

NEWSLETTER

UN System support to the COVID-19 response in Algeria



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NATIONS UNIES
ALGERIE



COVID-19
RESPONSE

Epidemiological situation

20 July - 29 September 2020

The country is seeing a gradual slow down of the epidemic since the week of 20 July, with less than 150 new positive cases registered on the day of 28 September.

Since the onset of the epidemic until today, 4 wilayas have registered the largest number of confirmed cases (each of them >3000). These wilayas are **Algiers, Oran, Blida and Sétif.**

675 CASES

24 July 2020

The highest number of new confirmed cases in a day (675) was registered on 24 July 2020.

146 CASES

28 September 2020

Since 8 August 2020 a steady and significant decrease of new confirmed PCR+ cases has been observed. 146 new cases were registered on 28 September 2020. This figure is the lowest observed in 76 days (since 28 June 2020).

Epidemiological situation

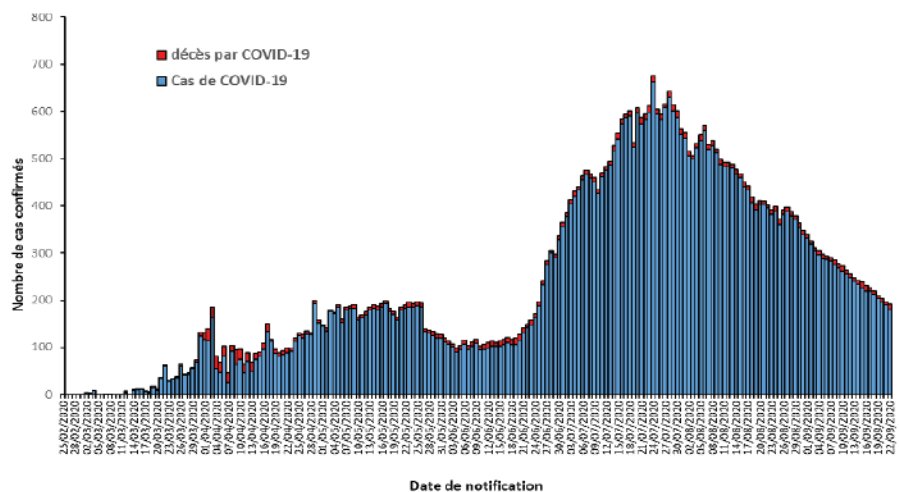


Figure 1: Evolution of the number of confirmed cases and Covid-related deaths as per the notification date 22 September 2020 in Algeria

UN system response to the sanitary crisis

The UN system provides its support, though a coordinated interagency approach, to the “Covid-19 Preparation and Response Plan” implemented by the Algerian government across the 5 pillars

01 | Resource mobilization

The total amount of mobilized resources is estimated at 57,1 million USD

The Resident Coordinator and the UN agencies have jointly mobilized resources from donors and the private sector, notably in the domain of procurement, assured by WHO, UNDP, UNICEF and IOM.

In addition to the resources mobilized through the global funds and agency specific facilities, funds have also been channeled through the UN system by a number of donors, notably the European Union, Canada, the USA, Japan, Switzerland, China, Austria, Germany, the UK and Denmark. The total amount that has been mobilized is estimated at USD 57,1 million (this amount does not take into consideration funds mobilized through the humanitarian appeal targeting the Sahrawi refugee population nor the funds mobilized for the socioeconomic Covid-19 response).

Over the last two months, discussions have been ongoing between WHO and the UK embassy regarding support to community interventions, with a view to reaching a financing agreement corresponding to £60 000. UNDP is finalizing an MoU with the Ministry of Health and Algerian *Institut Pasteur* which a view to mobilizing one million US dollars from the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development (AFESD), aimed at the acquisition of supplementary materials necessary for the fight against Covid-19. UNAIDS is coordinating with the Global Fund and the Ministry of Health for additional support corresponding to USD 137 000 to be used for the procurement of additional equipment and reagents for the Covid-19 response.

In addition, UNDP Algeria has mobilized USD 162.000 from the Swiss government, targeting persons in Algerian custody with a view to mitigating the negative impact of Covid-19.

UNAIDS has collaborated with the Ministry of Health for the mobilization of USD 200 000 from the Global Fund to fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria in support of the Covid-19 response.

Agency	Mobilized Funds (in USD)	Donor
UNICEF	1 300 000	UNICEF Regional Office
	1 500 000	USA
	819 720	Japan
	500 000	Danmark
	362 900	Canada
UNDP	50 000 000	European Union (43M Euro)
	171 745	Private Sector
	162 000	Switzerland
	61 920	Global Fund
	329 000	UNDP Global
	1 000 000	FADES/FNI
WHO	77 000	UK
	70 000	China
	100 000	Danmark
	298 000	UK
UNODC	12 000	UNODC/ UBRAF Funds
UNAIDS	200 000	Global Fund for the fight against Aids
	157 000	Global Fund for the fight against Aids
	15 000	UNAIDS RST/MENA
TOTAL	57 119 285	

02 | Technical health support

The UN system, through WHO, UNICEF, UN Aids and UNFPA, is providing technical assistance to the public health response in the following areas:

01 Contact tracing: The special monitoring cell for Covid-19 is developing an electronic platform to ensure effective contact tracing on the ground. Five participants from the Ministry of Health have taken part in a webinar relating to Covid-19 monitoring and contact tracing, organized by the regional WHO office for Africa on 14 and 16 July 2020, attended by participants from all the countries in the region.

02 Re-opening of schools: UNICEF supports the Ministry of National Education in the preparations for the safe re-opening of educational establishments and the resumption of pedagogical activities, targeting pupils as well as staff, in line with the framework for reopening of schools that has been elaborated jointly by UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and WFP in April 2020.

More specifically, UNICEF supports:

- The preparation of national exams (BEM and BAC) scheduled for September 2020 through the purchase of personal protection equipment, such as wall mounted dispensers of alcohol gel and reusable face masks, to the benefit of 360.000 candidates and staff at 1000 examination centers.

- Capacity building for teachers and career counselors relating to the provision of psychological support to the pupils.
- Adaptation and distribution of a “Teacher Preparedness Training Package” developed by the regional UNICEF office, containing three self-learning modules for primary school teachers (safe operation, equity learning and wellbeing protection).

In parallel, UNICEF and the National Organ for Childhood Protection and Promotion work jointly to put in place a training module for the counseling hotline 11 11 operators (reception and treatment of alerts, listening, counselling and orientation) in order to provide them with psychosocial support competencies relating to the dangers of the internet in the context of Covid-19.

03 Algeria Startup Challenge: UNDP Algeria, through its Acceleration Lab, is providing technical and financial support to the initiative Algeria Startup Challenge (ASC) with the organization of the corona-hackathon, a hackathon in response to Covid-19. After a long solution mapping process, 60 projects across Algeria have been identified covering a range of themes (FinTech, e-commerce, teleconsulting and e-learning) and 6 finalists have been selected for the experimentation process. masques préventif destinés aux candidats des examens du baccalauréat et du Certificat d’Enseignement Intermédiaire

Within the framework of the partnership with the Ministry of Tourism, craft and family work UNDP has provided the raw

material for the manufacturing of 200 000 face masks for primary and high school final exam students as well as the staff overseeing the exams. The preventive masks have been crafted by artisans from multiple Artisan Chambers across the country.

03 | Logistics and procurement

In total, 77 000 diagnostical kits have been delivered to the Ministry of Health and Institut Pasteur over the past months.

- UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health through the supply of 52.000 units of diagnostic kits to Institut Pasteur as well as protective equipment (suits, blouses, jackets, overshoes, medical cups) to the central hospital pharmacy.
- UNICEF also ensured the supply of protective equipment to the Directorate of Civil Defense in Médéa.
- 16.000 test kits were delivered by WHO to Institute Pasteur in order to facilitate testing of suspected cases and sick persons.
- A coordination meeting “Supply Chain” was held on August 10th with participation of all invited partners (MSPRH, IOM, UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNDP, WHO and BCG – the consulting firm recruited by OSL/HQ). Action points for a better coordination of the support were established with the partners.
- 5 GeneXpert machines and 8.990 GeneXpert testing kits were delivered by UNDP and UNAIDS to Institut Pasteur and 6.400 additional testing kits are yet to be delivered. The GeneXpert machines, acquired thanks to private donations (Oxy, Bayer, Angem, Lilly) and the Global Fund (UNAIDS) are earmarked for different branches of Institut Pasteur across the national territory, notably in Ouargla and Tamanrasset.
- UNFPA donated PPE kits to the Gynecological Clinique to the Boufarik Hospital as part of its collaboration with the Algerian Red Crescent. UNFPA Algeria, in partnership with the association AKOUAS also donated PPE and child delivery kits to the Gynecology and Obstetric Clinic at the Hospital of Médéa, which covers as well the neighboring wilayas of Blida, Tipaza and Ain-Defla.



Figure 2: Distribution of PPE testing kits by the Algerian Red Crescent, provided by UNFPA. Credit:

04 | Communication

- UNICEF supports the Ministry of National Education in the elaboration of the “Safe Back to School” campaign, through the spreading of key messages on social media, production of television and radio spots and the printing of posters for hygiene promotion.
- Since February 2020, UNICEF Algeria publishes sensibilization messages and information through its social media channels, with an average of 2 publications per day (580 publications), having achieved an engagement figure of more than 6 million people¹ and a total outreach of more than 142 million.²
- WHO Algeria has supported the Ministry of Health to develop sensitization messages adapted to the current epidemic dynamics. Two TV and radio spots relating to the easing of lockdown measures and social distancing have been produced and are currently being broadcast.
- UNDP, through its Accelerator Lab, is launching an online awareness raising campaign relating to Covid-19.
- IOM has continued to share essential information through its Facebook page, created in the beginning of the pandemic. In particular, IOM has developed a communications campaign in several languages that complements the general UN communications platform, targeting the migrant as well as host communities. The campaign intends to promote the knowledge of preventive measures and credible sources of information on Covid-19, inform migrants and the public about social and physical distancing measures and prevention adopted by the Algerian government and bust myths around Covid-19 that circulate within the communities.

The UN system has also reinforced the communication and awareness raising on Covid-19 through the launch of two digital platforms and a blog.

Facebook:

https://web.facebook.com/EnsembleContreLeCovid19/?_rdc=1&_rdr

Instagram:

<https://www.instagram.com/ensemblecontrecovid19.una/?hl=fr>

COVID-19 Blog UNAIDS:

https://www.unaids.org/en/20200430_Algeria_pwud

05 | Support to vulnerable groups

The UN system has been advocating for the refugees, asylum seekers and migrants in distress to ensure the continuation of support during lockdown.

UNAIDS has coordinated with UNODC in support of the Ministry of Health and NGOs with a view to provide protective and communication equipment to ensure the continuation of HIV prevention services destined at injection drug users.



Figure 3: Delivery of Covid-19 protective equipment to NGOs

UNAIDS has supported NGOs in the putting in place of a helpline for female GBV survivors living with HIV in the context of Covid-19.

Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=3383380238373422&extid=wefKmb797FJYYAK>

UNDP has supported national and local associations in charge of families of former detainees economically impacted by Covid-19 through the acquisition of:

- Health and prevention materiel to improve the sanitary conditions of visiting rooms and for awareness raising of the public at risk of contamination,
- School materials destined at children of detainees,
- Medical materiel (wheelchairs and hearing equipment) for the most vulnerable,
- Equipment for families of detainees (sewing machines, baking ovens) to support home-based income generating activities.

IOM makes concerted efforts to ensure assistance to migrants in situations of vulnerability, including children and victims of human trafficking. This includes medical assistance, psychosocial assistance, housing, food and non-food supplies. In order to guarantee the timely assistance in spite of physical distancing measures, IOM has opened a hotline, operated through the regular telephone network and WhatsApp. It has also developed integrated and adapted tools to facilitate the registry, reference system, direct assistance and follow-up on requests for assistance.

Two special flights for voluntary returns of migrants stranded in Algeria have been organized, on 14 July and 31 August respectively. The first flight benefitted 84 migrants originating from Mali and the second one 114 individuals originating from Guinea, Ivory Coast and Liberia. The special flights were organized in close collaboration with the Algerian government and the governments of the countries of origin and have permitted migrants, including unaccompanied children and alone women with children to reunite with their families.



Figure 4: Voluntary return of migrants to Guinea, Ivory Coast and Liberia organized by IOM in collaboration with the Algerian government and the countries of origin

Humanitarian Pillar

The humanitarian agencies of the UN system and the NGO community present in Tindouf refugee camps have responded to the sanitary crisis through the adaptation of ongoing activities and the launching of new activities aiming at mitigating the risk of Covid-19 outbreaks in the camps. WHO, UNHCR, UNICEF and NGOs active in the camps launched a joint appeal in April 2020 with the aim of mobilizing USD 15 million for risk mitigation in the face of the pandemic, which threatens to increase the vulnerability of the populations in the camps. The appeal has been funded to 46%, not accounting for the provision by the Algerian government of a field hospital in order to ensure all necessary medical assistance for the entire duration of the pandemic.

Public Health

- Since the declaration of the first suspected case in the camps, the UNHCR and health partners have proceeded to the implementation of the second phase of the response plan, which focuses on the strengthening of capacities for the handling of cases in the camp and the creation of an information and communication system to fight disinformation and spreading of rumors.
- Throughout this phase, UNHCR and its partners have supported the adaptation of medical infrastructures to fit the new context of Covid-19 (the putting in place of Covid-19 related supports such as oxygen and adequate protection equipment, support to isolation centers, adaptation of the referral system etc.), acquisition and installation of special equipment for Covid-19 response, reinforcement of human resources and improvement of the working conditions in different hospitals and, last but not least, support to community mobilization and awareness raising.

- In addition to coordination efforts within sectors, UNHCR contributes actively to the reinforcement of the intersectoral coordination and planning (notably in the areas of WASH, logistics and education) in order to guarantee a multisectoral and harmonized response. For instance, UNHCR is preparing for the reopening of schools through the purchase of 40.000 face masks for refugee school children in the camps and 10.000 masks for particularly vulnerable refugees. Preparations are underway to start production of masks in the camps, by the refugees themselves.
- UNICEF, in close collaboration with the other agencies, has contributed to the procurement of protective equipment for health staff in the refugee camps; 20 oxygen concentrators have been procured through the UNICEF procurement center and will be distributed to the Tindouf refugee camps in support of the Sahraouian health authorities' Covid-19 response.
- UNICEF has supported the Sahraouian education authorities in preparation for the safe reopening of schools, through the development of a national awareness raising campaign "safe back to school". The campaign seeks to spread messages relating to good hygiene practices (physical distancing measures, handwashing practices etc.) and to reassure the families, children and parents ahead of the school start.



Figure 5: Awareness raising for the use of facemasks and the application of physical distancing measures in the refugee camps in the Tindouf province

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- UNHCR has equipped all public health structures in the camps (30 dispensaries et 5 hospitals) with supplementary installations for hand washing (40 units) in order to reduce the risk for spreading of the virus.
- In order to ensure an effective distribution of water in the camps, UNHCR has rehabilitated 6000 meters of flexible pipes used by families to refill their water tanks.
- To improve the hygiene conditions for the population, UNHCR has continuously distributed soap directly to the population and to public establishments, as well as sanitary napkins for women.
- Chlorine has been provided for the treatment and disinfection of water ahead of distribution.



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Figure 6: Handwashing station installed in a refugee camp in Tlemcen province

Remote measures

Given the lack of possibilities to travel to the camps during this period, the ground unit of UNHCR, in coordination with the partner association CISP, has put in place a team of 10 trained monitors from within the Sahraoui refugee population (2 per camp) to ensure follow up of the distribution on the ground and amongst UNHCR's beneficiaries throughout the camps. During this period, the following has been delivered:

- 56.000 gas cylinders (refill) to the population of the 5 camps (1 cylinder per household per month)
- 290 400 sanitary napkins to all the women and girls of reproductive age
- 626 plastic water tanks for families in the Smara and Dakhla camps
- 128 450 pieces of soap to the benefit of the entire refugee population

Food security

WFP has implemented measures to maintain food security in the camps in the wake of the health crisis and its economic impacts. It has increased the number of beneficiaries of food assistance by approximately 20 000 persons, mainly refugees, day laborers, traders and taxi drivers, many of whom have lost their revenues.

Assessment of the socioeconomic impact of COVID-19 in Algeria

Rapid analysis of the socioeconomic impact and UN socio-economic response to the Covid-19 in Algeria

The rapid assessment of the socioeconomic impact of the Covid-19 crisis, developed in collaboration with the Economic Commission for Africa, was communicated to the Algerian government in June and allowed to initiate a discussion with the national partners on the main elements for economic recovery, in particular the social dimensions and the structural reforms needed to face the challenges exacerbated by the Covid crisis, with focus on the most vulnerable groups.

On the basis of this analysis the United Nations System has developed its offer of support to the socioeconomic recovery as part of its joint workplans for 2020-2021.

Following a series of consultations with partners at sector level, a UN framework of support to the socio-economic response to the Covid crisis in Algeria will be developed in line with the UNSDG Framework of the Immediate Socio-economic Response to Covid-19.

In-depth socioeconomic study

The socioeconomic impact study proposed to get a more accurate appreciation of the consequences of the pandemic on households and enterprises through in-depth surveys has been approved by the Algerian government and will be carried out in partnership with the National Economic and Social Council" (CNES).

Coordinated by the Resident Coordinator, and under the technical leadership of UNDP, this study gathers the expertise of the UNS with the participation of several UN agencies, namely UNICEF, UNESCO, UNIDO, ITC and WFP.

Within the framework of this study, the following research areas is foreseen:

- Households and vulnerable groups of the population: incomes and the socioeconomic situation of households before and after the epidemic; the access and capacity of the most vulnerable households to buy basic food products before, during and after the crisis; people's access to basic health services before and during the crisis (focus on the most vulnerable households); access to education; the socioeconomic situation of women, notably those confronted by multidimensional vulnerabilities (socioeconomic status, family situation, employment status); the frequency of violence against women in the homes before and during the crisis; the socioeconomic situation of persons with disabilities or serious diseases; the socioeconomic situation of migrant populations; knowledge, attitudes and practices concerning COVID-19.
- Small and medium sized enterprises (SME): the economic performance, the production level and the productivity of SMEs, the financial and fiscal situation of SMEs, the functioning of food supply chains between points of production and market places for SMEs active in agriculture and agribusiness, the impact of countercyclical measures taken by the authorities and the needs for support to SME recovery and growth.

UNIDO has undertaken a global survey concerning the impact of the pandemic on female and youth headed business in the manufacturing sector (including industrial services).

The ILO is dialoguing with the Ministry of Labor, Employment and Social Security regarding an analysis of the impact of Covid-19 on the labor market and professional relationships with a focus on the economic sector.

Support to UN staff

WHO continues to ensure leadership of the Covid-19 taskforce of the UN system. The taskforce, supported by the UN system crisis management team, is currently undertaking a review of the UN contingency plan in response to the pandemic. The taskforce also supports UN staff through information sharing and awareness raising relating to Covid-19. Within the framework of measures taken to mitigate the negative impact of the Covid-19 crisis on the UN staff, UNDSS has recruited two stress counsellors. Regular Zoom sessions open to all UN staff were organised during the period 9 June to 2 July, covering four different themes relating to staff wellness and health.

UNDSS continues its awareness raising efforts targeting all UN staff focusing on the necessity of staying alert and respecting preventive and response measures (put in place by authorities and the UN system alike). DSS continues to support and orient staff in relation with travel and missions of urgent character.

Latest government measures

Regarding the socioeconomic recovery plan, the Algerian government held in August tripartite consultations with members of government in charge of the economic portfolios, the central labor union and the employers' organizations with a view to inform the operationalization of a recovery plan aiming at "the construction of a new national economy based on diversification of sources of growth, knowledge-based economy and rational management of national resources". Banks and financial institutions, investment agencies and some hundred researchers also took part in the discussions.

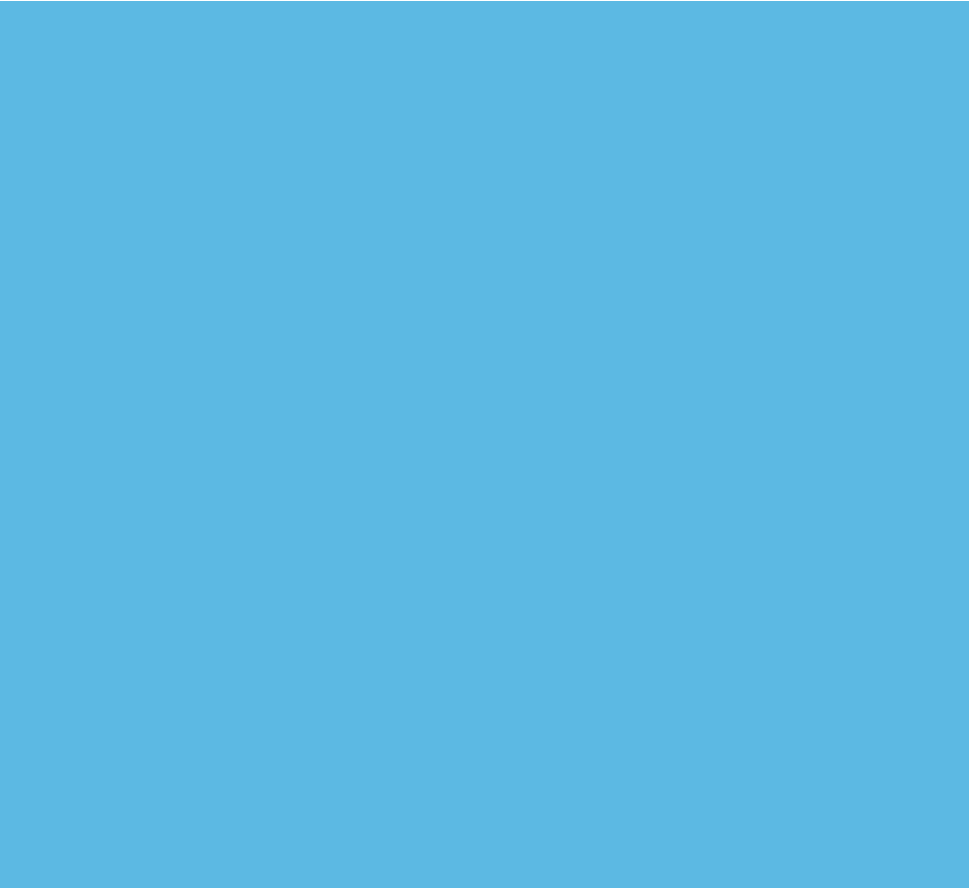
In light of its new status, which provides an expanded strategic mandate and places it directly under the presidency of the republic, the CNES will submit a summary report of the discussions, with

recommendations, to the competent authorities.

The synchronization of studies undertaken so far by the UN system, in combination with the ongoing discussions, should allow for a better alignment between the strategy of the Algerian state and the UN programs aimed at supporting the reform process.

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