

Coronavirus in Syria Monitoring Report

30th April 2020

All regions of Syrian remain in the shadow of a Coronavirus outbreak after 43 confirmed cases were recorded. This report monitors the precautionary measures taken to combat the disease and highlights the number of documented and suspected cases in Syria as well how the disease is being handled and the effects of its spread. The period the report focuses in is from the 18th to the 30th of April.

1.Regime-controlled Areas

The official figures as follows:

43 registered cases: 30 in Damascus countryside, 12 in Damascus and 1 in Daraa.

Deaths: 2 in Damascus and 1 in Damascus countryside.

Recoveries: 11 in Damascus countryside and 8 in Damascus.

Current infections: 21 in Damascus countryside, 4 in Damascus, and 1 in Daraa.

It was also announced that the number of cases that were sampled was 3850, and the number of suspected cases has reached 2115.

The suspected cases are divided between 19 health centers and 14 isolation centers throughout different regions of the country. There is no information about their location within these regions.

Some of the new measures that have been taken include:

- Increasing the number of medical laboratories conducting testing for the virus from one to 5. 2 of these laboratories are in Damascus and the other three are in Homs, Aleppo, and Lattakia respectively.
- Releasing the Tall Mnin area from lockdown after conducting 800 random checks there, the results of which government sources indicated were all negative.
- Distribution of a directory for workers in the public and private health sectors issued by the Directorate of Health. The directory includes information on preventive measures against the Corona pandemic. In addition to this, a central emergency committee has been formed in the Ministry of Health.
- Curfew times were ammended from 7:30 p.m. to 6:00 a.m., including during public holidays.
- The Council of Ministers is calling on all ministries to start to gradually returning employees to work, provided that they only work 40% of their usual hours. Working hours are to be increased gradually in the directorates most in need of completion of work especially with regard to citizens 'transactions. Every ministry and its affiliated entities has been asked to provide its own health response plan and to adhere to the Ministry of Health's guidelines and instructions for Coronavirus prevention.
- Extending the suspension of internal public and private mass transport within the governorates until 2 May, and opening roads between the governorates for public transport and private companies, provided that safety measures are followed and 3 days only are given for each governorate to travel to the capital.
- Halting the export of legumes, dairy products, cheese, eggs, bleach and Javel water for a period of one month to provide for local market needs and reduce prices.

- Allowing the following types of businesses to operate: auto repair shops, textile factories, printing shops, optometrists, agricultural machinery maintenance works, combine harvesters manufacturers, blacksmith shops, turneries, carpenters, tailors, and shops selling agricultural production equipment and modern irrigation work, provided that they adhere to preventive measures, and according to a program on which these professions operate on different days of the week.

- A decision was issued on 26 April to transfer all students of transitional classes in the and secondary education stages to the next grade up, provided that a plan to compensate for educational loss is established at the beginning of the next academic year. As for the primary and secondary education certificates, the Ministry of Education was asked to set a date for exams and take necessary measures to protect students by increasing the number of exam centers, establish distancing measures and , the necessary health conditions, and extending the suspension of working hours in public and private universities until the end of the Eid Al-Fitr holiday.

There is no provision for social benefits or grants provided by government agencies to the most affected communities, which results in an increase in the poverty rate among Syrians, especially with the rise in food prices which has occurred a result of the depreciation of the Syrian pound against the dollar. As the price of a bag of bread reached 700 Syrian pounds . Members of the public have been witnessed insulting each other when trying to obtain it., this bread crisis was concentrated in certain governorates such as Aleppo and some areas of Damascus and its surrounding rural areas.

Initiatives aiming to educate the population on the danger of the virus and ways to prevent and protect against it continue, An arrival of aid from China which provided 2,000 samples for testing the virus, and a further arrival of aid from Russia supplied the system with 50 artificial respirators, 10,000 tools for testing the virus, and 1,000 items of protective clothing as a measure to support capacity for the health sector to tackle the virus.

2. - North-Eastern Regions

Al-Raqqa:

There have been no official cases of infection in the province. Spraying and sterilization campaigns have continued throughout public facilities and residential neighborhoods according to the plans laid down by the Department of Health.

The Social Affairs and Labor Authority of Al-Raqqa Civil Council distributed food items to disadvantaged families affected by the decision to impose a curfew.

The humanitarian work of the initial response team in Al-Raqqa continued in exhuming the bodies from mass graves left by ISIS.

During the period in which the distribution of diesel was prohibited, the Fuel Office in Al-Raqqa Council continued to distribute domestic gas to the community through the neighborhood and the People's Assembly.

The movement of farmers(both men and women) and labourers to and from work areas has been facilitated, while adhering to the principle of social distancing during their transportation with the provision that the number of workers per machine does not exceed ten.

The Internal Security Forces arrested 4 people for trafficking civilians from regime-controlled areas to Self-governed region. These , women and men civilians were tracked and transferred by ambulance and Red Crescent teams to quarantine in the city of Al-Tabqa.

The local authority has monitored markets and food sellers, prevented shop owners from monopolizing, raising prices, and selling expired items and has set food prices according to the exchange rate.

Deir Ezzor:

No cases have been recorded, but sources who claimed that there are two suspected cases , samples form which were sent to Damascus. Sterilization campaigns have continued and the residents remain committed to the curfew regulations.

It has been decided to facilitate the movement of farmers and labourers, provided that social distancing is observed during transportation to and from work areas.

The creation of a fire brigade and an emergency committee that tracks the progress of the operations. The mechanisms were collected at the headquarters of the commission and the latest major centers for the presence of firefighters, specifying the drivers' residence center and distributing phone numbers with identifying fountains and water wells all this in coordination with the internal security forces, agriculture and defense.

Smuggling has continued to and from the SDF areas towards the areas of controlled by the regime through the Al-Shuhail water crossing. This has caused resentment and fear among residents because of the possibility of the virus being transmitted. The economic situation is still deteriorating. The prevalence of thefts has been noticeably monitored in the Western town of Al-Jarzi. Some organizations have distributed food baskets to residents in the Khasham area and the Western Deir Ezzor countryside.

Al-Hassaka:

The Health Authority of the autonomous region stated that 72 of the 100 newly arrived individuals es were not subjected to examinations as a result of government forces preventing medical teams from conducting examinations on them. The Crisis Cell explained that there are 5 people suspected to be carrying the virus. 2 have newly arrived in the area and 3 suffer from chronic diseases. The first case ry in Al-Hassaka was announced on 28th April.

Al-Sanabel Hotel has been allocated as a quarantine center and the General Authority of Al-Qamishli Hospital as an isolation center and 3 quarantine centers in Al-Derbasiya have been equipped with medical equipment. aThe Kurdish Red Crescent has opened an emergency center has been opened which consisting of 15 paramedics and 5 ambulances b, in addition to the restoration of Tal Hajar primary health care center.

| Two new machines which detect Coronavirus infections have arrived accompanied by a medical team, to help medical personnel in Northeastern Syria.

The Health Authority closed 6 hospitals because they did not adhere to the medical tariff and did not receive ambulances. Al-Salam Hospital was designated to receive emergency cases. Yaaqub Hospital was closed for maintenance and restoration.

Disinfecting campaigns continue in shopping areas of Trabisa, Aamouda, and the Nowruz camp, as well as cleaning and waste collection campaigns in the neighborhood of Jamaaya.

In light of the ban, new decisions were issued, including:

- Facilitating the work of farmers and labourers to and from work areas with preventive measures in place. New shops and professions were also excluded from the decision to close markets and impose curfews; these stores were allowed to open on Tuesday every week.
- Exempting vehicle owners from delay fines for renewing and issuing licenses.
- The fuel committee distributed fuel oil to the residents in Al-Shaddadi to prevent gatherings in front of petrol stations.
- Several tenants also called for the government of the autonomous region to issue an official circular stating that tenants should not be evicted from their homes during the lockdown period if they did not make their obligatory payments.
- The Semalka Crossing Administration announced the resumption of commercial traffic as of 20 April 2020.
- Among the precautionary measures, Yazidi House cancelled the celebration of the Yazidi New Year, while the Christians in the Al Jazeera area observed Easter (which fell according to the Eastern calendar without gatherings and with rituals restricted to social media).

Al-Ettihad Church in Derek launched an initiative to help those in need, and a citizen initiated an emergency application containing the numbers of institutions involved in the crisis. 17,000 face masks were delivered to the crisis cell emergency committee by the Women's Economy Committee and food baskets were distributed to the people in need in Karki, Derek and Aamouda.

There have been several violations of curfews in Aamouda, Al-Hasaka, and Al-Qamishli and fines have been consistently issued for those who do not comply. Several complaints also rose from Washo Kanye camp, including complaints of a shortage of basic foodstuffs, cleaning and sterilization materials, and poor public facilities.

3. Northwest:

As of the reporting date, the Northwest had not recorded any cases of Coronavirus, with 225 suspected cases having negative results.

The interim government issued a statement imposing a curfew on the elderly and children. The internal security forces in Azaz and Afrin regions broke up any gatherings and prevented markets and bazaars from taking place.

Many families returned to the areas in conflict with the Regime, fearing that the virus might spread in the camps in both Jisr Al-Shughour countryside, Jabal Al-Zawiya, and Al-Ghab, putting their lives at risk in the event of renewed shelling in those areas.

Medical status:

There are two isolation tents outside the Atma Charitable Hospital. The outpatient clinic has been deactivated, and the hospital has received several suspected cases; 6 samples were taken in the hospital and the results showed negative.

A hospital for children and women in Atma, known as Al-Hand Hospital, was one of the first hospitals to undertake precautionary measures, including sterilization of departments, distributing face masks and gloves for examiners, admitting unaccompanied patients, and having guards wear the protective clothing. One of the nurses in the children's department indicates: "Currently we have been provided with sterilization materials, face masks, and gloves, but in the event of corona cases, the situation will become more difficult. As for accepting patients, it has have been reduced from 100 to 60 admission cases, and the hospital has 6 artificial respirators and 4 active devices."

Al-Ikhaa Hospital in the city of Atma, with its limited capabilities, was unable to distribute facemasks and gloves to the clinic visitors. It limited itself to taking precautionary measures for its staff such as only allowing patients to be accompanied by one person. This was applied randomly and it was possible that there was more than one person with the patient.

The third medical point in Atma camps implemented procedures in addition to the previous procedures of sterilization, wearing gloves and facemasks for employees only and preventing gatherings. Two telephone numbers were allocated to call to reserve a role the next day with specific appointments a tent was set up outside the clinic to measure the temperature of the beneficiaries and sterilize their hands and feet with extended chlorine before entering the clinic and isolating those whose temperature is high in the isolation tent installed in front of the procedures tent. Protective clothing is worn and sick people who work outside the point never enter it in order not to undo the sterilization.

There is still a lack of commitment by the population to the preventive measures. It was observed that some markets have resumed business selling goods from motorbikes. Witnesses saw large numbers of men gathering in one place without taking any precautionary measures, especially before the advent of Ramadan.

The crossings between the areas of Afrin and Idlib were re-opened for the movement in and out of civilians without any precautions taken to prevent the spread of the virus. People believe that the arrival of the virus to the Northwest is not possible as long as there are closed border crossings with the Regime-controlled areas and Turkey.

Some mosques in Atma camps again received the children in the Quran memorization workshops wherein each class there are approximately 20 children sitting beside each other without any precautionary measures taken.

Civil defense teams, response teams and some initiatives continued with awareness campaigns about the dangers of the virus, spraying and disinfection campaigns in public facilities and some camps, and schools and religious rites continue to be suspended including Friday prayers and group prayers.

The organizations operating in the Northwest region continued to take preventive measures for their employees by distributing facemasks and sterile materials to their cadres. They also reduced

the number of beneficiaries from their activities. Some organizations have also worked in the areas of the Euphrates Shield and the Olive Branch under the guidance of the local council and the governing bodies to take preventive measures by reducing the number of working hours, reducing gatherings or by distributing relief for two months to organizations working to distribute relief periodically.