



NATIONAL PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY OPERATION CENTER (PHEOC), ETHIOPIA

COVID-19 PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE IN ETHIOPIA

WEEKLY BULLETIN

Epi-Week- 21 (May 24 – 30, 2021)

BULLETIN No: 57

Issue Date: June 06, 2021

I. HIGHLIGHTS

- A total of 2,151 new confirmed COVID-19 cases and 79 COVID-19 related deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-21 bringing the total cases and death to 271,345 and 4,155 respectively.
- A total of 33,361 laboratory samples were tested in the Epi-Week-21 bringing the total number of samples tested to 2,720,495.
- A total of 189,906 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been at Home Based Isolation and Care so far; 4,717 of these are enrolled in the Epi-Week-21.
- The number of COVID-19 confirmed cases, deaths due to COVID-19, Case Fatality Rate and laboratory test positivity rate in Ethiopia have shown decrement in the last consecutive weeks.

II. Subject in Focus:

a. New names for SARS-CoV-2 New Variants

- WHO has assigned simple, easy to say and remember labels for key variants of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, using letters of the Greek alphabet¹.
- These labels were chosen by an expert group of partners from around the world to do so, including experts who are part of existing naming systems, nomenclature and virus taxonomic experts, researchers and national authorities.
- These labels do not replace existing scientific names (e.g. those assigned by GISAID, Nextstrain and Pango), which convey important scientific information and will continue to be used in research.
- While they have their advantages, these scientific names can be difficult to say and recall, and are prone to misreporting.
- As a result, people often resort to calling variants by the places where they are detected, which is stigmatizing and discriminatory. To avoid this and to simplify public communications, WHO encourages national authorities, media outlets and others to adopt these new labels.

¹ <https://www.who.int/news/item/31-05-2021-who-announces-simple-easy-to-say-labels-for-sars-cov-2-variants-of-interest-and-concern>

Table 1: New names assigned for SARS-CoV-2 Variants of Concern (VOCs) and Variants of Interest (VOIs), 31 May 2021²

WHO label	Pango lineage	GISAID clade	Nextstrain clade	Earliest documented samples	Date of designation
Variants of Concern (VOCs)					
Alpha	B.1.1.7	GRY (formerly GR/501Y.V1)	20I/501Y.V1	United Kingdom, Sep-2020	18-Dec-2020
Beta	B.1.351	GH/501Y.V2	20H/501Y.V2	South Africa, May-2020	18-Dec-2020
Gamma	P.1	GR/501Y.V3	20J/501Y.V3	Brazil, Nov-2020	11-Jan-2021
Delta	B.1.617.2	G/452R.V3	21A/S:478K	India, Oct-2020	VOI: 4-Apr-2021 VOC: 11-May-2021
Variants of Interest (VOIs)					
Epsilon	B.1.427 / B.1.429	GH/452R.V1	20C/S.452R	United States of America, Mar-2020	5-Mar-2021
Zeta	P.2	GR	20B/S.484K	Brazil, Apr-2020	17-Mar-2021
Eta	B.1.525	G/484K.V3	20A/S484K	Multiple countries, Dec-2020	17-Mar-2021
Theta	P.3	GR	20B/S:265C	Philippines, Jan-2021	24-Mar-2021
Iota	B.1.526	GH	20C/S:484K	United States of America, Nov-2020	24-Mar-2021
Kappa	B.1.617.1	G/452R.V3	21A/S:154K	India, Oct-2020	4-Apr-2021

b. COVID-19 plan revitalization ('Dagim Tikuret LeCOVID-19')

- The COVID-19 response revitalization movement which mainly focuses on enhancing overall COVID-19 response via increasing community awareness through risk communication and community engagement, detection capacity and improving quality care and capacity is already launched at national and subnational level.
- Fourteen days have passed since the “Dagim Tikuret LeCOVID-19” movement is launched nationally.
- Regional states have launched and initiated the movement.
- Sub regional cascading has also been started in Sidama regional state.
- House to house visit is started in Addis Ababa, Benishangul Gumuz, Sidama and Harari regional states.
- In line with the response revitalization movement, regional support teams are deployed to regional Public Health Emergency Operation centers and biweekly meeting with regional and national Public Health Emergency Operations Centers (PHEOC) COVID-19 response IMS is being conducted. The biweekly meeting agenda focuses on the overall COVID-19 response plan status, detection capacity, challenges (ongoing & predicted) and support area required (identifying resources on hand and gaps).

² <https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/weekly-epidemiological-update-on-covid-19---1-june-2021>



Fig. 1: ‘Dagim Tikuret LeCOVID-19’ launching ceremonies in regional states

III. EPIDEMIOLOGICAL SITUATION

a. Global Situation

- Globally, over 4.1 million new cases are reported in the last week (Figure 2). This decrease is for the fourth consecutive week.
- More than 107 thousand new deaths (7% decrease compared to previous week) are reported globally in the Epi-week-21.
- As of May 30, 2021, a total of 166,589,189 COVID-19 cases and 3,475,605 deaths (CFR=2.09%) have occurred globally. Of the total cases and deaths reported since the beginning of the outbreak, 4,170,825 cases and 107,870 deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-21.
- Generally, the United States of America (USA) reported the highest number of cases followed by India.
- The highest numbers of new cases in the last seven days were reported from India (1,405,609 new cases), Brazil (533,648 new cases), the United States of America (313,921 new cases), Argentina (223,080 new cases) and Colombia (155,432 new cases).

- In Africa, as of May 30, 2021, a total of 4,858,505 cases and 129,603 deaths were reported across the continent (CFR=2.67%). Of these 100,828 cases and 2,484 deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-21.
- In Africa, South Africa reported the highest number of cases followed by Morocco.
- Ethiopia reported the highest number of COVID-19 confirmed cases in East Africa. See the summary dashboard below.

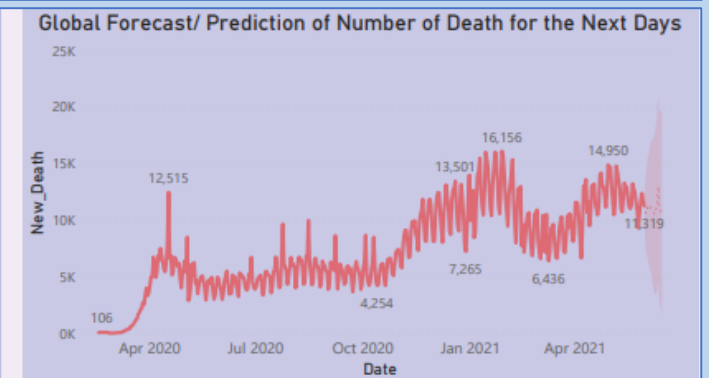
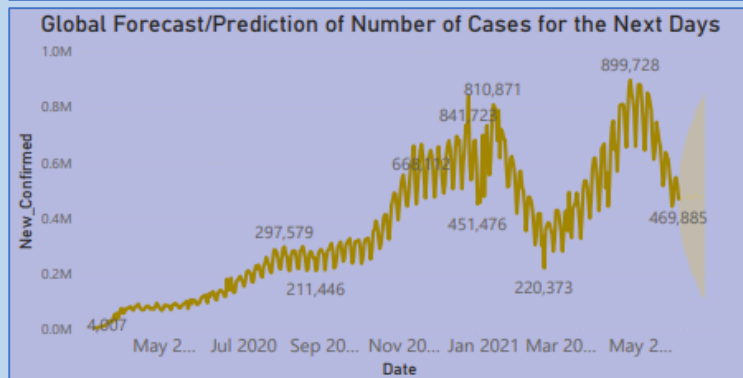
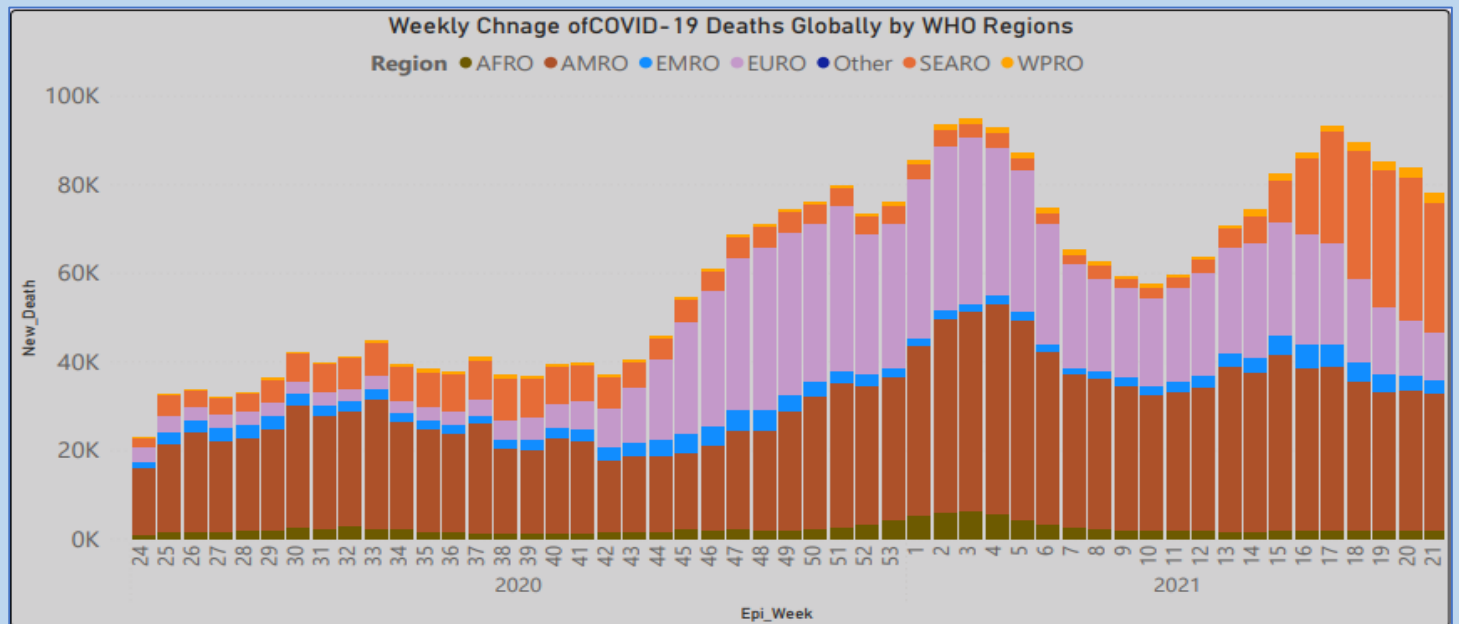
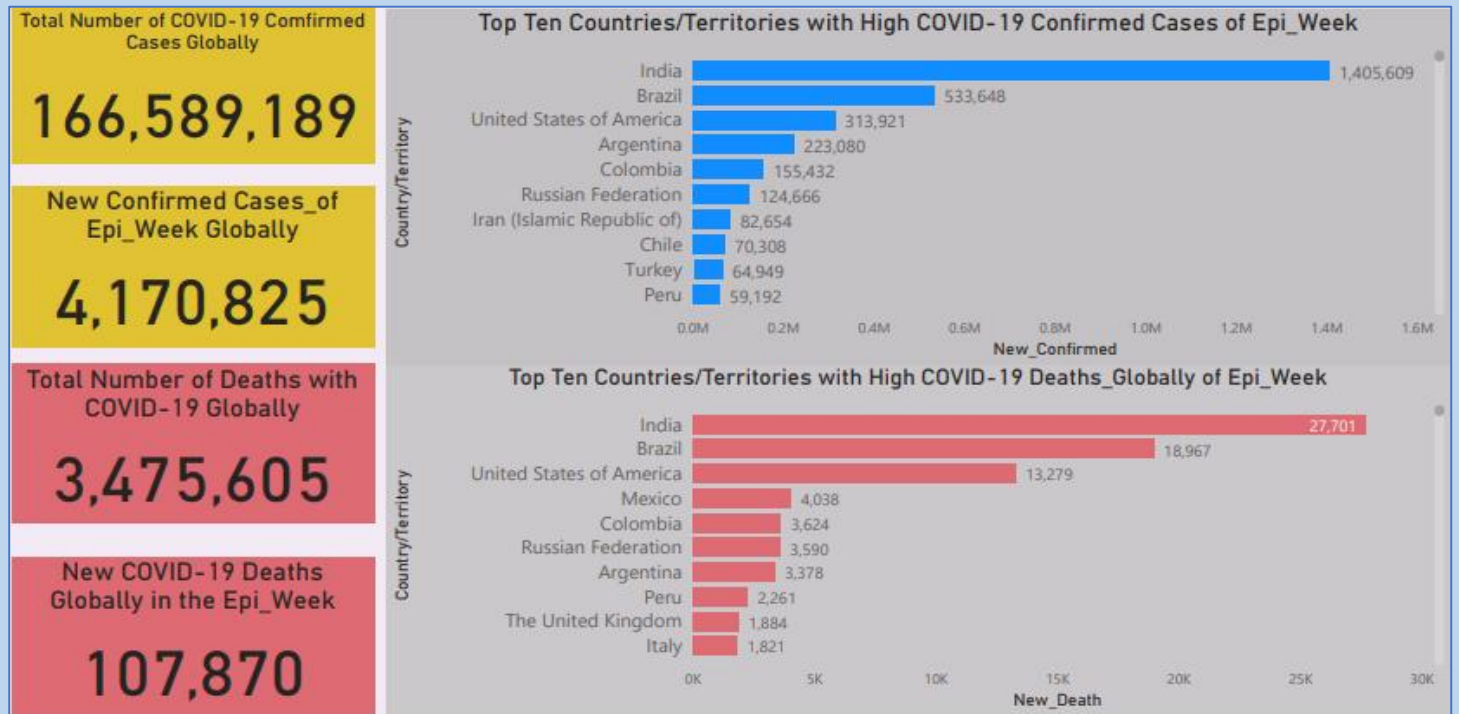


Fig. 2: COVID-19 Global Situation Update as of May 30, 2021 (Source: WHO)

Total Number of Cases Confirmed in Africa

4,858,505

New Confirmed Cases in Africa with COVID-19_of Epi_Week

100,828

New Cases in Last 7Days Per 100K Popn. in Africa

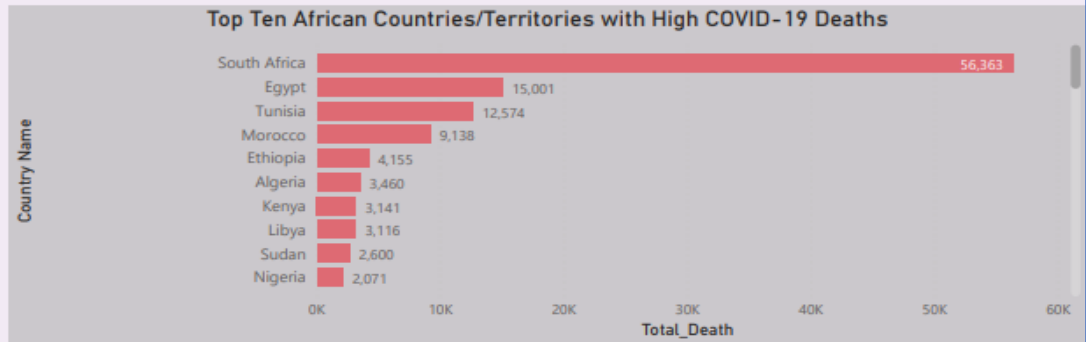
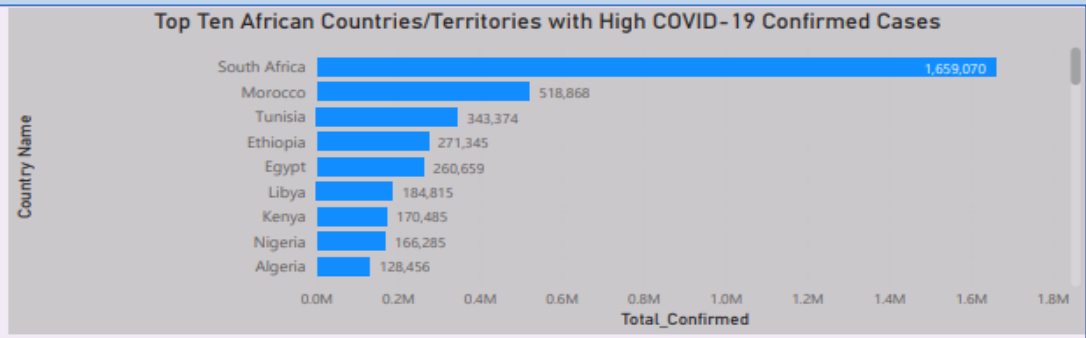
1792

Total Number of Deaths in Africa with COVID-19

129,603

New Deaths in Africa with COVID-19_in Epi_Week

2,484



Total Number of Cases Confirmed in Horn_Africa

506,251

New Cases in Horn_Africa_in Epi_Week

8,124

Total Number of Deaths in Horn_Africa with COVID-19

10,021

New Deaths in Horn_Africa with COVID-19 in Epi_Week

245

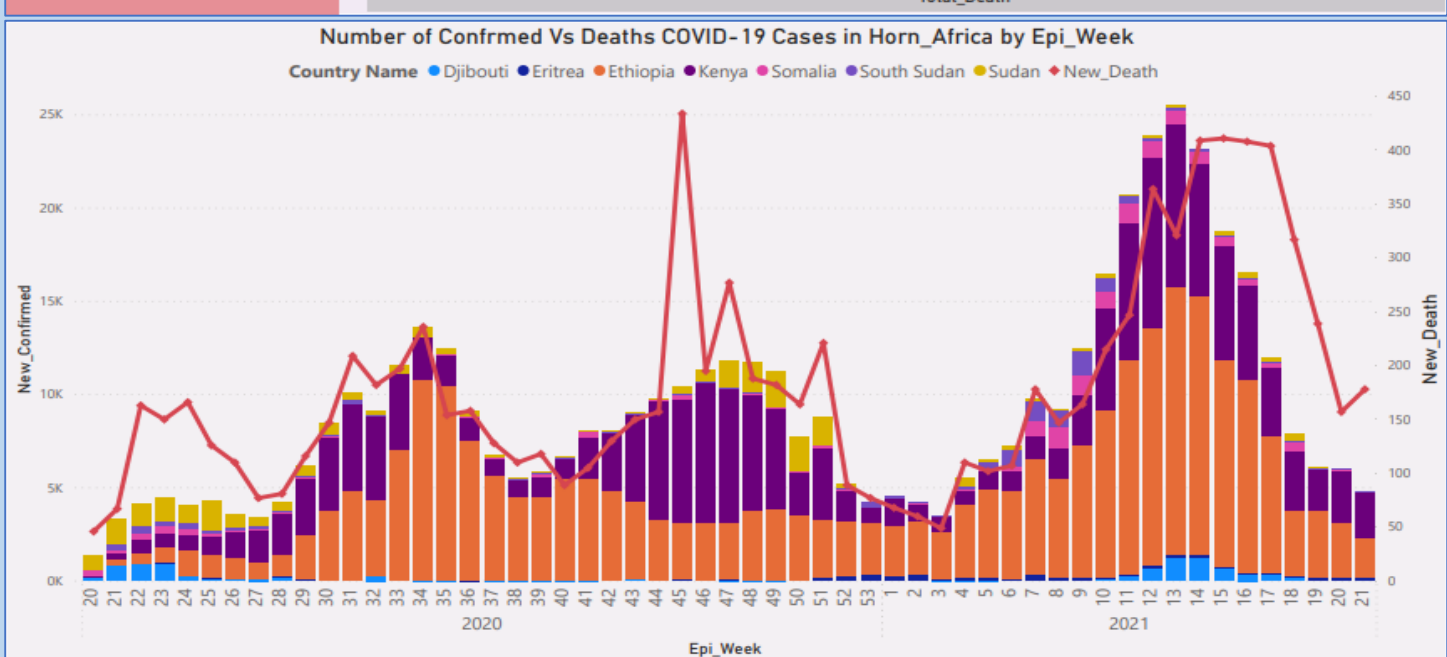
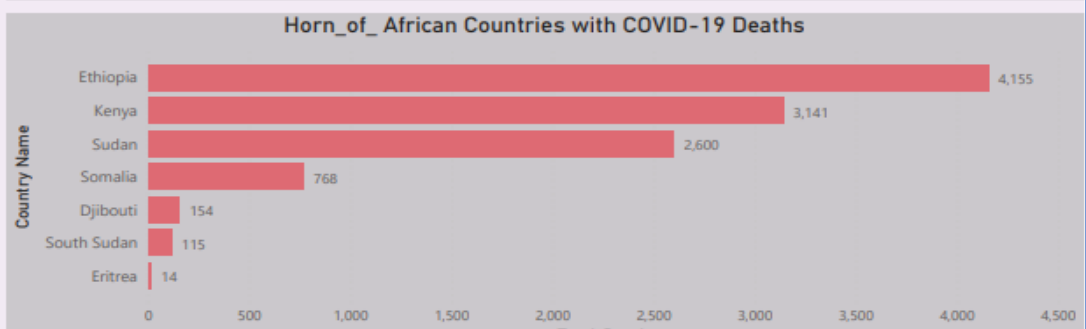
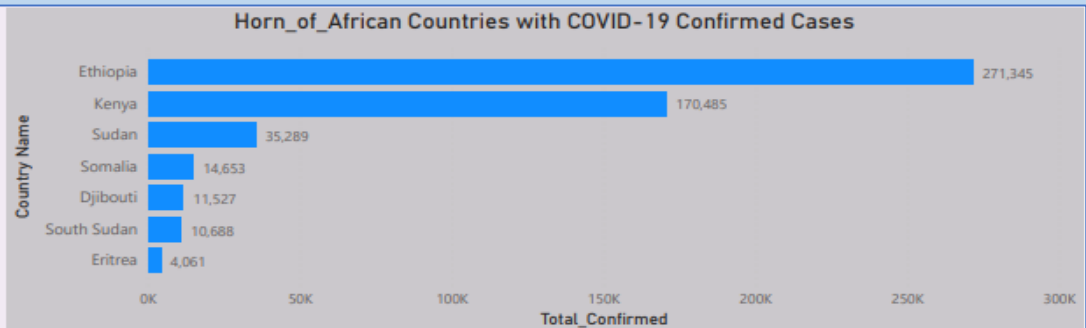


Fig. 3: COVID-19 Situation Update in Africa as of May 30, 2021 (Source: WHO)

b. National COVID-19 situation:

- As of May 30, 2021, a total of 271,345 confirmed COVID-19 cases and 4,076 deaths were recorded in the country with a case fatality rate of 1.50%. This puts Ethiopia in the fourth position by the number of confirmed cases and in the fifth position by the number of deaths due to COVID-19 in Africa.
- Two-thousand-one-hundred-fifty-one (2,151) newly confirmed COVID-19 cases and 79 COVID-19 related deaths were reported during the Epi-Week-21.
- In this week, there is a 27% decrement in the number of COVID-19 confirmed cases (for the eighth consecutive week). For detail, see the summary dashboard below.

Table 1: Summary of National COVID-19 situation in the Epi-Week-21 of 2021

Regions	New_Tested	New_Case	New_HF_Admission	New_Deaths	Positivity Rate	# of Recovery
Addis Ababa	26303	1271	265	50	4.9	7289
Oromia	2348	435	59	15	24.4	1050
SNNPR	929	61	6	1	6.0	119
Afar	764	25	4	0	3.1	40
Amhara	764	120	27	2	13.3	70
Gambella	523	39	4	1	7.7	1
Benshangul	466	11	19	0	0.6	26
Tigray	430	131	16	2	23.9	24
Harari	315	22	12	4	6.6	35
Sidama	300	10	3	2	3.1	31
Dire Dawa	156	22	6	2	14.8	43
Somali	63	4	2	0	5.5	59
Total	33361	2151	423	79	**** 9.9	8787

**** Positivity Rate is the Weighted Averages of Regional Distributions of Rates

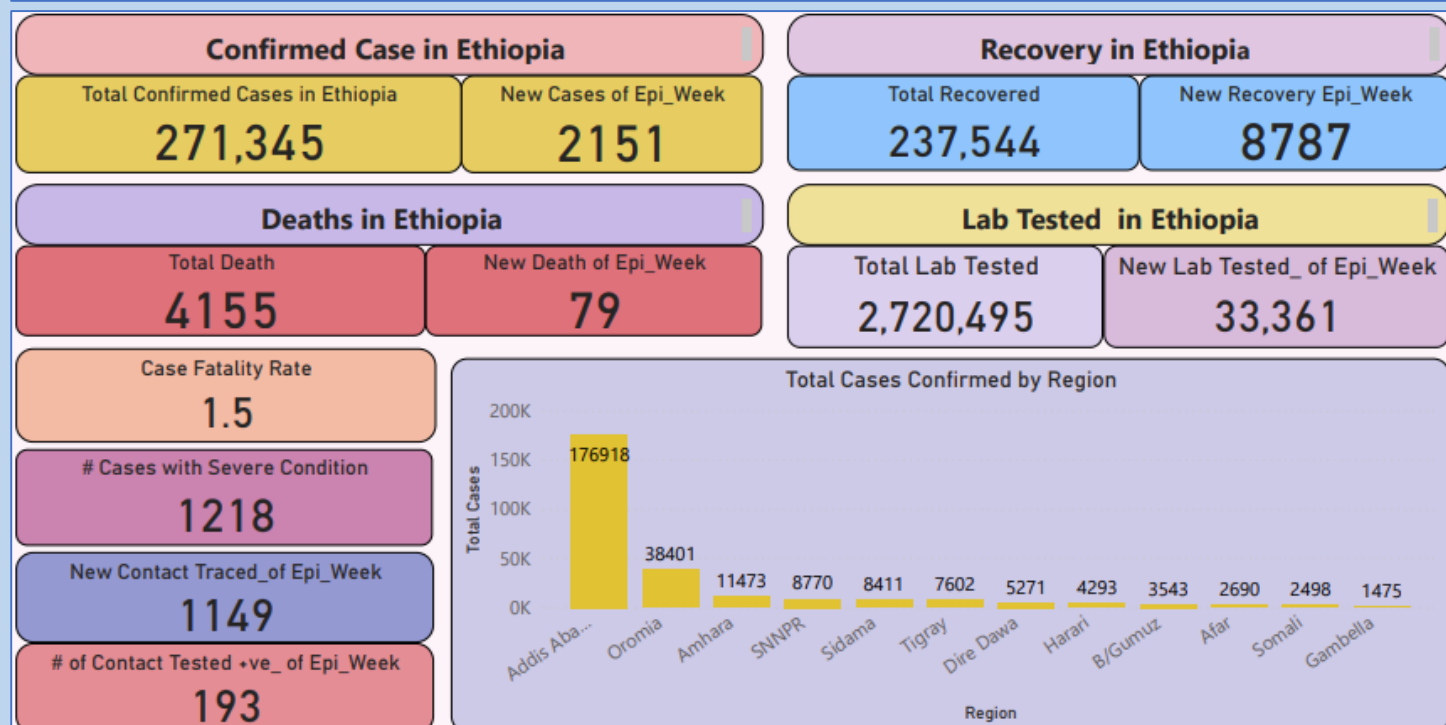


Fig. 4: Weekly summary of the COVID-19 situation in Ethiopia as of May 30, 2021, Ethiopia

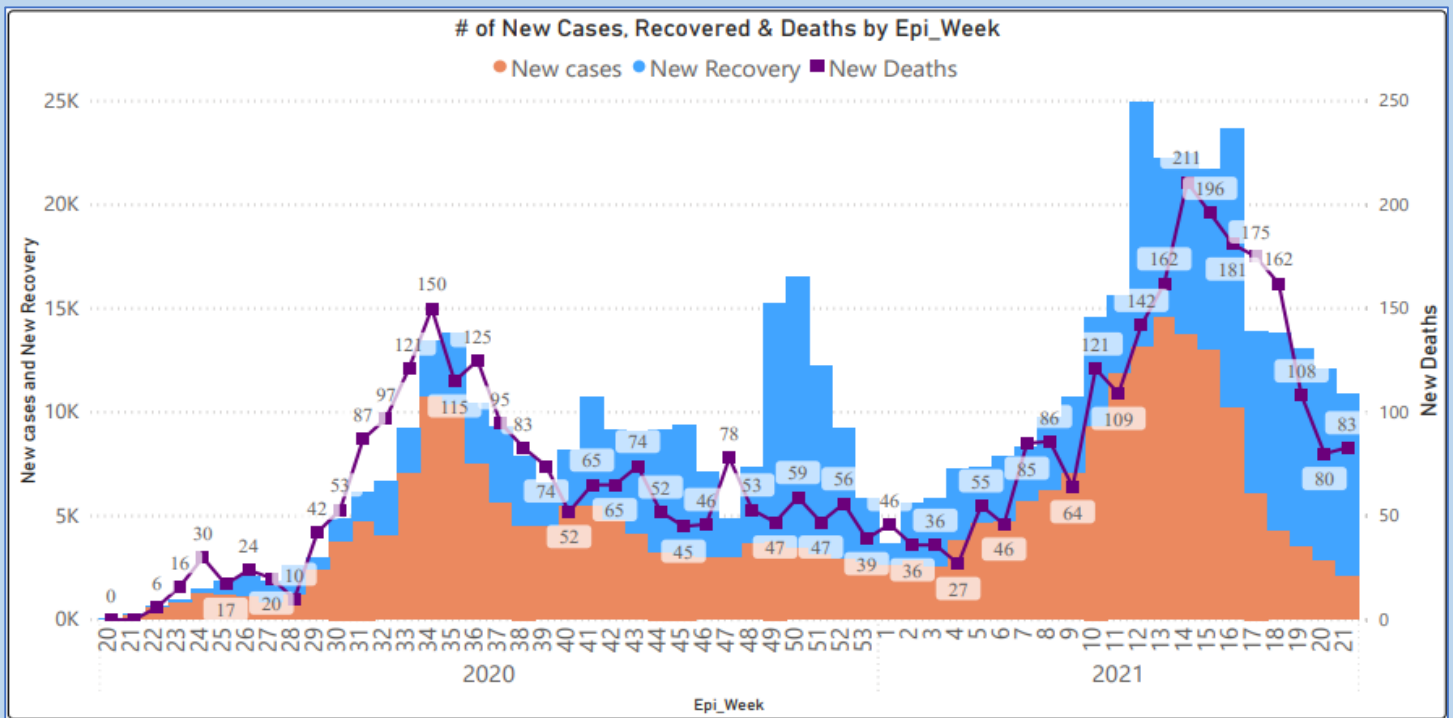


Fig. 5: COVID-19 confirmed cases, recovery and death by Epi-Week as of May 30, 2021, Ethiopia

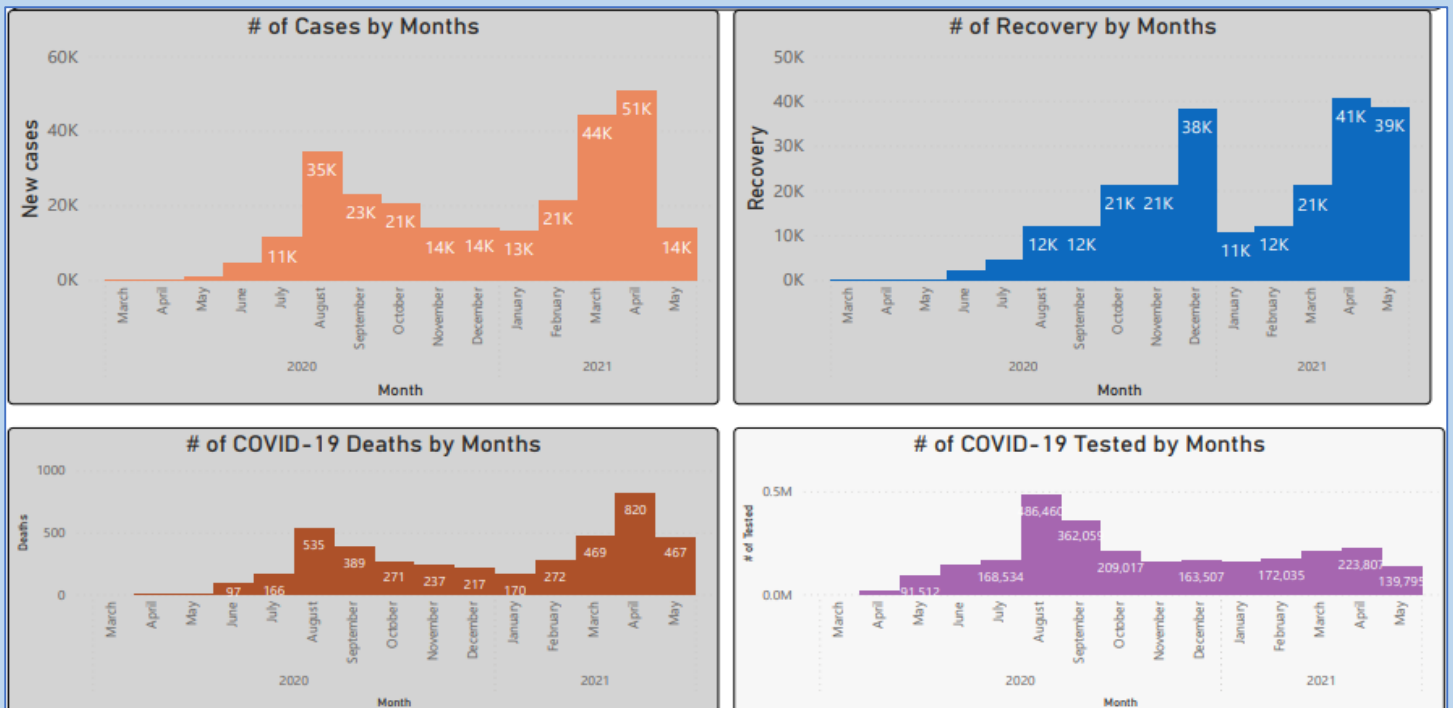


Fig. 6: Summary of monthly trend of COVID-19 situation in Ethiopia as of May 30, 2021.

c. Other Epi-Surveillance Related Activities

There is ongoing travelers' health screening at point of entries (POEs), follow-up of international travelers, rumor collection, verification, investigation and information provision via toll free call center, active case detection by house to house search, contact listing, tracing and follow-up of persons who had contact with confirmed cases. There is also laboratory investigation of suspected cases, contacts of confirmed cases, SARI/pneumonia cases and community members, surveillance and assessment in school and congregated setting communities.

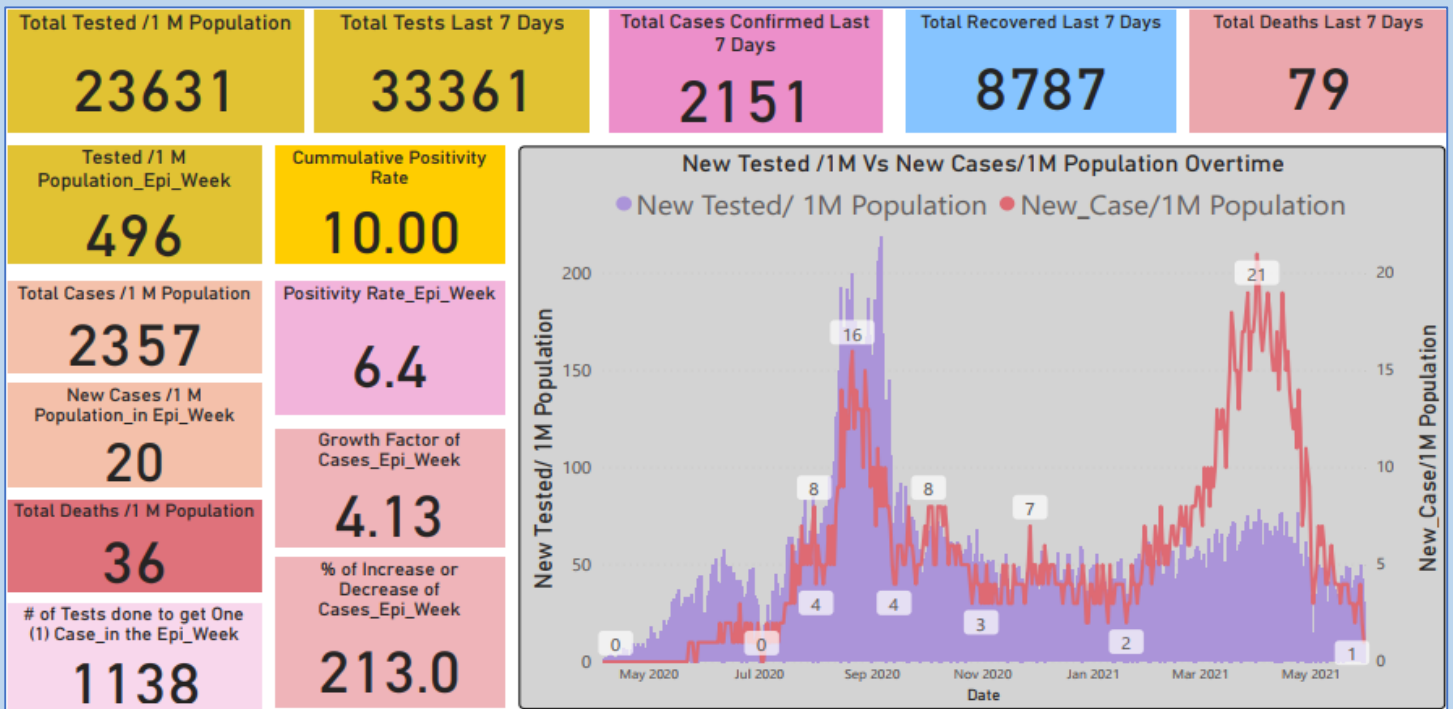


Fig. 7: Summary of COVID-19 confirmed cases in Ethiopia as of May 30, 2021.

i. Contact tracing and follow-up:

- Contact tracing is a key strategy for interrupting chains of transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and reducing COVID-19-associated mortality and thus should not be abandoned.
- As of May 30, 2021:
 - A total of 369,309 contacts of confirmed cases have been identified. Of these, 1,149 contacts were identified in the Epi-Week-21.
 - Of total contacts, 323,943 (87.71%) have completed 14 days follow-up, while 3,976 contacts are still on follow-up.
- Overall, 41,803 (11.31%) of the contacts (symptomatic plus asymptomatic) have been tested positive.
- Contacts of the confirmed cases contributed for the 15.41% of the total cases. However, when there is transmission of the disease at community level, it is known that an individual acquires the disease from unknown contacts.

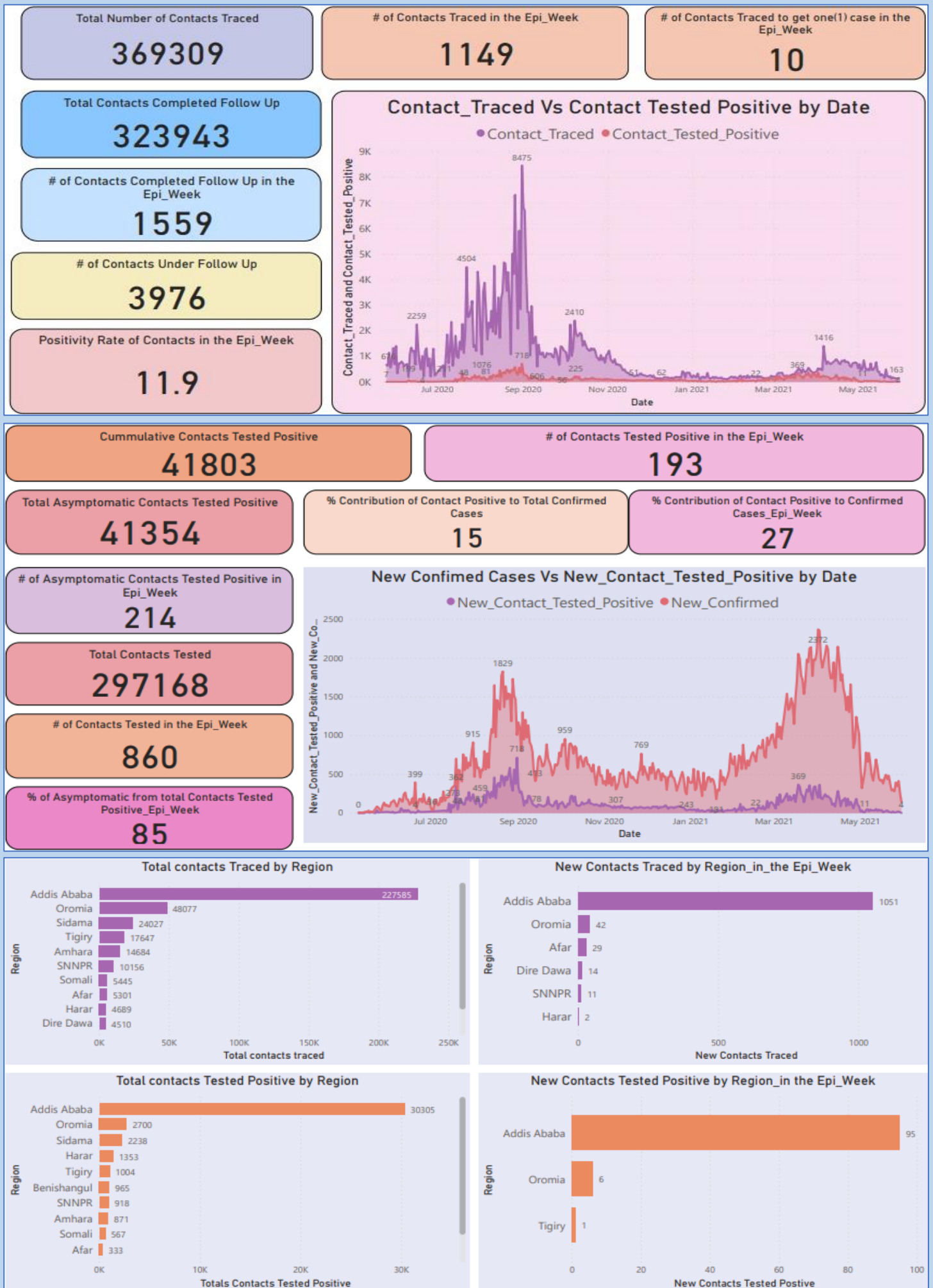


Fig. 8: Summary of COVID-19 contact tracing as of May 30, 2021, Ethiopia.

ii. Rumors collection and verification from all sources

- COVID-19 related rumors are received from different sources: Call centers, Health facilities, Contact follow up, Self-report, Travelers follow up, Point of Entry (PoE), Community surveillance and Special Settings.
- As of May 30, 2021:
 - 391,770 rumors/alerts have been received and investigated. Of these, 314 rumors were reported in the Epi-Week-21.
 - 278,798 (71.16%) of the rumors/alerts have fulfilled the suspected case definition.
- 23,471 COVID-19 related calls are received through call centers in this Epi-week.

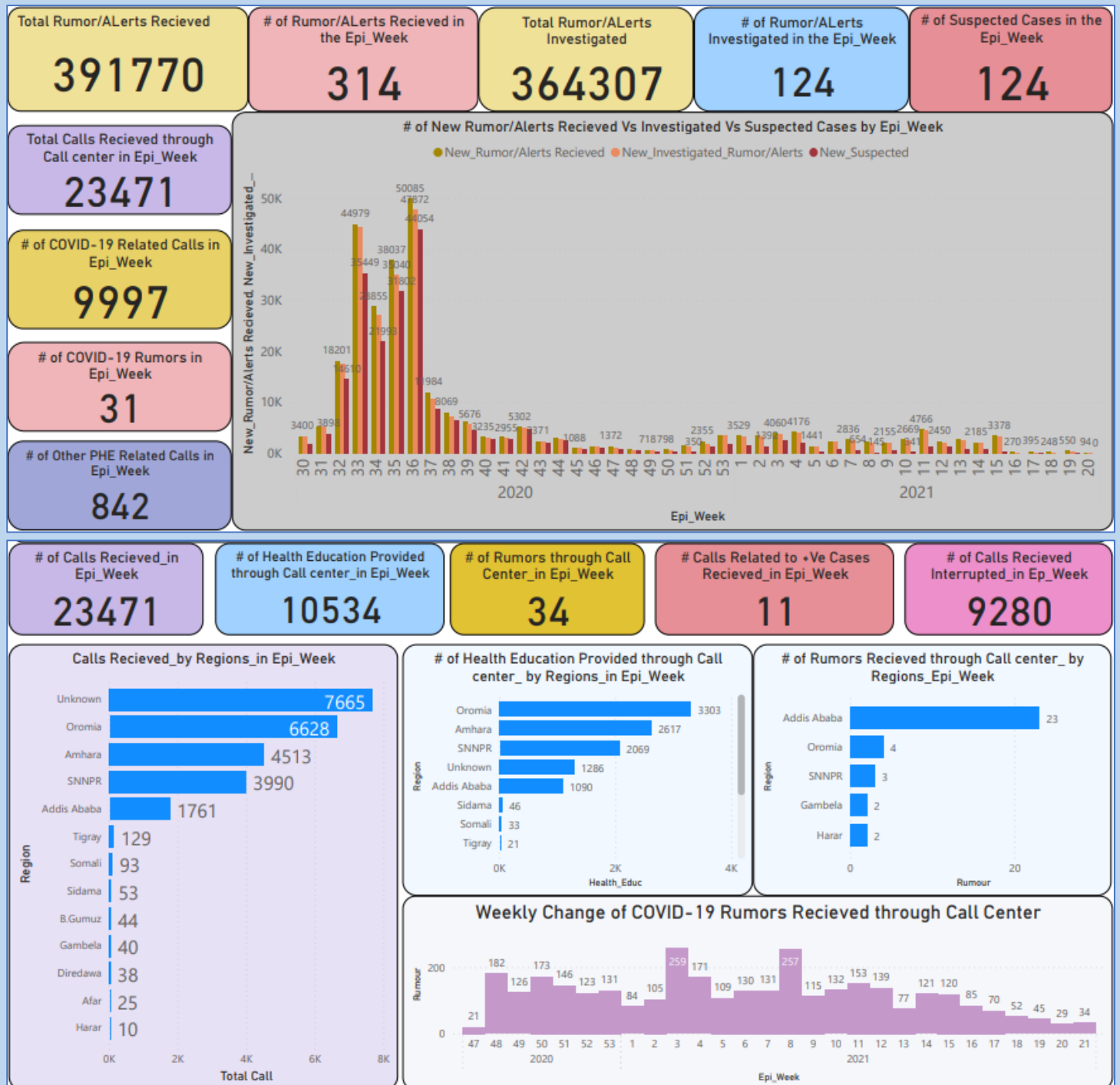


Fig. 9: Summary of COVID-19 rumor/alert investigation as of May 30, 2021, Ethiopia.

iii. Point of entry and Quarantine related activities

- Since the start of the outbreak, 2,218,688 passengers have been screened at the Point of Entries of Ethiopia and 703,576 (31.72%) of them were screened at Bole International Airport.
- Of the total passengers screened, 36,602 were screened for COVID-19 in the Epi-Week-21.
- As of May 30, 2021, among the passengers coming with COVID-19 PCR test result certificates, 330,700 passengers (17,081 in Epi-week-21) had PCR negative certificates while 46 passengers with PCR positive certificates were identified during health screening. A total of 91 SARS-COV-2 positive cases have been detected after arrival laboratory test.

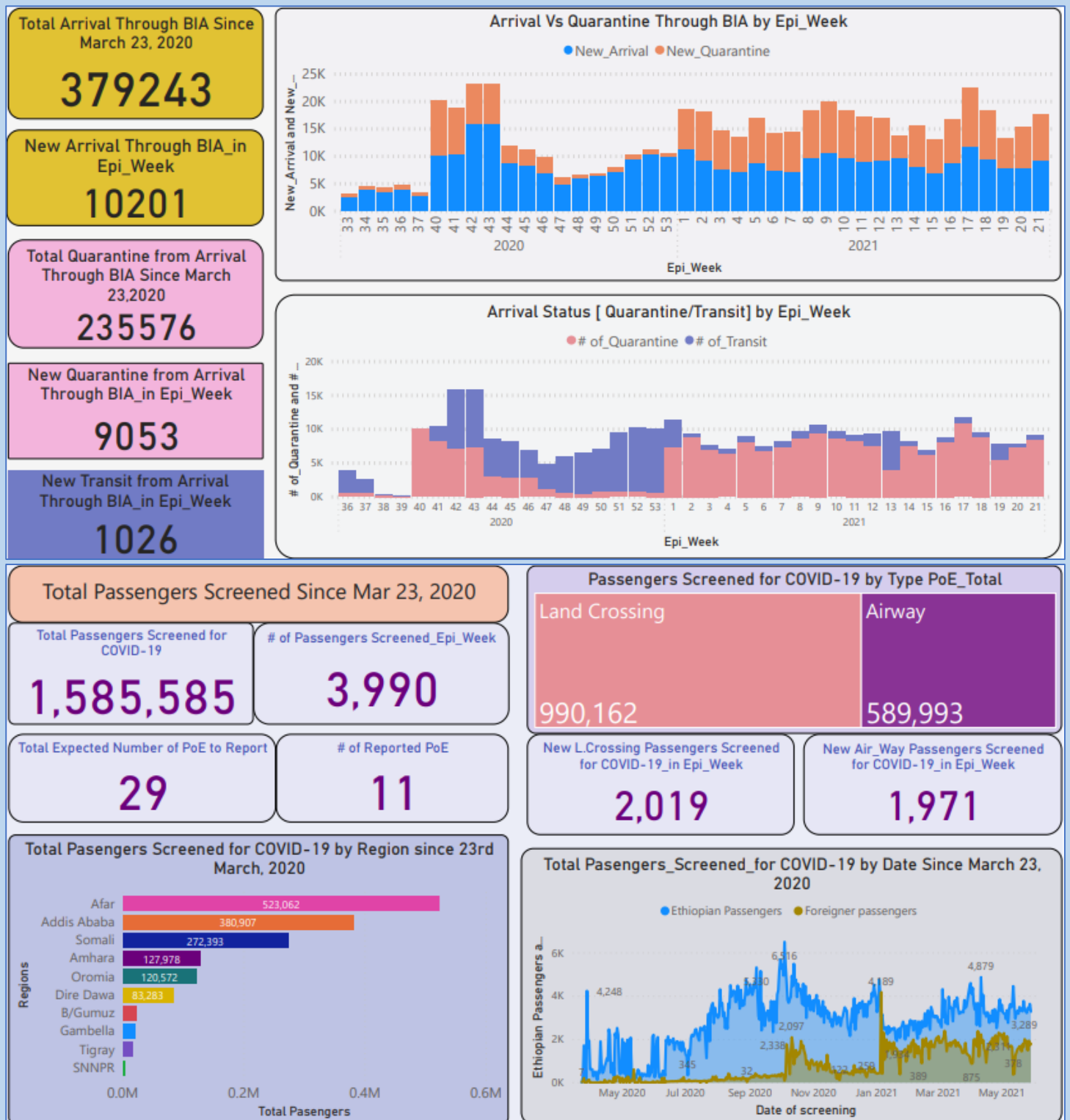


Fig. 10: Summary of Passengers screening for COVID-19 as of May 30, 2021, Ethiopia.

IV. Laboratory related activities

- As of 30 May 2021, a total of 2,720,495 samples have been tested for COVID-19 by laboratories across the country.
- 33,361 laboratory tests were processed during the Epi-Week-21 which is a 4% decrease compared to number of tests performed in the previous week.
- The laboratory test positivity rate for the Epi-Week-21 is 6.45%, which is lower than that of the preceding week (8.47%).
- Oromia, Tigray, Dire Dawa and Amhara regional states have reported positivity rates higher than the national weighted average while the positivity rate in Addis Ababa has showed a decrease (figure 12 below). This shows that the COVID-19 epidemic has got high spread to regions.
- COVID-19 Antigen Rapid Diagnostic Test (Ag-RDT) is also started and being used nationally. A total of 7,821 laboratory tests are performed by Ag-RDT among which 1,207 is performed in the Epi-week-21 (figure 11 below).

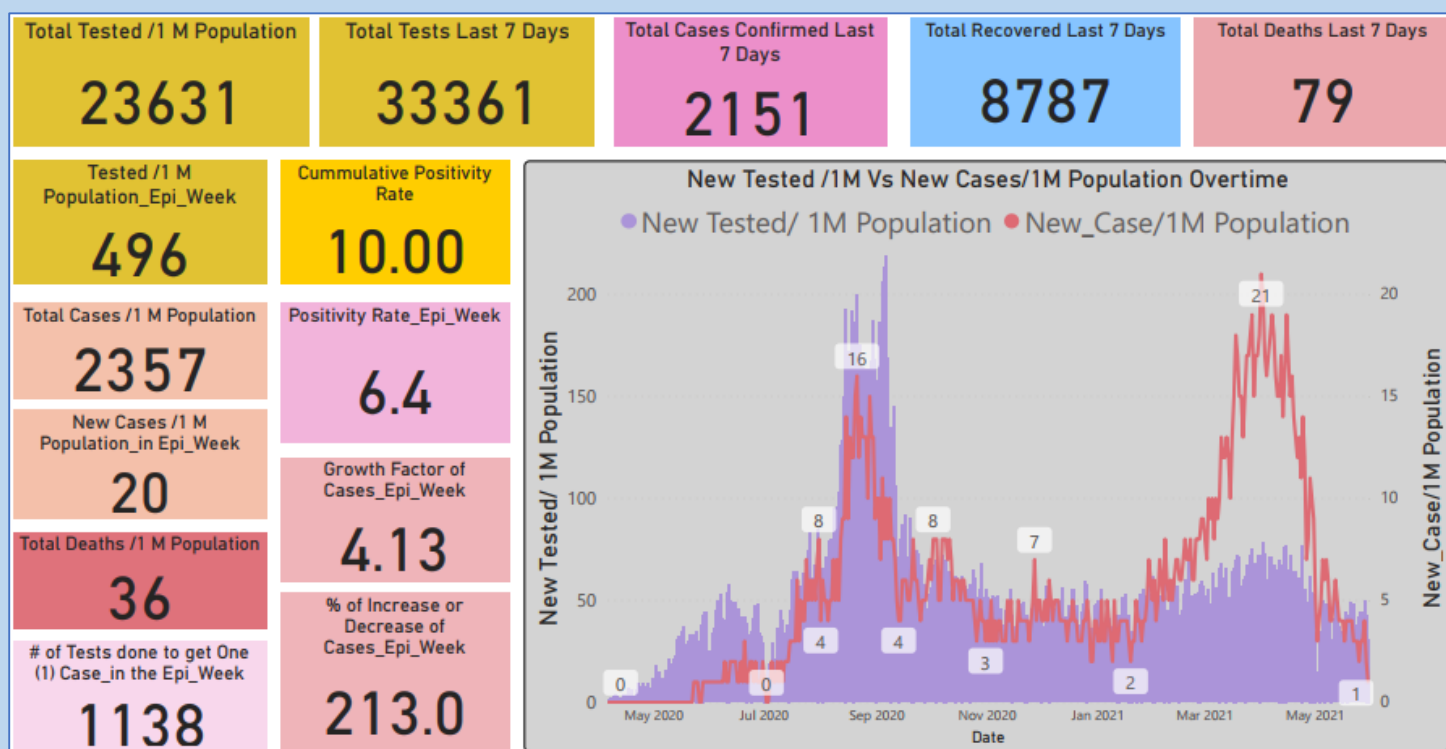
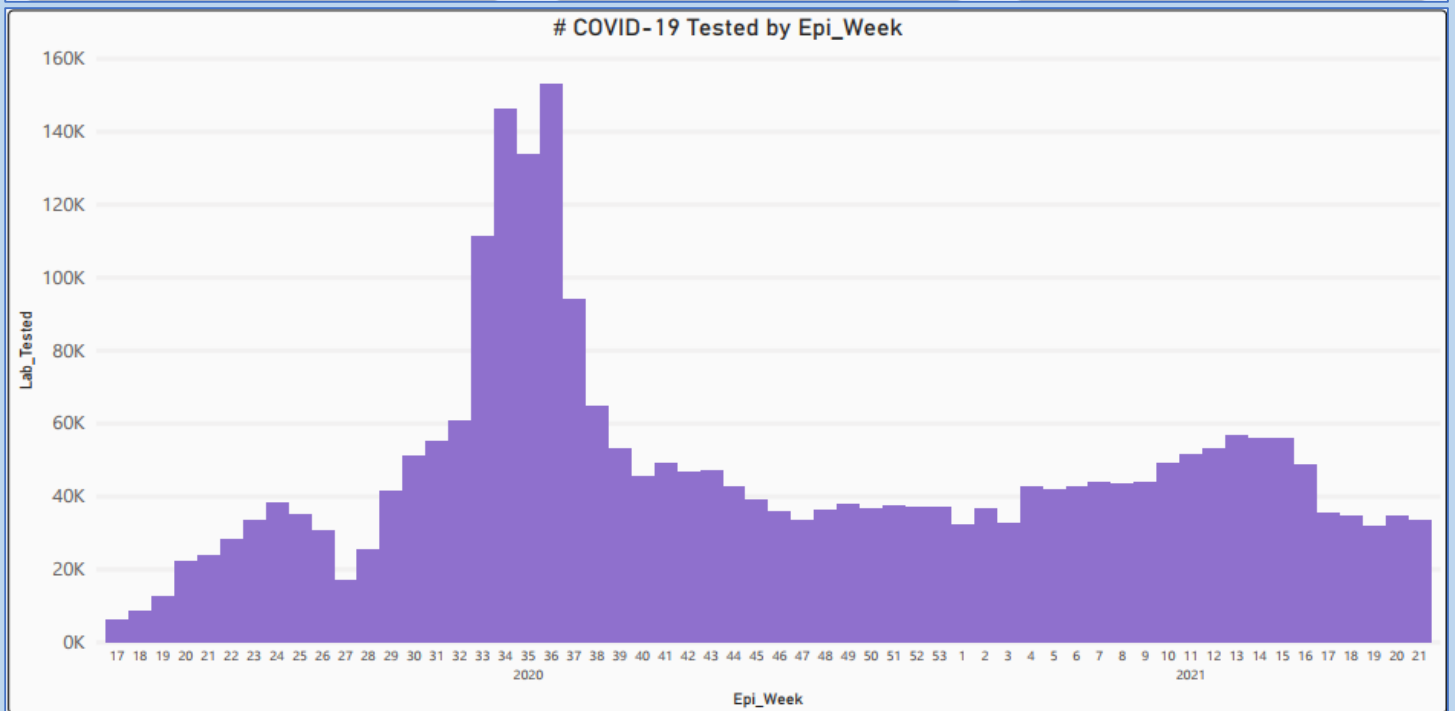
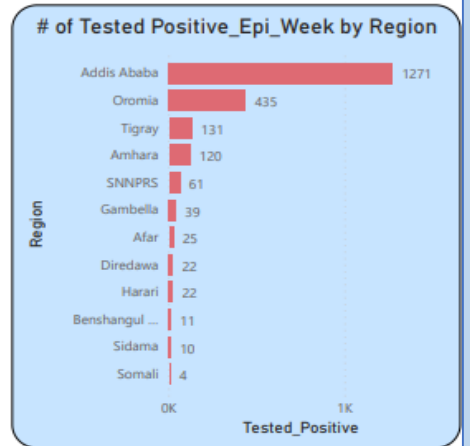
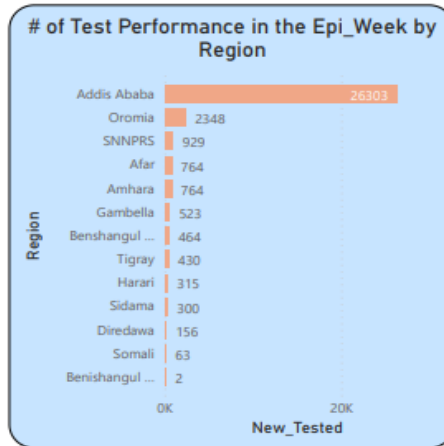
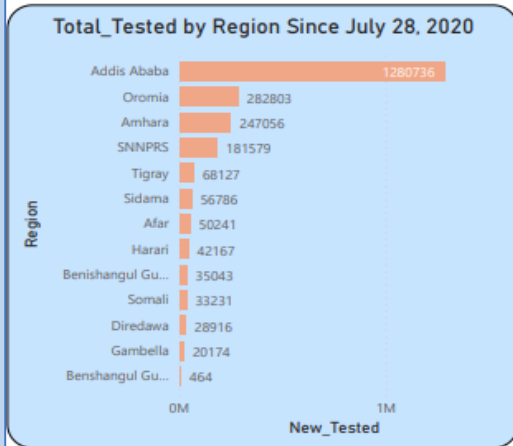
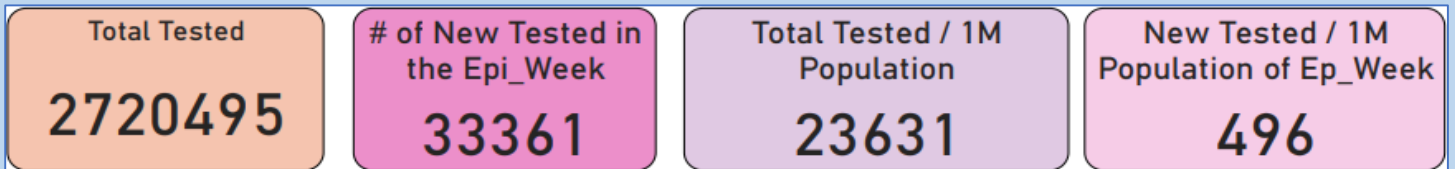


Fig. 11: Update on laboratory tests performed by Ag-RDT, as of May 30, 2021



Region/City Admn	New_Tested	Tested_Positive	New_Deaths	Positivity_Rate
Addis Ababa	26303	1271	50	4.76
Oromia	2348	435	15	24.36
SNNPRS	929	61	2	6.23
Afar	764	25	0	3.11
Amhara	764	120	2	13.24
Gambella	523	39	1	7.63
Benshangul Gumz	464	11	0	0.85
Tigray	430	131	2	23.79
Harari	315	22	4	6.41
Sidama	300	10	1	3.00
Diredawa	156	22	2	14.87
Somali	63	4	0	5.75
Benishangul Gumuz	2	0	0	0.00
Total	33361	2151	79	9.90

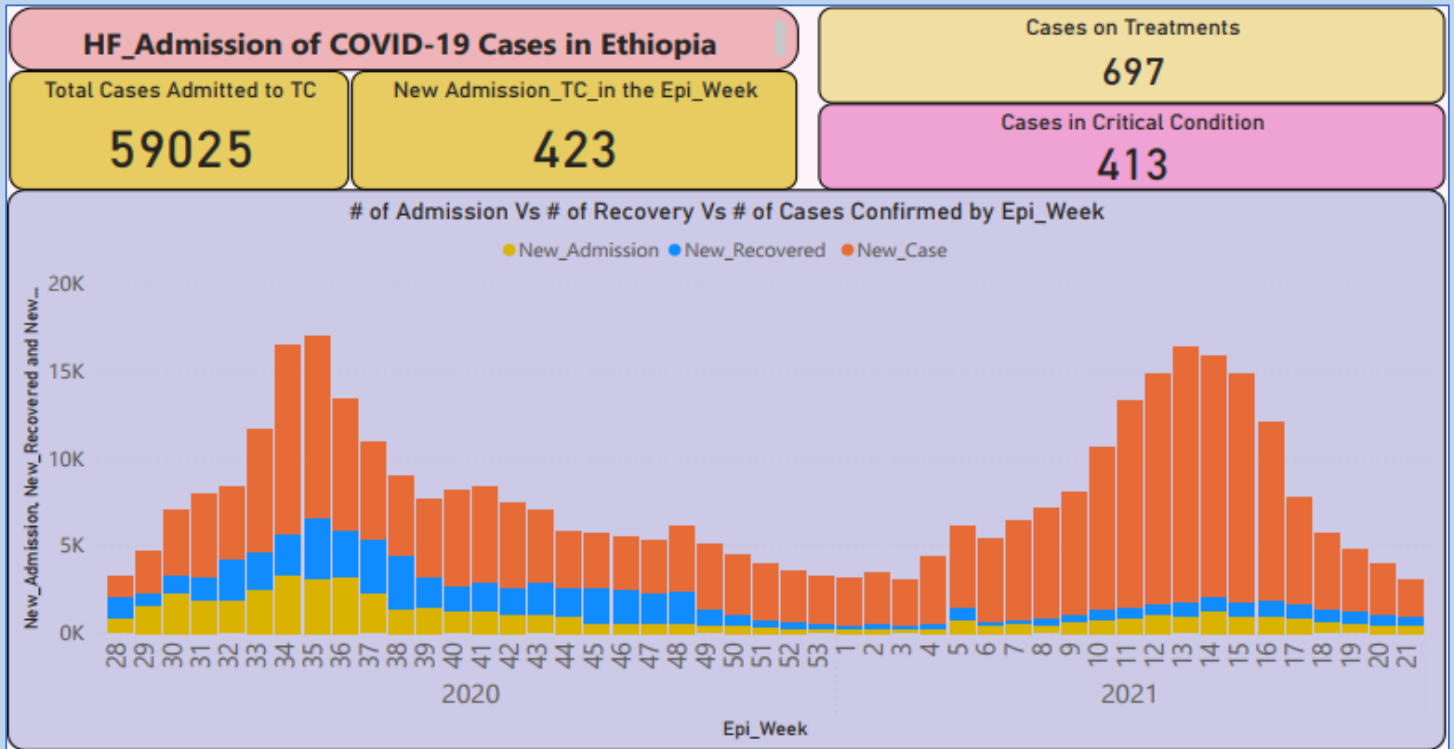
***** Positivity Rate is average of Regional Distrn of Rates

Fig. 12: Summary of COVID-19 laboratory testing as of March May 30, 2021, Ethiopia.

V. Case Management and Facility Readiness

a. COVID-19 treatment center

- There were total of 8,787 newly recovered COVID-19 cases during the Epi-Week-21, bringing the total number of recovered cases to 237,544 (both from COVID-19 treatment center and from HBIC).
- The highest number of daily cases in severe condition reported in this week is 485.



HF=Health Facilities TC=Treatment Center

Fig. 13: Summary of COVID-19 cases in Health Facilities/Treatment centers, as of May 30, 2021.

- 45.8% of the COVID-19 related facility deaths occurred in age greater 64. This indicates that as the patient becomes elder there comes high probability of death due to COVID-19 (see figure 14 below).

Age_Group	# of Confirmed cases admitted to TC	# of COVID-19 patients discharged from Facility	# of Facility Deaths
65 - 74	4364	3098	990
55 - 64	5669	4563	854
75 - 84	2020	1312	561
45 - 54	6716	5998	512
35 - 44	9255	8668	400
85 +	741	378	338
25 - 34	16434	15963	265
15 - 24	12354	12088	129
0 - 4	838	775	37
5 - 14	1277	1213	37
Total	59668	54056	4123

Fig. 14: Summary of COVID-19 patients' update based on age group as of May 30, 2021, Ethiopia.

b. Home Based Isolation and Care (HBIC):

- So far, 189,906 COVID-19 confirmed cases have been on HBIC. Of them 183,585 (96.67%) have recovered and 32 (0.017%) died.
- Of these, 4,721 cases have been enrolled to HBIC and 8,305 cases have recovered in the Epi-Week-21.
- As of May 30, 2021, there are 7,895 cases on HBIC.
- So far, 2,183 (12 of them in the Epi-Week-21) of the cases have been transferred from treatment centers to HBIC after improvement.
- So far, 849 (3 of them in the Epi-week-21) of the cases have been transferred from HBIC to treatment centers for better care.

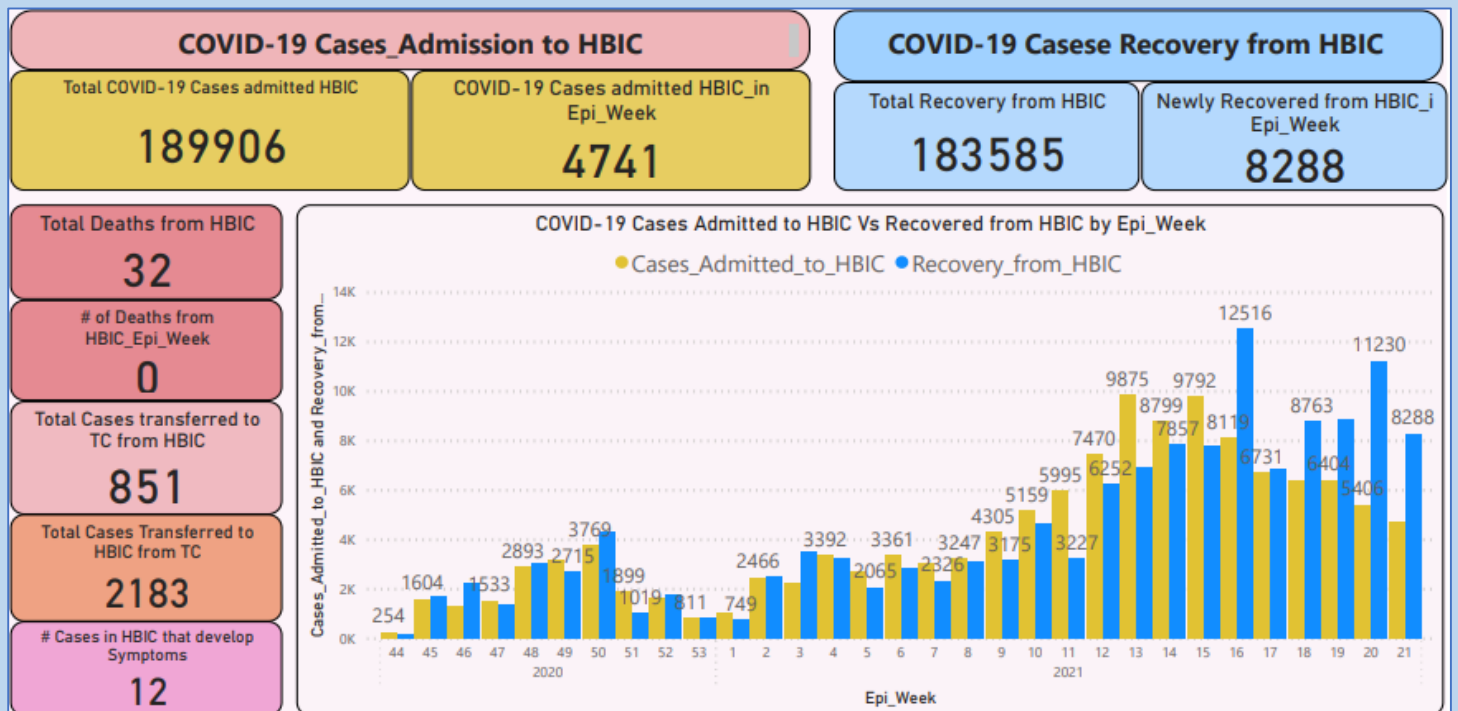


Fig. 15: Summary of COVID-19 Home Based Isolation and Care in Ethiopia, as of May 30, 2021.

VI. Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)

- Media (mass media and social media) monitoring on COVID-19 related information is ongoing.
- COVID-19 related key messages and updates shared on social media.



Fig. 16: COVID-19 situation update as of May 23, 2021 shared on social media.

I. Coordination and Leadership

- The national PHEOC is collaboratively working with stakeholders: government agencies, partner organizations, UN agencies, embassies, hospitals, Industrial parks and others.
- Morning briefing of IMS is being conducted every day by core IMS staffs and key partners' representatives.
- Weekly leadership and strategic virtual meeting, chaired by the H.E MOH Minister, is being conducted to oversee and guide the response efforts.
- Weekly joint meeting is started (every Monday) among the national and regional Emergency Operations Centers to evaluate weekly situations and challenges faced.
- There is also a weekly Joint Steering Committee virtual meeting under the leadership of H.E Minister of Health.

II. Challenges and Way Forward

a. Challenges

- Happenings of super spreading events-Mass gatherings with poor physical distancing and facemask use which exacerbates the spread of COVID-19.
- Poor adherence to the public health and social measures by public figures and leaders.
- Poor attention given to COVID-19 at all levels by all responsible bodies in particular at subnational level.
- Weak law enforcement efforts to enhance adherence to COVID-19 prevention and control measures.
- Low stock status of personal protective equipment and laboratory supplies.
- COVID-19 vaccine related misinformation and hesitancy.
- Low utilization of Antigen RDT kits by facilities despite distribution to all regions and capacity building activities.

b. Way Forward

- Enhancing law enforcement to enhance public health and social measures by all responsible bodies.
- Continuing the COVID-19 vaccination.
- Genomic surveillance strengthening and networking.
- COVID-19 preparedness and response plan revision subnational level.
- Intensify risk communication and community engagement activities.
- Strengthen collaboration and coordination with key stakeholders and partners.
- Advocate and strengthen Home Based Isolation and Care (HBIC).
- Conduct intensive testing of high-risk population group and contacts of confirmed cases for COVID-19.

- Enhance technical support, coordination and timely and accurate information sharing at all levels.
- Enhance active surveillance for COVID-19 such as house-to-house case search and detection in the community.
- Intensification of a capacity building trainings and orientation including through virtual/online platforms.
- Strengthen and sustain other essential health services besides COVID-19.
- Follow up and performance report on Antigen Rapid Diagnostic Test Kits from regional COVID-19 testing sites.

III. COVID-19 Related News:

- World Health Organization approves China's Sinovac Covid-19 vaccine for emergency use. It is the second Chinese vaccine given WHO approval after Sinopharm was approved in early May. : <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/06/01/health/who-approves-sinovac-covid-vaccine-intl-hnk/index.html>
- Interest in vaccinations increased after CDC announced new mask guidance. Data obtained exclusively by CNN shows that interest in getting vaccinated against Covid-19 increased right after Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, announced two weeks ago that vaccinated people could take off their masks. : <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/05/27/health/vaccination-interest-cdc-mask-guidance/index.html>
- Masks, distancing still important even with vaccination, study suggests. Even with a majority of the population vaccinated, the removal of pandemic precautions could lead to an increase in virus spread, the researchers reported in the medical journal [JAMA Network Open](https://www.jama-network.com). : <https://edition.cnn.com/2021/06/01/health/pandemic-precautions-vaccination-impact/index.html>
- Russia starts vaccinating animals. In March, Russia announced it had registered what it said was the world's first animal-specific jab. Several regions have now started vaccinations at veterinary clinics, Russia's veterinary watchdog, Rosselkhoznadzor, told local media.: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-57259961>
- A single-dose Covid vaccine made by Janssen has been approved for use in the UK by the medicines regulator. The vaccine was 85% effective in stopping severe illness from Covid-19 in trials and has met expected safety standards.: <https://www.bbc.com/news/health-57283837>
- The EU's medicines agency (EMA) has approved the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine for 12-15 year olds - the first jab allowed for this age group in the bloc. Individual member states must now decide if they will offer the jab to children. German leaders gave the green light on Thursday. The US and Canada approved the Pfizer jab for adolescents earlier this month. :<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-57287755>

IV. Public Health Policy Recommendation

Advice for the Public:

- For any individual confirmed to have COVID-19 and who is candidate for Home Based Isolation and Care:
 - Properly isolate from other family members.
 - Take full responsibility in prevention of transmission
 - Strictly adhere to the National Directive of Home-Based Isolation & Care.
 - Provide reliable information during regular follow up either by phone or home visit.
 - Report to nearest health facilities/follow up team in case of any emergency, appearance of new symptoms or worsening of existing symptoms.
- It is important to be informed of the situation and act appropriately to protect yourself and your family.
 - Wash hands frequently
 - Don't touch your mouth, nose or eye by unwashed hands
 - Keep physical distancing; avoid mass gathering and shaking hands.
- For most people, COVID-19 infection will cause mild illness however, it can make some people very ill and, in some people, it can be fatal.
- Older people, and those with pre-existing medical conditions (such as cardiovascular disease, chronic respiratory disease or diabetes) are at risk for severe disease.
- If anybody had contact with a COVID-19 confirmed patient, he/she should call 8335 or 952 or report to regional toll-free lines or to the nearby health facilities.

National/Regional official websites, social media pages and toll-free hotline for COVID-19 information

MOH/EPHI/Region	Facebook page	Toll-free hotline
Ethiopian Public Health Institute Main Website	https://www.ephi.gov.et/	8335/952
Ethiopian Public Health Institute COVID-19 Website	https://covid19.ephi.gov.et/	
Ethiopian Public Health Institute Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/ephipage/	
Ethiopian Public Health Institute Twitter Page	https://twitter.com/EPHIEthiopia	
Ethiopian Public Health Institute Telegram Channel	https://t.me/EthPHI	
Ethiopian Public Health Institute YouTube Channel	https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCvvTzeY-IJiQfEFBULH9Mkw	
Ministry of Health, Ethiopia Website	www.moh.gov.et	952
Ministry of Health, Ethiopia Facebook Page	https://www.facebook.com/EthiopiaFMoH/	
Afar Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/afarrhb.org/	6220
Amhara Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/Amhara-Healthbureau-682065755146948/	6981

Benishangul Gumuz Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/Benishangul-Gumuz-Health-Bureau-1676282159265517/	6016
Gambela Regional Health Bureau	https://fb.me/gambellaregionhealthbureau	6184
Harari Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/Harari-Regional-Health-Bureau-1464182130355007/	6864
Oromia Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/OromiaHealth/	6955
Somali Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/srhbdotcom/...	6599
SNNP Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/snnprhealthbureau/?ref=br_rs	6929
Tigray Regional Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/tigrayrhb/	6244
Dire Dawa city Administration Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/Dire-Dawa-Administration-Health-Bureau-1371606266279524/	6407
Addis Ababa City Administration Health Bureau	https://www.facebook.com/aahb.gov.et/	6406

COVID-19 updates and sources of evidence:

Source	Link
WHO Coronavirus (COVID-19) dashboard	https://covid19.who.int/
Africa CDC Dashboard, COVID-19 Surveillance Dashboard	https://au.int/en/covid19
WHO COVID-19 daily situation reports	https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports
WHO Academy mobile learning app for health workers, COVID-19 information	Android- https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.who.WHOA Apple- https://apps.apple.com/us/app/who-academy/id1506019873

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Call-Centers
FOR MORE INFO and
ALERT NOTIFICATION on
COVID-19



The above presented Quick Reader (QR) code takes you to a portal that you can access updates and all COVID-19 related information available (<https://covid19.ephi.gov.et/covid-19/>)

DISCLAIMER

This weekly bulletin is produced based on figures pulled from official releases of the World Health Organization and activities and reports of all the sections under the Incident management System.

This Weekly Bulletin series of publications is published by the Ethiopian public health Institute (EPHI), public health emergency operation center (PHEOC). The aim of this bulletin is to inform decision makers within the institute and FMOH, UN agencies and NGOs about COVID-19 preparedness and response activities. All interested health and other professionals can get this bulletin at the Institute website; www.ephi.gov.et

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