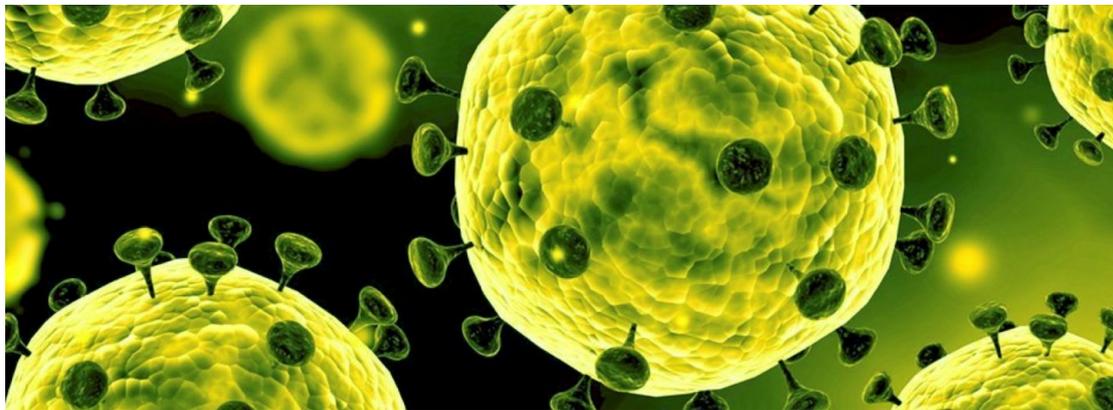




Arab Reform Initiative

Blog, 29 May 2020

ARI Blog and Updates: The Impact of the Coronavirus in MENA





Sudan: Managing COVID-19 Pandemic During a Time of Transition

Ezzan Kunna | 29 May 2020

Sudan's current transitional government has inherited a fragile health system that



suffered years of neglect and underinvestment. The spread of COVID-19 poses important challenges to the country's health and political structures. This Q&A looks at how Sudan's government and non-government actors are faring against the spread of the pandemic and the impact of the lockdown on the political transition in the country.

Can Tunisia Shake Off “Business as Usual” Following Covid-19?

Salma Huerbi | 20 May 2020



The consequences of Covid-19 on Tunisia's already fragile economy are bound to exacerbate existing social tensions. The government has rolled out a series of socio-economic measures to support individual entrepreneurs and businesses to maintain jobs and incomes across all sectors. This paper argues that the government's support to the private sector represents a golden opportunity to rectify longstanding problems in state-business relations and institute a culture of corporate accountability. But to do so, the government should place the Covid-19 response within a broader effort to address the persistent and systemic challenges the country faces from corruption to rent-seeking to vulnerable workers' conditions.

What it means to be a Palestinian child in an Israeli prison in Coronavirus times

Claire Nicoll | 20 May 2020



Each year approximately 500-700 Palestinian children are detained and prosecuted in the Israeli military court system. The most common charge is stone throwing, for which the maximum sentence is 20 years. Currently, more than 190 Palestinian children remain in detention in Israeli prisons, the majority of whom, like Ahmed, are in pre-trial detention and have not been convicted of any offence. This is despite calls by the United Nations to release them before the Coronavirus spreads.

Lebanon: Managing Covid-19 in the Time of Revolution

Ishac Diwan & Joelle M. Abi-Rached | 07 May 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic in Lebanon is a crisis within a crisis. It occurred amidst a broader socio-economic meltdown that has shaken the country in recent months. While Lebanon appears to have responded effectively to the pandemic so far, a number of major challenges await it. With little measures to mitigate the economic impact of the confinement and protesters pushing to return to the streets, the country is entering an extremely volatile period. The only way out will be through measures that address the sanitary as well as underlying socio-economic issues



that are threatening the entire country.

Will COVID-19 Mark the Endgame for Iraq's Muhasasa Ta'ifia?

Ahmed Tabaqchali | 24 April 2020

Iraq's sectarian-based political system has depended on oil rents since 2003 to ensure its legitimacy and buy loyalty. Already running out of steam and challenged by protesters, it faces a major new test due to the drop in oil prices caused by the COVID-19 crisis. Unable to maintain its expensive patronage system, and in the absence of any real political reform, the days of the Muhasasa Ta'ifia may be running out.

Is the Worst Part Behind Us? Epidemiology, Data and Lebanon's COVID-19 Response



Sirine Anouti | 22 April 2020

Data from Lebanon suggests that the country is experiencing a significant decrease in COVID-19 spread. Epidemiologists are monitoring to see if infection rates remain low for at least two incubation periods before declaring a successful containment. The lockdown strategy has come at a great cost to middle-to-low income groups given the absence of any social safety measure and the sustainability of lockdown measures will require urgent relief support.

Testing for COVID-19: What Should Lebanon Do?

Fatima Al Sayah | 15 April 2020

Testing for COVID-19 is globally supported but is approached differently from country to country. This paper outlines Lebanon's approach to testing so far and asks crucial questions about what the country can do at this stage given its limited



testing resources, fragmented and under-financed healthcare system and dire economic circumstances.

Tunisia Facing COVID-19: To Exceptional Circumstances, Exceptional Measures?

Eya Jrad | 14 April 2020

With COVID-19, Tunisia is dealing with an unprecedented emergency that is testing its newly established democratic institutions. This paper explores how Tunisia's different institutions have responded so far to the crisis, and sheds light on how each is trying to assert its role under the exceptional circumstances imposed by the pandemic.

After the Pandemic: Reimagining the Role of State and Non-State Actors in



(Re)building National Health Systems in the Arab World

Fadi El-Jardali | 10 April 2020

In the Arab region, countries have become increasingly dependent on non-state actors, notably the private sector, for healthcare provision and any response that includes the State alone may not be sufficient to address the COVID-19 pandemic. This paper explores how state and non-state actors in Arab countries have collaborated so far and suggests ways forward to ensure quality healthcare services for all.

The Future of the Algerian Hirak Following the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dris Nouri | 7 April 2020

The spread of the COVID-19 pandemic to Algeria has forced the Algerian popular Hirak to suspend demonstrations that continued without interruption for over a year despite the authorities' various manoeuvres to disrupt them. This paper examines the Algerian authorities' attempt to exploit the suspension of the protests to deal with the Hirak and assesses the ability of the popular movement to overcome this period.



The Politics of Coronavirus: Inequality, Repression, and Conflict

Nadim Houry | 3 April 2020

No one can predict the full impact of the unfolding Covid-19 pandemic on the MENA region, but three issues deserve close attention. MENA was already the world's most unequal region. While the virus doesn't distinguish between people based on wealth, income level affects coping mechanisms.

Syria's Growing Economic Woes: Lebanon's Crisis, the Caesar Act and Now the Coronavirus

Jihad Yazigi | 26 March 2020

The already bleak prospects of the Syrian economy have worsened in recent months with the Lebanon crisis, the enactment of the Caesar Act and now the coronavirus pandemic. This paper examines their impact on the Syrian economy and the population at large. While the cumulative impact is hard to assess at this stage, Syria's population will remain heavily dependent on the international humanitarian effort. The future of this effort will itself depend on major donor countries whose own economies are likely to emerge weakened from the coronavirus pandemic.

COVID-19: Urgent Measures Must Be Taken



by MENA Governments to Protect the Prison Population

Joint Statement | 24 March 2020

In light of the global COVID-19 pandemic outbreak—qualified as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the World Health Organization (WHO)—we, the undersigned organizations, express grave concern over the situation of detainees and prisoners across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). While certain states in the region have taken some positive steps to protect the general population, the prison population remains particularly vulnerable.



About Arab Reform Initiative

The Arab Reform Initiative is the leading independent Arab think tank working with expert partners in the Middle East and North Africa and beyond to articulate a home-grown agenda for democratic change. It conducts research and policy analysis and provides a platform for inspirational voices based on the principles of diversity, impartiality and social justice.

- We produce original research informed by local experiences and partner with institutions to achieve impact across the Arab world and globally
- We empower individuals and institutions to develop their own concept of policy solutions
- We mobilize stakeholders to build coalitions for positive change

Our aim is to see vibrant democratic societies emerge and grow in the region.

Founded in 2005, the Arab Reform Initiative is governed by a Plenary of its members and an Executive Committee.

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