

Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker

Regional report - Middle East and 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.

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| REGION | Middle East and North Africa |
| Date range | 01 December - 31 December |
| Reported by | Zoha Imran and Matilde Stronell |

Brief summary of major changes:

COVID-19 policy for the month of December showed a mixed picture across the region, as some countries either moved to partial reopening or implemented short lockdowns. However, it is also noted that for most countries, November policies have been carried forward. Lebanon began lifting restrictions following a two-week national lockdown in November.

Previous COVID-19 testing policies were carried forward in most countries. A notable incident occurred in the Gaza strip, where the Health Ministry ran out of PCR testing kits and was unable to perform tests for 11 days. While most countries continued with existing facial mask policies, Syria made them mandatory in public institutions, public transportation, markets and bakeries.

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| C1: School Closing | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Israel: On 25 December, the government approved a 14 day restriction period for Israel. Under the restriction, no classes will be held from 5th to 10th grade as well as the 13th and 14th grades.• Lebanon: Schools have partially reopened, although some classes are still held online.• Palestine: On 20 December all schools and universities closed and shifted to distance learning. |
| C2: Workplace Closing | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Iraq: On 23 December, the Cabinet ordered the closure of restaurants, malls, shopping centres and clubs for two weeks starting from 24 December.• Israel: Under the 14 day restriction period announced on 25 December, public and business places will be closed other than essential stores. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebanon: Due to a gradual reopening of businesses and workplaces, restaurants were able to reopen at 50% capacity, though bars and restaurants remained closed. • Libya: On December 10, restaurants and cafes were allowed to reopen for takeaway and delivery. • Morocco: On 23 December, additional restrictive measures were put in place for three weeks, including a daily closing time for restaurants, cafes, shops, and supermarkets of 8:00 pm; and the closure of all restaurants and cafes in Agadir, Casablanca, Marrakech, and Tangier. |
| C3: Cancel Public Events | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebanon: All public gatherings and parties were banned on 23 December. |
| C4: Restrictions on Gatherings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israel: Under the 14 day restriction period, it is not allowed for workplaces employing more than 10 workers to call in workers at a rate exceeding 50% of the workforce, or 10 employees, whichever is higher. • Lebanon: All private gatherings and parties were banned on 23 December. |
| C5: Close Public Transport | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israel: During the 14 day restriction period starting from 27 December, public transport will be operating at 50%. |
| C6: Stay at Home requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israel: From 27 December to 9 January, there are restrictions on leaving the home to 1,000 meters. However, there are exceptions to going out to get vaccinated, medical or social care, demonstrations, legal proceedings, physical activities (without the use of a vehicle), transferring children between separated parents, going to a workplace or educational facility whose activities are allowed, going out for a funeral, wedding or Brit Milah (Subject to the gathering restriction). • Lebanon: On 23 December a nationwide curfew between the hours of 9:00 pm and 6:00 am was put in place. • Morocco: On 23 December, a nationwide curfew between the hours of 9:00 pm and 6:00 am was put in place for three weeks. • Palestine: On 10 December, a one-week lockdown was implemented in Bethlehem, Nablus, Hebron, and Tulkarm, while a night curfew remained in place in the remaining districts. |
| C7: Restrictions on Internal movement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Palestine: On 10 December, travel between all West Bank districts was suspended for a week, except for essential goods. |

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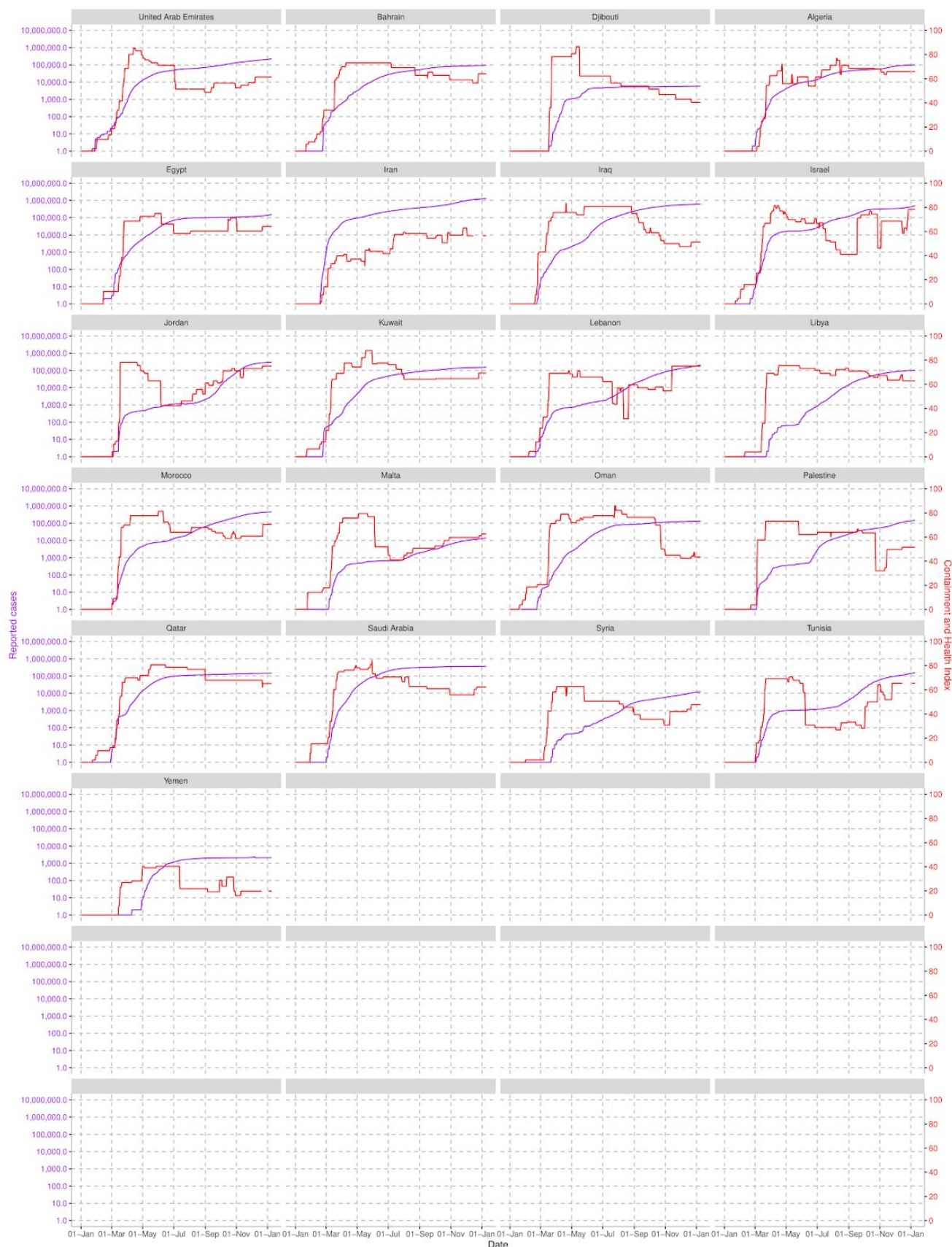


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| C8: International Travel Controls | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Iraq: On 23 December, the cabinet ordered travel to be banned to the UK, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, Iran, South Africa, Australia, and Japan. Entry has been prohibited into Iraq from these countries. However, Iraqi citizens are allowed to enter and are subjected to a mandatory 14-day quarantine period in health institutions. |
| H2: Testing Policy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Israel: The ministerial committee has approved a plan which increases the frequency of testing, making it generally available. ● Palestine: On 6 December, the Health Ministry announced that its only laboratory had stopped conducting PCR tests in the Gaza strip because it ran out of testing kits. On 17 December, a shipment of 14.4 tons of medical supplies from the UAE enabled the resumption of testing. |
| H3: Contact Tracing | No major changes recorded. |
| H6: Facial Coverings | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Syrian Arab Republic: On 14 December, the Government team in charge of controlling the pandemic decided to make the use of masks mandatory for citizens and employees at public institutions, public transportation, markets and bakeries. Facilities and restaurants, which do not adhere to these measures will be shut down. |

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Cases vs Government Response Index:



Source: Oxford COVID-19 Government Response Tracker. More at <https://github.com/OxCGRT/covid-policy-tracker> or bsg.ox.ac.uk/covidtracker

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