



Week Ending 14 September 2020

Coronavirus Cases

	Overall	New This Week
Total Cases	840	216
Deaths	46	6
Recoveries	282	124

Cases by Region

Jazira region: 182

Euphrates region: 21

Deir-ez-Zor region: 3

Shebha pocket: 10

Key Developments

- Over 100 health-workers in NES confirmed to have coronavirus
- Kurdish Red Crescent raises alarm over false sense of security
- Health authorities try to overcome chronic under-testing
- Corona cases in Jazira region, where most testing is concentrated, increase 122% week-on-week (82 to 182)
- 10-fold increase in cases detected in Shebha (1 to 10), situation likely far graver due to chronic under-testing
- Deir-ez-Zor is region in North and East Syria with the least individuals reached, per UN

In Depth

Kurdish Red Crescent raises alarm over false sense of security

Dr. Sherwan Beri of the Kurdish Red Crescent tells RIC: "Coronavirus cases are not decreasing. The main problem is that people are not telling KRC they are sick. People are dying in their houses, yet in the hospital we only have 6 patients. The Intensive Care Unit is not working properly in Jazira. All the people that have arrived to the intensive care unit have died."

Health authorities try to overcome chronic undertesting

Despite the opening of a number of Covid-19 hotlines, many people remain untested. This is due to the lack of sufficient testing supplies and also a resistance from people to admit corona is a threat, and that they might have it. People are remaining in their homes and dying without going to get tested.



In order to test more people and track the spread of the disease, health authorities in the Jazira region now aim to test everybody with two or more symptoms of coronavirus – for example everyone with a cough or a fever. This will of course be difficult if people do not report their symptoms. The hotlines are also under-staffed, with 30 people managing the Covid-19 Emergency Center in Qamishlo, coording all the calls from the hotlines and sending out rapid response teams. The 1000SYP (\$0.50) fine for not wearing a mask will be increased in the future, and the Internal Security Forces (Asayish) will be encouraged to take this matter more seriously due to the fact the people of NES are still not practising preventative measures such as wearing a mask, or social distancing.

Case study: Manbij

Our RIC field researcher is following the coronavirus crisis on the ground in the Euphrates region. He reports from Manbij: “There is the feeling that coronavirus is not a threat. Nobody is using a mask, even some health workers are not wearing them. A doctor in the Manbij National Hospital said there is no corona because Allah is protecting them.”

There are no official coronavirus cases in Manbij, but health authorities have made only 15 PCR tests – all negative – in the past months. Rather, officials are relying on inaccurate spit tests heavily criticized by the UN and health NGOs. This explains the low number of cases.

In Manbij’s National Euphrates Hospital there is a department for corona cases prepared with oxygen tubes and cameras (to follow the situation of the patients remotely) but the rooms are empty. There are no beds or health equipment installed, nor any isolation facilities. There is also 1 school equipped with 120 beds for moderate cases, prepared by the local Manbij Health Committee, KRC and NGO UPP, but more work is needed to get it online. Officials complain of bureaucratic difficulties in getting health equipment and supplies to Manbij.