

# Israel to lock down nationwide in main holiday season amid COVID-19 surge

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JERUSALEM: Israel will enter a three-week nationwide lockdown starting on Friday to contain the spread of the coronavirus after a second-wave surge of new cases, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday.

During the lockdown, which comes during the Jewish high-holiday season, Israelis will have to stay within 500 meters of their houses, but can travel to workplaces that will be allowed to operate on a limited basis.

Schools and shopping malls will be closed but supermarkets and pharmacies will remain open. The public sector will operate with fewer staff, but non-governmental offices and businesses will not have to close, as long as they do not accept customers.

Indoor gatherings are limited to 10 people and no more than 20 people outdoors.

"I know those measures will exact a heavy price on us all," Netanyahu said in a televised address. "This is not the kind of holiday we are used to. And we certainly won't be able to celebrate with our extended families."

The Finance Ministry said the lockdown will cost the economy, which slipped into a recession in the wake of the virus, an estimated 6.5 billion shekels (\$1.88 billion).

Netanyahu, who has faced increasing criticism over his handling of the coronavirus crisis, said he instructed his finance minister to come up with a new economic package to assist businesses hurt by the lockdown.

Israel declared an even tighter lockdown in April when the virus first arrived, after which daily cases dropped to low double digits among a population of nine million.

But as the economy reopened, daily infections jumped, passing 4,000 last week. On Saturday, 2,715 new cases were reported. Since the outbreak began, 1,108 people have died.

The country's health system "raised a red flag" a few days ago, spurring the government to act, Netanyahu said.

The director general of the Health Ministry, Hezi Levy, said in a radio interview earlier on Sunday that "dozens of localities are being sucked into the circle of morbidity."

"We have to impose severe restrictions, but they will be able to stem this wave and not bring us to the brink of an abyss," Levy said. (\$1 = 3.4566 shekels)



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## [UAE coronavirus cases drop after topping 1,000 a day earlier](#)

Sun, 2020-09-13 23:01

DUBAI: The UAE on Sunday recorded 640 new COVID-19 cases – significantly lower than recent days when numbers hit the highest level since the pandemic broke out.

The health ministry said the total number of cases had reached 79,489.

All the cases, who are various nationalities, are “stable and subject to the necessary health care,” the ministry said.

The number of daily cases in the UAE had dropped steadily from a high point on May 22 of 994. But figures have surged from 164 cases on Aug. 3.

The UAE recorded 1,007 new cases on Saturday, the highest daily number and

the first time cases crossed the 1,000 mark.

The ministry said 468 people had “fully recovered from the symptoms of the virus” bringing the total number of recoveries to 69,451.

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– وزارة الصحة ووقاية المجتمع الإماراتية – MOHAP UAE (@mohapuae)  
[September 13, 2020](#)

The ministry also said no deaths had been recorded in the previous 24 hours. The UAE has recorded 399 deaths from the coronavirus since the pandemic began.

Authorities across the country have issued a number of closure orders and large fines in efforts to bring the virus under control.

On Saturday, Dubai closed down a restaurant in Bluewaters Island and a swimming pool at a sports facility, while Ras Al-Khaimah ordered the closure of a wedding hall. In Fujairah several facilities were closed for not complying with the measures set by the government.

Dubai Police said on Saturday it had reported 141 violations and 1,422 warnings were issued in four shopping centers in one day.

One young man infected with coronavirus was caught violating home quarantine instructions.

He had published a video on social media, where he confirmed he had the virus and bragged about going out to buy coffee. He has been fined Dh50,000 and faces imprisonment and a further fine ranging from Dh200,000 (\$54,453) to one million dirham for encouraging the public to violate the laws.

The government also issued a new list of updated fines for individuals and entities not complying with the coronavirus measures and said they were increasing inspections. The fines, which range between Dh1,000 – 50-000, apply federally but authorities in each emirate can apply additional measures.

The Ministry of Health and Prevention launched a campaign to increase testing to isolate cases and those who they have been in contact with.

More than 84,000 new examinations were carried out in the space of 24 hours. Dubai Health Authority (DHA) on Sunday also issued a detailed list of health and safety guidelines for parents and children as students go back to school.

How to communicate with colleagues and teachers at school.

[#BackToSchool#COVID19](#) [pic.twitter.com/kwr850unGW](#)

– هيئة الصحة بدبي (@DHA\_Dubai) [September 12, 2020](#)

Meanwhile, Kuwait on Sunday reported two deaths and 553 new infected cases, bringing the total number to 560 and 94,764 respectively. The Ministry of Health said that 591 cases have recovered bringing the total to 84,995. Oman's health ministry said 52 new cases have emerged, bringing the total to 89,746, but announced a 93.3 percent recovery rate, with 83,771 cases having recovered from the virus so far.

[#Statement](#) No. 184

September 13, 2020 [pic.twitter.com/J0CkS3wZz1](https://pic.twitter.com/J0CkS3wZz1)

وزارة الصحة - عُمان (@OmaniMOH) [September 13, 2020](#)

The sultanate did not record any deaths on Sunday but the total death rate stands at 780. The coronavirus pandemic has affected over 29 million people in 213 countries and territories around the world and the death rate has topped 920,000. (Dh1 = \$0.27)



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UAE reports 1,007 new COVID-19 cases, highest since outbreak UAE daily coronavirus cases surge to near peak level as 931 new cases reported

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## [PLO official calls for joint Arab security plan](#)

Author:

Sun, 2020-09-13 22:30

AMMAN: The secretary-general of the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) executive committee, Saeb Erekat, on Sunday said that Palestinians would remain committed to the two-state solution even if 193 countries moved their embassies to Tel Aviv.

He said that no other option could ensure peace and security – nor bring an end to the conflict. “There are 51 percent Muslims and Christian Palestinian Arabs living between the sea and the Jordan River. What will you do with this Palestinian population?”

Addressing a virtual press conference attended by Arab and foreign journalists, he called on the Arab world to forge its own national security plans without relying on foreign powers.

Criticizing what he described as a “peace for protection” policy, Erekat said that Arabs must find their own system for protecting each other.

He said that Israel sought military superiority in the region. “The last war that took place between an Arab and a non-Arab country was the Iraq-Iran war, and Israel supported Iran,” he said.

Erekat said that Israel “will never be part” of such a national security matrix and that “Arab protection needs an Arab strategic plan.”

He said that the Palestinian leadership wanted security and prosperity for all Arab countries but it would not compromise on its principles.

The chief Palestinian negotiator said that the continuing smear campaign against the Palestinian leadership was unfair. “We heard the same broken record when the late martyr Yasser Arafat was besieged by Sharon.”

Erekat said that if the world's top democrats were Palestinian and demanded an independent Palestinian state, some would still want the leadership to be changed. “If Mother Teresa were to be the president of Palestine, Thomas Jefferson the prime minister of Palestine, Voltaire the speaker of the

Palestinian parliament, and they all demanded two states, Netanyahu and others would call for a new Palestinian leadership,” Saeb Erekat said. He said, however, that new elections would take place soon.

The senior Palestinian official criticized US President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for their military doctrine, which he said was based on control. “Trump divides the world into strong countries and countries that need the protection of strong countries. This is the law of the jungle.”



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## [Lebanon's overcrowded prison may be courting health disaster](#)

Author:

Sun, 2020-09-13 22:27

BEIRUT: Reports about the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Roumieh Prison, the largest in Lebanon, have caused panic among the families

of inmates who fear disaster if quick measures are not taken.

Several guards and inmates are reported to have contracted the virus. Lebanon's prisons already suffer from severe overcrowding, running at 160 percent of capacity at the end of 2019.

Roumieh, located east of Beirut, houses more than 5,500 prisoners and has a separate juvenile section.

The prison was opened in 1970 with a capacity of about 1,500 prisoners, but the number has grown over the years, making social distancing impossible. The possibility of granting a general amnesty to all inmates is currently under discussion.

Lawyer Ghida Franjeh said: "The judiciary ordered the release of many detainees since the announcement of the general mobilization to avoid crowding in detention facilities."

She added that parliamentary intervention would be required to ensure the release of those convicted of minor crimes.

"There are many questions that need answers: Were the infections discovered in the early stages?" she added. "Were the infected people isolated immediately?"

"The increase of overcrowding could lead to a health disaster in Roumieh Prison that may cross prison boundaries if the internal security forces and the judiciary do not take all necessary measures to protect infected prisoners and those in contact with them, especially since many prisoners suffer from weak immunity due to poor living conditions and health."

Many prisoners have complained of fatigue, high temperatures, coughing, shortness of breath, sore throats, loss of smell, and other symptoms. The prison pharmacy has run out of painkillers and fever remedies, according to reports.

Health Minister Hamad Hassan confirmed that there had been COVID-19 cases in Roumieh, but said infections were chiefly "among the security forces in the prison" and that "a very limited number of infections were reported among the prisoners.

"We are working to secure a hospital in Bekaa and another in Beirut to treat the detainees," he added.

The General Directorate of the Internal Security Forces stated: "Thirteen prisoners and nine security personnel tested positive for the virus on Sept. 11, and a place for quarantine has been prepared in the central prison, in cooperation with the International Red Cross and the World Health Organization (WHO), and sections have been allocated in government hospitals for necessary treatment."

Families of many detainees in Roumieh organized a protest in Tripoli, calling for necessary measures for the protection of prisoners and to prevent the

spread of the virus among them.

The total number of people infected with COVID-19 in Lebanon has reached 24,000, as the daily number of infections has exceeded 500 since mid-August. The total number of deaths as of Sunday was 239.

Lebanese Foreign Minister Charbel Wehbe has also been infected with the virus. His ministry's employees were subjected to PCR tests last week, and it was found that three people who had contact with the minister were also infected.

Tripoli MP Faisal Karami expressed his concern over the spread of the virus, with only 26 beds to treat COVID-19 patients in his home city, with people having to wait for six days to take tests.

Karami revealed that the residents of Tripoli and its municipality "do not yet believe in the existence of the virus, and people do not adhere to the preventive measures."

Meanwhile, a spokesman for the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), Andrea Tenente, said 90 peacekeepers had contracted the virus.

"Eighty-eight of them belong to the same unit. They have been kept in quarantine and all precautions are being taken to prevent the spread of the virus among the peacekeepers," he said.

"UNIFIL is taking very strict precautionary measures with all its military and civilian elements inside and outside their centers, by following all approved protocols, including quarantine and isolation, in line with the guidelines of the WHO and the Lebanese government. With regard to our employees, we have reviewed the roles of all."

He said all UNIFIL activities related to implementing its mandate in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1701 remain unaffected.



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## [UAE FM arrives in US for Israeli peace signing ceremony](#)

Sun, 2020-09-13 22:03

DUBAI: UAE Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Abdullah bin Zayed, arrived in Washington on Sunday heading an official delegation attending the signing ceremony of the UAE-Israeli peace deal. The White House announced that the UAE and Israel would sign a historic peace treaty at a ceremony in Washington on Sept. 15, in the presence of the UAE foreign minister and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. The delegation included several senior Emirati officials and ministers, as well as UAE's permanent representative to the United Nations Lana Nusseibeh. The UAE announced last month it would establish full relations with Israel in a deal brokered by Donald Trump, but the deal included an Israeli promise not to annex occupied Palestinian land in the West Bank.



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