

SOLACE GLOBAL

COVID-19 Weekly Update

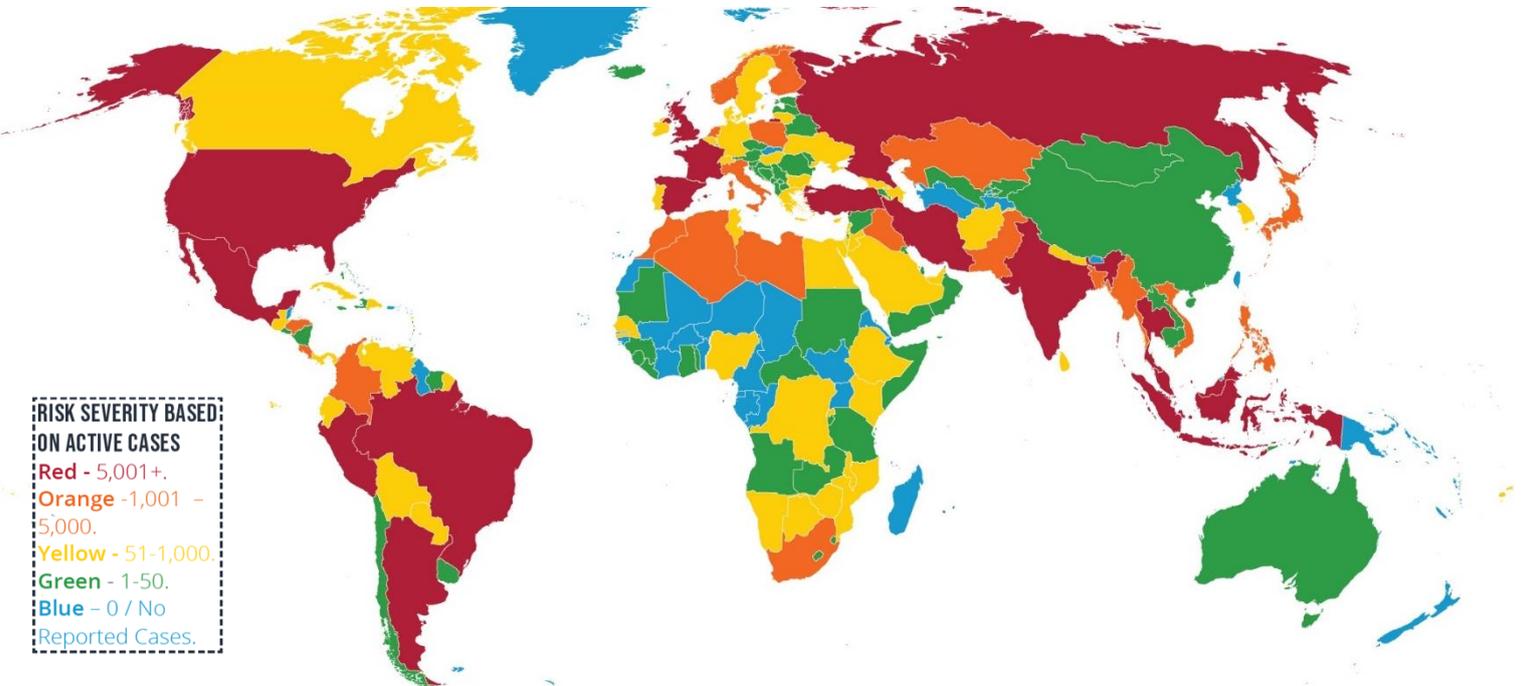
12 August



Executive Summary

The global cumulative caseload has now surpassed 205 million cases with more than 4.3 million deaths since the start of the pandemic. The United States, India, Iran and Brazil have reported the highest number of new infections in the past week, with the United States and Iran seeing a strong increase in caseloads in the past seven days compared to the week before, 25 percent and 15 percent respectively.

The total number of new weekly cases globally has risen by around 5 percent per cent compared to last week’s tally. This rate of increase has slowed compared to last week. In the seven days up to 11 August, there were approximately 4.5 million new cases reported worldwide, compared to 4.2 million in the preceding seven days. The total number of weekly new COVID-19-related deaths has risen by around 2 percent compared to the previous week.



Notable Updates

As a result of the United States’ surge in cases, North America is currently seeing a strong increase in weekly rates. In terms of case numbers, Asia continues to report the highest weekly numbers, with just under 1.9 million new cases in the past seven days.

Early findings from Public Health England on the interplay between vaccines and the now prevalent Delta variant seems to suggest that those who are vaccinated appear to reduce the risk of catching the virus initially. However, those infected are reportedly able to spread the infection as easily as those who have not yet received a vaccine. The United Kingdom is being closely observed by a number of international observers to see how the country continues to fare after it lifted all remaining restrictions, despite a spike in cases caused by the Delta Variant.

After eighteen months of studying the virus and its various mutations, scientists are more comfortable in outlining what humanities future with COVID may look like. Increasingly the scientific community believes that COVID-19 will follow the trajectory of the other coronavirus’ which infect humans and become a common cold or flu that peaks in the winter. The United Kingdom’s Zoe COVID symptom study, and other symptom trackers across the world seem to indicate that the symptoms of the Delta variant are converging with symptoms that many report when they are infected with the common cold. Namely a sore throat, and a runny nose.

The one aspect of this future COVID-19 that scientists are not yet in agreement on is how long this evolution may take. The more optimist scientists believe that COVID-19 could become akin to the common cold in as little as a few years and point to the symptoms of the new delta symptoms as evidence. Meanwhile, more cautious or sceptical scientists believe this transition may take decades or even a century or two. However, scientists are clear on the fact that whilst modern medicine and the rapid develop of vaccines has helped us thus far against COVID-19, dropping our caution and waiting for it to evolve into a common cold is not something that should be adopted as policy.

Vaccination Updates

As of the 11 August, 30.4 percent of the world population has received at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine, with 15.8 percent being fully vaccinated. In total, there have been 4.54 billion COVID-19 doses administered globally, and 36.66 million are now administered each day. Despite this, only 1.2 percent of people in low-income countries have received at least one dose.

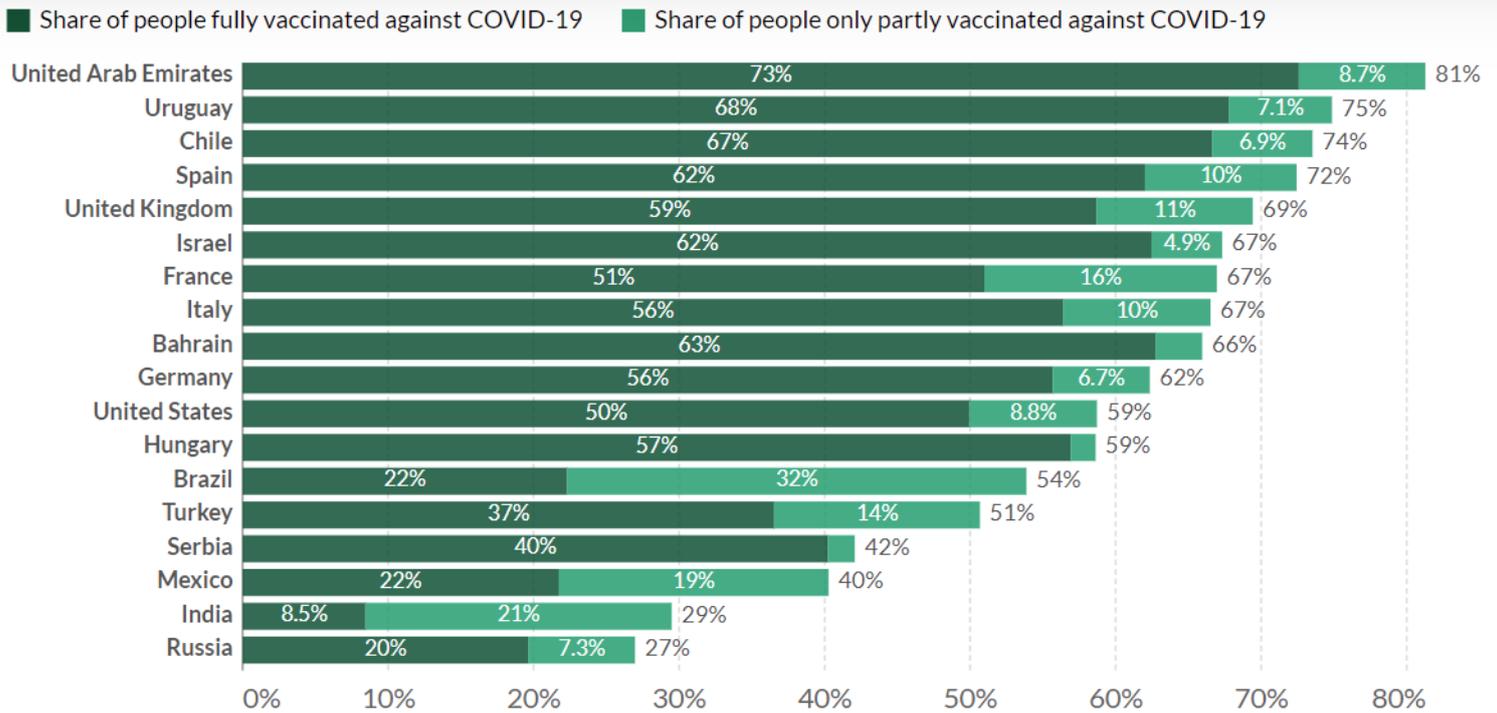
As a result of this continued divide, the WHO has called for wealthy nations to not give out COVID-19 booster shots, until at least September 2021. A halt of booster shots in such nations is believed to allow enough vaccines to be allow

the WHO to meet its goal of having 10 percent of the population in every country vaccinated by September 2021.

For example, in the United Kingdom, figures show that the country is on track to receive 210 million more COVID-19 vaccine doses than it currently needs. Around 467 million vaccines will be delivered to the country by the end of year, despite the fact that only 256 million will be needed to fulfil the country’s aims of giving all vulnerable adults a booster shot whilst fully vaccinating anyone over 16.

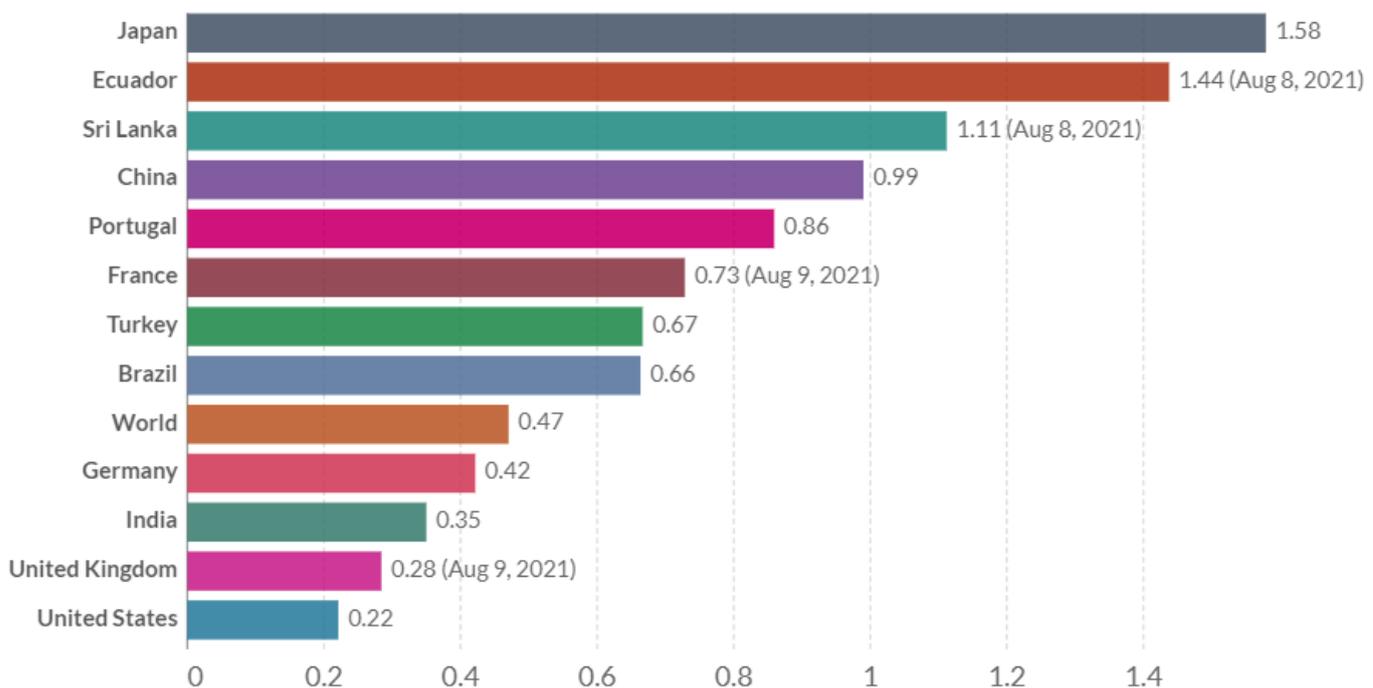
On 6 August, the United States Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published the results of a study into the level of protection afforded by vaccination against reinfection with SARS-CoV-2. The researchers looked at the vaccination status of Kentucky residents reinfected with the virus between May-June 2021 and concluded that being unvaccinated was associated with a 2.34 times greater probability of reinfection compared to being fully vaccinated.

Percentage of People Vaccinated in Select Countries



Source: Official data collated by Our World in Data. This data is only available for countries which report the breakdown of doses administered by first and second doses in absolute numbers.
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Daily COVID-19 vaccine doses administered per 100 people



Source: Official data collated by Our World in Data – Last updated 11 August 2021, 13:00 (London time)

OurWorldInData.org/coronavirus • CC BY

Select Country Updates

United States

The United States is now believed to be averaging around 100,000 new daily COVID infections as the Delta variant continues to spread through the country. The last time the states recorded more than 100,000 new daily cases was during the winter peak. Despite the high case rates the country's vaccine progress remains notable with 70.6 percent of all adults in the country having had at least one dose, whilst 60.6 percent of all adults are considered to be fully inoculated.

As the number of cases have risen again, so too have the number of hospitalisations and deaths caused by the virus. However, in a sign of how vaccinations prevent both of these outcomes, the US centre for Disease Control has stated that more than 97 percent of all those who are currently hospitalised in the country are unvaccinated.

While the Delta variant is present across all of the states in the US, the situation is particularly bad across the southern states where governors have refused to implement mask wearing regulations and where there are also high numbers of vaccine sceptics. For instance, Austin, Texas, has only six spare hospital beds as of 8 August. Paediatric hospitals are especially hard hit, with major cities such as Houston and Miami both reporting they now have no further capacity for child COVID-19 patients.

Argentina

In a pre-recorded national address on 6 August, President Alberto Fernandez announced his government would loosen COVID-19 restrictions with a plan of "sustained and progressive reopenings." The president also said the next phase would include the reopening of the country's borders to fully vaccinated foreign tourists "starting with the countries of the region,"

Beginning on 7 August, capacity limits and/or the number of people permitted to meet and attend various sporting, social, cultural, recreational, and religious activities and events have increased nationwide. However, restrictions will remain in effect in areas under a state of epidemiological alert.

Germany

A police investigation has found that a Red Cross nurse in a rural area of northern Germany has injected thousands with a saline solution instead of COVID-19 vaccine. Authorities have appealed to those impacted to get another shot.

It remains unclear if the individual has been arrested or charged. Whilst the person's identity has not been released; police have reported that they have shared sceptical views about vaccines on social media.

It is believed that around 8,600 residents may have been impacted. The vast majority of these were elderly local residents and those deemed at high risk from the virus. The incident has been handed over to a specialist unit that deals with politically motivated crimes.

France

People took to the streets across France on 7 August for the fourth weekend in a row to protest the new health pass requirement. The *passe sanitaire* requirement, first introduced on 21 July for access to public venues of more than 50 people, was extended on 9 August to include long-distance transport, cafes and restaurants and care homes, among other locations/events.

The health pass requirement means that only those with proof they are fully vaccinated, in possession of a negative test result within the last 48 hours, or in possession of a COVID-19 recovery certificate less than six months old, will be able to enjoy everyday activities or visit public venues.

Senegal

Senegal remains in the midst of a deadly third wave of infections that has seen a sharp rise of new cases and related deaths since early July. Consequently, cemeteries in the capital Dakar are contending with record numbers of burials. The city's largest cemetery in Yoff is handling roughly three times more burials compared to pre-pandemic.

One reason for the rising numbers of COVID-19 related deaths, particularly in Dakar, is that healthcare facilities have been overwhelmed by the numbers of patients requiring critical care, with many reportedly being turned away due to either a lack of oxygen or beds in intensive care units.

Tunisia

Thousands of Tunisians attended walk-in vaccination centres across the country on 8 August after President Kais Saied declared a national day for vaccination. The President stated that it was hoped that at least one million Tunisians would be vaccinated during the nationwide effort. It remains unclear whether the President's target had been reached or not.

Libya

The Libyan Government of National Unity implemented a three-day 'total lockdown' on 7-9 August in central and western Libya, including the capital Tripoli. The lockdown was imposed due to a recent rise in COVID-19 infections and followed a two-week 'partial lockdown' and curfew between 18:00 and 06:00.

Saudi Arabia

On 8 August, the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah announced it will begin to receive Umrah pilgrimage requests from fully vaccinated people. This will include foreigners. Overseas pilgrims will have to include authorised COVID-19 vaccination certificates along with their Umrah request

The ministry said it will begin to allow citizens and residents to perform Umrah, in addition to "gradually receiving requests from various countries of the world," starting from 9 August. Permits will initially be granted to 60,000 Umrah pilgrims per month, but that number will gradually be increased to two million per month.

Philippines

The Philippines capital, Manila, was placed under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) on 6 August due to a recent surge in COVID-19 infections, largely driven by the highly transmissible Delta variant. The strict lockdown will remain in effect until at least 20 August and has resulted in the temporary closure of most non-essential businesses.

Additionally, the ECQ order has seen the return on so-called Authorised Persons Outside of Residence (APORs), including essential workers, residents buying essential goods or services, and those scheduled for a COVID-19 vaccination.

Thailand

Anti-government protesters clashed with police in Bangkok last Saturday amid demonstrations against the government's perceived failure to contain COVID-19 outbreaks. Protesters also expressed their anger over the damage caused by restrictions on the country's economy and called for the resignation of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha.

Last weekend's protests saw Thai security forces deploy water cannons and fire tear gas and rubber bullets in a bid to halt the protest march toward Government House, the prime minister's office. Dozens of people were injured or arrested amid the unrest. It is highly likely similar protests will take place in the coming days and weeks.

Japan

Japan surpassed one million cumulative COVID-19 cases on 6 August amid a surge in infections that has seen record numbers of daily infections and hospitalisations in the past week. With the country's outbreak showing no signs of abating due to the spread of the Delta variant, concerns are growing over a potential collapse of the health system.

The worsening health crisis - which has already led to a change in policy regarding hospitalisations – is likely to be a major issue in the run up to the general election, scheduled to take place in or before October this year.

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