



COVID-19 Situation Report

April 12, 2021

Overview

Gaza is currently experiencing a massive spike in COVID-19 cases. Similar surges have occurred in the West Bank and Jordan, both of which are attempting to contain the spread through vaccination campaigns and lockdowns. The difference between the two regions is clear. Jordan has seen a small decline in active cases since late March. As a sovereign nation, it has full control over its own vaccination program, which includes refugees. On the other hand, the West Bank and Gaza have largely relied on the COVAX initiative and donations from foreign countries to secure much needed doses.

Lebanon is also in dire straits. Though coronavirus cases appear to have plateaued, combined political and economic crises are hampering vaccine distribution. This is especially problematic for refugee camps, which are reportedly struggling with high mortality rates.

These new waves of infections are believed to be caused by the spread of the variant first identified in the UK, which health experts conclude is more infectious and more deadly.¹ This variant seems to induce more physically taxing symptoms, with more patients reporting soreness, coughing, and fatigue. Youth and young adults are also showing greater rates of infection with the spread of the new variant.

West Bank

As of April 8th, the West Bank has recorded 14,403 active cases, 184,710 total cases, and a mortality rate of roughly 1.2%. Nablus and Hebron are the most affected, accounting for 33% and 13% of all cases respectively. Roughly a quarter of these cases are recorded among people between the ages of 10 and 39. Hospital resources are severely strained, as incoming patients have put ICU capacity at 100% with 47% of ventilators in use.

The Ministry of Health has attempted to curb the spread of the virus by imposing a lockdown that will last until May 3.² As of April 12, 113,958 people have been vaccinated in the West Bank.³ On March 30th, 100,000 Sinopharm and 25,000 AstraZeneca vaccines were delivered by China and India respectively. Another 102,960 Pfizer

¹ [Biospace: British Variant Transmission Rate](#)

² [World Health Organization: COVID-19 Situation Report 71. Issued 8 April 2021](#)

³ [WAFA News Agency: COVID Update](#)

vaccines and 144,000 AstraZeneca vaccines are expected to arrive at the end of June and the end of April respectively.⁴ All told, that is 371,960 potential doses for the more than 5 million people that live in the West Bank and Gaza.

Gaza

As of April 8, Gaza has 16,845 active coronavirus cases, nearly double the number from a week ago and triple the number from 2 months ago. Total cases amount to 77,307 people, with a mortality rate of 0.9%. In order to combat the spread of the virus, authorities have implemented a curfew and heavily restricted general travel and public gatherings. UNRWA also announced that it would close its schools and revert to virtual classes for a week to wait out the surge.

According to Anera's field office in Gaza, 26,458 Gazans have been vaccinated. Vaccine acquisition is entirely dependent upon shipments from the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, the COVAX initiative, and direct shipments from foreign countries. On March 30, one such shipment was sent by Qatar to vaccinate 7,000 Gazan merchants in the West Bank.

Lebanon

In addition to 88,209 active cases and 485,918 total cases, Lebanon is in the middle of social turmoil. This has negatively affected vaccine distribution, with fewer than 260,000 doses administered. According to our Beirut field office, 94,112 people have been fully vaccinated, which is less than 1.4% of the population. As protests mount and people gather in the streets, mandates for social distancing are largely ignored.

Though overall cases appear to have plateaued, a report from [Human Rights Watch](#) indicates that mortality rates among Palestinian and Syrian refugees are 3 to 4 times higher than regular citizens. Furthermore, only 3,638 Palestinians and 1,159 Syrians have received the vaccine, even though over 20,000 Syrians and Palestinians are eligible in the first phase of the vaccine rollout.

Jordan

Jordan has also struggled to rein in the surge of cases brought on by the British variant. Currently, there are 72,885 active and 655,456 total cases. Health experts are predicting another wave may arrive in September. People between the ages of 25 and 34 account for over 22% of cumulative cases, although the mortality rate is highest among people in the 75-84 age group. Amman remains the epicenter of the pandemic in Jordan. According to the [Reuters Vaccination Tracker](#), Jordan's vaccination program has

⁴ The total number of vaccines in the West Bank and Gaza in mid-March was 134,000 (62,000 from COVAX, 60,000 from UAE that went directly to Gaza, 10,000 from Russia, and 2,000 from Israel).

administered 409,203 doses, enough to cover about 2% of the population. Despite proactive measures taken by the government to increase vaccination turnout, less than 10% of Jordanian have registered with the MoH to receive the vaccine.

Vaccinations in Azraq Refugee Camp began at the end of March. Refugees have the option of registering directly with the Ministry of Health or through UNHCR. 250,000 doses are expected to arrive from China at the end of the week.

Anera's Response

Anera's efforts to curb the spread of COVID-19 include funding distribution of the vaccine itself, encouraging people to register for the vaccine, and distributing PPE and other medical and hygiene aid. Anera is helping in the vaccination process by raising money to cover the costs of vaccinating 20,000 Palestinian refugees in Lebanon. Anera has also established awareness campaigns to stop the spread of harmful misinformation.

Anera's medical donations program has secured a number of shipments containing PPE, including 19 for Lebanon, three for Gaza, and one for the West Bank. One such shipment arrived in our distribution center in Lebanon last Friday with 1,750 boxes of latex gloves and 1,000 boxes of N95 face masks. Other Anera shipments include medicines that treat the symptoms of respiratory illnesses. Anera has also resumed shipments to Jordan, creating possibilities for further COVID relief shipments.