

COVID-19: Iraq

Biweekly Situation Report



World Health
Organization
Iraq

Epi Weeks 7 - 8 (14 - 27 February 2022)

Key figures (As of 27 February 2022)

17.9M

COVID-19 tests performed in Iraq since the beginning of the pandemic



9.9M

people vaccinated against COVID-19 since March 2021



2.3M

confirmed cases registered since late February 2020



35.6K

COVID-19 active cases reported in Iraq up to week 8



2.24M

recoveries from COVID-19 reported across Iraq



24,975

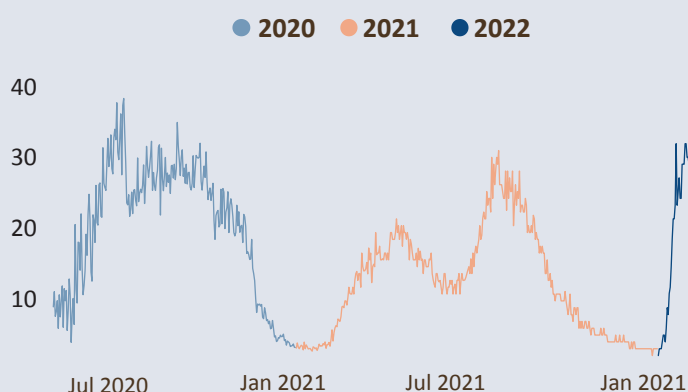
deaths due to COVID-19 reported in Iraq since March 2020



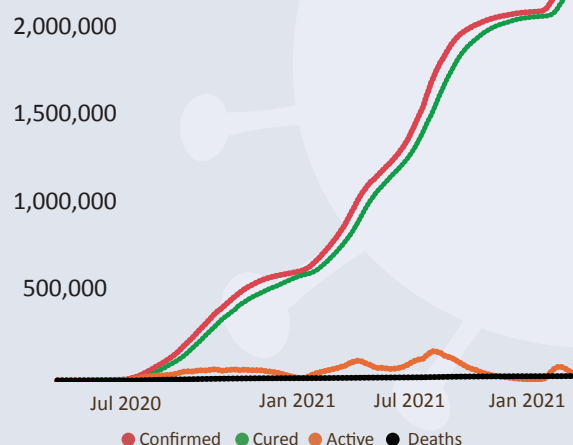
Epidemiological Highlights:

- During the reporting period (14 - 27 February 2022), the number of new COVID-19 cases decreased by **64%** compared to the two previous weeks. Deaths have also declined by **17%** during the same period.
- Real-time PCR tests during weeks 7 - 8 stood at average **153,972**, indicating a decrease by **57%** than the average in the previous two weeks.
- The community transmission all over the country has been moderate during the last two weeks.
- The positivity rate in weeks 7 and 8 stood at **12.3%** and **9.6%**, respectively. During the reporting period, the governorate with the highest positivity rate is Missan (23.2% during week 8), while the lowest positivity rate was in the governorates of Muthanna (4.1%) and Salah Al-Din (3.1%).
- The average number of new hospital admissions has decreased during weeks 7 - 8 compared to the previous two weeks. Demand for ICU beds decreases, while the ICU occupancy rate declined by **25%** during week 7 and **18.3%** during week 8.

Daily positivity rate



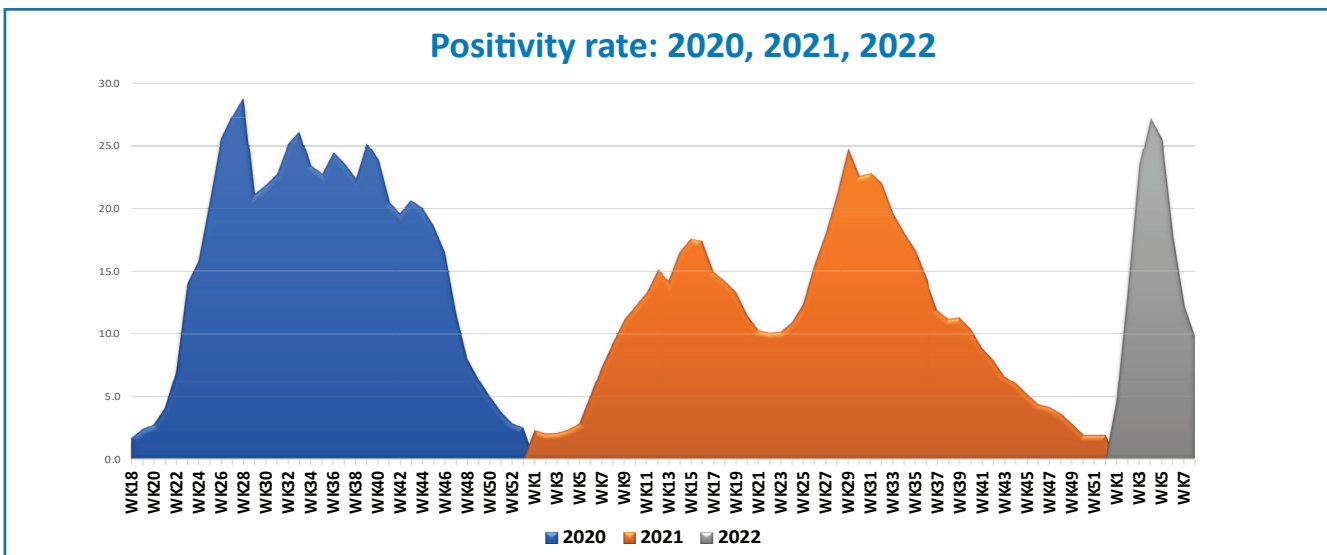
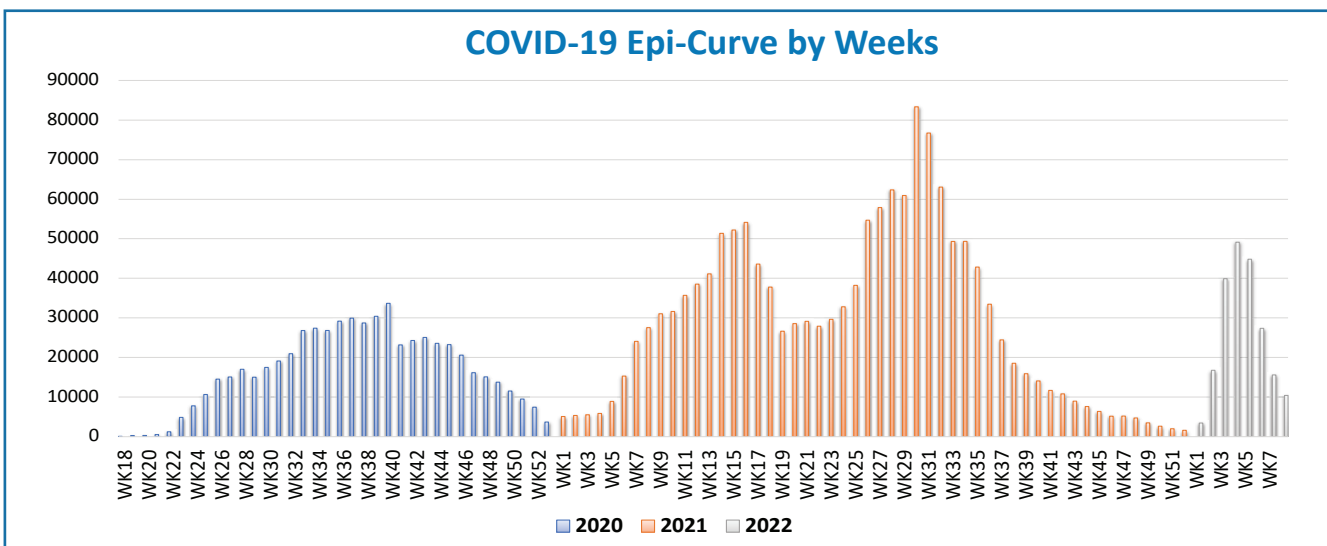
Cumulative distribution of cases by health status



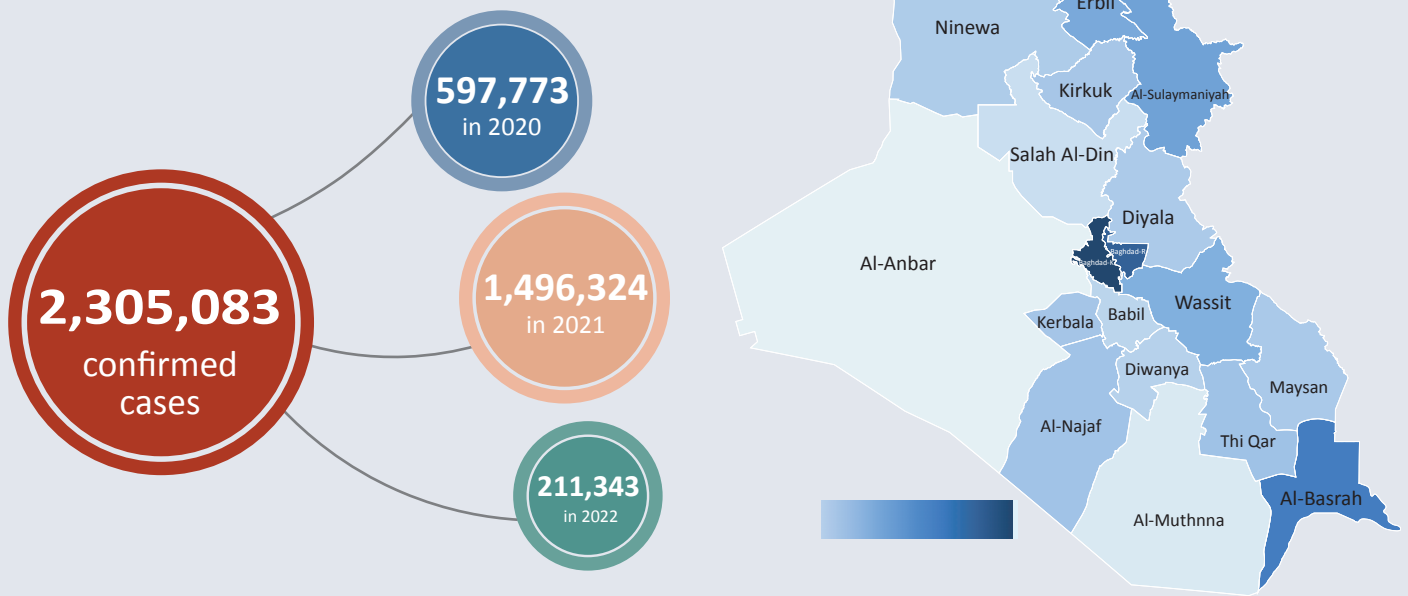
The COVID-19 epidemiological indicators for weeks 7 - 8:

By the last day of week 8 (27 February), the overall community transmission in Iraq is moderate except for Dahuk, Diyala, Erbil and Missan. The lowest score in the low green zone remains in Muthanna and Salah Al-Din. The results were analyzed based on three indicators: cases per 100,000 of population, deaths per 1 million of population, and positivity rate.

Week	8.0	Wk Number	8	Community Transmission by Governorates							
Year	2022.0										
Row Labels	Case 100THs	Death 1 M	PR	Case 100THs	Death/M	PR	Score 1	Score 2	Score 3	Total Score	Rank
ANBAR	5.6	0.0	12.8	Low	Low	Substantial	1	1	3	5	Moderate
BABYLON	11.3	4.5	6.8	Moderate	Low	Moderate	2	1	2	5	Moderate
Baghdad	18.2	1.8	8.0	Moderate	Low	Moderate	2	1	2	5	Moderate
BASRAH	34.9	2.9	12.0	Moderate	Low	Substantial	2	1	3	6	Moderate
DAHUK	120.4	5.0	15.9	High	Moderate	Substantial	4	2	3	9	Substantial
DIWANIYA	9.5	8.6	6.1	Low	Moderate	Moderate	1	2	2	5	Moderate
DIYALA	13.7	5.7	14.8	Moderate	Moderate	Substantial	2	2	3	7	Substantial
ERBIL	68.4	6.5	6.0	Substantial	Moderate	Moderate	3	2	2	7	Substantial
KERBALA	20.1	2.3	10.2	Moderate	Low	Substantial	2	1	3	6	Moderate
KIRKUK	14.9	1.7	5.6	Moderate	Low	Moderate	2	1	2	5	Moderate
MISSAN	33.8	3.3	23.2	Moderate	Low	High	2	1	4	7	Substantial
MUTHANNA	7.3	0.0	4.1	Low	Low	Low	1	1	1	3	Low
NAJAF	11.3	2.5	4.5	Moderate	Low	Low	2	1	1	4	Moderate
NINEWA	16.7	2.2	10.7	Moderate	Low	Substantial	2	1	3	6	Moderate
SALAH AL-DIN	8.6	0.6	3.1	Low	Low	Low	1	1	1	3	Low
SULAYMANIYAH	37.7	3.9	13.6	Moderate	Low	Substantial	2	1	3	6	Moderate
THI-QAR	18.8	1.8	18.9	Moderate	Low	Substantial	2	1	3	6	Moderate
WASSIT	43.1	2.0	16.9	Moderate	Low	Substantial	2	1	3	6	Moderate



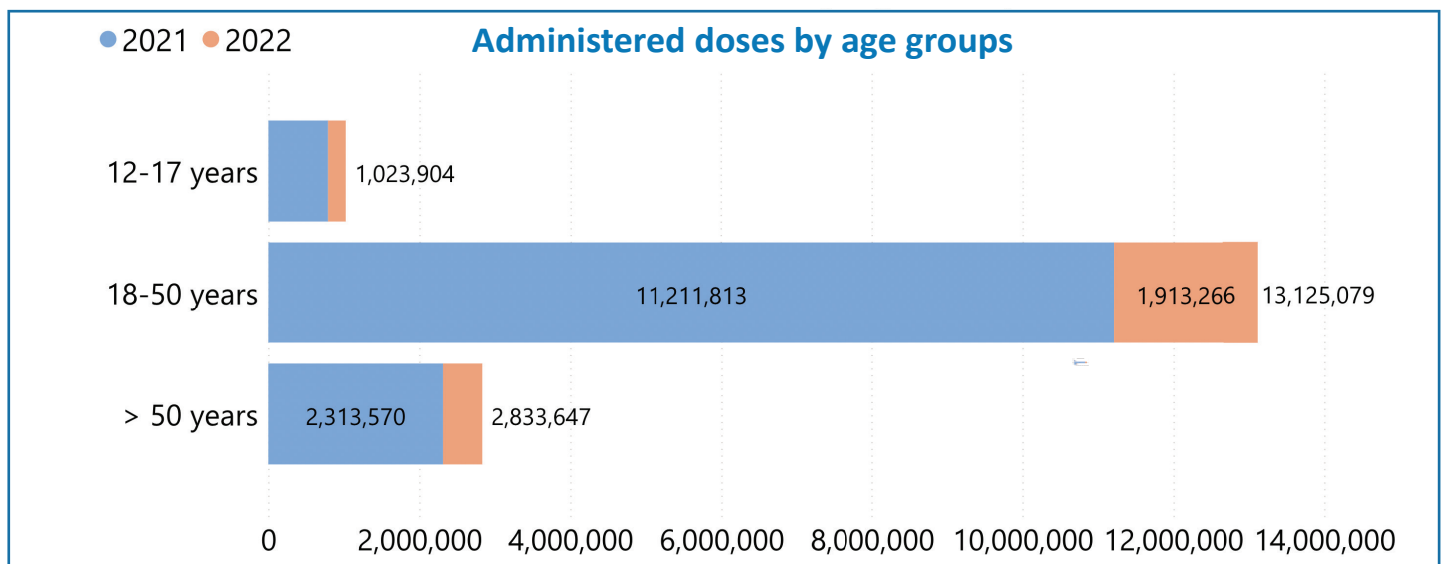
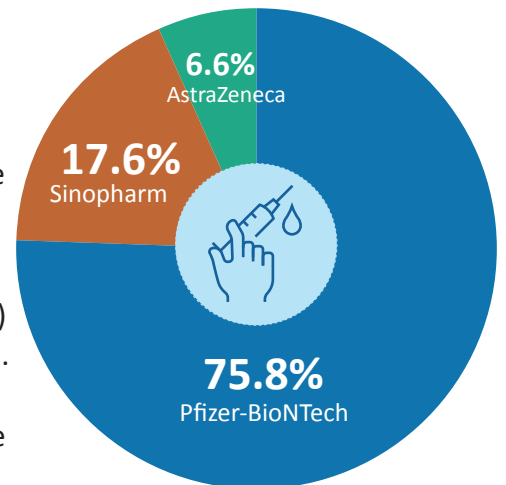
Cumulative distribution of confirmed cases by DoH



WHO preparedness and Response:

COVID 19 Inoculation campaign:

- As of 27 Feb 2022, a total of 16,817,854 vaccine doses were administered countrywide. A total of 9,891,769 people -- 24% of the population -- have received the first dose, while 6,804,651 -- 16.5% of the population -- have been fully vaccinated.
- Vaccine administration statistics showed that 5,096,656 males (62%) were vaccinated with the first dose against 3,795,113 females (38%). The turnout among women remains comparatively low due to several reasons associated with housekeeping requirements and the rumors about the vaccines' side effects.
- Governorates with the highest number of people vaccinated with the first dose include Baghdad- Karkh with 1,203,934 (46.4%) followed by Dahuk at (46.4%), Basra at (45.0%), while the lowest coverage of vaccination as of week 8 was reported in Missan and Sulaymaniyah at a rate of (24.4%) each, and Diwannia at (23.6%).



Health cluster and partnerships:

- In light of the fourth wave of the pandemic, a no cost extension of two months for health partners supporting the COVID-19 quarantine/ isolation sites in IDP camps in Duhok (Bajed Kandala, Berseve 2 and Sharia), Sulaymaniyah (Ashti) and Ninewah (Hasansham U3), funded by the Iraq Humanitarian Fund (IHF) was processed during February. The project will be implemented by the end of March 2022.
- The Health Cluster COVID-19 Task Force meeting was held online on 23rd February. Among other agenda items, focal persons from the Federal MoH presented the epidemiological situation of the disease, the MoH COVID response activities to date, and vaccination status. WHO's RCCE activities were also presented as was the Health Cluster's COVID-19 Supplies and Services mapping dashboard, which has an additional page mapping partners' support to COVID vaccination efforts.

Risk communication and community engagement (RCCE):

- A total of 75 community leaders (faith and tribal leaders) participated in two workshops in **Ninawa** (from 8-10 February) and **Basra** (from 21-24 February) to foster their engagement as partners in health while ensuring participation in health and COVID-19 response as active and strong actors in health promotion and health-seeking behaviors.

WHO is targeting 4,000,000 individuals in low vaccine uptake governorates through SMS messages. The targeted governorates include Duhok, Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, Ninawa, Maysan, Muthanna, Wasit, Dewaniya, and Babil. Around 40% of the total population of each targeted governorate will be reached. The messages will be mainly sent to individuals who did not receive MoH SMS for COVID-19 vaccine appointment, refugees and IDPs, and people above 50 years old.



Faith and tribal leaders in Basra participate in workshop on engagement in health and COVID-19 response

WHO Iraq assisted MoH in developing and printing effective Information Education Communication (IEC) material to help ensure staying safe in school during COVID-19 by raising awareness on the importance of adhering to COVID-19 preventative measures, in addition to COVID-19 vaccine promotion. The IEC material (poster) to be printed and distributed among schools.

- Based on several COVID-19 hesitancy surveys in Iraq, COVID-19 key messages were produced to address rumors, misinformation, and myths. In collaboration with Iraqi artists, these messages were used to produce the first patch of 10 multimedia animations (caricature).
- All the produced materials were customized to the Iraqi community, with the Iraqi general dialect used in all products. The messages are targeted to cover different community groups and subjects, including but not limited to:
 - Importance of COVID-19 vaccine for pregnant women, the elderly and people with underlying health conditions.
 - Announcing the eligibility of youth 12 years and above to take the COVID-19 vaccine.
 - Importance of taking both doses for full protection.

COVID-19 response in other governorates

- WHO **Duhok office** technical team visited COVID-19 Quarantine/ Isolation site in Berseve 2 IDPs camp in Zakho district, which is one of the three Q/I sites under establishment in Duhok Province. In coordination with Duhok DOH, the project started in December 2021 by the IHF fund and involved Health, WASH, Camp Management and Camp Coordination (CCCM), and Shelter/NFI clusters to enhance COVID-19 response in the IDPs camps. WHO had a meeting with PUI team as health cluster partner assigned to manage the health services in the site and discussed the number of cases admitted and the challenges faced by the partner.

Conclusions:

- It is expected that the downward phase to continue in the coming weeks if the current public health and social measures remain the same or more.
- The Omicron variant proved to be spreading all over the country. The variant seems to be more transmissible, but less severe with low mortalities.

Recommendations:

- Considerations for the implementation of individualized public health measures should be enhanced, including immunity status, vaccination, and mask wearing in public and indoor settings.
- A new strategy for vaccination uptake needs to be considered for further enhancement, particularly among vulnerable groups such as IDPs and refugees.
- It's recommended that the Ministry of Health reassess the health capacity regarding the management of cases and replenishing medical supplies and equipment to ensure the readiness of health facilities to manage cases.

The response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Iraq is made possible with the generous contributions from WHO Iraq's long-term partners:



For more information, please contact:

Ms. Ajyal Sultany, Communications Officer, +9647740892878, sultanya@who.int
Sadeq Hasan, Communications officer, +964 7833528326, hasansa@who.int
Dr. Wael Hatahit, WHO Emergency Team Lead, +964 7729 814 999, hatahitw@who.int

Notes for the reader:

- The source of the data in this situation report is the Ministry of Health daily reporting system.
- For detailed information on COVID-19 in Iraq, visit the COVID-19 dynamic infographics dashboard for Iraq.