

Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker

Regional report – Middle East & North Africa



This report summarises the major changes in the region for the Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker's [Containment and Health Index](#), providing a high level overview of shifts in government policies.

OxCGRT is created by the Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford. For more information visit www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/covidtracker.

REGION	Middle East and North Africa
Date range	15 August – 8 September, 2020
Reported by	Anna Bruvere

Brief summary of major changes:

A common trend in the MENA region has been to loosen existing restrictions. Several countries have started re-opening schools, some public events have been allowed to take place, stay-at-home and travel restrictions have been lifted or loosened to some extent. Two exceptions to this are on the one hand Lebanon which, after the explosion in Beirut, re-imposed stringent COVID-19 policies, and on the other hand, Libya, which tightened its stay-at home restrictions.

C1: School Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Libya: On 1 September, most high schools in Libya reopened to students. However, returning to in-person teaching is an option as students can also opt for online learning instead. Protective measures in schools are in place. • Qatar: On 1 September, Qatar opened both public and private schools and introduced a blended model which includes both in-person and online learning. • Syria: On 31 August, the remedial lessons to compensate for educational losses finish (which had started on 11 August.) Syria prepares for school opening. • United Arab Emirates: On 31 August, some schools returned to in-person teaching. Some, however, only returned to online teaching.
C2: Workplace Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebanon: After the explosion in Beirut, all restrictions seemed to have been lifted. However, on 21 August, Lebanon again re-imposed restrictions: all restaurants, malls, and gyms are not allowed to open, and grocery stores operate from 06:00-17:00.
C3: Cancel Public Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algeria: On 15 September, the restrictions on public events was loosened as mosques were allowed to reopen with a number of 1000 people. Friday prayers, however, are still prohibited from taking place. The government also allowed beaches, restaurants, cafes and hotels, although safety restrictions are in place. • Bahrain: Mosques were gradually allowed to reopen on 28 August in the Kingdom of Bahrain for the daily dawn prayers, given they meet the prescribed health requirements. • Lebanon: After the explosion in Beirut, all restrictions seemed to have been lifted. However, on 21 August, Lebanon again re-imposed restrictions: all public events are banned.

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C4: Restrictions on Gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebanon: After the explosion in Beirut, all restrictions seemed to have been lifted. However, on 21 August, Lebanon again re-imposed restrictions: gatherings are not permitted, although there is no specified limit on numbers.
C5: Close Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Qatar: On 1 September, Qatar resumed public transport, however, with reduced capacity and restrictions to limit the spread of COVID-19 between passengers.
C6: Stay at Home requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bahrain: There have been no stay-at-home recommendations from the government of the Kingdom of Bahrain. The previous stay-at-home measures seem to have been lifted, as suggested by the message the government published on 28 August, which focused instead on social distancing, mask-wearing, hand-washing and sanitation. • Lebanon: After the explosion in Beirut, all restrictions seemed to have been lifted. However, on 21 August, Lebanon again re-imposed restrictions: a nation-wide curfew from 18:00-06:00 is in place. • Libya: On 26 August, stay-at-home restrictions were tightened as the Libyan Presidential Council imposed a four-day statewide curfew.
C7: Restrictions on Internal movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bahrain: The policy on intercity and interstate travel in the was lifted on 23 August. • Lebanon: After the explosion in Beirut, all restrictions seemed to have been lifted. However, on 21 August, Lebanon again re-imposed restrictions: a nation-wide curfew from 18:00-06:00 is in place which restricts internal movement during the curfew times, with the exception of travelling to and from the airport.
C8: International Travel Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Iraq: On 27 August, Iraq opened its borders to international travellers, although inbound and outbound passengers will need to provide a negative COVID-19 test. • Israel: On 16 August, Israel opened its borders to international travellers. Israel has classified countries into "green" and "red" locations, whereby countries from the green locations can enter Israel without restrictions whereas countries in the red locations have to go into isolation.
H2: Testing Policy	No major changes recorded.
H3: Contact Tracing	No major changes recorded.

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Cases vs Government Response Index:

