

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.

REGION	Middle East and North Africa
Date range	1 - 30 November, 2020
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Brief summary of major changes:

As cases have surged in the MENA region, strict restrictions have been observed with the intent to reduce physical contact as much as possible. In most countries, schools and universities are offering a blended-learning model, with most classes taking place online. Curfews have been observed, such as in Palestine, where all shops are ordered to close by 17:00. Public events, gatherings and public transport are also impacted by the curfew. Lebanon observed a nationwide lockdown from 14 - 30 November. A mandatory quarantine period on arrival is also common throughout most countries, while Israel has completely banned entry into the territory.

Previous COVID-19 testing policies were carried forward in most countries. In early November, Israel moved towards testing that is generally available, while Morocco limited its testing from being generally available to only testing symptomatic patients. The MENA region recorded no major changes in contact tracing policies. Furthermore, while most countries continued with existing facial mask policies, Syria and UAE increased their policy stringency level.

C1: School Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Egypt, Arab Rep.: Schools remain partially open for the month of November.• Israel: On 19 November, new regulations for Education in Eilat and the Dead Sea were reported in which practical studies were decided to be held in a higher education establishment. Studies were decided to be held in capsules and teaching staff would alternate between different study groups. On 24 November, grade 5 and 6 returned to school. On 29 November, grade 10 to 12 returned to school.• Jordan: As of 9 November, schools and universities will continue distance learning.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lebanon: A nationwide lockdown came into effect from 5am on Saturday, 14 November, until 5am on 30 November to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Public institutions and schools were closed. ● Oman: On 1 November, the opening of schools was recorded. 'Blended education' has been adopted with a mix of classroom and online learning. Students are rotated in and out of the classrooms and precautionary public health measures have been adopted. ● Palestine: As of 17 November, 125 schools in 'red areas' across the Gaza Strip are closed. ● Tunisia: Amid the rapidly spreading pandemic, the Tunisian government decided to suspend classes of schools and colleges from 28 October to 8 November. Educational institutes partially reopened post that.
C2: Workplace Closing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lebanon: A nationwide lockdown came into effect at 5am on Saturday 14 November, until 5am on 30 November to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Supermarkets and food shops remained open during the day and pharmacies and essential health services continued their usual opening hours. Public institutions closed, though there were exemptions, including for banks, some ministries and security institutions. ● Morocco: Authorities have extended restrictions in place in Casablanca to control the spread of the COVID-19 until at least 30 November. Restrictions will be similarly extended in the towns of Berrechid and Benslimane. Under the measures, a nightly curfew is in place between 22:00 and 06:00 (local time). Local markets must close by 15:00, cafes and restaurants by 20:00. ● Palestine: As of 15 November and until further notice, all shops across Gaza will have to close by 17:00. The authorities have also designated 23 out of the 94 geographic areas in Gaza as red, where no movement is allowed. The police will further enforce measures to ensure that violators face legal charges.
C3: Cancel Public Events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Djibouti: According to the UK government's travel advice, government offices and places of worship have reopened with social distancing in place. ● Israel: As of November, it is banned to participate in sporting events, conferences, festivals and entertainment or artistic performances.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebanon: A nationwide lockdown came into effect on 14 November to last until 30 November to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Public events and gatherings were banned under the restrictions specified. • Morocco: On 5 November, the country's government decided to extend the country's 'Health State of Emergency' until 10 December.
C4: Restrictions on Gatherings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lebanon: A nationwide lockdown came into effect on 14 November. Public and private gatherings were banned among other restrictions. • Morocco: An indefinite nighttime curfew between 21:00 and 06:00 was imposed in Al Hoceima province on 1 November. Public gatherings were limited to 10 people. Public parks, playgrounds, and sports stadiums in the province were closed. • Palestine: As of 15 November and until further notice, all shops across Gaza will have to close by 17:00. Gatherings of more than 15 people indoors are prohibited, including for weddings and wakes at home. • Syria: On 30 October, a 10-day partial curfew came into effect across North Eastern Syria lasting until 8 November. Mass gatherings (wedding halls, condolence tents and conference meetings all specifically mentioned) were prohibited in this time period.
C5: Close Public Transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Algeria: Public and private transportation between the 29 provinces is being impacted by a curfew. Public transportation (and depending on the province, private transportation) may be suspended on Fridays and Saturdays in the provinces affected by a curfew. • Egypt, Arab Rep.: According to the US Embassy, public transport is fully operating in Egypt for the month of November. • Lebanon: The lockdown that started on 14 November restricted movement of personal and public vehicles on roadways. Taxi services remained open though it was advised to book ahead. • Morocco: Authorization is required to travel into or out of the Casablanca-Settat region, due to the extended restrictions in the region until 30 November.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Syria: Lockdown came into effect on 6 November to last until 19 November, which led to some disruptions in public transport.
C6: Stay at Home requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Egypt, Arab Rep.: As restaurants, cafes, sports clubs and movie theaters are currently allowed to operate at 50 percent capacity, it is generally recommended to stay at home. ● Israel: Mas'ade municipal area was declared the "restricted coronavirus zone" from 6 November to 11 November. On 16 November, central Arab towns of Qalansawe and Iksal were also declared the "restricted coronavirus zones". On 24 November, Majd al-Krum and Kafr Manda in northern Israel were declared the "coronavirus red zones". Movement has been prohibited in these restricted zones, unless it's absolutely necessary. ● Jordan: On 2 November, the Government of Jordan announced a five-day comprehensive curfew beginning on 10 November at 10 p.m. The curfew lasted till 6 a.m. on Sunday, November 15. During the comprehensive curfew, citizens were required to stay at home and only leave when it's absolutely necessary. ● Lebanon: A nationwide lockdown came into effect in Lebanon from 5am on Saturday 14 November, until 5am on 30 November to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Movement was prohibited between 5pm and 5am. Hospitality businesses were closed and gatherings were banned. Public institutions and schools were closed. Movement of personal vehicles on roadways was to be restricted to vehicles with registrations ending in odd numbers on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and even numbers on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Driving on Sundays was not permitted. ● Morocco: Individuals entering or departing from Casablanca must have a letter of permission issued by Moroccan authorities, due to more stringent restrictions in the region. ● Palestine: As of 15 November and until further notice, all shops across Gaza will have to close by 17:00. Gatherings of more than 15 people indoors are prohibited, including for weddings and wakes at home. The authorities have also designated 23 out of the 94 geographic areas in Gaza as red, where no movement is allowed. The police will further enforce measures and ensure that violators face legal consequences.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Syria: Lockdown started on 6 November to last until 19 November, thereby requiring the masses to stay at home.
C7: Restrictions on Internal movement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israel: It is forbidden to travel in between addresses within Israel, especially those declared as "restricted coronavirus zones" for the month of November. • Lebanon: A nationwide lockdown came into effect in Lebanon on Saturday 14 November until 30 November. Movement was prohibited between 5pm and 5am. Movement of personal vehicles on roadways was to be restricted to vehicles with registrations ending in odd numbers on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and even numbers on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays. Driving on Sundays was not permitted. • Morocco: On 10 November it was recorded that a curfew was in place in Casablanca between the hours of 9:00 pm and 6:00 am.
C8: International Travel Controls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israel: As of 4 November, entry into Israeli territory has been banned. • Jordan: On 9 November, it is noted that quarantine is mandatory for all incoming arrivals to Jordan, regardless of their country of origin or negative test results. • Oman: While quarantine is still mandatory, on 2 November it was recorded that the quarantine duration was reduced from 14 days to 7 days.
H2: Testing Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Israel: As of 4 November, testing moved towards generally available. The slogan that is used is "When in doubt, there is no doubt, get tested!" • Jordan: On 9 November, the Ministry of Health declared a fine of 300 JD is to be imposed on administrators and staff members who underreport COVID-19 cases. • Morocco: On 10 November it was recorded that rather than being generally available, anyone symptomatic can get in touch with Moroccan Ministry of Health's hotline for assistance. • Palestine: COVID-19 Emergency Situation Report for the period of 3 -17 November noted that the official figures of the region are believed to significantly underestimate the actual number of people who have contracted the virus, due to the policy implemented in West Bank by the MoH, whereby only

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	those showing possible symptoms, as well as travellers, are being tested.
H3: Contact Tracing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No major changes recorded.
H6: Facial Coverings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Syria: On 10 November a directive was recorded that required the population to wear masks; no enforcement mechanism has been put in place to promote compliance. Previously, there was no such directive or policy in place.• United Arab Emirates: On 10 November it was recorded that wearing a face mask became compulsory at all times outside the home. This also applies to visitors staying in hotels when they are not in their rooms. Previously, the policy was less stringent, requiring a face mask in all public places as opposed to at all times outside the home.

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Cases vs Containment and Health Index:

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