

The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS)

COVID-19 Response Plan & Measures

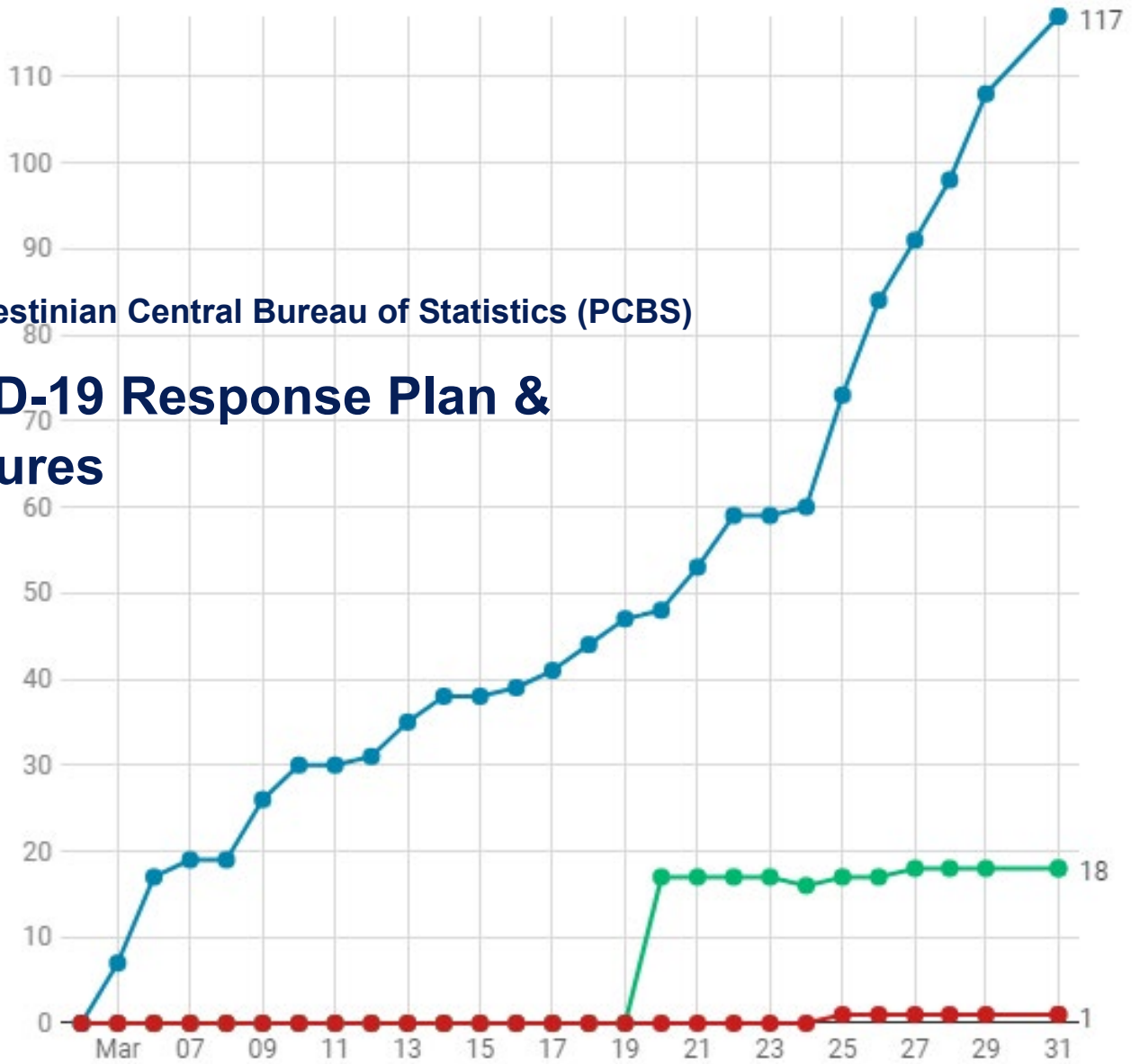


Chart: corona.ps • [Get the data](#) • Created with Datawrapper

APRIL 9



Introduction and General Context:

The Government of Palestine has quickly and effectively responded to the outbreak of COVID-19, using an internationally and nationally coordinated, data-driven approach to contain the spread of the virus within our borders. The Government's approach is containment and suppression, which is designed to protect our citizens (particularly the most vulnerable) from infection while also mitigating the stress on our already strained health care system.

The Government immediately declared a State of Emergency when the first cases in the State of Palestine were diagnosed on 5 March 2020 and launched robust national containment measures, supported by an evidence-based communications campaign to encourage our citizens to protect themselves and follow government guidance.

So far, the State of Palestine has one of the lowest rates of virus spread and almost no community transmission, with 119 active cases in the West Bank and the Southern Governorates (Gaza Strip). As the COVID-19 incidence increases around the world, the Government is continuing efforts to contain the virus to protect our citizens (and those of the larger region) and contribute to the global effort to end the pandemic. On 22 March, the Government rolled out stricter suppression measures in the West Bank, preventing movement between governorates, closing all non-essential facilities, and asking our citizens in the Palestine to stay at home for 14 days.

The Covid19 Crises and NSOs:

1. Corona has influenced NSO priorities to be aligned with national ones (i.e. impact of the socioeconomic conditions of the society)
 2. Corona has also influenced preferences of donors including committed funds. This in turns obliges NSO to become cost conscious as well as expenditure rational.
 3. The conditions on the ground (either now or post corona) will not accommodate the implementation of typical surveys but rather more attention will be given to relevancy, response burden, cost, methods of data collection, and timeliness of results.
 4. NSO must be proactive in anticipating data requests and try to make it available beforehand (i.e. forecast economic impact / loss)
 5. Adaptive NSO: NSO cannot stay in business as usual and at the same time cannot stay and observer in these conditions. Collaboration with partners, stakeholders is perquisite to influence the impact of the crisis
 6. Safety is first as our slogan for our employees as well as respondents. Thus work type modalities such as attendance rotation, work at home, flexible time, phone data collection, internet data collection.
2. There's a need to agree globally on what are the most prominent indicators to be addressed now and should be made available on a global level and at the local level in the event of crises.

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3. It's important for NSOs to discuss how to measure and collect relevant data in light of crises in times of risk.
 4. An effective communication mechanism should be worked on collectively among all statistical agencies.

PCBS Response to the Corona Crises:

PCBS carried out its work remotely in light of the emergency that Palestine is witnessing because of coronavirus pandemic, in order to continue carrying out its mission and statistical message the best way possible, especially during this stage that requires securing necessary statistical figures and information for the Palestinian government and planners, which cover all aspects of life, and in particular the economic reality that we are experiencing in this difficult stage.

The PCBS' management is working to ensure the implementation of the statistical core plan activities. PCBS directly worked on the following activities:

A. Operational Level:

1. PCBS started with the formulation of an emergency team to ensure following upon the statistical work in terms of the technical, administrative and technological aspects, through monitoring matters and setting up plans and programs that will help PCBS to continue its work remotely through utilizing new technology tools, as well as assigning home tasks to be carried out by most of PCBS staff.
2. All statisticians and PCBS staff are working from home to ensure that all statistical activities are being followed upon via the email.

B. Technical Level:

1. Conducting estimates regarding the expected losses resulting from the current health crisis and submitting them to the government, where PCBS shared the updated economic forecast for 2020 in light of the current outbreak of the coronavirus; the forecast was based on three scenarios assuming the crisis will continue for 1 month (scenario 1) or for 3 months (scenario 2) or for 6 months (scenario 3). It's worth mentioning that this forecast was sent to the Prime Minister and the Ministry of Finance and Planning in which the emergency budget was prepared upon. The plan was shared with all partners for guidance and insight.
2. PCBS has worked with the Ministry of National Economy on measuring economic losses, measuring the economic impact of the crises, and on a recovery plan (short term, long term) (like the effect on entrepreneurs and small sized enterprises).
3. Continuing data collection of prices surveys via the phone and following upon the work of the fieldwork team on constant basis.

1. An internal team was formed to maximize efforts and coordinate on relevant messages to be addressed to the general public through special media platforms. (5 statistical videos, 4 statistical flashes, 4 statistical infographics).

2. A press release was published under the title “The Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (PCBS) will continue carrying out its mission and statistical message during the emergency”.

3. PCBS toll free and landline were connected with one of PBCS staff personal phone to ensure receiving calls from citizens/data users and providing them with the requested statistical figures.

4. All press releases on statistical data were disseminated on by PCBS since 05/03/2020 on PCBS website and social media networks on their due dates and without any delay according to the Statistical Calendar 2020 (15 press releases and 4 statistical reports).

5. Providing several data for the public upon their requests whether via the phone or email (30 data requests), especially those have to do with tourism, economy, foreign trade, unemployment and population.

6. PCBS is coordinating with many audio-visual mass media in order to hold interviews with PCBS relevant staff to talk about the most important statistical indicators related to the current status.

7. PCBS was keen to coordinate with all local partners including Governmental situations and Civil Society Organizations to support them with all data needs.

