



**MINISTRY OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
FEDERAL GOVERNMENT OF SOMALIA**
بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

108,000 doses of COVID-19 vaccines donated by France arrive in Somalia

Mogadishu, 08 August 2021 – Today, 108,000 doses of the Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine arrived in Somalia. The vaccines were donated by the Government of France through the COVAX Facility, a partnership between the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO), in continued efforts to protect Somalia’s population from COVID-19.

“The Government of France is committed, along with the EU and COVAX partners, to help Somalia bolster vaccination efforts so that additional frontline workers and other high-risk populations in Somalia can be protected from COVID-19,” said Aline Kuster-Menager, the French Ambassador to Somalia. “This donation is part of a global effort from France: President Macron has pledged to give 60 million doses of the vaccine before the end of 2021. This is a global pandemic and France is committed to ensuring the equitable distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine around the world. If we are to contain the spread of COVID-19, we have to work together.”

Since the outbreak began on March 2020, Somalia has reported a total of **15,735** laboratory-confirmed cases of COVID-19 including **837** deaths as of 24 July 2021. Owing to low vaccination coverage in the country where less than 1.8% of the country’s population are fully vaccinated, the country faces the dual challenge of improving the uptake amongst its general population as well as to ensure an equitable and predictable supply of COVID-19 vaccines to support an effective rollout of mass vaccination.

“The arrival of this new batch of COVID-19 vaccines comes at a critical time, as cases in Somalia are on the rise,” said HE Dr Fawziya Abikar Nur, Somalia’s Federal Minister of Health and Human Services. “The only way to stop the spread of the virus is to get the population vaccinated. We are grateful for this latest donation from the Government of France and I call on all those eligible to get vaccinated.”

Somalia will continue to prioritize frontline health and other essential workers, the elderly, and people with chronic health conditions in this next phase of the roll out of the

COVID-19 vaccine. To date, an estimated 186,094 people in Somalia have received their first dose of the vaccine and 92,792 have received their second.

“We appreciate the commitment of the French Government to ensure the equitable delivery of COVID-19 vaccines by providing much needed doses to Somalia,” said Mohamed Ayoya, UNICEF Somalia Representative. “This timely support will be critical in increasing the number of people vaccinated against COVID-19, particularly the health workers so they can continue to provide essential health care for Somali children and their families.”

WHO and UNICEF will continue to support the Ministry of Health to ensure the safe and equitable distribution of the vaccines through the management of cold chain systems and in the training of vaccinators and the monitoring of vaccine utilization? Efforts will also continue to promote the safety and uptake of the COVID-19 vaccine.

“If we can end the pandemic in Somalia, we can end it everywhere. The country’s fragile health system, high number of its population, especially the high-risk people, still to be vaccinated can make the virus more transmissible and we risk emergence of a new variant of the virus in the country if we cannot roll out the vaccination programme against COVID-19 with speed and scale. The vaccines against the COVID-19 are remarkably safe and effective. These are our only hopes to end the pandemic from Somalia and elsewhere,” said Dr Mamunur Rahman Malik, WHO Representative to Somalia. “We remain thankful to the Government of France for their kind support in providing these vaccines for the people of Somalia.”

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