

CURRENT EVENTS IN LIGHT OF COVID-19

The Palestinian Association for Empowerment and Local Development - REFORM



https://scontent.fir25-1.fna.fbcdn.net/v/h39_30808-6/292865472_5823774637632615_4545360823301432257_n.jpg?nc_cat=106&ccb=1-7&nc_sid=730e14&nc_ohc=15V_9fncw&X9IX83C&nc_hlscontent.fir25-1.fna&oh=00_AT_Hsu-wk15emmuQYGTu8T87FEvX9_EWkhQYsmPRZetQ&oe=62DF1E36

*As the highly contagious Coronavirus, COVID-19, is affecting **228 countries and territories** around the world, Palestine attempts to contain a local outbreak that has effectively halted daily life and led to tens of thousands of people entering quarantine.¹*

Although **3,078,533** individuals in the West Bank and Gaza Strip have been tested for COVID-19, there remains a deficiency in the amount of testing kits, as there is an increase in the number of individuals who have tested positive for COVID-19. **2,009,535** individuals in the West Bank and Gaza Strip took the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and **1,773,298** individuals are completely vaccinated.²

Global Level³

of COVID-19 Cases

of Recoveries

of Deaths

of Active Cases

571,833,542

541,943,329

6,396,439

23,493,774

¹<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

²<http://www.corona.ps>

³<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

| Local Level ⁴ | | | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---------------------|----------------|----------------------------------|
| Location | # of COVID-19 Cases | # of Recoveries | # of Deaths | # of Currently Infected Patients |
| West Bank (including Jerusalem) | 420,339 <i>Including 79,340 in Jerusalem</i> | 412,666 (77,486) | 3,685 (304) | 4,669 (1,559) |
| Gaza Strip | 251,700 | 247,797 | 1,979 | 1,243 |
| Total | 672,039 | 660,463 | 5,664 | 5,912 |

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics issued a report indicating that the overall Wholesale Price Index in Palestine during the second quarter of 2022 recorded a sharp increase by 2.75% compared with the first quarter of 2022 (2.79% for imported products, and by 2.63% for local products). Sources: [The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics' Website](#), [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Raya News Network](#)

In comparison to the previous year, 2021 experienced an even higher rate of settlement units' advancements in the West Bank and East Jerusalem (22,030), enforcing the trend of a continuously increasing settlement expansion on occupied Palestinian territories, according to a new report by the Office of the European Union Representative to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and UNRWA. "Adding to the exponentially high figures in 2021 were particularly the advancement of settlement units in occupied East Jerusalem, which more than doubled compared to the previous year, from 6,288 housing units to 14,894," said the report on Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem, during the period from January to December 2021. "As outlined in several statements by the EEAS Spokesperson on new settlements announcements in 2021, the EU has repeatedly called on Israel to end all settlement activity and to dismantle outposts erected since March 2001. It remains the EU's firm position that settlements are illegal under international law. Israel's decision to advance plans for the approval and construction of almost new settlement units in 2021, i.a. for Givat Hamatos and Har Homa, further undermines the prospects of a viable two-state solution," stressed the EU. Sources: [The Council of Ministers' Website](#), [Raya News Network](#), [Ma'an News Agency](#) and [Wafa News Agency](#)

Today, the Palestinian Ministry of Transport and Communications launched the legal procedures to grant licenses to all agricultural tractors in the northern Jordan Valley, as part of the government's plan to support the resilience of citizens in the targeted areas. The Minister of Transport and Communications, Assem Salem, said that at a time when the occupying authorities target the Jordan Valley with its residents and their agricultural equipment, such as tractors, the government is working to strengthen the steadfastness of citizens by providing services that establish them in their lands. Sources: [The Palestinian Ministry of Transport and Communications' Website](#), [Raya News Network](#), [Ma'an News Agency](#) and [Wafa News Agency](#)

Several attacks and arrests by the Israeli occupying forces took place across Palestine:



1. Today, dozens of settlers invaded the courtyards Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem. [Sources: Wafa News Agency and Raya News Network](#)
2. Today, settlers seized an agricultural room in the town of Kafr ad-Dik, west of Salfit. [Sources: Wafa News Agency and Raya News Network](#)
3. Today, the occupying forces notified a number of citizens living in the Abu al-Nawwar Bedouin community, east of occupied Jerusalem, to vacate or demolish their homes, tents and facilities. [Sources: Wafa News Agency and Raya News Network](#)
4. Today, the town of Beit Duqu, northwest of occupied Jerusalem, was invaded and tear gas canisters were thrown at its residents. [Sources: Wafa News Agency and Raya News Network](#)
5. Today, equipment was seized from inside the archaeological site in the town of Sebastia, northwest of Nablus. [Sources: Wafa News Agency and Raya News Network](#)
6. Today, (13) Palestinians were arrested across several Governorates in the West Bank, including: Ramallah and Al-Bireh, Jenin and Nablus. [Sources: Wafa News Agency and Raya News Network](#)
7. Today, Shuafat refugee camp, northeast of occupied Jerusalem, was invaded. [Sources: Wafa News Agency and Raya News Network](#)
8. Today, fire was open towards agricultural lands east of Khan Yunis in the southern Gaza Strip. [Sources: Wafa News Agency and Raya News Network](#)
9. Today, shepherds in the Al-Jawaya area in Masafer Yatta, south of Hebron, were forced from fleeing their lands. [Sources: Wafa News Agency and Raya News Network](#)

Local and International Events

The US pressured Israel to open Ben Gurion International Airport to Palestinian Authority (PA) Arabs - and the agreement to allow them to use Ramon Airport was a compromise between the sides. Ahead of US President Joe Biden's visit to Israel, and as part of Biden's desire to present Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas with achievements, the US government pressured Israel to solve the issue of PA Arabs' travel abroad. [Sources: Ma'an News Agency, Wafa News Agency and Raya News Network](#)

The Board of Deputies has lashed out at a "disgraceful" comment in the latest United Nations report on Israel. It follows publication of the End-of-Mission Statement of the UN Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, with one comment in particular standing out. "By design, Israel's 55-year occupation of Palestine has been used as a vehicle to serve and protect the interest of a Jewish State and its Jewish people, while subjugating Palestinians," it said. "Many stakeholders consider that this practice amounts to apartheid." The Board of Deputies' senior vice-president David Mendoza-Wolfson said: "This disgraceful statement is just the kind of thing we have come to expect from a body that is so often biased against the State of Israel. [Sources: Ma'an News Agency, Wafa News Agency and Raya News Network](#)

Emmanuel Macron warn^{تي} against settlement building in Palestinian territories as the French leader said the situation is "more than worrying." "We all know that a new spiral of violence can start at any moment," Mr. Macron said, as the Palestinian leader visited the Elysee Palace on Wednesday. "To avert this threat that is present daily and undermines the lives of both Palestinians and Israelis, we must act. We must act. We must address the deep political causes of a situation that has been deadlocked for too long. Short-term, as we know, this means first putting an end to unilateral measures on the ground. I am thinking particularly of the evictions of Palestinian families, of the demolitions, of the policy of colonisation that is contrary to international law and that makes the possibility of establishing a Palestinian state living in peace alongside Israel more remote." [Sources: Ma'an News Agency and Raya News Network](#)

Amnesty International has submitted a 19-page briefing to the Department of Trade, setting out how the agreement should be framed to avoid reinforcing Israeli breaches of international law and remain consistent with the UK's non-recognition of Israeli settlements in Palestine. The UK's international trade secretary, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, met the Israeli ambassador to the UK, Tzipi Hotovely, in London yesterday to begin talks on the issue. The UK recently conducted a consultation over plans to negotiate a new UK-Israel Free Trade Agreement this year which will "upgrade" an existing Trade and Partnership Deal with Israel already worth £5 billion a year. Ms. Trevelyan said: "The UK and Israel are both modern, hi-tech services superpowers, but our current trading relationship is based on an agreement from 1995, before smartphones, the internet, and digitally delivered services transformed the global economy. "We want a deal that will play to British strengths, while stimulating innovation and increasing opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises across the UK. Combining the power of our economies in a revamped trade deal will boost trade, support jobs and help take our economic relationship to the next level." [Sources: Ma'an News Agency and Raya News Network](#)

Miscellaneous

Today, the Israeli Ministry of Health confirmed that total number of COVID-19 cases is **4,531,690**, of which **11,208** died and **4,453,616** recovered. According to the Health Ministry's statistics, of the **66,866** active cases in Israel, **310** are in critical condition. Sources: Ma'an News Agency and <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries>.

- ❖ Israeli court, at a hearing on Wednesday, postponed its final ruling on ending the solitary confinement of Palestinian prisoner Ahmed Manasra. The 21-year-old Palestinian has been kept in solitary confinement at the Ramleh prison clinic's psychiatric section for more than a month. His lawyer, Khaled Zabarqah, filed a request to return Manasra to the collective detention facilities with other inmates.
- ❖ The Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) in Palestine signed an agreement, during which the United Nations Office for Project Services will establish two rehabilitation centers in the West Bank with a value of \$806,548.
- ❖ A new survey has found that 52 percent of Palestinians believe that their privacy and personal data lacks protection, and that Palestinian and Israeli authorities, along with telecommunication companies are some of the primary actors when it comes to violations of data and protection rights. The survey, conducted by the Arab Center for the Advancement of Social Media-7amleh, measured the extent to which Palestinians have knowledge and understanding regarding issues related to digital rights, including privacy and right to information.
- ❖ United States Senator Tom Cotton has outlined a plan to introduce nationwide legislation targeting the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement - a campaign which calls for the non-violent severance of civic ties with Israel. Anti-BDS legislation currently only exists at the state level in the US. The announcement came Monday at a summit hosted by Christians United for Israel, an organisation founded by Pastor John Hagee - who has been criticised for his controversial comments on Islam and Jewish people. Cotton, a Republican lawmaker, said that the legislation he was planning to introduce would prevent the US military from contracting with any companies engaged in a boycott of Israel. "We can fight the antisemitic BDS movement by passing a bill I plan to introduce this year to deny military contracts to any company that boycotts Israel," he said.

Following are links of useful resources for information and updates on COVID-19:

1. <http://www.corona.ps/details>
2. <https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/q-a-coronaviruses>
3. https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1
4. <https://www.moh.gov.ps/portal/en/>