



BCMUN

British Columbia Model United Nations 2023

Directors Letter

Dear Delegates,

My name is Tyler Sun, and I am distinctly honored to serve as your Director for the World Health Organization (WHO) at BCMUN 2023. This year, our committee doors are open to all skill levels of debaters; whether a first conference or second last—all are welcome. As you plunge into the landscape of cooperation to resolve the burdening encumbrance of the COVID-19 pandemic, be eager to posit your ideas in an open space for blunders.

As a committee, we will work together on the issue of COVID-19—where it came from and how it affected people globally; I highly encourage delegates to conduct thorough research, analyzing the topic from multiple perspectives: ordinary citizens, international governments, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and charities.

An entry-level committee for beginner delegates, WHO serves as a breeding ground for fledgling novices to discover their debating potential and foster their interests in the rigorous extracurricular of Model United Nations. Delegates are promised an exciting two-day session of continuous deliberation over one of the most pressing events in contemporary history, developing lifelong interpersonal relationships and honing their skills.

However, this promise cannot be fulfilled without my Chair, Michael Weng. The two of us look forward to meeting everyone as we approach this memorable iteration of BCMUN, and we wish you all the best of luck in your preparation for this conference.

Sincerely,
Tyler Sun
Director of WHO

Committee Overview

The World Health Organization (WHO) was founded on April 7th, 1948, during the founding Conference of the United Nations (UN) held in San Francisco. At that conference, the representatives of the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Republic of China proposed that an organization focusing mainly on international health should be established.¹ On February 15, 1946, the Economic and Social Council of the UN instructed the Secretary-General to convene such a conference. After months of preparation, WHO's Constitution came into force on April 7th, 1948 – a date we now celebrate every year as World Health Day.² 74 years later, the efforts of these diplomats have created connections between citizens and nations in the promotion of public health worldwide.³ With 194 member states, the World Health Organization considers and supports the agendas of all countries.⁴ The World Health Organization makes international healthcare possible for countries all around the globe through its advocacy and involvement for more robust and more accessible healthcare systems.⁵ Its primary goals are to ensure that anyone can more easily access healthcare systems from anywhere, and to raise the standards of healthcare worldwide, with some of their main goals outlined here:

1. *Focus on primary healthcare worldwide*
2. *Prepare for emergencies by identifying, mitigating, and managing risks*
3. *Prioritize health in all policies*
4. *Promoting mental health awareness*

The World Health Organization's main role in the United Nations is to discuss, suggest, and create more international health policies.⁶ Their main focus is related to reforming healthcare systems, improving healthcare in developing countries, and creating a sustainable international healthcare system for the world at large.⁷ The World Health Organization's budget for the 2020-2021 goal was around \$5.8 billion, with about 17% coming from mandatory dues paid by member states: the rest is made up by voluntary donations from governments and private partners.⁸ Recently, some of the top donors have been the United States, the United Kingdom, and the *Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation*.⁹ Some things that the World Health Organization has accomplished in the past include: the eradication of smallpox, framework convention on Tobacco Control, and controlling SARS.¹⁰ These are just some of the achievements that the WHO has made in the past, and the WHO is also facing many challenges in the midst of this global pandemic.¹¹ Some actions that the WHO is currently undertaking include: battling COVID-19, which is our topic, expanding local pharmaceutical manufacturing, and combating drug usage worldwide.¹² With the increase of public health crises and growing socioeconomic inequality, the World Health Organization continues to play a major role in the United Nations, coordinating and ensuring the health of citizens all around the globe.

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Topic Introduction

The novel Coronavirus disease first identified in 2019 was caused by the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), a virus that when contracted by humans, led

to the development of respiratory illnesses or flu-like symptoms. In the beginning, it was widely believed that COVID-19 emerged at the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market in Wuhan, China, where an epidemic was already brewing amidst times of normalcy, due to unsanitary conditions at the Market. However, this initial outbreak rapidly deteriorated as COVID-19 was no longer an epidemic, but a pandemic. As the pandemic progressed and the ramifications of COVID-19 began to make themselves felt on the rest of the world, the United States accused China of either an accidental leak or deliberate attack from the Wuhan Institute of Virology (WIV), barely 10 kilometers away from the Seafood Market which was originally thought to be the place of origin. In turn, China accused the U.S. of leaking the virus, from an army base lab in Frederick, Maryland. Initially, neither of these accusations had evidence supporting them, and were just another example of a political food fight. But as the timeline of the virus progressed, more evidence started coming to light about a possible leak from the WIV, as they were pursuing Gain-of-Function research at the time of the virus' emergence, which the U.S. NIAID under Dr. Anthony Fauci may have helped fund. Gain-of-Function research is a process whereby laboratory researchers add genetic modifications to an organism that increase its biological functions, such as host ranges, pathogenesis, transmissibility, and efficiency. Regardless, there is still no scientific or general consensus on the origins of COVID-19.

Understanding the origin of COVID-19 is imperative in tackling the greatest and most impactful pandemic of the last 100 years. This is because in the future, scientists can set limits on gain of function and other potentially dangerous avenues of scientific research, increase public awareness on such matters as future pandemics, increase medical standards in areas where a new pandemic can potentially emerge due to unsanitary conditions, and generally be more prepared for the next pandemic.

Also an important aspect, the implications of COVID-19 have been far and wide; affecting almost every possible economic sector, and every corner of society. Millions of deaths, hundreds of millions of changed lives, immeasurable pain and incomprehensible suffering have all been induced directly and indirectly by the disease known as COVID-19. We must continue to take into consideration the humanitarian aspect of this disease while we debate its origins and potential solutions.

COVID-19 has made resurgences multiple times—both in cases and deaths, largely due to how the world reacts when the pandemic dwindles in severity and concern for governments and citizens. With the pandemic marking its 3rd year of existence, there must be an agreement on implementing strategic adjustments to end global prolonged struggles with the disease.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/science/about-epidemiology/identifying-source-outbreak.html>
<https://publichealth.jhu.edu/2022/origins-of-sars-cov-2>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hep/non-us-settings/overview/index.html>

Topic History

First reported in December 2019 in the city of Wuhan, China, the novel Coronavirus disease began as a localized epidemic that quickly spread to all corners of the world—exposing a flurry of flu-like symptoms to the human population, where subsequent cases took major headlines by storm, alerting the world of its danger. These cases mostly culminated in the cumulative spate of deaths that befell the epicenters of Wuhan, South Korea, Italy, and the United States of America. Even in the short period of time that it has befallen this world, the COVID-19 pandemic instigated a global upheaval of day-to-day life by derailing world economies and social order—creating prolonged challenges of detriment that remain even two years later.

Despite initial reports of global carnage and recession, there was still light at the end of the tunnel. On November 9th, 2020, Pfizer Inc. issued a statement in which they announced the successful test of their COVID-19 vaccine, providing a significant morale boost for the world, and assuring us that the return of normalcy was not far off. This was a significant development, as this was the first globally distributed COVID vaccine, and was a major scientific achievement as vaccines were expected to take multiple years and even decades to develop, but this vaccine defied all odds and completed all the necessary tests within 9 months. This positive news was swiftly followed by other pharmaceutical corporations such as Moderna, AstraZeneca, Johnson & Johnson declaring the success of their own vaccines.¹³ Shortly after, on December 11, 2020, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of America recommended the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for all individuals ages 16 or older to prevent the contraction of the disease.¹⁴ This response was shared by the Trump Administration of the United States as they purchased 100 million additional doses of the Pfizer vaccine, while ratifying the second COVID-19 Relief Act that included \$900 billion in funding for enhanced unemployment benefits, business loans, the purchase and distribution of vaccines and testing kits, and direct cash payments of \$600 USD for people in need.¹⁵ Three days later, the one year anniversary of the first reported case to WHO came, on December 31, 2020.

Moreover, the scientific achievements of the vaccines began to make their impact, as the world began to see a decrease in the number of reported cases on January 11, 2021, a sign that a global recovery from the pandemic was now set to start.¹⁶ Yet despite the successful rollout of the vaccines and its positive impact, the new year also had its downsides, as pharmaceutical companies and manufacturers simply could not keep up with the high demand of vaccines, which lead to vaccine shortages, as companies looked to ramp up production in a quick and efficient manner.

In 2021, the world experienced more pain and more suffering, as we surpassed many grave milestones: 2 million deaths with COVID, 100 million COVID cases, 5 million deaths with COVID, and 200 million COVID cases. 2021 also marked many other important events: The

WHO declares the Delta Variant of Coronavirus to be a Variant of Concern on 11 May 2021, and subsequently declares the Omicron Variant of Coronavirus to also be a Variant of Concern on 26 November 2021. The Delta Variant will be significantly more infectious and deadly than the Alpha (original) strain, contributing to 2021 being a more deadly year than 2020 in terms of overall deaths. The Omicron Variant will mark a turning point in variants, as it is highly (140x Alpha) infectious, but its lethality is severely reduced. This marks the start of a trend whereby variants increase in transmissibility, but decrease in overall deadliness, helping the globe to achieve herd immunity. Variants were not the only major event that happened in 2021: Many countries opened vaccination programs for their citizens, and certain countries even offered them to refugees. In March of 2021, WHO released a report outlining the possible origins for the COVID virus, where they did not find any substantive evidence positively determining the origin, but ruled natural transmission at the Wuhan Seafood Market to be the most likely point of origin. This was further corroborated by a report from US intelligence agencies, which ruled out neither option. Finally, 2021 was also the year in which global inflation rates began to increase substantially, as governments now had to deal with the consequences of their own actions. As national governments had previously printed tens of trillions of dollars to keep people paid and businesses afloat, this extra money in a heated economy ultimately led to a circular cycle of inflation, which continues to the present day, impacting major economies such that of the United States, the European Union, and Canada.

2022 marked a steep decline in the interest and relevance of COVID-19, as many people perceived COVID as having ended. Citizens in almost every country launched protests against policies they perceived to be draconian, or otherwise unnecessary. Some of these more noteworthy protests include the Canadian Truckers' Protest in Ottawa, Canada, the Dutch Farmers' Rebellion in the Netherlands, and nationwide protests against severely restrictive policies in the People's Republic of China. In 2022, people also became more skeptical of the origins of coronavirus, as people began wondering where this entire catastrophe had originated from, with more and more evidence pointing to an accidental leak from the Wuhan Institute of Virology, as it emerged that COVID cases which required medical care were detected there in November of 2019, raising questions about the credibility of WHO.

The pandemic also drastically changed the lives of normal citizens, and society as a whole. Students, schools, and teachers changed from attending traditional in-person classes, instead using online classes on Zoom and other video sharing services, to continue learning knowledge. In the offices, workers also adapted from their in-person working spaces to online, work-from-home solutions, as local and federal governments instituted lockdowns and quarantines for the populous at large. People around the world lacked the physical interaction and interpersonal relationships that was required for a mentally healthy society, which in turn led to a spike of mental illness, depression, and suicide. During the two year battle with COVID-19's indirect effects, 12,746 suicide attempts and 33,345 suicide cases were estimated to have been

made from 18 studies. Society was truly troubled by the pandemic, as people were unable to extricate themselves from the pits of loneliness and depression.

Throughout the remainder of 2021 and 2022, the world continued to witness milestones being achieved by governments and the scientific community in humanity's fight against COVID-19. The pandemic as well, was punctuated by rise and fall in the number of cases and deaths, reminding the world that the disappearance of the disease is contingent on global perceptions of danger, and eagerness to eradicate the most pressing event of the 21st century.

<https://covid19.who.int/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/museum/timeline/covid19.html#Mid-2021>

<https://bmepsyiatry.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12888-022-04158-w>

<https://www.ajmc.com/view/a-timeline-of-covid-19-vaccine-developments-in-2021>

Timeline

December 8th, 2019 – The first patients of a new mystery illness develop symptoms in Wuhan, China. This marks the beginning of the SARS CoV-2 outbreak/pandemic, which will significantly derail global economies and politics.

December 31st, 2019 – China alerts the World Health Organisation's China Country Office of a new mystery illness, which resembles severe pneumonia at first. This mystery illness is detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. WHO immediately requests additional information from local and national authorities to assess the risk

January 9th, 2020 – The first death from the newly identified SARS CoV-2 is announced by Chinese authorities

March 13, 2020 – The first nationwide lockdown to combat the SARS coronavirus is implemented in Albania, and lasts until June 1st, 2020. Throughout the pandemic, lockdowns remain controversial, as experts and citizens debate their effectiveness, economic impacts, and political negatives.

March 2020 – First Mask Mandate outside of China is introduced by Venezuela, quickly followed by other countries

April 2nd, 2020 – Worldwide cases of COVID-19 surpass 1M, the first grim milestone of the pandemic

September 28th, 2020 – The globe officially surpasses a grand total of 1 million deaths from coronavirus. It will eventually grow to be the deadliest pandemic since the Spanish Flu of 1918, with over 6.6M deaths as of December 2022. The winters of 2020 and 2021 in particular will produce many deaths globally to contribute to this number.

November 9th, 2020 – Pfizer Inc. announces via press release that it has manufactured a coronavirus vaccine that has achieved upwards of 90% efficacy in preventing COVID-19 in patients. Widely hailed as a scientific breakthrough, they are quickly followed by Moderna Inc. and Johnson & Johnson.

December 2020 – Reports emerge in India that a new variant of coronavirus, the Delta Variant, has emerged. This variant had a higher rate of transmission, and a higher rate of

fatality among people it infected, contributing to the winter spike in COVID fatalities. A pattern of increasingly infectious and less deadly variants emerges

December 24th, 2020 – Ecuador becomes the first country in the world to introduce a nationwide vaccine mandate for people above the age of 5, to be followed by other countries. Citizens across the world debate the efficacy and morality of these mandates

March 30th, 2021 – World Health Organisation releases a report outlining possibilities for the origin of the coronavirus pandemic, reaches conclusion that transmission from animal to human is most likely, almost entirely rules out of question the lab leak theory

October 29th, 2021 – American intelligence agencies release a declassified report declaring that neither the lab leak theory nor animal-to-human transmission can be ruled out

November 1st, 2021 – Worldwide fatalities from coronavirus officially surpass 5M

January 29th, 2022 – The Canadian Truckers protest arrives en masse in Ottawa, demanding an immediate end to vaccine mandates and other COVID-related policies. This is the first in a series of global protests against “draconian” COVID measures, as many see the pandemic as having ended by this point

September 14th, 2022 – WHO Director General Tedros Ghebreyesus officially declares that “the end of the pandemic is in sight”

<https://www.cnbc.com/2020/09/28/a-timeline-of-the-insidious-path-the-coronavirus-took-around-the-world-to-kill-more-than-1-million.html>
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/4/10/global-coronavirus-death-toll-exceeds-100000-live-updates>
<https://www.weforum.org/agenda/2020/04/coronavirus-spread-covid19-pandemic-timeline-milestones/>
<https://www.devex.com/news/covid-19-in-2021-a-timeline-of-the-coronavirus-outbreak-102417>
<https://www.devex.com/news/covid-19-a-timeline-of-the-coronavirus-outbreak-96396>
<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/8/17/which-countries-have-made-wearing-face-masks-compulsory>

Past Actions

The World Health Organisation and the United Nations at large have authored and supported many policies and humanitarian packages that are designed to help the global population, and support global vaccination efforts.¹⁷ Such efforts include declaring COVID-19 a global pandemic in March of 2020, and the UN Comprehensive Response to COVID-19, a package designed to help lawmakers decide what policies to pursue in order to defeat COVID, and how best to go about their implementation.¹⁸ It aims to coordinate the United Nation system to “save lives”, “protect societies”, and “recover better”.¹⁹ The UN also launched a major humanitarian appeal and a \$2 billion coordinated global response plan on 25 March 2020, aiming to aid vulnerable countries and prevent another global resurgence of COVID.²⁰ The World Health Organisation spearheaded the COVID-19 Solidarity Response, which aims to help support WHO missions in preventing future outbreaks, suppressing current outbreaks, and improving coordination in both of these endeavours.^{21, 22} The World Health Organisation also organised the COVAX program alongside its partners in the private and public sectors, which aimed to promote and distribute vaccines in an equitable fashion to all nations. This program has had some considerable success, having delivered 1.4B doses of the COVID vaccine as of April 2022. The World Health Organisation also sent a team of top scientists and epidemiologists to investigate the origins of the coronavirus in the Chinese city of Wuhan, with their report eventually concluding that animal-to-human transmission at the Wuhan Seafood Wholesale Market was the most likely scenario, and that a leak, either accidental or on purpose, from the Wuhan Institute of Virology was highly unlikely. However, it should be noted that this decision was the subject of mixed reviews, and certainly did not improve WHO’s global reputation. In addition, WHO also donated hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), and partnered with major powers in order to ensure that smaller countries also have an adequate amount of PPE for their own healthcare systems.²³ The World Health Organisation also gave advanced warning on COVID-19 to governments, posting daily guidance packages to help governments and citizens make the best decisions for themselves and their countries. The UN at large also launched the UN COVID-19 Supply Chain Task Force, which aimed to provide logistical support for countries struggling with COVID.

Case Study 1: The United States of America

The United States is a prime example of the terrible repercussions and impact that COVID-19 has caused. One of the most powerful countries in the world; all but brought to a halt for more than a year. The United States has suffered terribly, in terms of lives lost, livelihoods impacted, and jobs shuttered, leaving it in the worst economic position it has been in since the Great Recession of 2008, and potentially threatening its geopolitical standing in the world relative to other powers such as the People's Republic of China, and the Russian Federation.

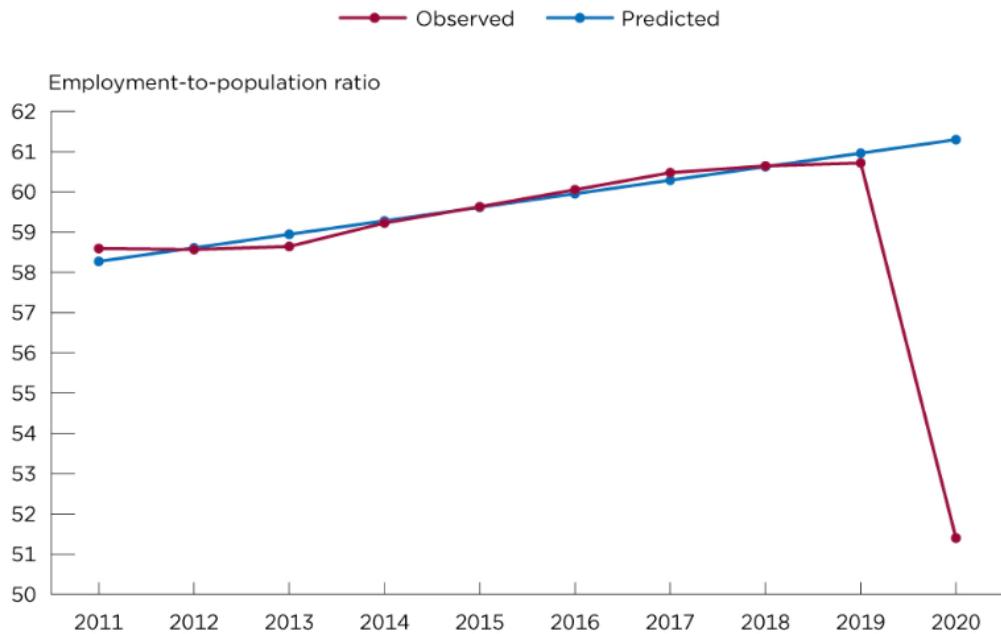
During the height of the outbreak in April of 2020, the United States witnessed an additional 2.4 deaths per 10,000 individuals beyond predictions on historical mortality trends. A 33% increase in all-cause national mortality, the additional deaths were highly concentrated in a few states and demographics of older age groups. The outbreak continued to intensify in the following months when national statistics reported the number of cases across every American state and its four territories to be above 7.7 million. Concurrently, the *New York Times* database corroborated the figure of 213,876 COVID-19 deaths in the United States.²⁴ However, these alarming numbers were also attributed to the economic impact of COVID-19 on the financial conditions of the population.

In the present day, the United States is looking at a death toll that exceeds 1.1 million, an infection count of over 100 million, and heavy economic damage, estimated to be in excess of \$20 trillion. The coronavirus pandemic has struck every industry in America, with the critical automobile, agriculture, airline, and service industries being some of the most affected. For example, it is estimated that the airline industry lost \$252 billion in revenue in 2020, which is corroborated by a 35-51% decline in the stock prices of most major airline companies. Currently, it is being debated whether America has entered a recession, as defined by two quarters of negative economic growth, which official reports help illustrate.

The losses of sentient lives traces a connection to the devastation of the nation's economy. The economic impact of COVID-19 can be measured by the decline of economic activity. In particular, the ratio of employment-to-population as a metric of economic activity is of primary focus, and other metrics such as unemployment rate, percent of population with unemployment insurance claims, consumer purchases, and small business employment are closely tracked as they can foreshadow direct consequences for the financial conditions of normal individuals. To take a prime example, the decline of employment-to-population ratio in the United States in April 2020 was significant. For example, historical trends predicted a 61.3% per ratio, while the actual ratio was 51.5%; meaning the additional national decline was 9.9 per 100 individuals in that month, with fewer people employed than was expected prior to the pandemic. This statistic can be illustrated in the accompanying graph:

Figure 1.

U.S. Share of Population Working Full-time or Part-time: April 2011-2020



Note: Working population 16 and up.

Source: "Initial economic damage from the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States is more widespread across ages and geographies than initial mortality impacts." Maria Polyakova, Geoffrey Kocks, Victoria Udalova, and Amy Finkelstein. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 117, no. 45 (2020): 27934-27939. <www.pnas.org/content/117/45/27934>.

Narratives on Origin Speculation of COVID-19

The American narratives regarding the mystery of COVID-19 origins have experienced a lack of recent developments. But at its climax, former President Donald Trump and his aides promoted the so-called “Wuhan lab-leak theory” amidst a time of intense criticism over his administration’s handling of the outbreak. The last official attempt at figuring out the mysterious origin of COVID was more than a year ago, when a US Intelligence report delivered to the White House was reported to be inconclusive on whether the virus jumped to humans via animals or escaped a highly secure research facility near the Wuhan seafood market. The US Intelligence assessment was the result of President Joe Biden’s directive to “redouble [the intelligence community’s] efforts to untangle the origin mystery”. In spite of this, the 90-day review did not advance the American government’s path to consensus.

Case Study 2: The People's Republic of China

The People's Republic of China understood the potential danger that this new coronavirus could inflict on its people, which is why ever since the beginning of the pandemic, the government has enforced strict policies such as extensive lockdowns, testing, and quarantines to control the spread of the virus. However, while these lockdowns were effective, they were expensive to maintain. For example, in April of this year, recent Purchasing Manager Index (PMI) data for China illustrated that its economy was contracting at its fastest rate since early 2020. Moreover, economic models suggested that a strict lockdown in Shanghai alone could reduce China's real gross domestic product (GDP) by 4% for the duration of the shutdowns. And if the 3 other largest cities in the nation all undergo strict lockdowns simultaneously, the national inflation-adjusted GDP would fall 12%. This economic predicament has forced Beijing and Xi Jinping to carefully decide what their next move should be.

In November of 2022, the incumbent Chinese Communist Party (CCP) promised to reduce disruptions from its “Zero-COVID Strategy” by relaxing existing controls and regulations, due to the recent “White Paper” protests occurring in major cities—over the controversy of COVID-19 protocols’ enabling a fire in a quarantined Xinjiang apartment. As a result, a significant resurgence in the number of cases has forced the government to once again institute strict policies to protect its people, as the level of herd immunity in China is abysmally low compared to other countries in the world such as the United States and Canada. The government closed off populous districts in major cities, and ordered factories to isolate their workforces from outside contact. More than 253,000 cases of COVID-19 were found in the past three weeks with the daily average continuing to rise. Additionally, in contrast with the United States’ approach to curbing the pandemic’s activity, China’s massive population and poor quality of vaccines lay the grounds for the implementation of their “Zero-COVID Strategy”.

Since the start of the outbreak, the “Zero-COVID Strategy” has forced international businesses and expats to exit the Chinese markets. As a result, cities such as Hong Kong are experiencing negative shocks to capital investments and labour forces. In addition, A *European Chamber of Commerce* report from January 2022 predicted that the strategy’s approach to COVID-19 could keep Hong Kong cut off from most of the world until 2024, potentially fueling a mass exodus of businesses, foreign workers and executives from the urban centre’s 700,000 strong-expat community.

Narratives on Origin Speculation of COVID-19

In a spiraling tale of retaliation against American narratives, the Chinese government in early 2020 pushed a theory that the origin of COVID-19 was an American disease, introduced by members of the United States Army who visited Wuhan in October 2019. This was also most likely intended to deflect China's early missteps in quelling the epidemic. Moreover, when the US Intelligence Report became the next hot item of international media in 2021, China issued a series of firm responses defending its innocence, with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Wenbin forcefully denying all allegations. Subsequently, China's permanent representative to the United Nations at Geneva, wrote to the WHO Director General, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, alleging that the labs of Fort Detrick and Northern Carolina University in America should be the subject of investigation instead, pointing fingers at the United States. In 2022, however, there appears to be a clear dissipation of mutual allegations, with both countries doubling down on their claims.

<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/us/>
<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/aug/25/us-intelligence-biden-inconclusive-report-covid-origins-wuhan-lab-animals>
<https://www.thinkglobalhealth.org/article/economic-cost-chinas-lasting-zero-covid-strategy>
<https://www.usglc.org/coronavirus/china/>
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC7762908/#:~:text=COVID%2D19%20is%20killing%20people,died%20in%20the%20United%20States>
<https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2021/03/initial-impact-covid-19-on-united-states-economy-more-widespread-than-on-mortality.html>
<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41598-021-99712-z>
<https://www.ctvnews.ca/world/china-covid-19-cases-and-lockdown-spur-fears-of-global-economic-impact-1.6163348>
<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/13/world/asia/coronavirus-china-conspiracy-theory.html>
<https://finance.yahoo.com/news/10-industries-impacted-most-covid-110042511.html>
<https://www.techrepublic.com/article/top-5-industries-hardest-hit-by-the-pandemic/>
<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2020/11/what-might-covid-cost-the-u-s-experts-eye-16-trillion/>

Current Situation

The COVID-19 pandemic still remains far from eradication. Despite being a relative backwater to other major events such as the Russo-Ukrainian conflict and the global inflation crisis, variants such as Omicron and its sub-lineages are of considered interest, as it increases the overall transmissibility and virulence of the virus, while decreasing the effectiveness of public health measures against the disease. As of December 13, 2022, major regions of the world such as Asia, Africa and North America have ostensibly re-entered the dormant period of pandemic activity, while Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) had reported 99,419 cases—an increase of 874% compared to the totals just a week prior.²⁴ Comparing this statistic globally, the rest of the world saw 724,959 cases reported on the same day, but that represented a downward trend from last week's average. See a graph representing the LAC's rise of cases below:

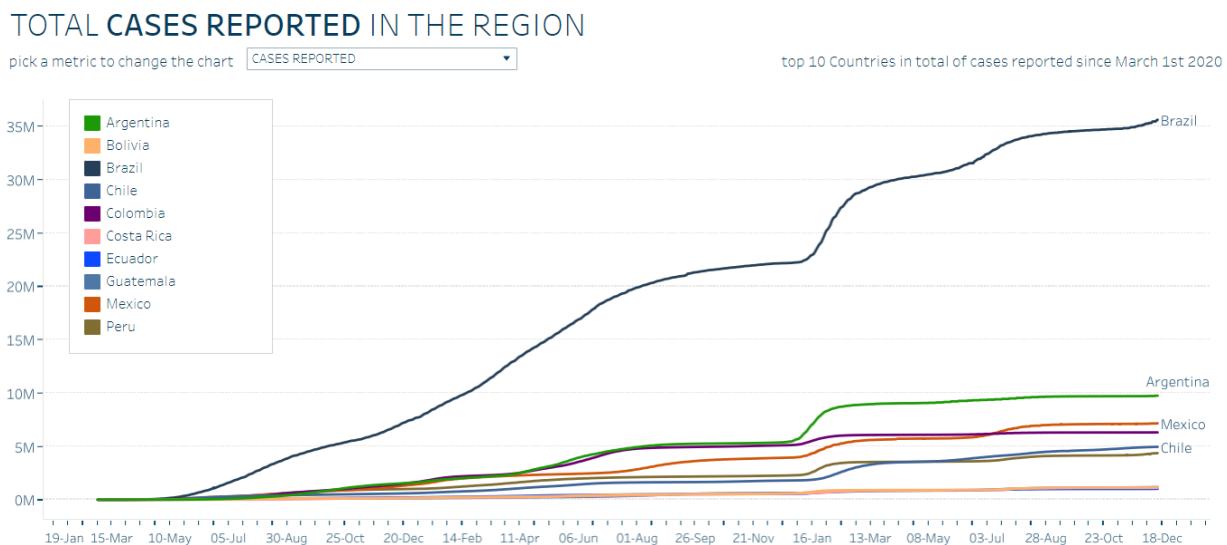


Figure 2. Total Cases Reported In The LAC Region

However, at the country level, cases remain elevated, with the highest numbers of new weekly cases from December 4, 2022, being reported from Japan (749,895 cases), France (385,716 cases), South Korea (370,574 cases), the United States of America (296,333 cases), and Brazil (188,043 cases). And in terms of deaths, the United States reported 1744 new deaths (+2%), Japan reported 1063 (+6%), Brazil reported 632 (+18%), Italy reported 462 (-22%), and France reported 424 (+2%).

<https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/weekly-epidemiological-update-on-covid-19---7-december-2022>

<https://www.who.int/activities/tracking-SARS-CoV-2-variants>

<https://health-infobase.canada.ca/covid-19/testing-variants.html#VOC>

<https://www.iadb.org/en/coronavirus/current-situation-pandemic>

Bloc Positions

Countries Supporting the Eradication of COVID-19

It is a universally agreed upon stance that COVID-19 is a calamity warranting immediate eradication and has harmed global society.

Countries Supporting Chinese Origin Narratives

The People's Republic of China alleges that the origin of COVID-19 derived from an American military base, while China had no involvement whatsoever with the manufacturing of the virus.

Most other countries and international bodies agree that the virus originated in China, but differ on where exactly it came from: A Wuhan “wet-market”, or a Wuhan virology lab.

Countries Supporting American Origin Narratives

Utilizing the origin mysteries of COVID-19 as a political weapon to incite negative sentiments against the Chinese government, the United States of America has firmly postulated the possibility of China’s malicious intent involving the creation of the global pandemic.

Guiding Questions

1. What is the significance of the impacts of COVID-19 in shaping our findings of its origin?
2. How can major actors in the COVID-19 pandemic work together to eradicate the virus?
3. How does conflict influence the severity of the impact of COVID-19?
4. Should we prioritize countries that should receive aid first? What countries should that entail?
5. What are the ideal policies that can effectively mitigate the negative impacts of COVID-19? Can social welfare satisfy the citizenry? What are the long and short-term benefits and negatives of these policies?
6. What punishments can be designed to restrict nations from weaponizing or politicizing COVID-19 origin conspiracies?^x
7. How can nations effectively work together to solve the pandemic crisis at hand?
8. What is the global agenda in pertinence to ending the pandemic?
9. What is the role that each nation should play in the discussion of the Origins and Impacts of COVID-19?
10. How can we ensure that nothing like this ever happens again in the future?

Further Research

Overview of COVID-19 Origin Investigations—Superficial Documentation

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Investigations_into_the_origin_of_COVID-19#:~:text=Scientific%20background,-Main%20article%3A%20Severe&text=COVID%2D19%20is%20caused%20by,to%20humans%20by%20zoonotic%20transfer.](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Investigations_into_the_origin_of_COVID-19#:~:text=Scientific%20background,-Main%20article%3A%20Severe&text=COVID%2D19%20is%20caused%20by,to%20humans%20by%20zoonotic%20transfer)

COVID-19 Origin Discussions—In-Depth Documentation and Covering of Perspectives

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