

# COVID-19 Weekly Update

## 23 July

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For public health  
and safety, please  
**wear a mask**  
while taking public  
transport.



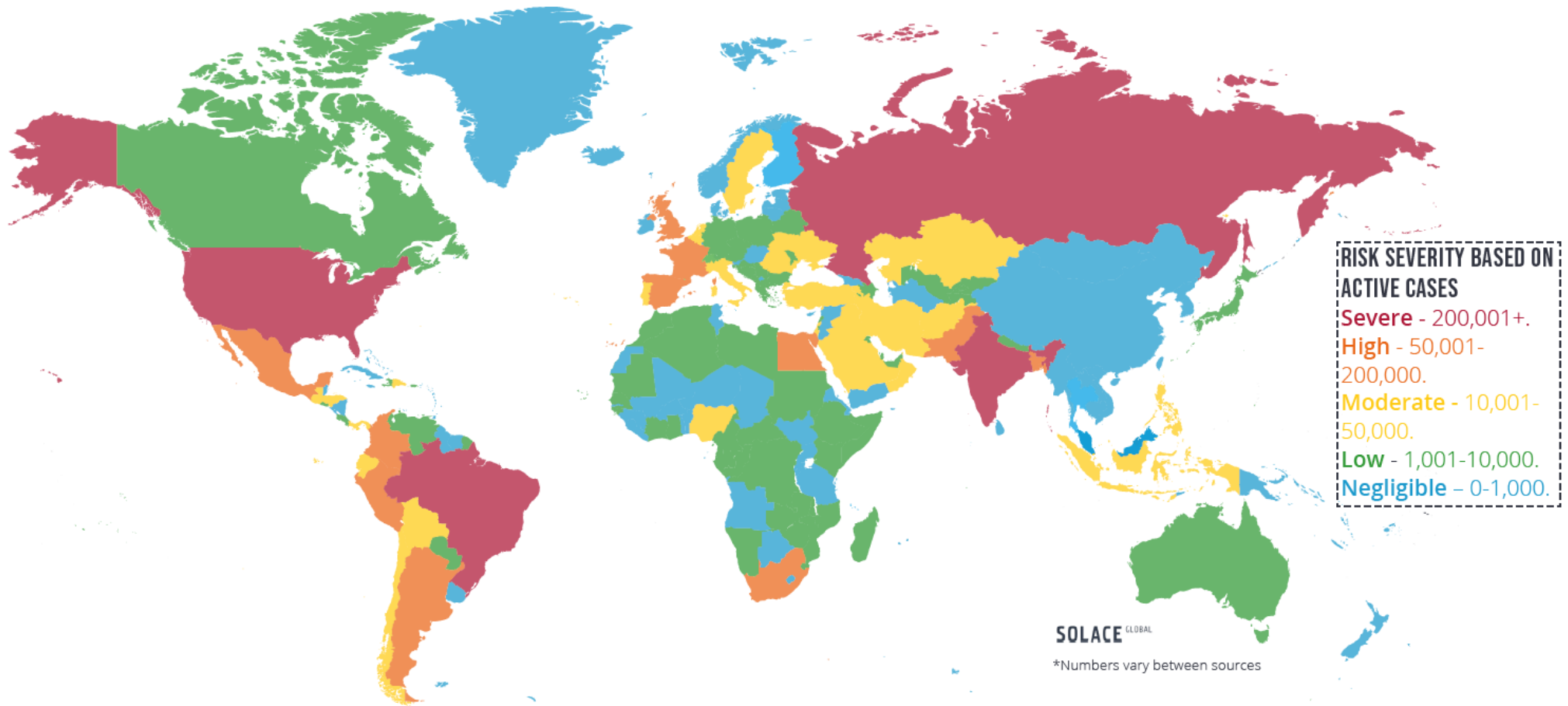
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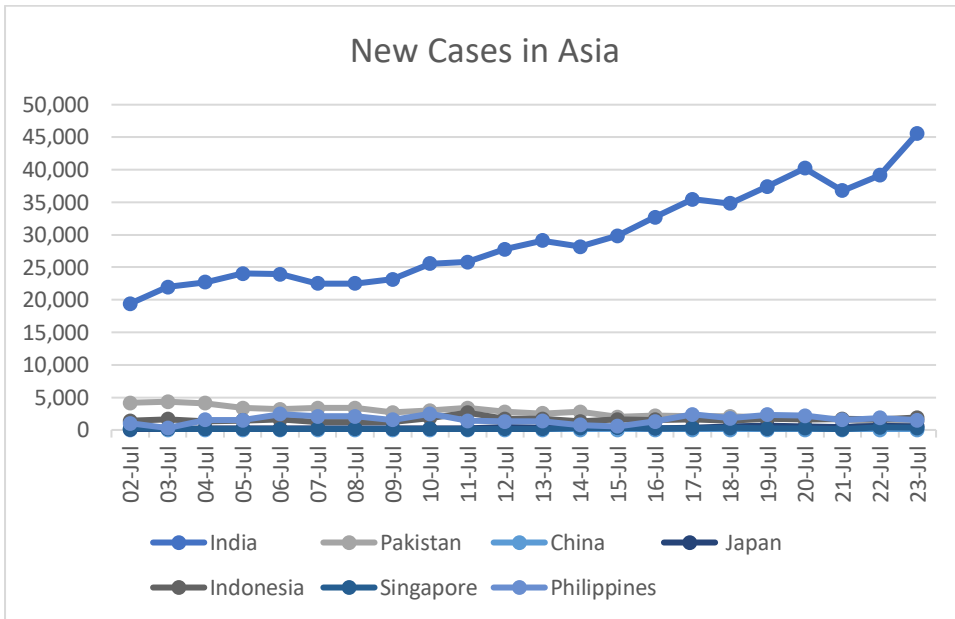
**Current Statistics (Numbers vary between sources)**

Total cases	15,405,069	Total Active Cases	5,391,956	Total Confirmed Recoveries	9,382,098	Total Confirmed Deaths	631,015
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# Asia



Covid-19 cases in Asia continues to surge, as countries battle their first and second waves of the virus, many of whom seem to be unable to determine an effective containment strategy.

This week Hong Kong has registered its highest daily increase in infections, registering over 100 new cases for multiple consecutive days. The territory’s Chief Executive, Carrie Lam, has described the situation as “really critical”, while health and municipal authorities discuss the possibility of imposing a curfew. A significant degree of restrictions had already been issued the week before, mandating the closure of gyms and clubs, as well as the mandatory use of facemasks indoors.

Indonesia overtook China as the country with most confirmed cases in East Asia, having reported a total of 86,521 infections since the beginning of the pandemic. The country, scoring the world’s fourth-largest population, had been criticised throughout the pandemic for its relatively moderate lockdown restrictions and now government authorities are coming under fire again for their handling of the disease, including an overall lack of testing.

Further easing of restrictions, such as the reopening of cinemas, has now been halted, while stricter measures are being discussed. A nationwide lockdown remains, however, highly unlikely. Even in the

early stages of the pandemic, the government had deferred authority to local and regional officials to implement adequate countermeasures.

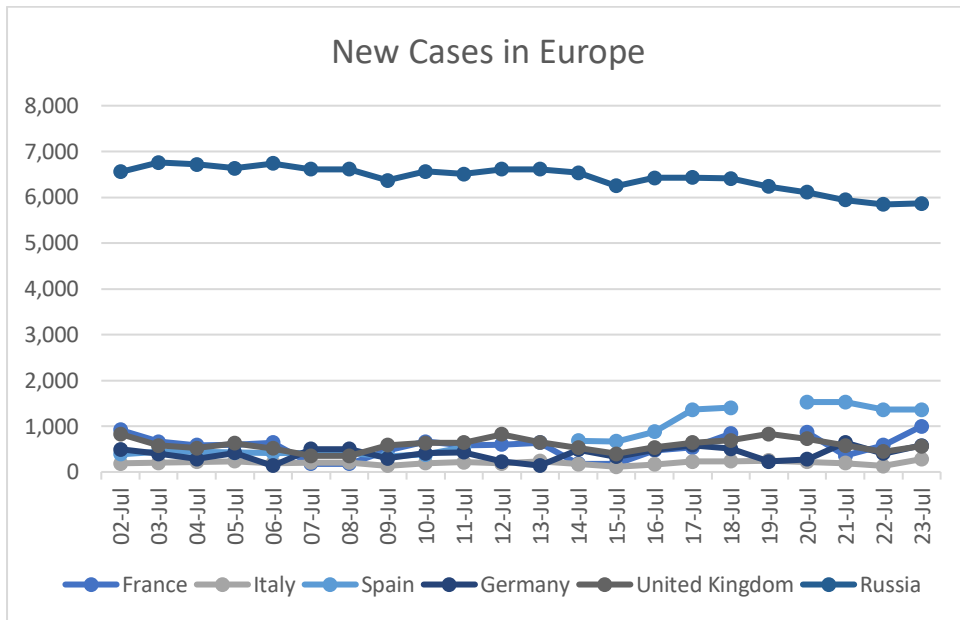
The Philippines, another Asian country leading in infection rates, will ramp up testing in the coming weeks according to its president, Rodrigo Duterte. The decision was made in retaliation to a sharp spike in infections registered over the past month; most likely a result of lockdown restrictions being eased. Furthermore, Duterte also declared his intention to mandate arrests to anyone who is found not in compliance with the Covid-19 guidelines, including the obligation to wear facemasks both outdoors and indoors while maintaining social distancing.

Australia, which still ranks among the most successful countries worldwide in containing the virus, has warned that it will take weeks to eliminate the localised outbreak in Melbourne. Bracing for a second wave, authorities have rapidly imposed a six-week-long lockdown in the affected districts, but Victoria’s premier, Daniel Andrews, has recently declared that it is too soon to be optimistic. Cases are reportedly growing in the neighbouring, and most populous, state of New South Wales (NSW), with 20 new cases registered on Monday, the highest figures in three months.

Countries	Active Covid cases	New Covid cases	Domestic lockdown	International Travel Restrictions
India	427,308	Increase	Moderate	High
Pakistan	50,307	Decrease	Moderate	High
China	240	Increase	Light	High
Japan	4,663	Dramatic Increase	Light	High
Indonesia	36,917	Stable	Moderate	High
Singapore	4,276	Increase	Light	High
Philippines	48,136	Dramatic Increase	Moderate	High



## Europe



The European leaders have reached an agreement over a Covid-19 recovery stimulus plan, after days of negotiations during a five-day-long summit in Brussels. The deal, which will see 750 billion euros of joint debt to kickstart the economies that suffered from the effect of the pandemic, was drafted by German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron, and required unanimous approval of the 27 member states.

While the plan represents a positive move by a European Union weakened by both the pandemic and the departure of the United Kingdom, the economic stimulus might not be enough for the bloc to avoid a large-scale recession.

Despite successfully avoiding a second wave of infections, thus far, Europe is witnessing several localised outbreaks of the virus, resulting in lockdowns and other travel restrictions being implemented in a number of countries.

Spain's region of Catalonia is facing a stark resurgence in infections, which continue to grow despite the localised lockdown imposed by the government last week. Reports have also indicated a low rate of compliance with the lockdown regulations, with locals gathering on beaches and in parks, in defiance of

social distancing regulations. On Monday, the chief of Catalonia's coronavirus monitoring unit warned the citizens that a continuous growth in infections will likely result in a lockdown and further damage the weakened tourism industry. Government officials have, however, reassured the general public that no talks about closing the Spanish border are ongoing with European partners.

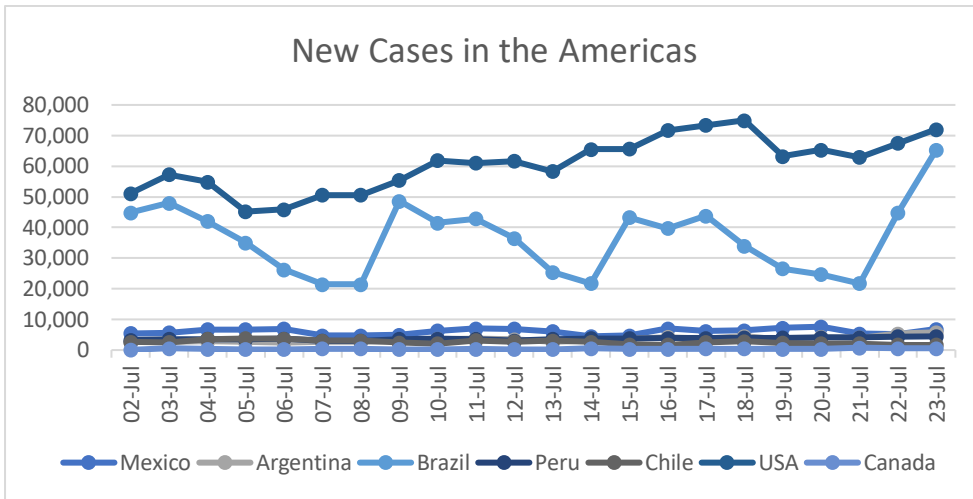
Only three weeks after the government scrapped the obligation to wear face masks and most of the Covid-19 related restrictions, the government in the Czech Republic has warned about a significant uptick in active cases, which have now almost reached 5,000. Most of the infections have been reported in the Moravia-Silesia region and have lower hospitalisation and fatality rate than in the previous high, earlier in April. Government authorities have, however, reintroduced the obligation to wear masks and reduced the opening times of restaurants and bars.

In the Netherlands, the National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM) has recently released its findings over the use of sampling and analysis of sewage water to establish Covid-19 presence even before the first cases become symptomatic. This could be used as a rapid response tool to guide and direct testing and containment efforts and effectively help in isolating localised outbreaks. A similar project is also being piloted in Italy, with sampling and analysis capabilities being used in 15 main tourist destinations to prevent spikes in the virus created by the influx of foreign travellers.

Countries	Active cases	Covid	New Covid cases	Domestic lockdown	International Travel Restrictions
France	68,207		Dramatic Increase	Light	Moderate
Italy	12,322		Stable	Light	Moderate
Spain	N/A		Slight Increase	Light	Moderate
Germany	6,688		Stable	Light	Moderate
UK	N/A		Increase	Light	Light
Russia	201,816		Stable	Moderate	High



# Americas



Covid-19 cases continue to grow in both North and Latin America, with the USA also registering a consistent rise in virus-related deaths. Overall, cases in the US have risen for seven consecutive weeks, causing an increasing number of states to halt their reopening processes and even imposing some restrictions.

A newly released report by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), moreover, suggested that the official number of infections might be actually significantly inaccurate, as a series of antibody tests showed that an alarming amount of people who experienced mild or no symptoms failed to identify their illness as Covid-19, seek medical care and self-isolate. For instance, in Missouri, the research conducted by the CDC indicated that the infection rate might have been 13 times higher than what reported by official figures.

Despite the concerning estimates, the American public seems to be increasingly sceptical of the virus and its impact, as indicated by a recent poll conducted by Axios-Ipsos. According to the results, approximately 30 percent of the surveyed individuals believe the number of Covid-related deaths to be significantly lower than reported by official figures. The growing trend of denial is particularly dangerous as the country is struggling to deal with its second wave and to induce compliance with lockdown regulations.

In Latin America, Brazil continues to lead as the worst affected country, reporting almost 620,000 active

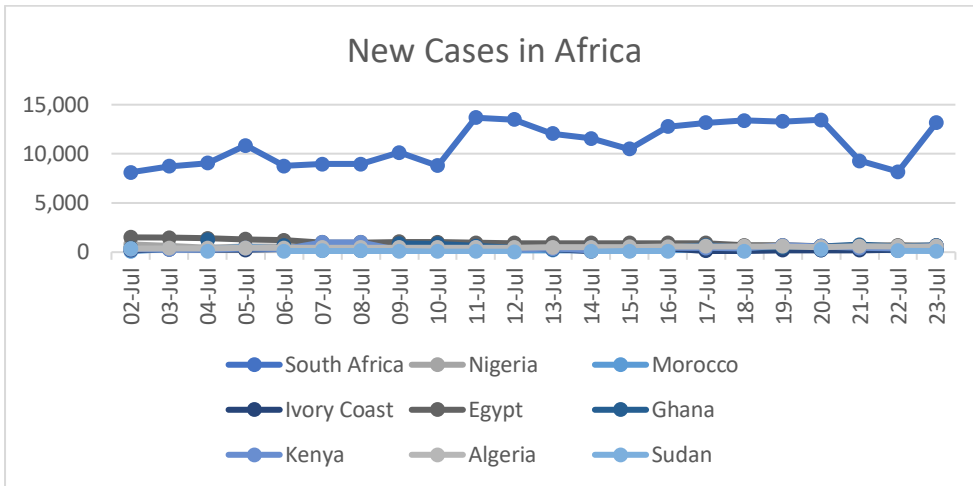
cases, including its president, Jair Bolsonaro, who continues to underplay the impact of the pandemic. In the past week, two more government officials, Citizenship Minister Onyx Lorenzoni and Education Minister Milton Ribeiro, have tested positive to the virus. Bolsonaro and his allies continue to be the object of widespread criticism for spreading misinformation about the outbreak and this week and its treatment, particularly regarding the effectiveness of the anti-malaria drug hydroxychloroquine. Both Bolsonaro and Lorenzoni have publicly endorsed the positive effect of the medicine, despite the lack of any scientific proof.

Despite reporting the fourth highest death toll in the world, Mexico has officially started reopening its businesses, implementing a strategy named "the new normal", despite health officials warning against such a premature move. While the new normal encourages individuals to follow strict hygiene and safety procedures, it does not require people and businesses to implement social distancing or self-isolation measures.

Countries	Active Covid cases	New Covid cases	Domestic lockdown	International Travel Restrictions
Mexico	89,681	Stable	Light	Moderate
Argentina	78,781	Dramatic Increase	High	High
Brazil	616,843	Stable	Light	High
Peru	96,849	Slight Increase	Moderate	High
Chile	18,439	Decrease	High	High
USA	2,011,613	Stable	Moderate/High	Moderate
Canada	5,228	Stable	Light	High



# Africa



Over the past week, the total cases in the African continent surpassed 750,000, with over 15,000 deaths, amidst fears of cases being under-reported due to lack of testing. The most affected countries remain South Africa, Egypt, Algeria, Nigeria and Ghana.

According to some epidemiological reports, these are effectively just countries ahead of the curb, most likely due to their air links to the rest of the world, which made them among the first to receive an influx of imported cases. In the past month, however, health authorities throughout Africa have registered a transition from infections arriving from abroad to localised outbreaks, especially as most countries have imposed strict travel restrictions.

On Monday, the World Health Organisation (WHO) voiced grave concerns over the outbreak in Africa, saying the rapid surge in infection rates could cause a dramatic escalation in cases in a continent largely unequipped to handle a pandemic and already ravaged by other deadly diseases. John Nkengasong, the Director of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, recently stated that “the pandemic is gaining full momentum” and that the hospitals will soon be overwhelmed.

While infection rates are consistently growing, Covid-related deaths remain comparatively low, despite the difficulty experienced by health officials and NGOs to provide adequate treatment, particularly in more remote areas. This has been attributed to the lower average age of the population, as younger individuals are less likely to die as a result of the virus.

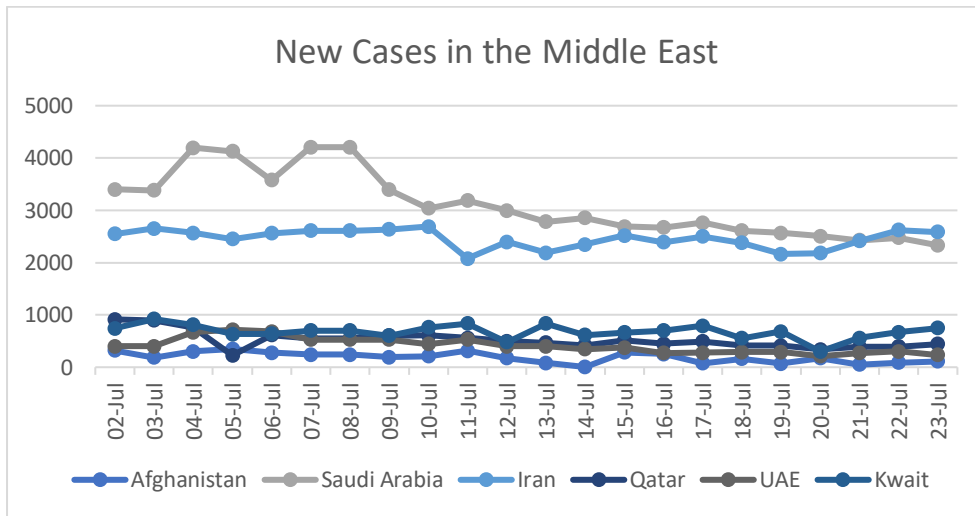
South Africa, the worst affected country on the continent, is already ranking fifth worldwide in the number of confirmed cases, reporting numbers that validate critics of the government’s choice to lift the lockdown and ease some of the restrictions initially imposed to contain the virus. Due to the spike in cases being largely attributed to the general lack of compliance by the population with the existing rules, such as the mandatory use of facemasks, the Health Minister appealed to the population to combat the “lockdown fatigue” and be diligent in following the guidelines. However, at the current rate, the number of cases in South Africa is projected to reach one million by early August.

This week, Zimbabwe has announced the introduction of a night-time curfew, which will be enforced by security personnel deployed throughout the largest cities. All individuals who are not required to work at night will have to remain in their homes unless they seek medical attention or urgently need groceries. During the day, business hours will be restricted to between 08:00 and 15:00. The decision was sparked by a spike in infections registered over the past week, which led the government to attempt to proactively issue restrictions and prevent the hospitals from being overwhelmed by people seeking treatment.

Countries	Active Covid cases	New Covid cases	Domestic lockdown	International Restrictions	Travel
South Africa	159,833	Stable	Moderate	High	
Nigeria	21,716	Stable	High	High	
Morocco	2,041	Increase	High	High	
Ivory Coast	5,645	Decrease	Moderate	High	
Egypt	55,230	Decrease	Moderate	High	
Ghana	3,429	Increase	Moderate	High	
Kenya	7,975	Increase	High	High	
Algeria	6,778	Increase	Moderate	High	
Sudan	4,694	N/A	High	High	



## Middle East



The situation in the Middle East remains largely unchanged during the past week, with countries preparing to celebrate Hajj, despite the pilgrimage being restricted to fewer, locally based participants. These were chosen based on health and safety criteria, such as age and absence of chronic diseases.

On Wednesday, the Saudi Red Crescent Authority (SRCA) announced the health and security precautions that will be implemented during the festivity in order to prevent the spread of Covid-19. A widespread network of emergency services will be deployed to the area, with over 17 emergency centres, 250 specialists and technicians and more than 100 ambulances.

Over the weekend, Iran has registered a spike in Covid-related deaths, reaching 163 on Sunday alone. Addressing the concerns over the pandemic in the country, President Hassan Rouhani, decided to impose some restrictions in Tehran and other virus hotspots across Iran including banning religious and cultural functions, closing boarding schools, cafes, indoor pools, amusement parks and zoos.

Furthermore, in his speech, the president has given an overview of the government’s estimation of the actual number of infections in the country, which could amount to almost 30 percent of the population. This estimate takes into account all the people who experienced only mild symptoms of the virus and did not seek medical advice. Iran has been one of the worst-hit countries in the Middle East and, since the government began allowing businesses to reopen and for people to gather, the number of cases have consistently increased.

Covid-19 continues to ravage the war-torn country of Yemen. Recent reports indicate that nearly 100 health workers are believed to have died from the virus, by far the largest figure worldwide. This suggests that the overall death toll in the country could be ten times higher than the official numbers report.

A number of Gulf countries are preparing to restart or increase their international flights. The UAE has recently declared that all passengers arriving at or travelling through its airports will be required to undergo a Covid-19 test. Kuwait has also recently released its guidelines for air travel safety, which include random testing of passengers, obligatory use of facemasks and maintain social distancing. Kuwait aims to resume international air travel on 1 August.

Countries	Active Covid cases	New Covid cases	Domestic lockdown	International Restrictions	Travel
Afghanistan	11,133	Decrease	High	Severe	
Saudi Arabia	45,157	Decrease	Light	Severe	
Iran	21,730	Stable	High	High	
Qatar	3,067	Stable	Moderate	High	
UAE	6,798	Slight Decrease	Light	High	
Kuwait	9,248	Stable	Moderate	High	