



# COVID-19 Situation Report

## Overview

With the emergence of the Omicron BA.5 variant of COVID-19, positive cases worldwide are experiencing an uptick. According to Yale Medicine, the BA.5 variant will be the most contagious one yet.<sup>1</sup>

During July, gatherings and events increased across the Middle East to celebrate Eid Al Adha as well as the advent of the tourism season, leading to an increase in cases.

## Palestine

Palestine is entering a new and intense wave of COVID-19, with a very sharp increase in the number of positive cases in the West Bank and Gaza.

In August, the West Bank was passing through its sixth wave of COVID-19, while Gaza was passing through its fifth wave. This rapid increase in cases is slowing down in September. Gaza broke records in the number of new positive cases in August, as cases reached 7,587 the week of July 24th, compared to 1,864 new positive cases reported in the previous week, a significant increase. The first week of September, cases were down to 6,172. The number of positive cases in the West Bank is down to only 85 active cases as of September 4.

Nearly 63% of the West Bank's population received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, and 66% of the eligible population has received one dose. However, the vaccination rate in Gaza is still substantially lower. Only 36% of the eligible population are fully vaccinated, and 47% have received at least one dose.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) in the West Bank and Gaza announced that this wave of infection will affect a large number of people within a short period of time because of the highly infectious property of the new COVID-19 strain. The MoH is advising people to wear masks again and take care of their personal hygiene. This will be a challenge for Palestinians affected by increasing inflation and the rising costs of non-food items in the West Bank and Gaza.

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<sup>1</sup> [We've all got Covid-19 fatigue, but BA.5 shows it's not over | VOX](#)

Due to the August escalation of violence in Gaza, hospitals are overwhelmed. The MoH's hospitals are operating at less than half of their capacity, and it announced the hospitals will be focusing on victims of the attack. The underwhelming amount of hospital resources could prove damaging for the trajectory of the pandemic.

## Jordan

There have been 1.7 million infections and 14,083 coronavirus-related deaths reported in the country since the pandemic began. Jordan has administered at least 10 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine so far, and over 4.8 million people have enrolled in Jordan's COVID-19 vaccination program. Almost 45% of the population received both doses of the vaccine, and 47% received the first dose. Jordan confirmed 3,389 new cases during the week of the first week of September. In comparison, Jordan registered 2,455 positive cases the week of July 18th.<sup>2</sup> The number of new weekly positive cases in Jordan has now been increasing since the week of May 30, 2022.

Despite an increase in infections between May and July, the increase is not reflected in deaths or hospitalizations. Positivity rates in refugee camps remain low, where COVID-19 cases are well below the national average. Jordan was one of the first countries to proactively vaccinate refugees in camps. Over 52,600 camp-based refugees are vaccinated as part of Jordan's COVID-19 vaccination program. As of March, more than 90% of Syrian refugees living in camps in Jordan have received at least one vaccine dose, in addition to around 50% of the Syrian and 40% of the non-Syrian refugee population living outside of camps.<sup>3</sup>

## Lebanon

July witnessed a noticeable increase in average daily cases and hospital admission rates. The community transmission level increased from level three to level four, reflecting that the transmission is high or rising exponentially. The cities with the highest transmission levels in the week of July 18 are Beirut, Baabda, and Metn.<sup>4</sup> The number of new cases is continuing to increase every week in Lebanon. The total number of active cases in Lebanon is currently at 114,581 cases.<sup>5</sup>

Comparing the figures between the last week of June and the last week of July shows an increase of 42% in the average daily cases. Additionally, the bed occupancy rate of intensive care units increased from 12% to 43%, and the death rate increased from one to three cases per day.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> [9 COVID deaths, 5,417 cases recorded in 30th epidemiological week | Jordan Times](#)

<sup>3</sup> [COVID-19 situation for refugees in Jordan \(February 2022\) | UNHCR Jordan](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Monitoring of COVID-19 Infection in Lebanon | Ministry of Public Health](#)

<sup>5</sup> [Lebanon COVID - Coronavirus Statistics | Worldometer](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Lebanese MoPH | Facebook](#)

In July, the Ministry of Health in Lebanon announced that children between 5 and 11 can begin receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, rather than only children ages 12 and up.<sup>7</sup> Only 43% of the Lebanese population are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, and 49% of the population have received their first shot.<sup>8</sup>

A surge in COVID-19 cases could prove overwhelming for the country's dwindling number of healthcare professionals. Lebanon is suffering from a “brain drain” of local doctors and nurses due to the economic crisis. Since October 2019, approximately 3,000 nurses have left the country, according to the Order of Nurses Lebanon. According to the director of the Rafik Hariri University Hospital, the largest public hospital in Lebanon, the hospital is down to only 15 doctors, and a third of its nursing staff has since left the country.<sup>9</sup>

## Anera's Response

### COVID-19 Response

In partnership with Americares and with funding from the US State Department Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, Anera launched its Critical Access for Refugees to Medicine and Health Services (CARAMAH) project on September 1st, 2021. In light of the compounding crises in Lebanon, CARAMAH addresses gaps in the availability of chronic disease medications by providing direct support for primary healthcare centers and dispensaries across all eight Lebanese governorates. The project will improve health outcomes for at least 20,000 Syrian, Iraqi and other refugee groups as well as vulnerable host community members by improving access to medicines for chronic illnesses. The project will supply 400,000 monthly refills (about 12 million defined daily doses) that will be distributed over two years. The distribution of medicines for chronic illnesses supports the health of those that are most vulnerable to COVID-19 infection.

In response to the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on the most vulnerable populations in Lebanon, Anera launched its community-based vaccination campaign in Palestinian refugee camps in March 2021. The campaign focused on mobilizing community influencers to increase vaccine acceptance, facilitating access to vaccines for community members, and protecting communities through increased vaccination rates. With support from Americares, Anera also distributed 718 motivational kits containing enough food and hygiene items to provide for one family's basic needs for one month to encourage individuals to get vaccinated against COVID-19. The motivational kits served as a necessary incentive for families who already struggle to meet their basic needs.

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<sup>7</sup> [Lebanese MoPH | Facebook](#)

<sup>8</sup> [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Vaccinations | Our World in Data](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Lebanon's hospitals are running out of medicine and staff in ongoing economic crisis | NPR](#)

In response to the scarcity of masks early in the outbreak of COVID-19, Anera, with funding from Americares, produced 25,000 masks for distribution to Palestinians, Syrians, and Lebanese in the most impoverished communities in Beirut. It also served as cash-for-work for five youth trained in sewing who Anera hired for the production. The masks are reusable, double-layer, and conform to WHO and AFNOR guidelines, allowing the beneficiaries to use these masks for a long period of time.

In response to the COVID-19 crisis in Gaza, Anera, in partnership with Islamic Relief USA, implemented a two-pronged humanitarian aid intervention to holistically address critical livelihood and medical needs. The first activity included a supplemental food program for 3,000 highly vulnerable households. Anera delivered fresh produce weekly for four weeks, including potatoes, tomatoes, onions, eggplants, and cucumbers, locally sourced primarily from 100 of Anera's greenhouse program's farmers. The second activity included additional shipments of highly valued medicines and medical supplies to Gaza, prioritizing both medications to treat patients with conditions that put them at greater risk for contracting severe cases of COVID-19 and equipment for first responders to keep them safe from COVID-19 infections.

### **Education**

Anera partnered with Thaki to provide laptops preloaded with educational materials and resources for vulnerable refugee and host community students and teachers in Jordan to support them during the shift to digital learning. The donated laptops contain offline learning content for teacher training and students' education. The 12-month program, funded by the Catalyst Foundation for Universal Education, began in February 2021 and aimed to ensure that students had access to remote and digital learning and address internet connectivity restraints. The program provided accessible enrichment materials and teacher training resources to teach skills and methods necessary to create digital learning opportunities for students. Five cohorts, with an average of 25 to 30 students, and 18 teachers in Jordan benefited from the donated laptops and educational materials.

### **Medical Shipments**

From June 1 to date, Anera has distributed over \$70,000 worth of personal protective equipment (PPE) to 15 beneficiaries in Lebanon, which included masks, goggles, gowns, gloves, sanitizers, and other equipment. In addition to the distribution of the PPEs in Lebanon, Anera's medical donations program distributed 25 gift-in-kind donations valued at \$11 million. These 25 shipments provided 1.5 million treatments, 726,720 medical consumables, and 100,713 items of PPEs.