Aid Security and COVID-19

Latest available information on COVID-19 developments impacting the security of aid work and operations.

Access the **data on HDX** to see the events referred to in this bulletin.

Bulletin 2
07 April 2020

General Aid Insecurity and COVID-19

Using open sources and verified security incident submissions from aid organisations, the main concerns identified at present are:

Threats or Violence Over Fears of 'Importing' Disease

Such violence or threats can affect aid workers returning to their own communities, aid workers who appear visually foreign, and aid workers seeking access to communities.

Anti-Foreigner Sentiment
- In Africa and parts of Asia, individuals with ethnic features associated with populations from areas where COVID-19 outbreaks spread rapidly - including China, Europe, and North America - may be at risk.
- Stone throwing and similar threats against cars carrying 'foreigners' have been reported in Bangladesh, Cameroon and Ethiopia. **Access data**

Illegal Roadblocks
- In some countries, mostly in Latin America, illegal roadblocks have been set up by rioters or local communities to prevent incoming travel.
- Illegal roadblocks have been reported in Costa Rica, Honduras, India, Panama and Uruguay. **Access data**

Impact of Government Measures on Aid Operations

Access Constraints
- In Burundi, some humanitarian organisations have been blocked from reaching and providing assistance to people kept in overcrowded and unsanitary COVID-19 quarantine sites.

Aid Worker Security
- **Risk of acts of repression from security forces attempting to slow disease spread:** In some countries, security forces have used violence to enforce lockdown and curfew measures. This has been reported in Kenya, Pakistan, and South Africa. **Access data**
- **Risk of social unrest provoked by government measures to deal with pandemic:** In many countries, severe government measures, including mandatory quarantine and curfews, entail significant economic and social burdens, including food shortages. These measures may spark violent social unrest and protest. Reported in India, Honduras, Kenya, Niger, Nigeria, Panama, and Yemen. In India, social unrest has also been expressed in the form of mob and vigilante violence. **Access data**

Stay up-to-date with the latest information on government measures using **ACAPS** COVID-19 dashboard.

This information bulletin provides the latest available information on COVID-19 developments impacting the security of aid work and operations to help aid agencies meet duty of care obligations to staff and reach people in need.

It is published by Insecurity Insight using verified security incidents from aid agencies and information available in open sources.

It covers threats and violence against aid organisations, and health providers and general insecurity related to COVID-19.

Access **data** from this bulletin on HDX Insecurity Insight.

Visit our **website** for more security related information for aid agencies in the context of the Covid-19 epidemic.

Join our Aid Agency and COVID-19 mailing list and get all the latest resources straight to your inbox.

Follow us on **Twitter** and **Facebook**.

Insecurity Insight
Data on People in Danger

Have you or your organisation experienced a COVID-19-related security incident? Interested in sharing information? Get in touch **info@insecurityinsight.org**

Lockdown, Religious Gatherings and Security

Multiple Religious Events Planned for April

- Capable of bringing thousands of people under one roof, religious gatherings have been linked to several COVID-19 outbreaks. However, moves to restrict or ban religious gatherings to contain and reverse the spread of COVID-19 have been met with severe unrest in several locations.
- Resistance against prohibited religious gatherings were reported in several countries, including Cameroon, Israel, Niger, Nigeria, and Pakistan. In several of these countries, in particular Cameroon and Nigeria, religious leaders have actively voiced opposition against restrictions. **Access data**
- Restrictions of religious gatherings are being enforced at a moment when religious communities across the globe, including Christians, Muslims, Jews, and Hindus, are preparing for important celebrations during the month of April. With communities facing an extended time of mandatory isolation and **lockdown fatigue**, violence surrounding religious gatherings and celebrations will only intensify in the coming days and weeks as governments grapple with the COVID-19 health and socioeconomic crises.

Recommendations

Stay Informed
- **F**ollow local news to know where religious communities opposed to social distancing are located and when they are likely to meet.
- In some countries, security forces may use, or threaten to use force, to prevent religious gathering while in other locations protesters may riot.

Lead by Example
- **E**ncourage your religious observant staff not to attend regular and special religious gatherings.
- Consider providing safe spaces for staff to celebrate, respecting distances and as small groups of people who are already in daily contact from working together.

Healthcare Insecurity and COVID-19

Threats and Violence Against Health Workers

Afghanistan
16 March 2020: In Herat city and province, 38 patients who had tested positive for COVID-19 at Shaidahe Hospital attacked staff and ran away for fear of being quarantined. **Source: The New York Times**

India
01 April 2020: In Munger town and district, Bihar state, a COVID-19 medical response team protected by police officials was attacked by residents when they visited a locality to collect samples from people suspected to have contracted the virus. **Sources: Hindustan Times and The Economic Times**

01 April 2020: In Hyderabad city, Deccan region, Telangana state, two COVID-19 patients at Gandhi Hospital assaulted a junior doctor after their sibling died from the virus. **Sources: Bangalore Mirror and The Hindu**

01 April 2020: In Tatt Patti Bakhal area, Indore city, Madhya Pradesh state, two female doctors were injured after healthcare workers and civic officials were attacked by a mob while screening residents for COVID-19. **Sources: Deccan Herald, First Post and NDTV**

30 March 2020: In Telangana state, a female doctor travelling to work was assaulted by police officials and forcibly dragged to a police station. **Source: Buzzfeed News**

Israel
04 April 2020: In Mea She'arim neighbourhood, Jerusalem city and district, a vehicle carrying medics and municipal inspectors was assaulted with stones while traveling to carry out COVID-19 tests in the area. In the attack, a volunteer paramedic received a head injury in the attack and required hospitalization. **Source: Times of Israel**

Libya
12 March 2020: On the Coastal Road, Castelverde town, Tripoli district, Tripolitania region, a doctor and a paramedic on their way to a meeting at the Ministry of Justice to discuss the preventive measures against COVID-19, were reportedly killed during an attack by Tarhouna-based Al-Kani militia affiliated with the Libyan National Army. Two other doctors were also injured. **Source: Libya Observer**

South Africa
31 March 2020: In Welkom city, Free State, two health workers at Bongani Regional Hospital were injured after police officials fired rubber bullets at a group of protestors demonstrating for more affordable public transport. **Source: News24**

The Philippines
27 March 2020: In Tacurong city, Sultan Kudarat province, a male nurse working at St. Louis Hospital was attacked with bleach by five aggressors while on his way to work, resulting in severe injuries. Reportedly, the suspects had mistaken the nurse to have been infected by COVID-19. **Sources: ABS-CBN News, CNN Philippines and Yahoo News**

Health workers can face many additional risks and insecurities, including **eviction from their homes**, **social exclusion** and **pressure to cease working**.

Threats and Violence Against Health Providers
Bangladesh
27 March 2020: In Tejgaon area, Dhaka city and division, more than a hundred residents protested violently against the building of an emergency hospital to cater for COVID-19 patients in the area. The demonstrators vandalized the construction site and attacked construction workers. The protest resulted in the postponement of the project. **Source: Dhaka Tribune**

Democratic Republic of Congo
As the DRC scrambles to contain the virus, North Kivu citizens demand video evidence of COVID-19 patients from authorities to verify reports of its presence in the country. Mistrust towards authorities underlines the need for continued work on **community acceptance strategies in North Kivu** if COVID-19 containment strategies are to prove effective.
Read the latest **bulletin** on Social Media Monitoring and Local Survey Results in the DRC.

India
27 March 2020: In an unidentified location, police officials enforcing the nation-wide lockdown reportedly assaulted a delivery driver carrying medical supplies. **Source: Al Jazeera**

27 March 2020: Along the Mumbai-Pune highway, near Pune city in Maharashtra state, an ambulance driver reportedly died in an alleged fatal assault by police officials, apparently for ferrying passengers illegally in his vehicle during the COVID-19 lockdown. **Sources: Die Welle and Hindustan Times**

Ivory Coast
05 April 2020: In Abidjan city and department, dozens of protestors violently dismantled a COVID-19 testing centre that was under construction, apparently for being too close to a residential area. **Source: CNews**

Thailand
27 March 2020: In Bang Bon neighbourhood, Bangkok city, Central Thailand region, protestors demanded the removal of COVID-19 patients from a local hospital, citing health concerns. **Sources: Khaosod**

Turkey
29 March 2020: In Pendik district, Istanbul city and province, Marmara region, an unidentified perpetrator stopped an ambulance that was en route to hospital and questioned the crew on whether or not the patient is infected with COVID-19. As the crew refused to answer, the perpetrator assaulted the crew and smashed the windows of the ambulance with a cobblestone. Three persons were subsequently detained by security forces in connection with this attack. **Source: Hurriyet Daily News**

Notes
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