

COVID-19 in Palestine and Libya



□The COVID-19 crisis is both an intensely local moment – with hundreds of millions unable to leave their neighbourhoods – and a global experience, with almost every country now working to suppress or contain the virus.

We were therefore particularly glad to hear from a Palestinian member of the Euro-Mediterranean Regional and Local Assembly (ARLEM) – Ramallah municipality – about the measure it is taking to respond to the crisis. Ramallah municipality wrote that it had quickly realised that COVID-19 pandemic would be “one of the most challenging stresses in its history”. It activated an integrated risk-management policy with six principal measures:

1. It established an emergency team in the city council, which now meets virtually to set actions in motion;
2. More than a month ago, on 5 March, the city closed all public parks and municipal facilities;
3. Municipal workers have disinfected a variety of public venues and spaces;
4. It made an open call for young volunteers to offer support to their neighbourhoods; more than 700 young people applied;
5. The municipality has focused on ensuring that solid waste continues to be collected and that waste-water and treatment plants remain in operation. Ramallah municipality is also supporting neighbouring cities efforts to maintain their services;
6. To ease the provision of services, the municipality has zoned the city into 19 neighbourhoods, and is using GIS interactive apps and spatial analysis to document cases, support decision-making and manage requests.

In its message, Ramallah municipality encouraged the creation of partnerships between states, cities and regions, so that they can face the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences side by side, exchanging knowledge, sharing resources, and learning from each other’s good practices.

The first winner of the ARLEM award for young entrepreneurs also wrote to the CoR, via our mailbox, covid19@cor.europa.eu. Najwa Shokriy said that her fashion company, Zimni Jdeed, which is based in Tripoli, has now producing protective clothing for medical workers. The circumstances are challenging, but the company is working 14 hours a day, doing everything it can to help doctors in the country. More details can be found [here](#). So far, Libya has confirmed 21 cases, with one death reported.