

WHO: COVID cases and deaths falling nearly everywhere

June 8 2022



Saudi health worker, Wedad Modaifen collects a swab sample for a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test at drive-through testing center, at King Abdulaziz University in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia, Wednesday, Feb. 3, 2021. The number of new coronavirus cases and deaths reported globally fell everywhere except the Middle East and Southeast Asia, according to the World Health Organization. Credit: AP Photo/Amr Nabil, File

The number of new coronavirus cases and deaths reported globally fell everywhere last week except the Middle East and Southeast Asia, according to the World Health Organization.

In its latest weekly update on the pandemic, the U.N. health agency said Wednesday that confirmed cases dropped 12% to more than 3 million and reported deaths declined 22% to about 7,600.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus described the continuing decline of COVID-19, which peaked in January, as "a very encouraging trend."

Still, he warned that the pandemic was not yet over and urged caution, even as many countries have [dropped their coronavirus protocols](#) and shifted into trying to live with the virus.

Tedros noted that 18 months after the first [mass coronavirus immunization](#) programs began in [rich countries](#), 68 countries around the world have yet to protect 40% of their people. While enough vaccines are now available, demand has fallen, he said.

"The perception that the pandemic is over is understandable, but misguided," the WHO chief said. "A new and even more dangerous variant could emerge at any time, and vast numbers of people remain unprotected."

WHO's pandemic report noted that new weekly cases rose 19% in the Middle East and inched up 1% in Southeast Asia, while falling everywhere else. The number of deaths increased 7% in the Western Pacific and dropped elsewhere in the world last week.

WHO has previously noted that the numbers are likely to be an underestimate and are dependent on countries' testing and reporting

strategies. Last week, WHO's emergencies chief Dr. Michael Ryan said the COVID-19 outbreak in [North Korea](#) was getting worse, not better.

Despite multiple offers of help, including vaccines, North Korea has not accepted any offers of aid from WHO and has yet to share more detailed information about how the outbreak is evolving there.

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