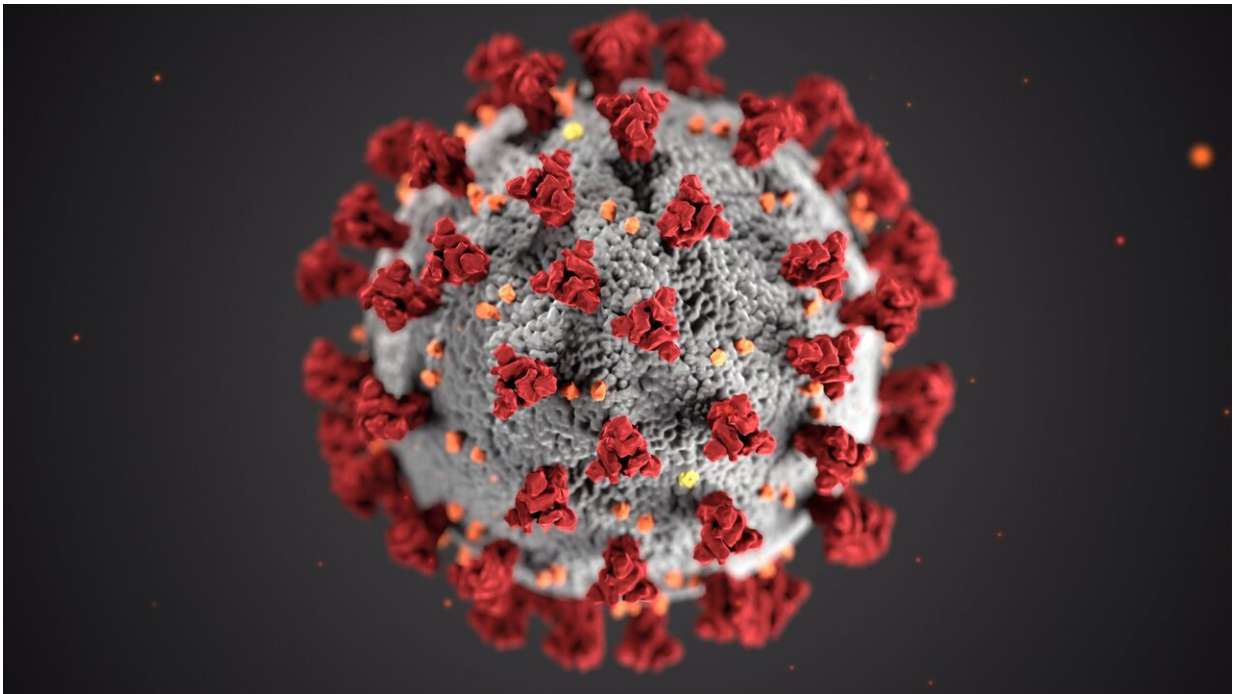


World COVID cases continue retreat, except in Asia

February 25 2022



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The COVID-19 pandemic continued its strong retreat this week around the world, with the number of cases cut by half since their peak a month ago.

But in Asia the number of cases remained stubbornly high, increasing by a fifth.

Here is a state of play based on AFP's database.

- Cases slashed by half—The average number of global daily cases dropped for the fourth week in row, by 16 percent to 1.66 million, according to an AFP tally to Thursday.

Over a month the decrease in cases is more spectacular: they have been cut by half since they soared to peaks of 3.37 million in the week of January 21, due to the highly contagious Omicron variant.

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

- Asia bucks improvement—This week, only Asia saw a deterioration in its situation, with one fifth more cases.

But in all other regions of the world the pandemic waned.

There were 39 percent fewer cases in the Middle East, 37 percent fewer in the United States-Canada zone, down 24 percent in both Africa and the Latin America-Caribbean zone, a fifth fewer in Europe and 12 percent less in Oceania.

- Main spikes—Hong Kong saw the biggest increase in new cases this week, with the number increasing by 331 percent compared to the previous week, prompting it to toughen its testing and social distancing requirements.

New Zealand followed with 187 percent more, South Korea with 85 percent more, Vietnam plus 71 percent, while cases were up 36 percent in Singapore.

- Main drops—Kosovo saw the biggest drop of the week with 61 percent fewer cases, followed by Azerbaijan with minus 55 percent, Slovenia minus 52 percent, and Paraguay and Peru each with 51 percent fewer.

- Germany takes top case spot—Germany overtook Russia to record the highest number of new cases, with an average of 164,600 infections a day, which was still a drop of nine percent.

Russia had 155,400 new cases, a drop of 17 percent, while South Korea took third place with 121,900, an increase of 85 percent.

The United States for the first time in many months was not in the top three.

On a per capita basis, the country with the most new cases over the week was again Denmark with 3,612 per 100,000 inhabitants. It was followed by Latvia with 3,558 and Estonia 2,789.

- Deaths—The number of COVID-linked deaths continued its decline, dropping by 10 percent globally, to 9,348 per day.

The US again mourned the most deaths over the week, with an average of 1,905 per day, followed by Brazil (784) and Russia (772).

The countries reporting the highest death rates in proportion to their population were Bulgaria with 7.5 per 100,000 inhabitants, followed by Georgia with 7.3 and Hungary with 7.2.

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