



**SOLACE** GLOBAL

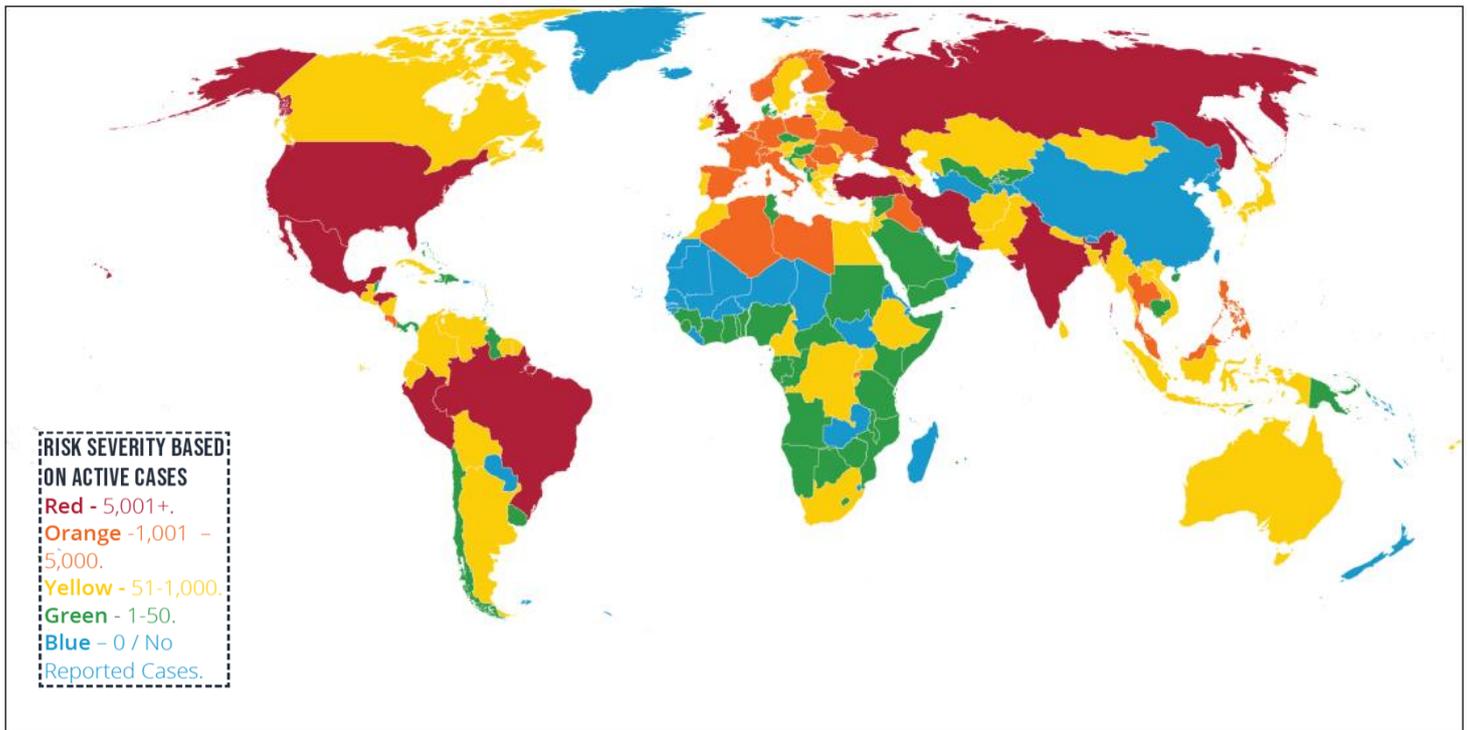
**COVID-19 Weekly Update**  
**7 October 2021**

## Executive Summary

Globally, the numbers of weekly COVID-19 cases and related deaths continue to decline, extending the downward trend that has been observed since late August. Over 2.97 million new cases and 48,500 deaths were recorded in the seven days up to 7 October, representing decreases of around seven and ten per cent, respectively, compared to the preceding week.

North America, Asia, and Africa have all seen significant overall declines in their numbers of weekly cases and deaths, with the latter reporting a 25 per cent reduction in cases and a 32 per cent decrease in deaths compared to last week's figures. Elsewhere, South America's weekly caseload has remained at a similar level to last week; however, the continent's weekly death toll has dropped by around 17 per cent. Similarly, despite a considerable rise in the number of weekly cases, Oceania's weekly deaths have decreased by roughly 13 per cent.

Meanwhile in Europe, there have been more than 935,000 cases and close to 14,000 deaths reported in the last seven days, with the figures increasing by around eight and nine per cent, respectively, compared to the preceding week. While much of Western Europe has seen a reduction in new cases, many nations in Central, Eastern and Northern Europe are currently grappling with surging infections, including the Czech Republic, Poland, Latvia, Romania, and Ukraine.



## Notable Updates

A major overhaul of England's COVID-19 rules on international travel came into effect on 4 October, replacing the widely criticised traffic-light system. The new system includes two categories: red list and 'non-red list' countries, with the latter effectively being an amalgamation of the previous amber and green list destinations.

In addition to scrapping the traffic-light system, the testing requirements have changed for fully vaccinated people returning to England. Since Monday, fully vaccinated arrivals from a non-red list country are no longer required to take a COVID-19 test in the 72 hours prior to departure. However, fully vaccinated travellers from non-red list countries are still required to take a PCR test within 48 hours of arriving in England. There are no changes to the existing testing or quarantine requirements for those who are unvaccinated or not fully vaccinated, or for people arriving from red list destinations.

The move has been welcomed by the travel industry, businesses, and British holidaymakers, with the head of International Air Transport Association, Willie Walsh, saying it marked a "positive step". Similarly, the chief executive of Airlines UK, Tim Alderslade, said: "Things are moving in the right direction and the removal of these restrictions will make it easier and cheaper for people to travel."

In other news, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) publicised its Annual Report on 4 October, in which the organisation warned "the fallout from the global pandemic could be with us for years to come." The IMF summarised that an economic recovery is underway; however, the crisis has exacerbated pre-pandemic vulnerabilities and as a result, country prospects are diverging. Moreover, the report suggested "nearly half of emerging market and developing countries and some middle-income countries are now at risk of falling further behind, undoing much of the progress made towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals."

### Vaccination Updates

On 1 October, US drugmaker Merck released a statement claiming its investigational oral antiviral drug molnupiravir reduced the risk of hospitalisation or death by approximately 50 per cent for patients with mild to moderate COVID-19. The announcement followed the conclusion of the drug’s Phase 3 MOVE-OUT trial involving around 1,400 patients, all of whom had at least one risk factor associated with poor disease outcome. Not only did the drug reduce the risk of hospitalisation or death, it demonstrated consistent efficacy across the Gamma, Delta and Mu variants.

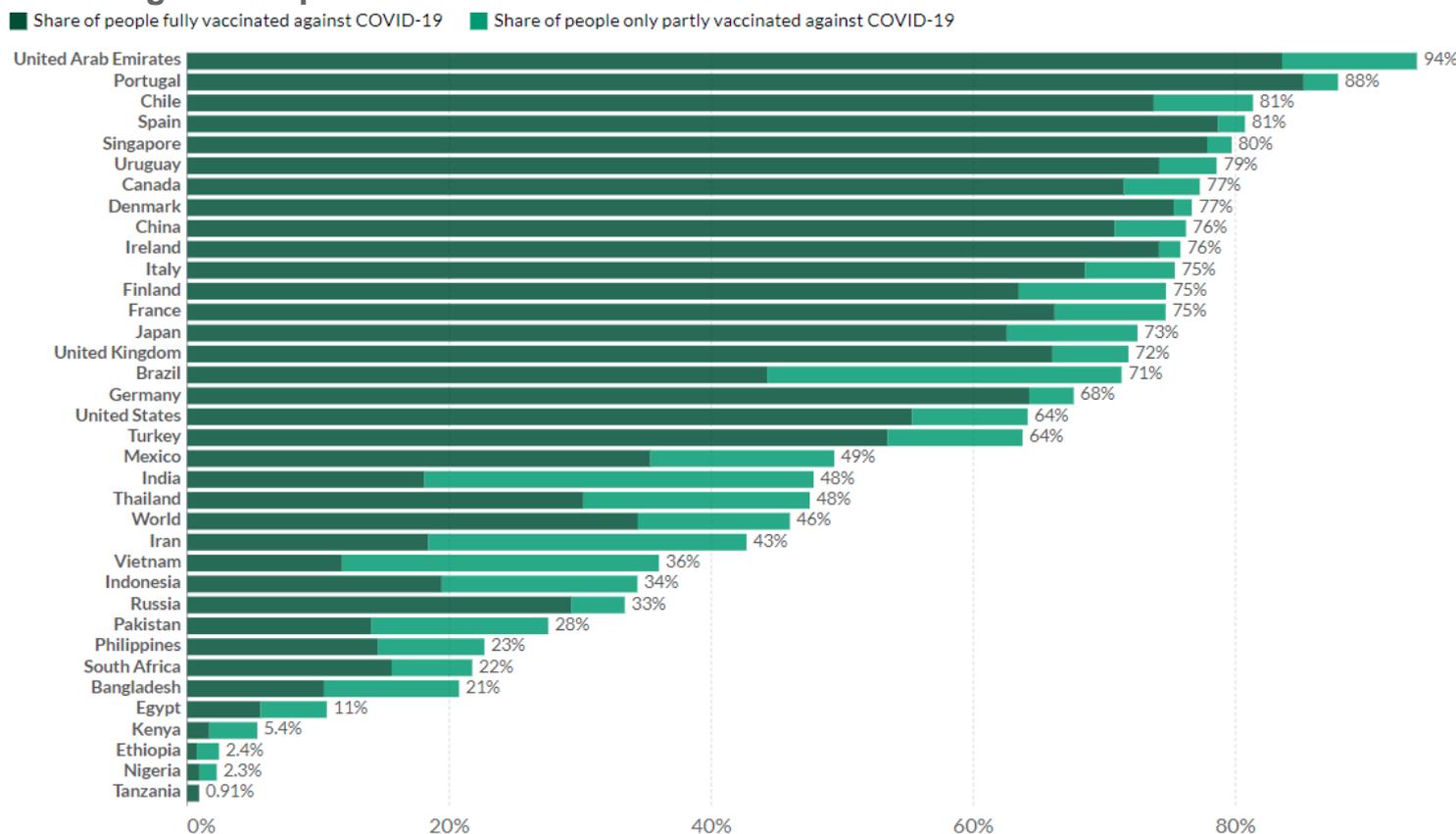
According to the statement, Merck will apply for Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) to the US FDA and other regulatory bodies worldwide “as soon as possible.” The drugmaker expects to produce 10 million courses of treatment by the end of 2021 and has already entered into supply and procurement agreements with governments worldwide, pending authorisation by local regulatory bodies.

In other news, the European Medicines Agency’s (EMA) Pharmacovigilance Risk Assessment Committee (PRAC) announced last Friday that it had identified a possible link between rare cases of venous thromboembolism (VTE) and the Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine, developed by Janssen Pharmaceuticals. VTE is a condition in which a blood clot forms in a deep vein, usually in a leg, arm or groin, and may travel to the lungs, with possible life-threatening consequences. The PRAC concluded there is a “reasonable possibility that rare cases of VTE are linked to vaccination with COVID-19 Vaccine Janssen.” As a result, it recommended listing VTE as a rare side effect in the vaccine’s product information. Despite this, the EMA has reaffirms that serious safety problems are extremely rare, and the vast majority of side effects are mild and short-lived.

The EMA has also recommended updating the product information for both the Johnson & Johnson and AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccines to include immune thrombocytopenia (ITP) as an adverse reaction with an unknown frequency. ITP is a disorder characterised by a decrease in the number of platelets that can lead to excessive bruising or bleeding.

Sweden and Denmark announced on 6 October that they had paused the use of Moderna’s COVID-19 vaccine for younger age groups following reports of rare side effects, including myocarditis (inflammation of the heart muscle) and pericarditis (inflammation of pericardium). Swedish health authorities have paused the vaccine for people born in or after 1991, while Danish Health Authority decided to pause giving the shot to people under the age 18.

### Percentage of People Vaccinated in Select Countries



## Select Country Updates

### United States

According to statistics from John Hopkins University, the United States surpassed 700,000 COVID-19-related deaths on 1 October. The grim milestone was reached as the country continues to grapple with its latest wave of infections.

Since mid-August, authorities have consistently reported more than 1,000 deaths per day in a country where roughly 55 per cent of the population have been fully vaccinated.

In other news, California's Governor Gavin Newsom announced plans last Friday to add the COVID-19 vaccine to the list of vaccinations required by students to attend both public and private schools. Pending full FDA approval for the respective age groups, the move could see California become the first state to mandate the COVID-19 vaccine for elementary, middle, and high school students.

### Mauritius

On 30 September, Deputy Prime Minister Louis Obeegadoo announced the reopening of the country's borders from 1 October. He emphasised how the reopening of borders was crucial for the country's economy, where tourism accounts for roughly 23 per cent of gross domestic product and some 100,000 households depend on the sector for their livelihoods.

The reopening of the island nation's borders allows both fully vaccinated and non-vaccinated travellers to enter; however, entry and quarantine requirements vary depending on vaccination status. Both groups require a negative PCR test taken within 72 hours of departure and a completed Passenger Locator Form. Those not fully vaccinated must book and pay for a 14-day in-room quarantine at a designated hotel; fully vaccinated people are not required to quarantine.

### Australia

In a press conference on 1 October, Prime Minister Scott Morrison said Australia will soon be opening its international borders to enable fully vaccinated residents and overseas citizens to travel abroad or return home.

According to an official media release on the same day, in the coming weeks large parts of the country will be moving to Phase B and then to Phase C of the National Plan to safely reopen Australia. Under Phase C, international travel is on track to reopen safely to fully vaccinated Australians, with the government intending to remove current overseas travel restrictions related to COVID-19 in November.

### Somalia

On 30 September, Somalia unveiled its first public oxygen plant, bringing hope to a nation that has struggled to provide adequate treatment to coronavirus patients. The oxygen plant has been funded by the

Hormuud Salaam Foundation, a non-profit established by Somalia's largest telecoms company, Hormuud Telecom, and Salaam Somali Bank.

The plant is installed at the Banadir Maternity and Children Hospital in Mogadishu, and the oxygen it produces will be distributed among hospitals in the capital free of charge.

### Nigeria

Last week, the Government of Nigeria received approval from the World Bank Board of Directors for a 400-million-dollar credit in additional financing from its International Development Association. The financing will be used by Nigeria to purchase and deploy COVID-19 vaccines, strengthen relevant health systems, and to prepare for future health emergencies.

The announcement will be welcome news for the Nigerian Government, which in recent weeks has been grappling with a third wave of infections alongside the country's growing economic and security concerns.

### Morocco

Last Friday, Morocco's Health Ministry announced a plan to provide booster shots of the COVID-19 vaccine. The booster campaign began this week, starting with those who have been fully vaccinated for at least 6 months.

As of 6 October, the North African nation has administered the most doses in Africa, having fully inoculated around 20 million people out of a population of about 36 million.

### Senegal

On Monday, Senegal logged just two new daily coronavirus infections, marking the lowest number since the pandemic first reached the West African nation. The country has seen a dramatic reduction in the numbers of daily infections in recent months, dropping from a peak of 1,800 per day in July to single digits by the start of October.

### Latvia

In the past week, Latvia's caseload has risen by approximately 3,900 cases, representing a 56 per cent increase compared to the total for the preceding seven days. Worse still, the country's current wave of infections is showing no signs of abating, with the Latvian Information Agency reporting 1,671 new cases on 6 October – the country's second highest daily caseload since the pandemic began.

### Slovakia

According to COVID-19 statistics published on 6 October, the Central European nation has seen a near 220 per cent rise in weekly COVID-19-related deaths compared to the number recorded in the preceding

seven days. In the week up to 6 October, Slovakia recorded 84 deaths, up from 26 for the previous week. While the figures are far lower compared to some Western European nations, cases in the country are surging amid low vaccination rates. Indeed, according to the country's health ministry, PCR testing indicates the rise in cases is largely among the unvaccinated population.

### **Turkey**

On 6 October, the country's daily coronavirus caseload surpassed 30,000, the first time it has done so since April. Daily cases in Turkey have been hovering around 27,000 and 30,000 since mid-September, numbers the

health minister Fahrettin Koca recently said were "not acceptable."



Copyright © 2021 Solace Global Risk Limited. All rights reserved. No part of this document may be reproduced, copied, translated, sold, or distributed, in whole or in part without the consent of Solace Global Risk Limited.

Solace Global remains available to provide our full range of Travel Risk Management services to clients throughout this current pandemic. Whether you require customised reports, training, comprehensive crisis management, in-country journey management, tracking, response, evacuation services or something specific, we are able to tailor our services to your operational needs, wherever or whatever they may be.

For further details, please email [risk@solaceglobal.com](mailto:risk@solaceglobal.com) or give us a call on +44 (0) 1202 308 810.