

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 **2,982,825** 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. **1,884,901** individuals in the West Bank and Gaza Strip took the first dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and **1,650,636** individuals are completely vaccinated.²

Global Level ³			
# of COVID-19 Cases	# of Recoveries	# of Deaths	# of Active Cases
385,910,363	305,793,041	5,721,140	74,396,182

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)	353,117 <i>Including 48,985 in Jerusalem</i>	293,698 (32,440)	3,361 (269)	56,058 (16,276)
Gaza Strip	211,367	190,423	1,773	19,171

Today, 03.02.2022, the Palestinian Minister of Health, Dr. Mai Al-Kela, announced that there are **7,934** new people who have COVID-19, bringing the total cases to **564,484**. Since Monday, 31.01.2022, there has been an overall increase of **29,324** cases in Palestine. The Ministry further indicated that there are a total of **484,121** recoveries and **5,134** deaths, while **75,229** 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 85.8%, while the percentage of active infections was 13.3%, and the death rate was 0.9% of the total infections. Sources: [The Palestinian Ministry of Health's Website](#) and [Wafa News Agency](#)

Today, the Prisoners Club confirmed that more than half of the prisoners inside the Ofer prison are infected with the Coronavirus. The press statement indicated that the policy of Israeli Prison Service consists of withholding information related to prisoners and detainees, in addition to not conducting examinations for prisoners who were in contact with those who tested positive for COVID-19. This led to the inability of any human rights or official body to count the number of people infected with the virus since its spread in prisons. It is noteworthy that about 1,000 prisoners are in Ofer prison, divided into 12 sections. Sources: [Raya News Network](#) and [Wafa News Agency](#)

On 01.02.2022, the Palestinian Minister of Health held a meeting with representatives of donor institutions, United Nations bodies, civil society organizations, NGOs concerned with health affairs, national institutions and the private health sector. The Minister reviewed the reality of the Palestinian health sector in general, and during the Corona pandemic in particular, the current epidemiological situation, the vaccination campaign against the Corona virus, and the various health procedures and policies followed in this regard. The Minister appealed to the international community for more support for the health sector, and the need to intensify various cooperation efforts. Sources: [The Palestinian Ministry of Health's Website](#), [Raya News Network](#) and [Wafa News Agency](#)

The General Manager of Laboratories and Blood Banks at Palestinian at the Ministry of Health, Osama Al-Najjar, said that the ministry does not allow the use of household Corona examination materials except those recognized and registered with the World Health Organization. Al-Najjar confirmed to the official agency that the ministry only follows what is documented by the World Health Organization, in order to ensure the medical and health safety of the Palestinian citizen, and to be on the medically and healthily safe side. Sources: [The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics' Website](#) and [Wafa News](#)

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



1. Today, 1,500 settlement units were approved to be built on land located between the French Hill and the Hebrew University, in occupied Jerusalem. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Raya News Network](#)
2. Today, (5) Palestinian men were arrested from several Governorates across the West Bank, including: Bethlehem, Qalqilya, Jenin and Tubas. 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, homes and barracks, belonging to Palestinians, were demolished in Deir Nitham village, northwest of the Ramallah and Al-Bireh Governorate. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Raya News Network](#)
5. Yesterday, a commercial facility, belonging to a Palestinian, was demolished in Anata, northeast of Jerusalem. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Ma'an News Agency](#)
6. Yesterday, four water wells, belonging to Palestinians, were demolished in were demolished in Masafer Yatta, south of the Hebron Governorate. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Ma'an News Agency](#)
7. Yesterday, fishermen were targeted off the sea of Gaza City. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Ma'an News Agency](#)
8. Yesterday, farmers were targeted east of the Al-Bureij and Al-Maghazi refugee camps in the central Gaza Strip, and were forced to leave their lands. Sources: [Wafa News Agency](#) and [Ma'an News Agency](#)

Local and International Events

The U.S. government said that it remains concerned over the death of a Palestinian American man whom Israeli soldiers dragged from a car, bound and blindfolded after stopping him at a checkpoint last month. Omar Assad, 78, had lived in the U.S. as a citizen for four decades — and still has family in America — before returning to retire in his home village in the occupied West Bank. Even after Israel announced that its soldiers would be reprimanded, the U.S. State Department expressed continued worry over the incident. “We continue to be deeply concerned by the circumstances of the death of Mr. Omar Assad, a U.S. citizen who was found dead on January 12, 2022, after Israeli soldiers detained him in the West Bank,” department spokesperson Ned Price said in a statement. “The United States expects a thorough criminal investigation and full accountability in this case, and we welcome receiving additional information on these efforts as soon as possible,” he added. “We continue to discuss this troubling incident with the Israeli government.” [Source: Ma’an News Agency](#)

Israeli authorities must be held accountable for committing the crime of apartheid against Palestinians, Amnesty International said today in a damning new report. The investigation details how Israel enforces a system of oppression and domination against the Palestinian people wherever it has control over their rights. This includes Palestinians living in Israel and the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT), as well as displaced refugees in other countries. The comprehensive report, *Israel’s Apartheid against Palestinians: Cruel System of Domination and Crime against Humanity*, sets out how massive seizures of Palestinian land and property, unlawful killings, forcible transfer, drastic movement restrictions, and the denial of nationality and citizenship to Palestinians are all components of a system which amounts to apartheid under international law. This system is maintained by violations which Amnesty International found to constitute apartheid as a crime against humanity, as defined in the Rome Statute and Apartheid Convention. Amnesty International is calling on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to consider the crime of apartheid in its current investigation in the OPT and calls on all states to exercise universal jurisdiction to bring perpetrators of apartheid crimes to justice. [Source: Ma’an News Agency](#)

Palestinian singer Dalal Abu Amna has snubbed an invitation to the Dubai Expo 2020 over the United Arab Emirates' ties with Israel. The singer, who says she declined many other official invitations to perform in the UAE, refused to perform at the six-month long world fair due to the country's "persistence in ignoring the feelings and rights of the Palestinian people", according to a statement on her Facebook page. In her post, Abu Amna made reference to Israeli President Isaac Herzog's attendance at the exhibition, where he delivered a speech on Monday and was welcomed with the Israeli national anthem. Herzog became the first ever Israeli head of state to visit the UAE. “This rejection was done out of our duty to take a clear position against everything that contradicts the Palestinian cause,” Abu Amna's statement read. [Source: Ma’an News Agency](#)

The Interior Ministry will now start considering family reunification requests from Palestinians married to Israelis, and it will begin with applications from people aged 50 or older who have received a residency permit in the last five years. In its announcement of the decision on Tuesday, the ministry’s Population, Immigration and Border Authority said it chose to start with this group because it poses “the least security risk.” Anyone whose application is approved will have their legal status upgraded to “temporary resident,” with social benefits. [Source: Ma’an News Agency](#)

Miscellaneous

Today, the Israeli Ministry of Health confirmed that total number of COVID-19 cases is **2,990,328**, of which **8,927** died and **2,510,076** recovered. According to the Health Ministry's statistics, of the **471,325** active cases in Israel, **1,134** are in critical condition. Sources: Ma'an News Agency and <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/#countries>.

- Pfizer and BioNTech are requesting emergency use authorization for their two-dose COVID-19 vaccine for children under 5 years old.
- The Beijing Olympics Committee has identified 32 new COVID-19 infections amongst Olympic athletes and personnel ahead of the Games' start on Friday.
- France has entered the first phase of easing COVID-19 restrictions, while Denmark has lifted all restrictions.
- New Zealand will start reopening its borders in phase later this month, COVID-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins and Immigration Minister Kris Faafoi announced on Thursday.
- French health minister says the country has passed peak of fifth COVID-19 wave.
- People who are not vaccinated against COVID-19 are 97 times more likely to die from COVID-19 than people who are vaccinated and boosted, according to data presented Wednesday by US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Director Dr. Rochelle Walensky.
- ***The latest data on vaccination efforts in the US, published yesterday by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:***
 - Fully vaccinated: 63.9% of the total US population (all ages), about 212 million people.
 - Not vaccinated: At least 19.8% of the eligible population (age 5+) has not received any dose of Covid-19 vaccine, which represents at least 62 million people.
 - Boosted: 25.7% of the total US population (all ages), about 88.6 million people.
 - About half (50.6%) of those eligible to receive a booster shot have not gotten one, about 84 million people.
 - More than a third (34.6%) of seniors who are eligible to receive a booster shot have not gotten one, about 15 million people.

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/>