



WHO Lebanon Country Office is the directing and coordinating authority for international health work within the United Nations. We work closely and in coordination with the Ministry of Public Health and other ministries as well as sister UN agencies operating in Lebanon. We work on improving health outcomes by providing technical support and assistance in scaling up essential prevention, treatment and care services throughout the health sector.

## Lebanon preparedness and response for COVID-19: national efforts

Since the advent of the COVID-19 outbreak in December 2019, and based on its evolution and epidemiologic progress, WHO has defined four transmission scenarios for COVID-19:=  
•Countries with no cases (No Cases);  
•Countries with one or more cases, imported or locally detected (Sporadic Cases);  
•Countries experiencing cases clusters in time, geographic location and/or common exposure (Clusters of cases);  
•Countries experiencing larger outbreaks of local transmission (Community transmission).

Lebanon national efforts have been accelerated with support of WHO and key partners; WHO support focused on:  
- Ensuring safety of health personnel, by provision of personal protective equipments for the MOPH Surveillance team and RHUH staff.  
- Ensuring timely diagnosis of cases by provision of sufficient reagents and supplies to RHUH reference lab.

- Ensuring at risk travelers are identified early at all Points of Entry and referred for appropriate management by provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), recruiting additional health staff, and provision of relevant IEC material.  
- Coordination with key partners, namely on communication and social mobilization, UN country team for the 8 pillars of the COVID-19 response plan, and participating in the National Task Force for COVID-19 established by the Prime Minister.  
- Providing normative guidance and supporting capacity building in terms of Infection Control and Prevention, case management, Standard Operating Procedures for transport of patients, triage and reference for care, self isolation, quarantine standards, etc....

- Support fund raising to fill critical gaps, particularly in terms of medical equipment for government hospitals and PPEs.

## Coronavirus Useful Link

[WHO real time dashboard](#)

[WHO COVID-19 page](#)

[WHO travel advice \(English/Arabic\)](#)

[Protect yourself \(English/Arabic\)](#)

[Q&A \(English/Arabic\)](#)

[WHO online course on emerging respiratory viruses, including COVID-19](#)

**Be READY for #coronavirus**

WHO is giving advice on how to protect ourselves & others:

1. Be **SAFE** from coronavirus infection
2. Be **SMART** & inform yourself about it
3. Be **KIND** & support one another




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WHOLebanon



who\_lebanon



wholebanon

WHO Lebanon Country office  
Museum square, Glass building  
4th floor, Beirut - Lebanon

Tel +961 1 612970/1/2

Email [emwroleb@who.int](mailto:emwroleb@who.int)

## The European Union support to health care in Lebanon

The European Union, through the EU Trust Fund MADAD, is providing assistance for refugees and host communities for better access to health-care and other basic needs. Through WHO Lebanon, the EU MADAD is supporting the provision of chronic medications via a network of 420 health facilities. Around 200,000 beneficiaries are currently registered in the chronic medications program, a joint program between the Ministry of Public Health and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA). In addition to ensuring medications, the EU fund also aims at strengthening the healthcare system, towards Universal Health Coverage. Main results include developing a health vision 2030, procuring IT equipment (i.e. desktops) and shifting the way health services are delivered to be more centred around the person.



# Protecting healthcare workers in COVID-19 outbreak: a TOT supported by WHO Lebanon

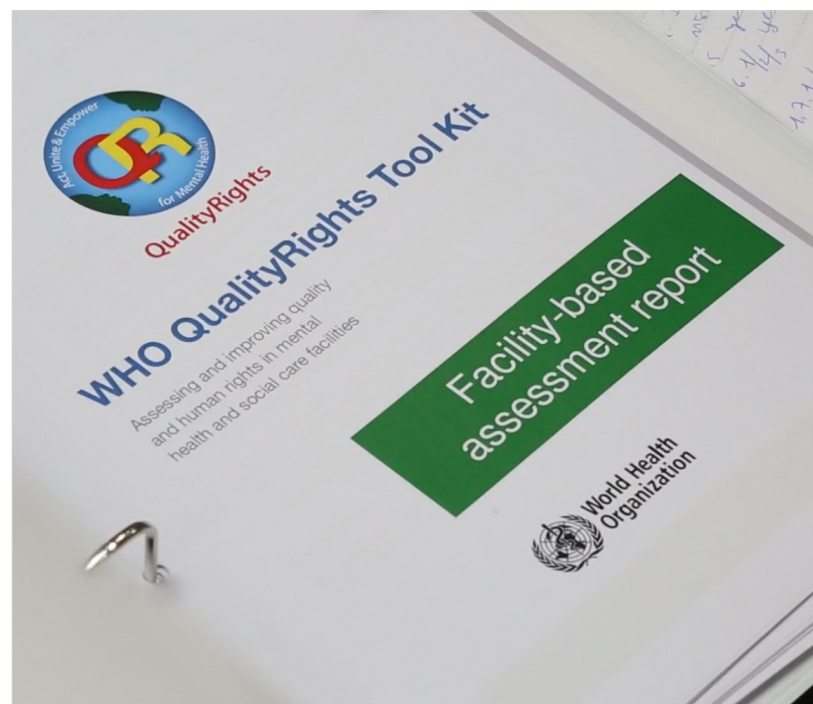
WHO supported the Order of Nurses in implementing a Training of Trainers (TOTs) for nurses on the topic of Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) and the proper use of personal protective equipment. WHO recently issued evidence-based IPC recommendations for healthcare workers caring for COVID-19 patients which had to be relayed to nurses to ensure that these measures are implemented in all hospitals in Lebanon. Each hospital assigned one nurse acting as clinical educator and/or infection control officer, to attend the training who will then in turn transfer the knowledge to their colleagues at their respective hospitals. The five trainings which were carried out in Beirut, Mount Lebanon, South, North, and Bekaa reached around 140 nurses including nurses from UNRWA and UNIFIL. "We rely on you to transfer this crucial knowledge to your fellow colleagues in order to ensure that IPC measures are implemented in all hospitals in Lebanon so that we enhance our preparedness measures against COVID-19 in health settings" said Dr. Iman Shankiti, WHO Representative in Lebanon, during the opening session of the training.



## Quality and human rights aspects of mental health services: Lebanon is moving ahead

Following the 2019 closure of the Fanar psychiatric hospital in south Lebanon, a ministerial decision #270/1 was issued calling for all psychiatric hospitals (including long-stay institutions) as well as in-patient psychiatry wards within general hospitals, to be subject to an assessment concerning the quality of care and human rights using the WHO QualityRights tool.

WHO Lebanon supported the National Mental Health Programme in training a national team of assessors on the WHO Quality Rights toolkit. The team then conducted an assessment of the mental health services in a number of mental health facilities. This was followed up by a report which will provide recommendations for improving the services, in line with human rights principles.



## Cancer experts in mission to form national strategy

Lebanon has been witnessing a sharp rise in cancer incidence over the last decade. In February 2020, WHO Lebanon invited a team of international experts in the field of cancer in order to conduct a rapid assessment of the cancer situation in the country with the scope of devising a National Cancer Control and Prevention strategy. The team comprised of experts from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), and WHO Regional Office.

The team met with key stakeholders in the country and visited the MOPH warehouse and cancer medication distribution site, the MOPH cancer registry offices, as well as different hospitals and treatment centres. The main recommendations include: 1) strengthening MOPH governance; 2) unifying the different steering committees related to cancer; 3) early detection and management of priority cancers; and others.



# WHO Lebanon leads health working group on COVID-19 outbreak

In light of the current international coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak and following the confirmation of cases in Lebanon, an exceptional health working group coordination meeting on preparedness and response was held on 3 March, at WHO premises. The meeting revolved around discussions on the latest COVID-19 updates with focus on international and national impact, risk communication activities, country preparedness plan, health partners activities, and national coordination between health and non-health partners. Attendees agreed on the need to strengthen coordination mechanisms in the health sector and with other sectors and to show solidarity with the served communities in this time of crisis.



## National AIDS Program updates guidelines for HIV-infected individuals with WHO support

With the support of WHO, the National AIDS Program updated its guidelines for diagnosis and management of HIV-infected individuals. The 2019 guidelines are roadmaps for a wide range of service providers including clinicians, pharmacists, laboratory directors and other healthcare providers focusing on antiretroviral drugs for treatment and prevention of HIV infections. The guidelines include innovative methods to prevent of HIV/AIDS as well as recommendations for stakeholders in maternal and child health programs, people living with HIV, and community-based organizations. The guidelines took into account the current HIV epidemiological situation in Lebanon and the availability of drugs and laboratory testing capacities.

During the first two months of 2020, twenty-one new cases were reported positive to the NAP and 35 new cases were enrolled in treatment at the ART center. The total number of People Living With HIV (PLWHA) that are currently on treatment in Lebanon reached 1,735. The majority of patients are taking first line medication and are virally suppressed, with only few numbers on second or third line treatment.

The ART center at the NAP spares no effort to ensure patient adherence to treatment regimen, through counseling at follow-up visits and through biological monitoring of patient HIV viral load. The ART center has a zero discrimination policy and offers free of charge treatment to Lebanese and non-Lebanese patients (mainly refugees).

## WHO team assesses preparedness activities at the Rafic Hariri International Airport

As part of its support to the preparedness activities of the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health for coronavirus disease (COVID-19), WHO conducted an assessment visit to the Rafic Hariri International Airport Beirut as the main point of entry in Lebanon, to check on the preparedness activities undertaken on its premises.

WHO Representative in Lebanon Dr Iman Shankiti and team members, accompanied by the Ministry of Public Health IHR focal point Dr Atika Berry, visited different departments of the airport and met with the Heads of General Security Forces and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation.

The WHO team also met with the MOPH airport medical team and visited the temperature screening points, the health check rooms, and the quarantine area. Dr Shankiti commended the collaborative efforts of the different teams and reiterated WHO's commitment to support further preparedness measures as the situation unfolds.





# WHO provides three hospitals with protective equipment



As part of the preparedness plan, WHO Lebanon has provided three public hospitals namely Beirut Karantina hospital, Saida Governmental Hospital and Zahle Governmental hospitals with Personal Protective Equipment for medical staff to make sure health workers in hospitals and reference laboratories are protected when diagnosing and treating patients that might be infected with COVID-19. The stock of PPEs includes gowns, coveralls, goggles, and head and shoe covers.

## Refresher workshop on tuberculosis registration system to cut down by half TB in migrant workers



The National Tuberculosis Program (NTP) with the support of WHO Lebanon, organized the Tuberculosis Registration System (TRS) for Latent TB in Migrant Workers-Refresher Workshop on 24 February 2020 to reinforce and upgrade knowledge and skills in the management of Latent TB. It trained focal persons from hospitals using the system who were not previously trained. One of the objectives is to decrease by half the burden of TB among migrant workers by 2021. Participants included nurses from NTP and focal persons assigned by the Ministry of Public Health from 22 public hospitals.

## People-centred care: towards engaging persons in their health care plan

Engaging adults in their self-care, especially those with long term conditions or complex needs, requires a change of mindset of the healthcare professionals. A collaborative care plan is when the person and the health care team work together on deciding on: 1) identifying needs, 2) exploring actions, 3) developing a plan for treatment and 4) reviewing this plan periodically. This will increase the skills and confidence of the person in actively engaging in self-care.

To move into this process of collaborative care plan and support planning, the primary care setting will need to be prepared in terms of multidisciplinary team and pathway for care planning, and the patients and their families will need to be informed and educated about care planning. It is vital to keep the ownership of the care plan with the patients, as this will increase their empowerment and will encourage their active involvement in their self-care.

WHO is currently working with the MOPH on integrating the people-centred primary care approach including improving health literacy starting with a pilot project of seven primary health care centres within the national primary healthcare centers network, with the ultimate aim of improving health outcomes and quality of life for people, and reducing avoidable demand for health and care services. This project is funded under the EU MADAD fund. WHO is piloting a project with seven primary health care centers to move forward.

### Steps for collaborative care plan and support planning

