

Pandemic spirals, but deaths still drop

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The number of COVID-19 cases soared by nearly two thirds across the world this week, but pandemic-linked deaths continued to drop.

Here is the global state of play from an AFP database:

Nearly two million daily cases

The average number of new daily coronavirus cases increased to 1.94 million, a 64 percent increase compared to the previous week, according to an AFP count to Thursday.

The confirmed cases only reflect a fraction of the actual number of infections, with varying counting practices and levels of testing in different countries.

Every region hit

With the highly contagious Omicron COVID variant present in most countries, flare-ups took place in every region of the world.

The number of cases in Oceania leapt by 259 percent, while in the Latin America-Caribbean zone they increased by 143 percent.

In the Middle East cases rose by 110 percent, in Asia by 109 percent, in the United States and Canada 69 percent, in Europe 51 percent and in Africa three percent.

Main spikes

Guyana, where cases rocketed by 653 percent, saw the biggest increase.

It was followed by Kuwait with 464 percent more, Mauritania 452 percent more, Suriname (419 percent more) and the Dominican Republic (375 percent more).

This week dozens of countries around the world saw the number of their cases double or more, including India, Pakistan, Brazil, Mexico, Japan,

the Philippines and Italy.

Main drops

Eswatini, or the former Swaziland, registered the biggest drop in new cases, dropping by half.

Namibia came next in the improvement rankings with a 32 percent drop, followed by the Comoros (minus 29 percent), Russia (minus 24 percent) and South Korea (23 percent less).

Eswatini and Namibia in southern Africa were in early December among the first countries to be hit by the Omicron variant.

US still has most cases

The United States remained by far the country with the biggest number of new cases with 595,200 per day on average, an increase of 70 percent.

Next in line came France with 206,100, an increase of 70 percent, and the United Kingdom with 181,000, 30 percent more.

On a per capita basis, the country with the biggest number of new cases this week was Cyprus with 3,468 per 100,000 inhabitants, followed by Ireland with 2,840, Greece 2,415, Montenegro (2,371) and Denmark (2,362).

Deaths down

At a global level, despite the upsurge in cases, the number of COVID-linked deaths dropped three percent to 6,172 on average per day.

The United States mourned the most daily deaths with 1,357, followed by Russia (838) and Poland (414).

The countries reporting the highest [death](#) rates in proportion to their population were Trinidad and Tobago with 10.1 deaths per 100,000 inhabitants, Georgia (8.1), Poland (7.7), Bulgaria (7.0) and Croatia (6.6).

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