

Construction site workers can make appointments for free COVID-19 testing service

The Food and Health Bureau announced on January 13 that the Government will provide one-off free COVID-19 voluntary testing service to all construction site workers in Hong Kong from January 15 to January 31 via online booking. Booking for the relevant service can be made starting from today.

A spokesman for the Food and Health Bureau said, "There were a number of confirmed cases involving construction site workers recently. In order to reduce transmission risk of COVID-19 in the community, in addition to the compulsory testing notices issued for individual construction sites, the Government will offer one-off free COVID-19 testing service to all construction site workers in Hong Kong through community testing centres."

"We encourage construction site workers to actively participate in the free voluntary test to safeguard their health and that of their families and co-workers. The free testing service will be available until end-January. Construction site workers can choose a suitable time slot taking into account their own needs."

"If construction site workers have symptoms, they should seek medical attention immediately and undergo free testing provided by the Government as instructed by a medical professional. They should not attend the community testing centres."

Construction site workers should make advance booking for the free testing service via the community testing centre booking system (www.communitytest.gov.hk). Those who did not make an appointment will need to pay for the testing service at \$240.

The community testing centres are open daily from 8am to 1.30pm and from 2.30pm to 8pm. Deep cleaning and disinfection will be conducted when they close in the afternoon and at night. When arriving at the community testing centre at the designated time slot, construction site workers should present identity document used at the time of booking (such as Hong Kong identity card or passport), their construction worker registration card issued by the Construction Industry Council and the SMS booking confirmation for verification.

The free voluntary testing service will be offered starting from January 15 and last until January 31. During the period, each construction site worker can receive free testing service once only. Participants will be notified of a negative test result by SMS through their mobile phones. If there is any specimen tested with preliminarily positive COVID-19 result, it will be referred to the Public Health Laboratory Services Branch of the

Department of Health (DH) for a confirmatory test. Confirmed cases will be followed up and announced by the Centre for Health Protection of the DH.

In addition to attending the community testing centres for testing, construction site worker can continue to utilise other free testing channels provided by the Government, including obtaining a deep throat saliva specimen collection pack from post offices, MTR stations or designated general outpatient clinics of the Hospital Authority and return the specimen to the designated specimen collection points. For details on other testing means than community testing centres, please refer to the following webpage: www.coronavirus.gov.hk/eng/early-testing.html. The voluntary testing service at construction sites arranged by the Construction Industry Council and the Hong Kong Construction Association will continue in parallel.

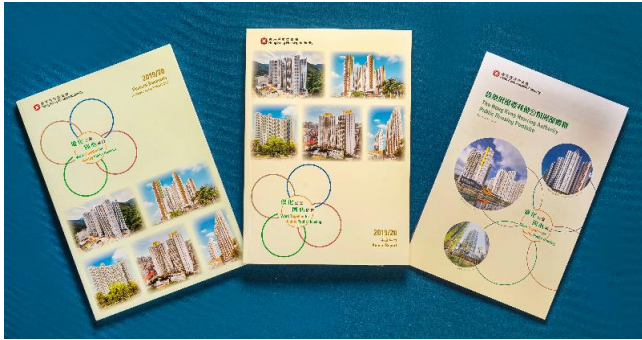
[HA Annual Report 2019/20 published \(with photo\)](#)

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Housing Authority:

The Annual Report and Financial Statements of the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) for the year 2019/20 were published today (December 9) and made available on the Housing Authority/Housing Department (HA/HD) website.

The theme of this year's Report is "Work Together for Quality Public Housing". Providing quality public housing for people in Hong Kong in need of affordable homes has been the HA's primary focus. It cannot be achieved without HA staff and teams working together to adopt quality designs and carry out effective initiatives. Amid the COVID-19 epidemic, the HA's determination to fight against the epidemic has contributed to safeguarding the health of the Hong Kong people.

A leaflet on the HA's public housing portfolio comes with the Annual Report, showing the geographic distribution and some useful figures of public rental housing estates and Home Ownership Scheme courts. Members of the public are welcome to browse the e-version of the Annual Report on the HA/HD website (www.housingauthority.gov.hk/mini-site/haar1920/en/index.html).



[Sudan deal plunges migrants in Israel into new uncertainty](#)

Author:

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TEL AVIV: Usumain Baraka speaks impeccable Hebrew, considers Israelis among his best friends and can quote passages from the Old Testament. But as a Sudanese asylum seeker, Baraka has no legal status in Israel and lives a precarious life tethered to the whims of the Israeli government.

Now, after Israel and Sudan agreed to normalize ties, Baraka is among 6,000 Sudanese in Israel once again fearing for their fate.

Israel already has indicated it will seek to settle the migrant issue in upcoming talks with Sudan, whipping up trepidation in the community that Israel might forcibly return them to Sudan, a place they say they fled because of conflict or persecution.

"If I return tomorrow or the day after when there is the official peace they are talking about, something awaits me there, and that's danger," said Baraka, 25, who fled Janjaweed militia attacks on his village in Darfur at the age of nine.

Israel and Sudan announced earlier this month they would normalize ties, making Sudan the third Arab country to do so in as many months.

The announcement brought satisfaction to Israelis. But after years of failed Israeli attempts to remove the migrants, it has renewed fears among the Sudanese who have long had an insecure existence in their adopted home.

African migrants, mainly from Sudan and Eritrea, began arriving in Israel in 2005 through its porous border with Egypt after Egyptian forces violently quashed a refugee demonstration and word spread of safety and job opportunities in Israel. Tens of thousands crossed the desert border in often dangerous journeys.

Israel initially turned a blind eye to their influx and many took up menial jobs in hotels and restaurants. But as their numbers swelled, there was a backlash, with growing calls to expel the new arrivals.

Israel considers the vast majority of the migrants to be job seekers and says it has no legal obligation to keep them. The Africans say they are asylum seekers who fled for their lives and face renewed danger if they return. Many come from Darfur and other conflict-ridden regions.

Sudan's former leader, Omar Bashir, has been charged with genocide for a campaign of mass killings that took place in Darfur under his watch. The area still experiences tribal clashes and rebel violence.

Under international law, Israel cannot forcibly send migrants back to a country where their life or liberty may be at risk. Critics accuse the government instead of trying to coerce them into leaving.

Over the years, Israel has detained thousands of migrants in remote desert prisons, left thousands of asylum requests open and offered cash payments to those who agreed to move to third African countries.

It also has built a barrier along the border with Egypt that stopped the influx and reached a deal with the UN to resettle thousands of migrants in Western countries while allowing thousands of others to remain in Israel – though the deal was quickly scrapped under pressure from anti-migrant activists and hard-line legislators.

The migrants' presence has long divided the country. Their supporters say Israel, a country founded upon the ashes of the Holocaust and built up by Jewish refugees, should welcome those seeking refuge. Opponents claim the migrants have brought crime to the low-income south Tel Aviv neighborhoods where they have settled. Some Israeli politicians have labeled them infiltrators, with one calling them "a cancer" threatening the country's Jewish character.

"I believe they are economic migrants and they act as if they own the place," said Sheffi Paz, a prominent anti-migrant activist.

Publicly, Israeli leaders have been guarded about their plans. On Sunday, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israeli and Sudanese delegations would soon meet to "discuss cooperation in many fields, including in the field of migration." A spokeswoman for Israel's Interior Ministry declined to comment.

A top Sudanese military official with direct knowledge of the early contacts with Israel said the matter of returning the migrants has not yet been discussed. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the matter in public.

Israel deported about 1,000 migrants back to South Sudan in 2012 after an Israeli court determined they were no longer at risk in their home country, which had just gained independence. But activists say some died there from disease and others fled renewed conflict.

Israel has acknowledged in recent court proceedings that the situation in Sudan remains volatile, and advocacy groups that work with the migrants say that deporting them will come up against stiff legal challenges.

"If Israel will dare to deport Sudanese with open asylum claims it will be a grave violation of the most fundamental principle of the refugee convention," said Sigal Rozen, public policy director at the Hotline for Refugees and Migrants.

She said Israeli leaders may nonetheless be raising the issue to prompt some Sudanese to leave voluntarily.

Migrants have already been hard-hit by the coronavirus pandemic, their jobs in restaurants and hotels threatened by repeated lockdowns. Without proper status in Israel, they are not entitled to claim unemployment insurance.

Rozen said some sympathetic employers have kept on migrant workers just to give them a lifeline.

In the south Tel Aviv neighborhood where many migrants live, a pedestrian

street typically lively with shops and restaurants was dreary on a recent day. Grey shutters sealed the entrances to many businesses and some mask-wearing migrants lingered on stoops.

Baraka fled Darfur after his father was killed in front of him. He settled in a displacement camp along the border with Chad before departing on a precarious journey north, through Libya and Egypt, to be smuggled through the desert into Israel, where he has lived for more than a decade.

He submitted an asylum request to Israel in 2013 and it remains open. While he welcomes any deal that stabilizes relations between Sudan and Israel, he doesn't believe that opens the door for his return.

"I do believe in what they're talking about now, normalization between Sudan and Israel," Baraka said. "I support it, but we need to know who it's being done with, when to do it and how to do it."



Main category:

[Middle-East](#)

Tags:

[Israel](#)

[Palestine](#)

KSR relief launches new medical campaign in Sudan
Sudanese in Israel fear being returned after normalization

[**Government consults on new measures to**](#)

boost the fishing industry and coastal communities

Press release

Package of consultations launched seeking views on opportunities for the fishing industry



New proposals seek to ensure more catch is landed in the UK.

The government is seeking views on new measures to boost our fishing industry, including how to fairly distribute the new opportunities from leaving the Common Fisheries Policy, and increase the economic benefits from fishing activity for our coastal communities.

The government has today launched a package of consultations which seek views on:

Fisheries Minister Victoria Prentis said:

As we take back control of our fisheries, we are creating new powers to set fairer fishing opportunities for industry and coastal communities through our flagship Fisheries Bill.

We want your help to design a more profitable fishing industry. This includes ensuring that more fish are landed in UK ports, providing a boost to the whole supply chain, from auction houses to fish processors.

The strengthened 'economic link' proposals put forward for consultation would see English licenced fishing vessels land 70% of their catch in the UK – up from 50%. The plans would allow vessel owners to use a combination of the two criteria – landings and quota donation – to meet the economic link

requirement, recognising the importance of flexibility to support ongoing business practices.

As the UK continues to negotiate with the EU and other coastal States, the UK government is seeking views on how new opportunities secured through these negotiations should be distributed, both across the UK and within England, in order to deliver maximum benefits to our fleets and coastal communities.

The three consultations are open from today for four weeks, until 10 November 2020.

Published 13 October 2020

[LCSD launches online music programme "Jazz Un-cancelled"](#)

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has launched an online jazz music programme "Jazz Un-cancelled", an online site-specific project held at the Kwai Tsing Theatre. The four-episode project aims to explore music improvisation with surprise elements, integrating different parts of life (such as meditation and coffee making) with different genres played out in various spaces of the theatre (such as the dressing room, loading bay, foyer, etc) to expand the possibilities of staging.

The first two episodes are available for viewing online and others will be released very soon. Discussion sessions are conducted in Cantonese. Programme details are as follows:

First episode: "Jazz, World Music & Percussion"

Content is from Hong Kong-born drummer Anna Fan, who holds a music degree from the Hong Kong Baptist University, majoring in percussion. In 2008, she studied jazz drumming at the Berklee College of Music in the US. She also formed the band Da Jian, which focuses on mixing jazz with ethnic rhythms. Their performance is held at the theatre's loading bay, where they explore some vigorous, powerful and energetic rhythms.

Da Jian band members are Anna Fan (drums), Perkin Yu (low tom) and Tracy Lam (snare, repique).

Guests are Kenny Lin (saxophone), Kaho Wong (saxophone, flute), Joey Wong (percussion) and Jason Leung (percussion).

Second episode: "Jazz & Mindfulness"

Content is from Angelita Li, who is regarded as one of the most prominent singers of jazz and Brazilian music in Hong Kong. She is also a certified yoga instructor and meditation practitioner. Backed by soft jazz played by Alan Kwan and friends at the foyer of the Kwai Tsing Theatre, the alluring

voice of famed jazz singer Li creates a meditative space that lures the audience in.

Band members are Angelita Li (vocal), Alan Kwan (guitar), Scott Dodd (upright bass) and Dean Li (drums).

Third episode: "Chamber Jazz & Hand-Drip Coffee"

Content here comes from a cup of good coffee, and is the creative drive behind Teriver Cheung and his musicians that make up Ensemble Transience. In this performance, they invite Vincent Hung, an outstanding barista in Hong Kong, to share the "stage" with them. Vincent has been featuring live jazz at his cafés to promote music culture in Hong Kong. The sounds of making coffee and jazz come together to create some amazing music.

Band members are Teriver Cheung (guitar, composition), Rebecca Li (cello), Bowen Li (keyboard) and Samuel Chan (drums). The guest barista is Vincent Hung.

Fourth episode: "Jazz & Ambience"

Content is from Mike Yip, who is more than just a traditional jazz musician, is deeply fascinated by the sounds and textures of the modular synthesiser and is keen to explore the ambience that it brings. In this new project with fellow musicians Vic Tsui, Olivier Cong and special guest Nelson Hiu, he and the band have transformed the theatre's dressing room into a performance space filled with a unique sound and ambience.

Thisisthewaytheworldends band members are Mike Yip (eurorack synthesiser, electric guitar), Vic Tsui (percussions, synthesiser) and Olivier Cong (voice, electric organ). The guest is Nelson Hiu (keyboard).

To view the online programme, please visit the LCSD's one-stop Online Resources Centre at www.lcsd.gov.hk/en/onlineresources.html. For programme enquiries or more information, please call 2268 7321 or visit www.lcsd.gov.hk/cp.