

# COVID-19 response – Lebanon bi-monthly situation report

18 May 2021

This report is prepared by OCHA, on behalf of and in collaboration with UN agencies and partners involved in COVID-19 response efforts in Lebanon. The report covers the period from 1-30 April 2021.

## Situation

- In April, **an additional 52,583 people were infected with the COVID-19**, bringing the total number of reported cases since 21 February 2020 to 527,508. A total of 2,690 healthcare workers have been infected, including additional 29 healthcare worker in April, compared to 102 in March. Further, a total of 7,302 deaths were registered (38 per cent female). **The average local test positivity rate in April was at 13.5 per cent**, compared to 18 per cent during March.
- Lebanon is in the transition phase from the level 4 of the community transmission to the level 3.**
- In April, **1,452 additional Palestine refugees were confirmed as positive with the COVID-19**. A total of 11,962 Palestine refugees, 59 per cent of whom are living in camps, have been confirmed as positive with the COVID-19, including 363 deaths, since February 2020. Further, **6,649 Syrian refugees and 34 refugees of other nationalities (non-Palestinians) have tested positive for the COVID-19, including 264 deaths. In April**, 199 additional cases were detected in informal settlements, bringing the total cases reported in the settlements since February 2020 to 914.
- On 9 April, **the Government has issued a statement outlining new COVID-19 preventive measures**, including implementing a curfew from 21.30 to 05.00 starting from 12 April for a month. Ahead of the Easter holiday, the Government announced a total lockdown starting from 1 May until 4 May to stem the spread of the coronavirus during the holiday. Further, considering the surge in reported COVID-19 cases in India and Brazil, a circular was issued on 29 April to ask all the airlines to stop transporting passengers coming from India and Brazil, starting 3 May. Those who wished to travel to Lebanon from those countries were required to stay in another country for at least 14 days.

### CUMULATIVE KEY FIGURES (as of 30 April)

**527,508 (52,583 new) confirmed cases**

(during the reporting period of 1-30 April)

**7,302 (956 new) deaths**

**457,758 (87,071 new) recovered**

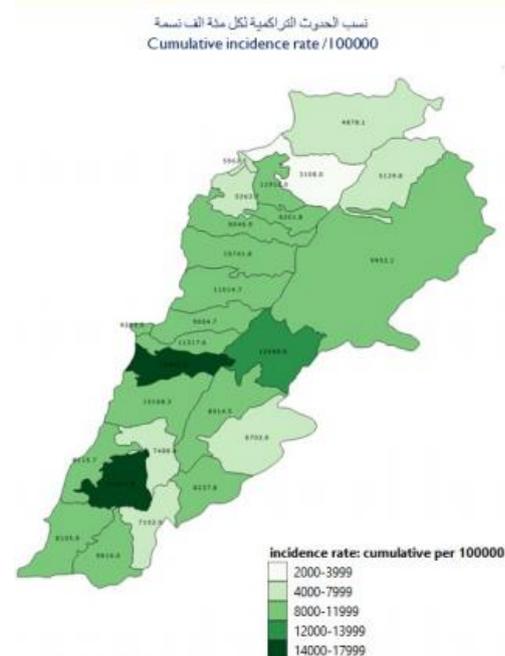
**3,786,859 (334,405 new) tests conducted\***

Sources: WHO/MoPH daily report on COVID-19

\*Lebanon National Operations Room daily report on COVID-19

## Highlights

- As of 30 April, **445,352 people have been vaccinated**, out of 1,234,012 people who have been registered through the IMPACT platform. Currently, COVID 19 vaccination rollout process includes, in addition to health care workers and all those above 65 years old, people between 55 and 64 years old with critical medical conditions who will receive Pfizer vaccine. People aged 55 to 64 without medical conditions, as well as school teachers and staff for grade 12 students (in preparation of the official exam) will receive AstraZeneca vaccine.
- A total of nine community isolation sites** - Abbassiyeh, Al Hekma, Drous Centre, Lebanese Canadian Hospital, Maad Isolation Centre, Mraijat, Mrayjeh Isolation Centre, Qana Governmental Hospital, and Wardanieh - **were active as of April 29, with 73 beds occupied out of 563 available beds.**
- As of 30 April, **the occupancy rate of COVID-19 intensive care unit (ICU) beds was 50.43 per cent** (586 occupied beds out of a total of 1,162 dedicated ICU beds).
- The first batch of AstraZeneca vaccine has arrived to Lebanon**, as part of the UN System-wide COVID-19 Vaccination Programme (3000 doses for UN civilians to be used as first dose and 12,000 doses for UNIFIL troops to be used as 1st and 2nd doses), with the vaccination campaign expected to start in May.



Source: Lebanon National Operations Room daily report on COVID-19

## Response per pillar under Priorities 1 and 2

### Pillar 2 (Risk communication/community engagement):

- Developed and disseminated social media packages with simplified messages answering questions and countering fake news. Posts covered the importance of preventive measures [after receiving the vaccine](#), why vaccination is recommended [for people with chronic diseases](#), and the [possible side effects](#) occurring after vaccination.
- Disseminated a fourth [video](#) to support the National Vaccines Deployment Plan to general public through television, providing simplified messaging on possible side effects to be monitored after receiving the vaccine, and steps to report them on the IMPACT platform, by calling 1214 or by referring to the chosen vaccination centre.
- Shared a third batch of the #Vaccinated Social Media package highlighting photos and quotes from doctors, frontline staff, and [elderly](#) taking the vaccines, to promote trust and safety of the COVID-19 vaccine and encourage registration on the IMPACT platform.
- Released the U-Report vaccine Chat Bot – a free and anonymous social monitoring tool for youth engagement and community participation to empower people to speak out on issues that they care about in their communities to encourage citizen-led development and create positive change – to raise awareness on COVID-19 vaccines.
- In preparation for [Easter](#) celebrations and [Ramadan](#), social media messaging was packaged, reminding everyone to abide by the preventive measures, replacing visits and gatherings with phone calls to stay safe, and refrain from hugging and handshaking.
- Reached 537,668 people in April through [the social media post](#) highlighted how vaccines have never been more critical in our lives, focusing on the COVID-19 vaccines, with the start of World Immunization Week (24-30 April).
- Reached approximately 70 per cent of residents in Lebanon with the COVID-19 related material via television in April, ensuring engagement with people who do not have direct access to social media.
- Conducted information and awareness activities on the COVID-19 vaccine and prevention and hygiene measures for 5,058 people across Akkar, Baalbeck-Hermel, Mount Lebanon, Nabatiyeh and North, through phone and door-to-door visits.
- Reached 1,260 Lebanese and Syrians in the Hay el Gharbeh community each week through WhatsApp voice, video or photo messages on topics related to the COVID-19. Further, Syrian and Lebanese students have prepared COVID-19 related sketches to raise awareness among families in Hay el Gharbeh, with 12 families being visited.
- Reached 1,628 Lebanese beneficiaries and 4,011 Syrians with COVID-19 vaccine awareness activities across Lebanon.
- Conducted outreach activities on the COVID-19 vaccines, targeting the 12 Palestine refugee camps as well as gatherings, with [disseminated materials](#) reached about 140,000 viewers through Facebook and WhatsApp.
- Distributed brochures to 16,000 people to raise awareness on COVID-19 vaccination.
- Distributed nearly 1,200 information, education and communication (IEC) posters on COVID-19 in the languages of migrant workers.
- Reached 392 people through COVID-19 vaccine awareness sessions in Mount Lebanon and the North. Further, 4,022 beneficiaries were reached with household visits on vaccine registration in Mount Lebanon.
- Continued outreach and advocacy activities to support registration on the IMPACT platform; migrant workers, community workers and leaders were contacted to better understand the barriers of migrants registering on the platform, and advocacy was ongoing to address the administrative barriers, especially for undocumented migrants and those who do not have Lebanese documentation.
- Conducted trainings for 89 Syrian and 18 Lebanese health outreach volunteers on COVID-19 vaccine awareness and IMPACT platform registration. Further, 4,398 Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinians were supported registration on the platform across Lebanon.
- Provided psychological counselling and online group education to 11,593 people in Tyre, as well as a workshop on how to relieve stress to 460 people and 25 support visits for elderly.
- Provided mental health support and education sessions to Lebanese in Beirut and Bekaa, to help them cope with the mental health impacts of COVID-19, reaching 205 community members and 30 children through phone sessions. Additionally, a total of 546 COVID-19 patients in Beirut and Bekaa were reached with mental health follow-up, in addition to 51 frontline nurses who joined a mental health help programme
- Conducted dead body management awareness sessions for 10 Lebanese people in Tripoli, to acquaint them with procedures to safely handle the bodies of deceased COVID-19 patients.

**Pillar 3 (Surveillance):**

- Delivered one freezer and one refrigerator to the National Influenza Centre to enhance specimen storage capacities, as part of support to improving the quality of national virus detection capacity.
- Delivered a training on epidemiological intelligence to enhance events-based surveillance at national level, as part of technical support to the epidemiological surveillance unit at the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH).
- As part of support to introduce genomic sequencing at national level, the agreement with the Lebanese American University (LAU) has been signed to conduct sequencing at the LAU pathogenomics laboratory on 1,000 specimens collected through routine surveillance.

**Pillar 4 (Points of entry):**

- Screened 86,926 individuals for COVID-19 at the Beirut Rafiq Hariri International Airport in April.
- Screened 15,054 individuals, including 1,540 children, for COVID-19 at the five border crossing points and provided them with guidance on prevention and home isolation during April, reaching a total number of 247,206 individuals screened since March 2020 at five border crossing points.
- Checked 927 children's vaccination status together with the COVID-19 screening and provided them with missing measles and polio vaccines.

**Pillar 5 (National Lab):**

- Upgraded the laboratory capacity of the governmental hospitals through procurement and delivery of the following equipment to nine governmental hospitals: one coagulation analyser, six plasma extractors, seven refrigerators, 10 freezers, and nine blood mixers. In addition, 32,000 PCR tests, one thermofisher test kit with two calibration dyes, one refrigerated centrifuge, and one double door autoclave were procured and delivered to the Rafiq Hariri University Hospital (RHUH).

**Pillar 6 (Infection prevention and control (IPC)):**

- Distributed 6,615 disinfection kits and 3,028 infection prevention and control (IPC) kits in informal settlements.
- Procured 859 hygiene kits and 702 elderly kits to be distributed to vulnerable older people in Beirut, Mount Lebanon, and South. Each hygiene kit contains a detergent, bleach, hand sanitizer, alcohol spray, liquid hand soap, surface mop, and floor mop, while each elderly kit contains diapers, hand soap bars, shower gel, underwear, pyjamas, slippers, medical face masks, hand sanitizer, and a towel.
- Supported 14 public hospitals and nine private hospitals across Lebanon with 227,846 units of personal protective equipment (PPEs).
- Donated following items to 58 primary health care centres in Akkar, Beirut, Bekaa, South and Tripoli, as well as 17 safe centres in five governorates: 266 bleach bottles, 54 soap bottles, 251 cleaning solution, 22,765 cloth face masks, 225,650 surgical masks, 7,570 gowns, 6,990 bouffant caps, 13,190 shoe covers, 635 hand sanitizers, 339 rubbing alcohol bottles, 50,700 gloves, 3,898 face masks, 349 paper rolls for examination tables, 15 face shields, six safety gloves, 2,715 pairs of sterile gloves, and 124 thermometers.
- Donated 7,785 cloth face masks and 8,030 hand sanitizers to the vulnerable people who have attended live awareness sessions and other field activities in Akkar, Beirut, Bekaa, Mount Lebanon, South and Tripoli.

**Pillar 7 (Case management):**

- Supported 14 public hospitals and nine private hospitals with 851 unit of oxygen related supplies.
- Strengthened COVID-19 intensive care unit (ICU) and regular beds capacity of five governmental hospitals (Baalbek, Dahr El Bacheq, Ftouh Keserwen, Sibline, Tripoli). Further, 12 government hospitals, including above mentioned five hospitals, were supported through recruitment of 54 registered and practical nurses during April. This brings the total number of nurses currently deployed in the hospitals to 152 at regular wards and 419 at ICU wards.
- A total of 37 nurses were deployed in six active community isolation centres during April.

**Pillar 8 (Operational support and logistics):**

- Evaluating the submitted tenders for the procurement of COVID-19 items (PPE and supplies), with phase two of the technical evaluation (evaluation of items) starting 17 May 2021.
- Preparation ongoing among the UN agencies for the facilitation request for customs clearance to the Prime Minister Office.

**Pillar 10 (Vaccination)**

- Supported 14 public hospitals and nine private hospitals across Lebanon with 96,000 of posiflush syringes for COVID-19 vaccination.
- Procured and delivered five ultra-low temperature freezers for vaccine storage to the MoPH drug warehouse.

## Response per sector under Priority 4

**Food Security Sector**

- Distribute food parcels to 64,000 vulnerable Lebanese households in April. Given the continued economic challenges and increasing risks to market functionality, it is planned to continue distributing in-kind food assistance until December 2021 for vulnerable Lebanese affected by the COVID-19 and economic crises, instead of shifting the assistance modality to cash-based transfers from April as initially planned. Further, the UN plans to expand the response from 240,000 individuals to reach an additional 160,000 individuals (total of 400,000 individuals) by the end of 2021.