

CURRENT EVENTS IN LIGHT OF COVID-19

The Palestinian Association for Empowerment and Local Development - REFORM



As the highly contagious Coronavirus, COVID-19, is affecting **223 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 **2,958,990** 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. **1,877,787** individuals in the West Bank and Gaza Strip took the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and **1,647,042** individuals are completely vaccinated.²

Global Level ³			
# of COVID-19 Cases	# of Recoveries	# of Deaths	# of Active Cases
375,847,454	297,218,688	5,683,403	72,945,363

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)	332,132 <i>Including 44,745 in Jerusalem</i>	285,472 (30,676)	3,347 (269)	43,313 (13,800)
Gaza Strip	203,028	189,923	1,757	11,348

Today, 31.01.2022, the Palestinian Minister of Health, Dr. Mai Al-Kela, announced that there are **10,444** new people who have COVID-19, bringing the total cases to **535,160 in Palestine**. The Ministry further indicated that there are a total of **475,395** recoveries and **5,104** deaths, while **54,661** remain active across the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, including occupied Jerusalem. Sources: [The Palestinian Ministry of Health's Website](#), [Ma'an News Agency](#) and [Wafa News Agency](#)

Today, the Minister of Health, Dr. May Al-Kaila, that the recovery rate from the Coronavirus in Palestine reached 88.8%, while the percentage of active infections was 10.2%, and the death rate was 1% of the total infections. Sources: [The Palestinian Ministry of Health's Website](#) and [Wafa News Agency](#)

Today, the Director of Ramallah and Al-Bireh Health Directorate, Mutassim Muhaisen, said that the Directorate decided to separate those who are going to travel from those who were in contact with COVID-19 patients in the examination centers. Thus, samples will be taken for citizens who intend to travel in the Directorate's building, and those who are in contact with the COVID-19 patients in the Ramallah Recreational Complex, in order to ensure the safety of citizens and avoid overcrowding and the spread of the virus. Regarding the possibility of opening additional examination centers, he said: "There are instructions from the Minister of Health, but this matter requires additional staff, more effort and equipment." Sources: [The Palestinian Ministry of Health's Website](#), [Raya News Network](#) and [Wafa News Agency](#)

Today, the Palestinian Prime Minister, Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh, stated: "The numbers of COVID-19 infections are increasing. It seems that a new wave is hitting the region and the world. Therefore, I ask the security forces to tighten the implementation of safety procedures. I also call upon our citizens to adhere to safety measures. We will continue to monitor the situation day-by-day closely. Hopefully, it won't be necessary to implement stricter measures." Sources: [The Palestinian Council of Ministers' Website](#), [Raya News Network](#) and [Wafa News Agency](#)

Today, the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics issued a report indicating that the overall Producer Price Index (PPI) in Palestine with its base year (2019=100) reached 98.04 in 2021, an increase by 2.67% compared to 2020. It also stated that prices of PPI for 2021 increased due to the increase in the prices of goods in water supply; sewerage, waste management and remediation activities by 25.02%, electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply activities by 4.35%, manufacturing activities by 3.80%, and mining and quarrying activities by 0.68%. Sources: [The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics' Website](#) and [Wafa News Agency](#)

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



<http://www.wafa.eu/Assets/News/Thumbnail/Default/0724f058-2c3c-4740-8abb-69112f76a8b6.jpg>



<http://www.wafa.eu/Assets/News/Thumbnail/Default/0b0e0508-9244-486a-8893-17211c438047.jpg>

1. Today, two homes, belonging to Palestinians, were demolished in the town of Jabal Mukaber, southeast of occupied Jerusalem. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Raya News Network](#)
2. Today, (29) Palestinian men were arrested from several Governorates across the West Bank, including: Jericho, Ramallah and Al-Bireh, Jenin, Silfeet, Bethlehem, Hebron and occupied Jerusalem. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Raya News Network](#)
3. Today, dozens of settlers invaded Al-Aqsa Mosque in occupied Jerusalem. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Raya News Network](#)
4. Today, the occupying forces opened fire towards agricultural lands, belonging to Palestinians, east of Khan Yunis, in the southern Gaza Strip. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Raya News Network](#)
5. Today marks the 31st consecutive day that 500 Palestinian prisoners continue to boycott Israeli courts, opposing the policy of administrative detention. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Ma'an News Agency](#)
6. Yesterday, a house, belonging to a Palestinian, was demolished in the village of Al-Aqaba, east of the Tubas Governorate. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Ma'an News Agency](#)
7. Yesterday, the Jenin-Nablus road was closed, preventing citizens from passing through. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Ma'an News Agency](#)
8. Yesterday, the occupying forces suppressed a solidarity stand, in the village of Khan al-Ahmar, south of Jericho, opposing attacks committed in Negev. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Ma'an News Agency](#)

Local and International Events

Seven American Jewish organisations released an open letter calling on Israel's top leaders to take "unequivocal action" to stop "ongoing terrorism and political violence committed by Jewish Israeli extremists in the West Bank against Palestinians, Israeli civilians, and IDF soldiers. We urge the entire Israeli government to unite in strong condemnation against these acts, to work decisively to hold those responsible accountable, and to confront the growing threats posed by these extremists with the determination and seriousness that this grave situation requires," they wrote. [Source: Ma'an News Agency](#)

A United States federal court has blocked the state of Texas from enforcing its anti-boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) law against a Palestinian-American contractor who refused to sign a pledge not to boycott Israel. Rasmy Hassouna, an engineer and executive vice president of the Palestinian-owned A&R Engineering and Testing Inc, filed the lawsuit in November challenging a Texas law that bars the state from doing business with companies participating in the BDS movement against Israel. On Friday, US District Judge Andrew S Hanen granted an injunction that blocks Texas from enforcing the anti-boycott law against Hassouna. "The speech contemplated by [Rasmy's company] may make some individuals -especially those who identify with Israel -uncomfortable, anxious, or even angry," Hanen wrote in his ruling. "Nevertheless, speech - even speech that upsets other segments of the population - is protected by the First Amendment unless it escalates into violence and misconduct. The Court does find that Hassouna authentically holds a pro-Palestinian point of view that is protected by the First Amendment."

[Source: Ma'an News Agency](#)

Over 40 members of the US Congress called on the administration of President Joe Biden to lead efforts to block a United Nations commission probing the Israeli regime's war crimes against Palestinians in the besieged Gaza Strip. "Please know that while Congress may be divided on the Administration's decision to rejoin the [UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC)], we stand united in urging you to act upon the Administration's commitment to defend Israel from discriminatory treatment at the Human Rights Council and throughout the UN system," the letter read. [Source: Ma'an News Agency](#)

Today, the Palestinian Prime Minister, Dr. Mohammad Shtayyeh, stated: "Pursuant to the Presidential decree issued by H.E. President Mahmoud Abbas to reinforce public freedoms and immediately release any detainees/prisoners held in custody against the backdrop of practicing the freedom of opinion, political affiliation, or for any other partisan reasons: We demand the immediate release of more than 80 political detainees in the Gaza Strip. The government affirms its readiness to employ all its capabilities to successfully honor the foundations of democracy, freedom, political pluralism, and national partnership. We assure you that our security services do not keep any political prisoner in custody against the backdrop of opinion or political affiliation. Freedoms are safeguarded under the Palestinian Basic Law, which was confirmed through the Presidential decree." [Source: Ma'an News Agency](#)

A process to reconcile the Palestinian factions has begun, said Algerian Foreign Minister Ramtane Lamamra, "The journey to Palestinian reconciliation has started and Algeria has a long experience in bringing the Palestinians together," he told a news conference in Kuwait today. [Source: Ma'an News Agency](#)

Miscellaneous

Today, the Israeli Ministry of Health confirmed that total number of COVID-19 cases is **2,830,161**, of which **8,725** died and **2,380,288** recovered. According to the Health Ministry's statistics, of the **441,148** active cases in Israel, **1,092** are in critical condition. Sources: Ma'an News Agency and <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries>.

- A new spinoff of the Omicron variant of the coronavirus is getting attention from scientists as it becomes the dominant cause of COVID-19 infections in some parts of the world. Experts say there's no reason to panic over the lineage, called BA.2, which was first identified in early December and has since spread to 49 countries including the United States.
- The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention plans to send a clear message to pharmacies on a conference call this week: Stop turning away immune-compromised people when they come seeking fourth doses of COVID-19 vaccines. Although fourth doses are not currently recommended for the vast majority of Americans, the CDC has urged millions of people with compromised immune systems to get them.
- Pfizer and BioNTech have begun a clinical trial for their Omicron-specific COVID-19 vaccine candidate. The study will evaluate the vaccine for safety, tolerability and the level of immune response, as both a primary series and a booster dose, in up to 1,420 healthy adults ages 18 to 55.
- Three large new studies from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention highlight the importance of getting a booster shot to provide the best protection against the Omicron Coronavirus variant. This is the first real-life data to examine the effect of boosters against Omicron, which now accounts for more than 99% of Coronavirus cases in the United States.
- Moderna announced that the first participant has been dosed in the company's Phase 2 clinical trial of a Coronavirus vaccine booster shot that is specific to the Omicron variant.
- The UK is charging ahead with its plan to learn to live with the Coronavirus, dropping nearly all its remaining restrictions.

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/>