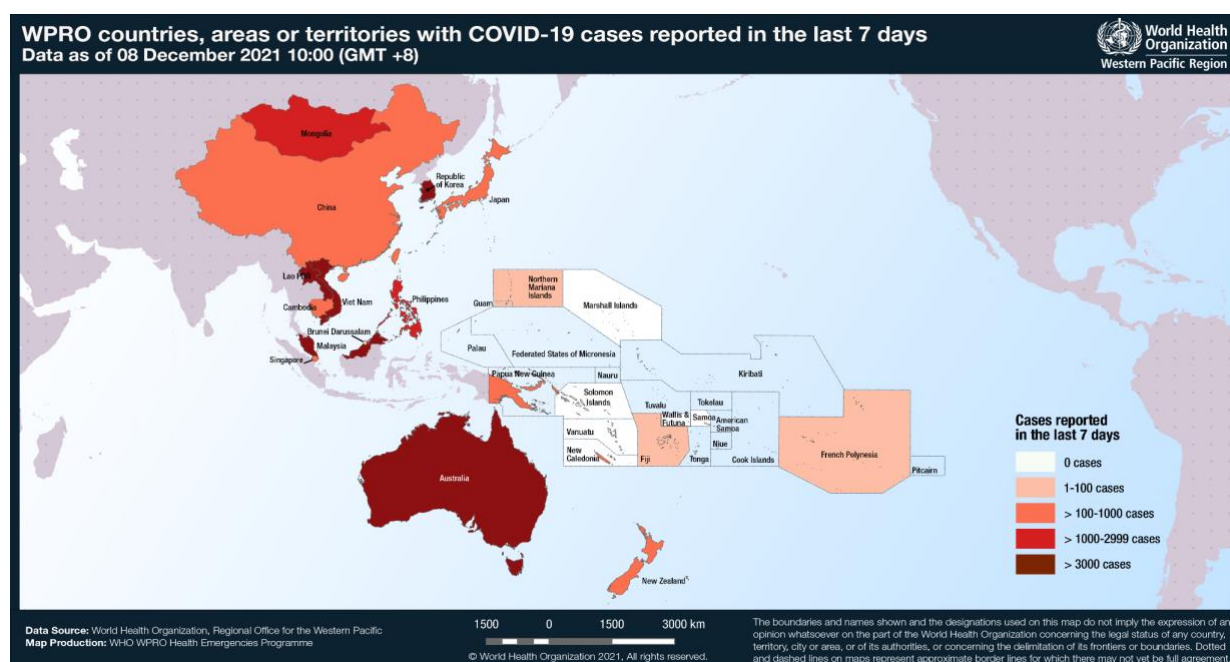


25 520
pulse oximeters

Weekly situation updates

- In the WPR, 28 countries and areas have reported COVID-19 cases since December 2019. Between 1 and 7 December 2021, a total of 204 485 cases with 3 302 deaths were reported, for a cumulative 10 455 868 cases with 145 533 deaths (proportion of fatal cases (PFC) 1.4%) as of 8 December 2021, 17:00 (GMT+8). Available data indicate that countries or areas in the WPR have identified imported cases or localized community transmission, while subnational areas in some WPR countries and areas have identified large-scale community transmission. Figure 1 shows the geographical distribution of cases reported in the last seven days. Updated information about transmission stage assessment (TSA)¹ in each Member State is available on the [TSA map dashboard](#).
- Globally, 265 713 467 COVID-19 cases with 5 260 888 deaths have been reported in 227 countries or areas (PFC 2.0%) as of 7 December 2021 20:00 (CEST). Recent daily new cases in the South-East Asia Region appear to be decreasing, however the trend of daily new cases in the European Region and Eastern Mediterranean Region appear to have plateaued while an increasing trend has been observed in the African Region and the Region of the Americas.

Figure 1. Countries or areas with reported confirmed cases of COVID-19, covering the period from 1 to 7 December 2021, as of 8 December 2021 10:00 (GMT+8)



¹ 0-No cases: no cases detected and no clear signals of transmission for at least 28 days (or two incubation periods); 1-Imported cases: cases reported in the past 28 days are imported or linked to importation within 3 generations, and there are no clear signals of local transmission; 2-Localized community transmission: cases reported in the past 28 days are localized and cannot be linked to importations, though most are linked to a cluster, and there are no clear signals of large-scale community transmission; 3-Large-scale community transmission: most cases reported in the past 28 days have no known link to a cluster and are spread across the area, and there are clear signals of increasing transmission and severe outcomes.

Figure 2. Epidemic curve of confirmed COVID-19 cases in countries or areas with the highest number of cases, as of 8 December 2021 10:00 (GMT+8)

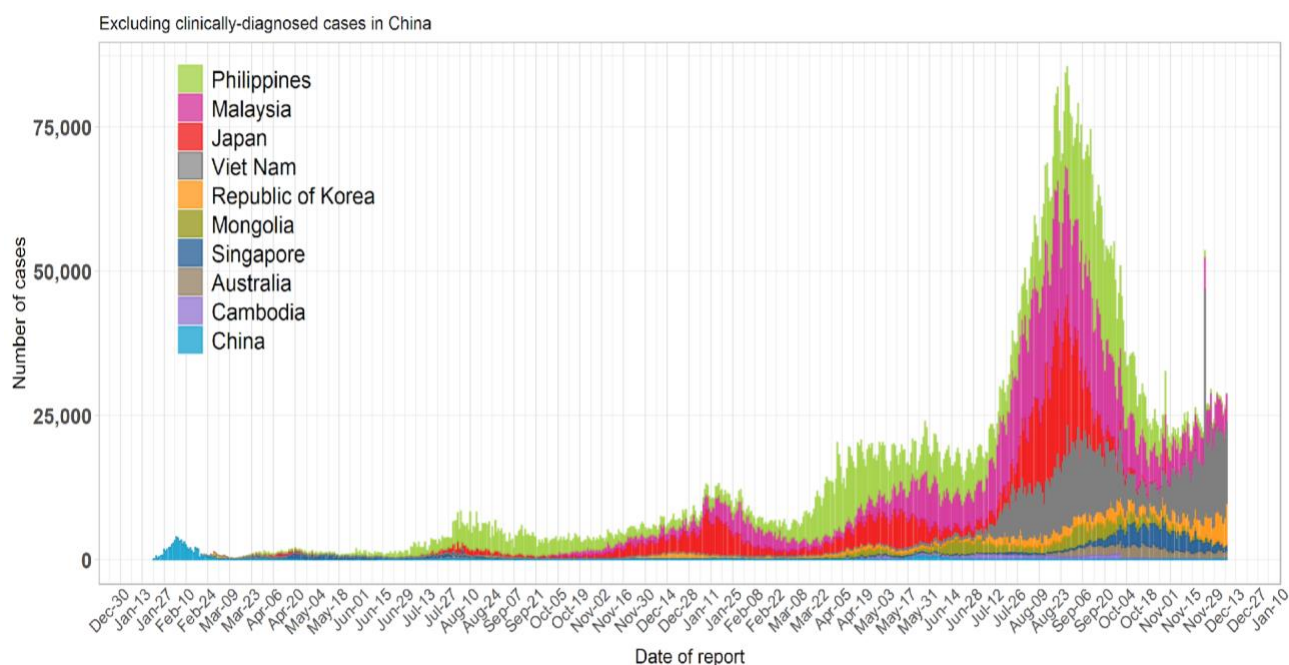


Figure 3. Epidemic curve of confirmed COVID-19 cases in countries or areas with the lowest number of cases, as of 8 December 2021 10:00 (GMT+8)

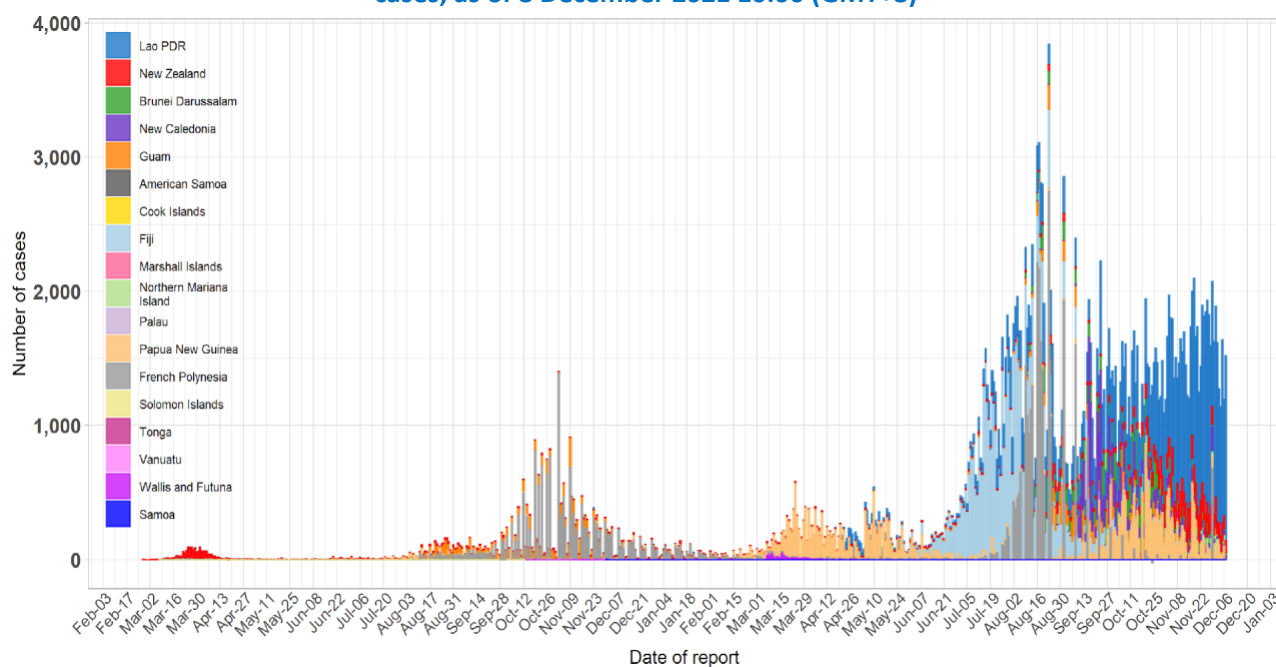


Table 1. Countries or areas with reported laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases and deaths, covering the period from 1 to 7 December 2021, as of 8 December 2021 10:00 (GMT+8) (n = 10 455 868)

Country or area	New cases (cumulative)	New deaths (cumulative)	Change in 7-day average	Days since last reported case
American Samoa	0 (10)	0 (0)	-0.71	8
Australia	10 318 (220 532)	59 (2 065)	106.71	0
Brunei Darussalam	136 (15 229)	0 (57)	-36.57	0
Cambodia	152 (120 286)	27 (2 967)	-5.57	0
China	664 (128 602)	0 (5 697)	42.57	0
Cook Islands	1 (1)	0 (0)	0.14	4
Fiji	45 (52 565)	1 (697)	-1.00	0
French Polynesia	13 (46 332)	0 (636)	-97.57	0
Guam	54 (15 186)	4 (267)	1.71	0
Japan	809 (1 728 113)	7 (18 367)	18.43	0
Kiribati	0 (0)	0 (0)	-	-
Korea, Republic of	37 136 (489 482)	362 (4 020)	1 407.71	0
Lao PDR	8 344 (82 082)	44 (214)	-130.29	0
Malaysia	35 217 (2 667 999)	293 (30 718)	-69.29	0
Marshall Islands	0 (4)	0 (0)	0.00	385
Micronesia (Federated States of)	0 (0)	0 (0)	-	-
Mongolia	1 888 (384 165)	18 (1950)	-194.43	0
Nauru	0 (0)	0 (0)	-	-
New Caledonia	132 (12 427)	3 (279)	-29.86	0
New Zealand	795 (12 146)	0 (44)	-45.29	0
Niue	0 (0)	0 (0)	-	-
Northern Mariana Islands	327 (1 182)	2 (5)	6.29	0
Palau	0 (8)	0 (0)	0.00	59
Papua New Guinea	465 (35 702)	27 (573)	-9.29	0
Philippines	2 685 (2 835 223)	954 (49 499)	-297.57	0
Pitcairn Islands	0 (0)	0 (0)	-	-
Samoa	0 (1)	0 (0)	0.00	296
Singapore	5 863 (270 588)	53 (771)	-490.14	0
Solomon Islands	0 (20)	0 (0)	0.00	242
Tokelau	0 (0)	0 (0)	-	-
Tonga	0 (1)	0 (0)	0.00	39
Tuvalu	0 (0)	0 (0)	-	-
Vanuatu	0 (5)	0 (0)	0.00	42
Viet Nam	99 441 (1 337 523)	1 448 (26 700)	760.86	0
Wallis and Futuna	0 (454)	0 (7)	0.00	215
Total	204 485 (10 455 868)	3 302 (145 533)	936.86	

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

Table 2. Countries or areas in the Western Pacific Region that have reported variants of concern, as of 8 December 2021 10:00 (GMT+8)

Country or area	Variant detected				
	B.1.1.7 (Alpha)	B.1.351 (Beta)	P.1 (Gamma)	B.1.617.2 (Delta)	B.1.1.529 (Omicron)
Australia	X	X	X	X	X
Brunei Darussalam	X	X		X	
Cambodia	X	X		X	
China	X	X	X	X	X
Fiji				X	X
French Polynesia	X	X	X	X	
Guam	X	X	X	X	
Japan	X	X	X	X	X
Lao PDR	X			X	
Malaysia	X	X		X	X
Mongolia	X			X	
New Caledonia	X			X	
New Zealand	X	X	X	X	
Northern Mariana Islands				X	
Papua New Guinea				X	
Philippines	X	X	X	X	
Republic of Korea	X	X	X	X	X
Singapore	X	X	X	X	X
Viet Nam	X	X		X	
Wallis and Futuna	X				

New guidance

- On 3 December 2021, WHO headquarters published the [SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant assays and animal models study tracker](#). This tracker tool compiles high-level information to facilitate matching up those who have materials for Omicron related studies with those who need them. The tracker currently summarizes: (1) Materials/assets available to share for experiments; (2) Planned in vitro studies with detail on experiment type, sera type, and timelines; (3) Planned in vivo studies with detail on experiment type, species types, and timelines; (4) Planned Microphysiological Systems (MPS) with detail on experiment type and MPS model.
- On 29 November 2021, WHO headquarters published the policy brief: [COVID-19 vaccine trial designs in the context of authorized COVID-19 vaccines and expanding global access: ethical considerations](#). This document aims to highlight ethical issues implicit in conducting placebo control COVID-19 trials in the context of multiple authorized vaccines and expanding global vaccination coverage.

- On 29 November 2021, WHO headquarters published the report on [Assays & Animal Models - Outline of research priorities related to the Omicron variant](#). This report is based on the results of a meeting of R&D Blueprint Working Groups on COVID-19 Assays and Animal Models, held on 29 November 2021, to discuss knowledge gaps and key research priorities related to the Omicron variant of concern (VOC). The experts agreed that there are four main gaps of knowledge at the moment: (1) Ability of post-vaccination and convalescent sera to neutralize Omicron; (2) Ability of current vaccines to prevent mild and/or severe disease; (3) Ability of current therapeutic approaches, including monoclonal antibody therapy; (4) Protease inhibitors and nucleoside analogs to retain efficacy against the Omicron VOC.
- On 28 November 2021, WHO headquarters published the newsletter: [WHO advice for international traffic in relation to the SARS-CoV-2 Omicron variant \(B.1.1.529\)](#). WHO advises the following: 1) countries should continue to apply an evidence-informed and risk-based approach when implementing travel measures in accordance with the International Health Regulations (IHR); 2) Any travel-related risk mitigation measures should be part of an overall national response strategy; 3) National authorities in countries of departure, transit and arrival may apply a multi-layered risk mitigation approach to potentially delay and/or reduce the exportation or importation of the new variant. WHO also emphasizes global solidarity in rapid and transparent information sharing and in a joint response to Omicron as with all other variants.

New communication materials

The Regional Office developed a communications package for the upcoming holiday season including:

- [Social media graphics focusing on safe travel in the context of COVID-19](#);
- [Social media graphics on safe celebrations in the context of COVID-19](#);
- [“Do it All” animation](#);
- Web story on [six ways to protect yourself and others during this holiday season](#).

Key information and announcements

Information and planning

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

Partner Coordination



A Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN) Global Meeting of Partners will be held from 14-17 December 2021, featuring webinars designed to introduce potential partners and stakeholders to key areas of ongoing work, while also providing a sneak peek into the future of these activities for existing partners. We invite all current GOARN partners, potential technical collaborators and stakeholders to GOARN to join us for the topical webinars and have a chance to dive into the world of GOARN and outbreak response.

More information is available [here](#).

Strategic Communication

- The Regional Director's Virtual Press Conference took place on 3 December 2021. The Regional Director, Dr Takeshi Kasai provided an update on COVID-19 in the Region and was joined by Dr Babatunde Olowokure, Regional Emergencies Director, Dr Huong Tran, Director of Programmes for Disease Control, and Dr Socorro Escalante, Coordinator for Essential Medicines and Health Technologies. [Watch the virtual press conference on YouTube](#) and [read the Regional Director's remarks](#).