



**ROLE OF THE
NATIONAL CENTER FOR SECURITY & CRISES MANAGEMENT /NCSCM
CONTINUITY OF GOVERNMENT (COG)
DURING COVID-19 / AMMAN-JORDAN
June 2020**

National Center for Security & Crises Management
AMMAN - JORDAN

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BACKGROUND

Since the initial spark of the COVID-19 outbreak in December 2019, which was later declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) to be a global pandemic, all affected countries are implementing various preventive and control measures to mitigate the spread of the disease. The newly emerging virus brings with it uncertainty—not only regarding its behavior and transmission dynamics but also regarding the current lack of approved antiviral therapy or vaccines—and this represents a major challenge for decision makers at various levels and sectors (Al-Tammemi, 2020).

On 12 January 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed that a novel coronavirus was the cause of a respiratory illness in a cluster of people in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China, which was reported to the WHO on 31 December 2019. The case fatality ratio for COVID-19 has been much lower than SARS of 2003, but the transmission has been significantly greater, with a significant total death till Now, COVID-19 is definitely an unprecedented international public health challenge now, and each country has its capacity and reacts according to its perception of threat, economy, healthcare policy and the structure of the healthcare system. The symptoms of COVID-19 mostly appear within 2–14 days of acquiring the virus, and a different range of symptoms and severity can affect patients, including fever, dry cough, dyspnea, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, myalgia, and fatigue (5, 7, 8). Although most COVID-19 patients develop a mild degree of symptoms and exhibit spontaneous recovery, there is still a proportion of patients, especially older age groups with underlying comorbidities, that are at higher risk of developing a more severe illness that is associated with complications (WHO, 2020).

Keywords: Jordan, COVID-19, Pandemic, NCSCM, Corona Matrix, Crisis

TIMELINE

On 2nd of March, the Prime Ministry of Jordan reported the first case of coronavirus in Jordan, for a 30 years old Jordanian Male who, showed symptoms of the Virus 16 days after returning from Italy. There were no new reported cases of COVID-19 in the second week. Jordan remained coronavirus-free after the recovery of the first infection. Afterwards daily cases were reported to those whom arrived from abroad and others that had direct contact with the infected. On 28 March, the first death resulting from COVID-19 was confirmed in the kingdom, an 83-years-old

woman who, was admitted to a private hospital suffering from various illnesses along with blood poisoning was transported from a private hospital to Government hospital upon discovery that she had contracted the disease (MOH,2020).

NCSCM ACTIVATING AT THE STRATEGICAL LEVEL

Upon analyzing the strategic environment and identifying the potential threats in the foreseen future for the Kingdom, National Contingency Plans (NCPs) were built to face such threats in coordination and cooperation between various state/national institutions and one of those NCPs is the NCP for Pandemics Prevention. Therefore, the National Center for Security and Crises Management has been activated at the national Level (Strategical Level) to follow this pandemic through activating the National Contingency Plan for Pandemics Prevention and the board of directors appointed the Minister of Health as the leader for this crisis at the national level who, will be authorized to exploit the governmental assets to respond to the crisis, see Figure (1).

NCSCM functions as a National Command and Control Center now, thus the Crisis Cell and all NCSCM staff will be working as the crisis Leader's staff to serve response effort. Determine the potentiality of crisis developments and NCSCM staffs will perform also an early assessment of the consequences resulting from the crisis. Liaison Officers from all Ministries, institutions, and Security Agencies were attached to the Center, many of them were participated in different exercises and workshops held at the center within the Defensive Capacity Building Initiative (DCB) project which supported by NATO HQ and other projects as well, which had the greatest impact in dealing with this pandemic in a systematic and professional manner (NCSCM,2020).



Figure (1)

NATIONAL CONTINGENCY PLANS

- Countering Terrorism.
- Dealing with the Influx of Refugees.
- Firefighting.
- Coping with Earthquakes.
- Responding to the Energy Crisis & its repercussions.
- Countering Strikes & Public disorders.
- Countering Environmental Pollution.
- Responding to Epidemic Diseases.
- Countering Drugs.
- Coping with drought Implications.

Actually, the above National Contingency Plans (NCPs) were prepared in cooperation with Liaison Officers from different Ministries and Security Agencies to face potential risks threatening the Kingdom, those plans have been distributed to the Ministries and Security Agencies, and they already prepared their executive plans that clarify their duties and SOPs that required from each entity during any Crisis. The NCPs are also being tested through conducting many exercises at different levels (TTX, CPX, FTX) with the participation of all state institutions in addition to the real operations and thus making any amendments and upgrades to these plans. Chart (1) below show the COVID-19 cases development in Jordan and Figure (2) show the Concept of Operations of NCSCM.

DECLARING A STATE OF EMERGENCY & IMPOSING A CURFEW

On 15th of March, His Majesty King Abdullah II chaired a meeting of the National Policy Council at the National Center for Security and Crises Management to discuss the implications of the Corona Crisis and to determine the extent of the Kingdom's preparations to confront this epidemic. The Jordanian government declared a state of emergency on 19th of March and imposed a curfew on 21st of March, therefore a Crisis Cell was formed at the Center from the Jordan Armed Forces / JAF and all the Correlated Authorities working in coordination with the staff of the National Center for Security and Crises Management in managing this crisis in order to set the restrictions and controls necessities for public life and closing the epidemic areas to facilitate the Epidemiological Investigation Team work (EIT) and prevent any movement or gatherings of people in order to contain the virus, actually all the ministries and Security Agencies even the Private Sector were fighting against this Pandemic as one team under the umbrella of NCSCM (Nation Faces Crisis).

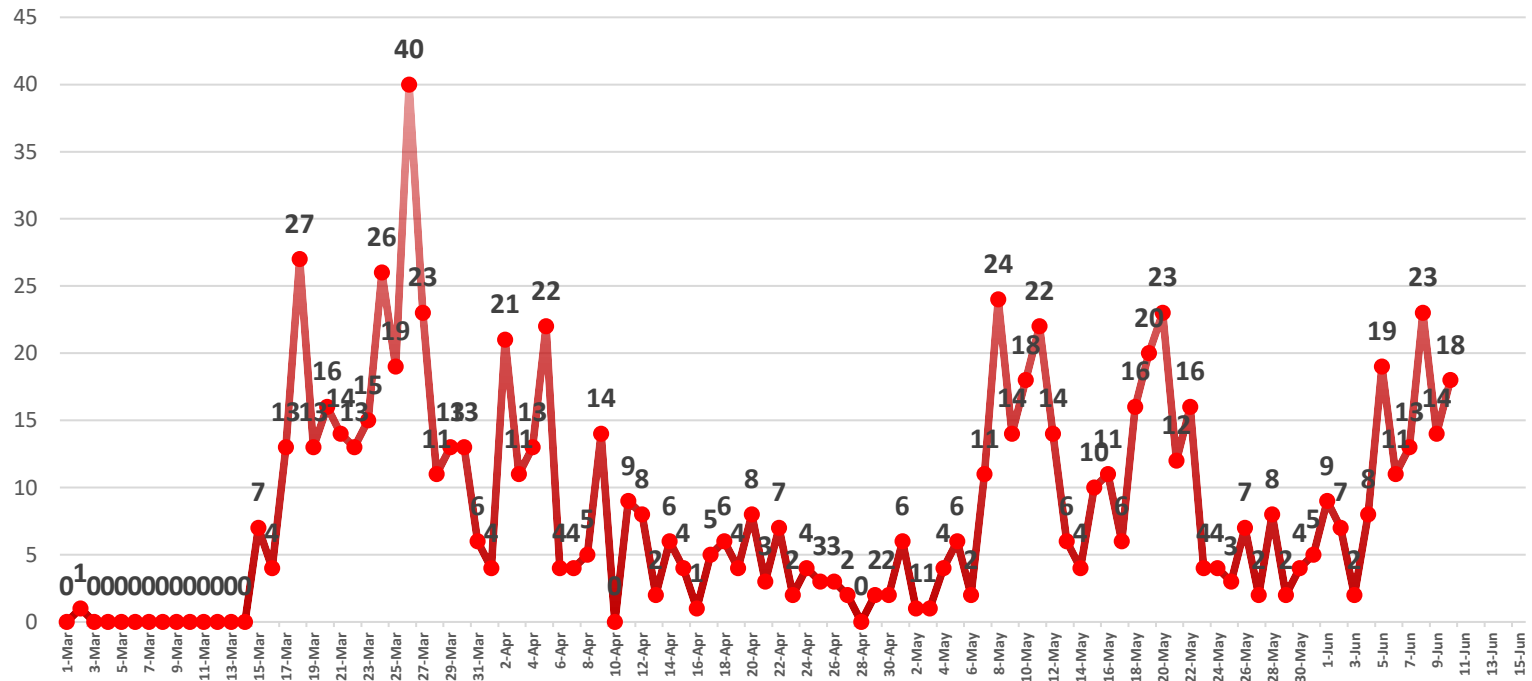


CHART 1 | The number of daily confirmed cases of COVID-19 by notification date during the period between the 1st of March and the 15th of June 2020. Developed according to Directorate of Operations & Plans /NCSCM statistics on the NCSCM website (5).

NCSCM CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

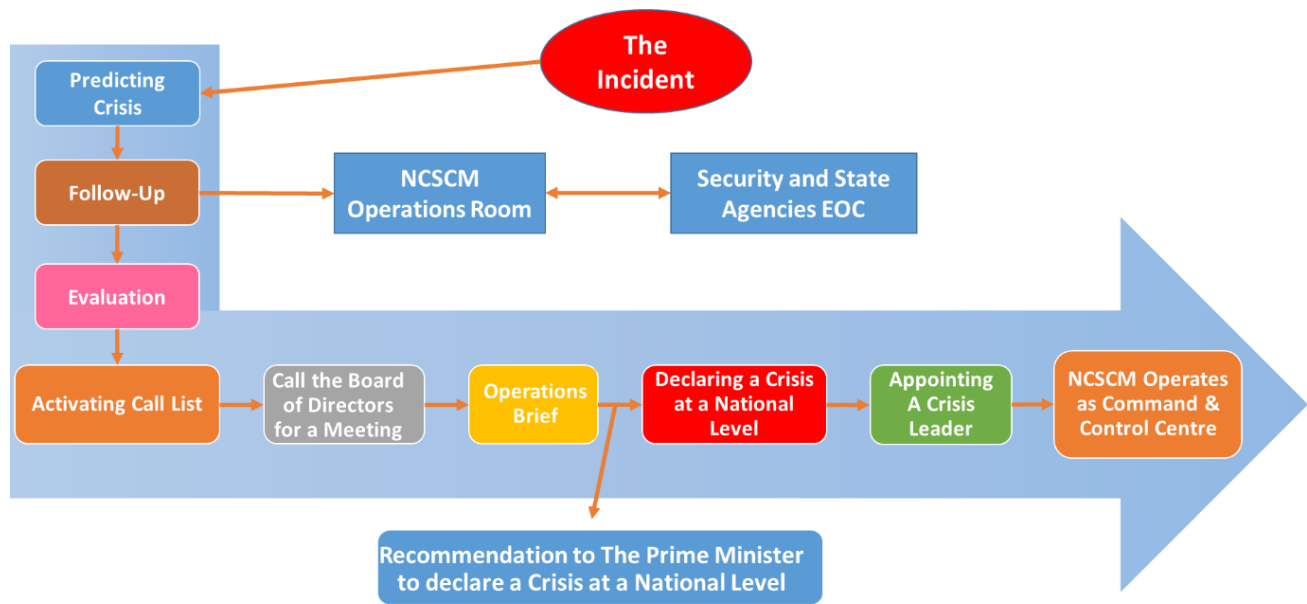


FIGURE 2 | NCSCM Concept of Operations. Developed according to Directorate of Operations & Plans /NCSCM statistics on the NCSCM website (5).

His Majesty King Abdullah II has addressed a speech to the Jordanian people on 10th of April in the light of the Corona Pandemic in which he said:” Let me tell you, you are giants because you achieve great things in the toughest circumstances. For you, nothing is impossible. You are giants because you are a testament to true sacrifice and selflessness. You are giants because you live in a nation that places human dignity above all else. Indeed, these are the Jordanians I know and proudly speak of to the world, fully confident in my people”.

His Majesty also said:” we shall, God willing, overcome all challenges. Yes, soon, prayers will be held in mosques and churches, streets and markets will be bustling, workers will return to their factories, employees will return to their offices, and our sons and daughters, the students, will head to their schools and universities every morning. Soon, this will become a reality” (H.M King Abdullah,2020).

QUARANTINE & ISOLATION

During the first week of the spread of the coronavirus in Jordan (March 2020), the Jordanian authorities declared that all whom are required for isolation, will be quarantined in five-star hotels across the country, with the central government covering the costs. On March 18, 1,900 people who came into the country during the last week have been placed in the Dead Sea resorts, while 3,000 were placed in Amman resorts and hotels. the majority of these people have been placed in quarantine upon arrival to Jordan from abroad to wait out the virus's incubation period (14th days). Of course, all necessary measures have been taken in the hotels and resorts, such as necessary sanitation operations, and banning outside visits.

MEDIA BUILDING TRUST

The media coverage for this epidemic where done from the center transparently in a regular basis from the first day by the Minister of State for Media Affairs and Government Spokesperson in coordination with Media Response Unit, the Minister of Health and the director of the Crisis Cell from JAF in addition to the competent minister when he is needed, in order to prevent any fertile environment for rumors, therefore the news found great acceptance from the audience. Also, a press conference is being held weekly in a regular basis with a number of the media representatives to answer any questions about this pandemic.

Also, the Media Response Unit worked on awareness advertising images which distributed from the Center concerning this Pandemic, see Figure (3).



Figure (3)

GOVERNMENT DECISIONS

There were many efforts and decisions taken by the Government to deal with this crisis, some of them are:

- Halting all air travel from/to the Kingdom from Tuesday 17th March 2020 until further notice, except for commercial cargo.
- All land/sea border crossings will be shut to passenger movement and only commercial cargo be allowed.
- The Ministry of Education commenced the Distant/Remote Learning Plan through the ministry's e-site, and through television stations.

The crisis cell is working 24 hrs. to follow-up on the developments relating to COVID-19, the following tasks force were established:

- Medical care task force.
- Border control, crossings and airport task force.
- Social protection task force.
- Strategic reserve task force (Food and drugs).
- Media follow-up task force.

On 11 March, the following measures were announced also:

- Preventing non-Jordanians from entering the Kingdom from the following countries: China, South Korea, Iran, Italy. Jordanians from the aforementioned will be quarantined on arrival.
- Banning vacations for expatriates working in Jordan.
- Halting new work permits for workers from abroad.
- Banning vacations for foreign students studying in Jordan wishing to travel to countries where the disease has spread.
- Banning school trips to foreign countries.
- Suspending all tourist travel between Jordan and Palestine/Israel.
- Halting all public events and gatherings and advising citizens from congregating at social events (weddings, funerals).
- Stressing on citizens the adherence to remain at home as much as possible and leave only if necessary.
- Under the advice of the Fatwa Council and Council of Churches, halting prayer in all the Kingdom's mosques and churches as a preventative measure.
- Halting of hospital and prison visits starting Sunday 15 March until further notice.
- Closing of all historic tourist sites for one week in order to execute disinfection campaigns at these site.
- Halting all sports events, closing of all cinemas, swimming facilities, sports clubs and youth centers until further notice.

DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Regarding, launching digital platforms the government also, through the National Center for Security and Crises Management, has started from the first day to plan to activate digital platforms so that the lives of citizens are not disrupted, with the continued social divergence and quarantine, as the private sector and the Ministry of Digital Economy and Entrepreneurship were used to this matter. The digital platforms are numerous in all fields such as health, education and delivery including:

- Ministry of Health dedicated website for the COVID-19 pandemic in Jordan besides a hotline 111: corona.moh.gov.jo
- Enrollment in the Aid Fund Supplemental and Support for Day Workers and Social Support: <https://reg.takmeely.jo>
- Social Security Corporation - In Kind Aid Service: <https://service1.ssc.gov.jo/sscaid>
- Requesting a permit to leave the house during the ban: <https://www.stayhome.jo>
- Distance education - your lesson platform: <https://darsak.gov.jo>
- An online platform dedicated to the service of requiring monthly medications from a health facility that is audited by: <https://emed.hakeem.io/index.php/en>
- Corona Virus Statistics: <https://www.ncscm.gov.jo/corona-statistics>
- Organizing the gradual transfer process for Jordanian students abroad to the Kingdom. safelyhome.gov.jo
- Mouneh platform, which is a guide for companies and licensed applications that provide goods delivery services to homes in all governorates of the Kingdom: mouneh.jo
- Protection platform, a protection service for worker and employer rights in the private sector: hemayeh.jo
- AMAN application to protect citizens from the spread of the Corona Epidemic: <https://amanapp.jo/ar>

REOPEN DIFFERENT SECTORS

On 4th of June, the Prime Minister of Jordan declared the **(CORONA Matrix of reopening different sectors)** in the Kingdom in order to allow companies, services, economic and social activities to resume work systematically, and to avoid a new wave of epidemic that could overwhelm our health care system and delay the progress made so far, see Figure (4) below.

Government approach for reopening the economy used a framework that looked at public health risks and economic returns to reopen each of the closed sectors. In addition to this framework, the government has looked at what other countries are

doing, including neighboring countries and those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

FIVE-STAGE RESPONSE & RECOVERY FRAMEWORK

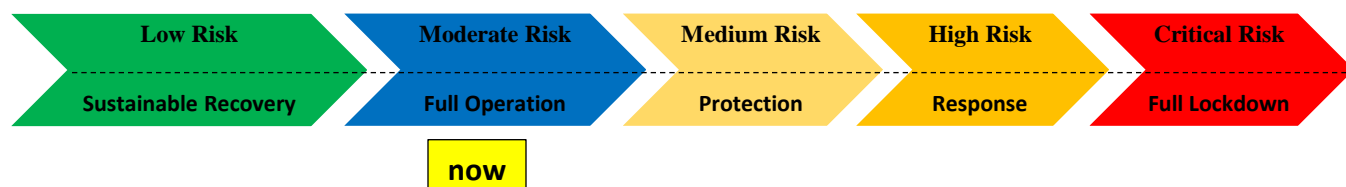


FIGURE 4 | Five-Stage Response and Recovery Framework for CORONA Matrix. Developed according to Jordanian Ministry of Health.COVID-19 in Jordan. (2020). Together-to-Reopen. on the MOH website (4).

Critical Risk: Double the number of cases for 3 consecutive days (such as recording 20 then 40 and then 80 cases, respectively). The emergence of 3 unknown sources of infection. More than 140 cases appeared in one day, or 3% or more were recorded as positive test results.

High Risk: More than 20 local cases per day for 7 consecutive days or 2- 3% of test results are positive.

Medium Risk: Number of local cases between 10-20 for more than 7 consecutive days or 1-2% of test results are positive.

Moderate Risk: of local cases less than 10 for 7 consecutive days or 5.0% -1% of the results of the tests are positive.

Low Risk: No new local cases for 10 consecutive days.

Each stage will last at least from one to two weeks and can continue for a longer period before moving to the next stage. The government will work with industries to formulate sector-specific guidelines before future stages. If we all work together to defeat Coved 19, we can move forward in each stage, and succeed with our commitment.

The Prime Minister said: “The efforts of all institutions, under the leadership of His Majesty King Abdullah II, have worked together, in continuous coordination and fruitful cooperation”. Also he pointed out that the management of the Corona Crisis and its consequences posed a challenge to all countries of the world, and Jordan was no exception, saying: “It is a complex dimensional pandemic that requires procedures and solutions that intersect responsibility for its implementation with several parties within the state’s work system.” (P.M Razzaz,2020)

HEALTH RISK INDICATORS

How did we reach Moderate Risk Stage? The Ministry of Health data indicates a significant decrease in the number of internal infections within 14 days, and also indicates that it is less than 10 cases per day. It was also found that the ratio of detected cases to the number of examinations is less than 5.0%, and therefore Jordan is considered to be in a moderate risk stage.

The following factors must be taken into consideration when deciding to open any sector:

- Health risks related to reopening.
- Economic benefits of reopening.
- Variable factors (such as blocking hours, size of gathering).

Response during this stage now will be limited close for most of the Sectors (focus on full operation).

SECTORS AND ACTIVITIES AUTHORIZED TO OPERATE

- The Government Sector.
- Security Agencies.
- Mosques and Churches (with controls and restrictions).
- Administrative activities and Logistics support services.
- Restaurants and Cafes (with restrictions and restrictions).
- Hotels & Hospitality.
- Courts.
- Real Estate Sector.
- Tourist sites for local tourism.
- Quarries Sector.
- Information & Communications Technology Companies.
- The Media Sector (including paper publishing).
- Publishing Houses.
- Sports Clubs and events (without audiences with restrictions).
- Incubations (with controls and restrictions).

EXCEPTIONS (Suspended activities)

- Schools and kindergartens.
- Wedding Halls.
- Mourning Houses.
- Universities and Colleges.
- Institutes and youth activities.
- Cinemas, parties, festivals, conferences, exhibitions, cultural events and festivals.
- Training and cultural centers.
- Public Parks.
- Game Cities and recreational places.

Also, the following categories are allowed to work and move: periodic medical examinations, permission to visit prisons and nursing homes. Not allowed the movement for elderly (70 +), those suffering from chronic diseases.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT BAN AND CLOSE REGIONS?

- There are no comprehensive ban days.
- The movement is permitted for citizens from 6 am to 12 at night daily.
- For facilities from 6 am to 11 at night daily.
- Social events up to 20 people.
- Travel restrictions according to the standards of the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Tourism, the Epidemiology Committee, and the Crisis Cell.
- Movement by private cars are fully permitted.
- Transportation 50% permitted.
- Movement within regions and between governorates is permitted.
- Closed any infected region.

PROCEDURE

- PCR screening with high momentum with 70% of the health sector capacity.
- Maintain contact tracking procedures at 100% of the capacity of Epidemiological Investigation Teams. (EIT)
- Expand awareness and verification campaigns.
- An extensive information flow towards citizens.
- Allowing internal flight.
- Activating and announcing emergency response plans for all ministries and institutions.

Of course, our success depending on our commitment, in case of changing of Health Risk Indicators, shifting to another stage will be necessary and it will be with its own response, sectors and activities authorized to operate, exceptions and suspended

activities, how to implement ban and close regions and procedures should be taken at that stage, see Figure (5) below.

OUR SUCCESS WITH OUR COMMITMENT (RESPONSIBILITIES)

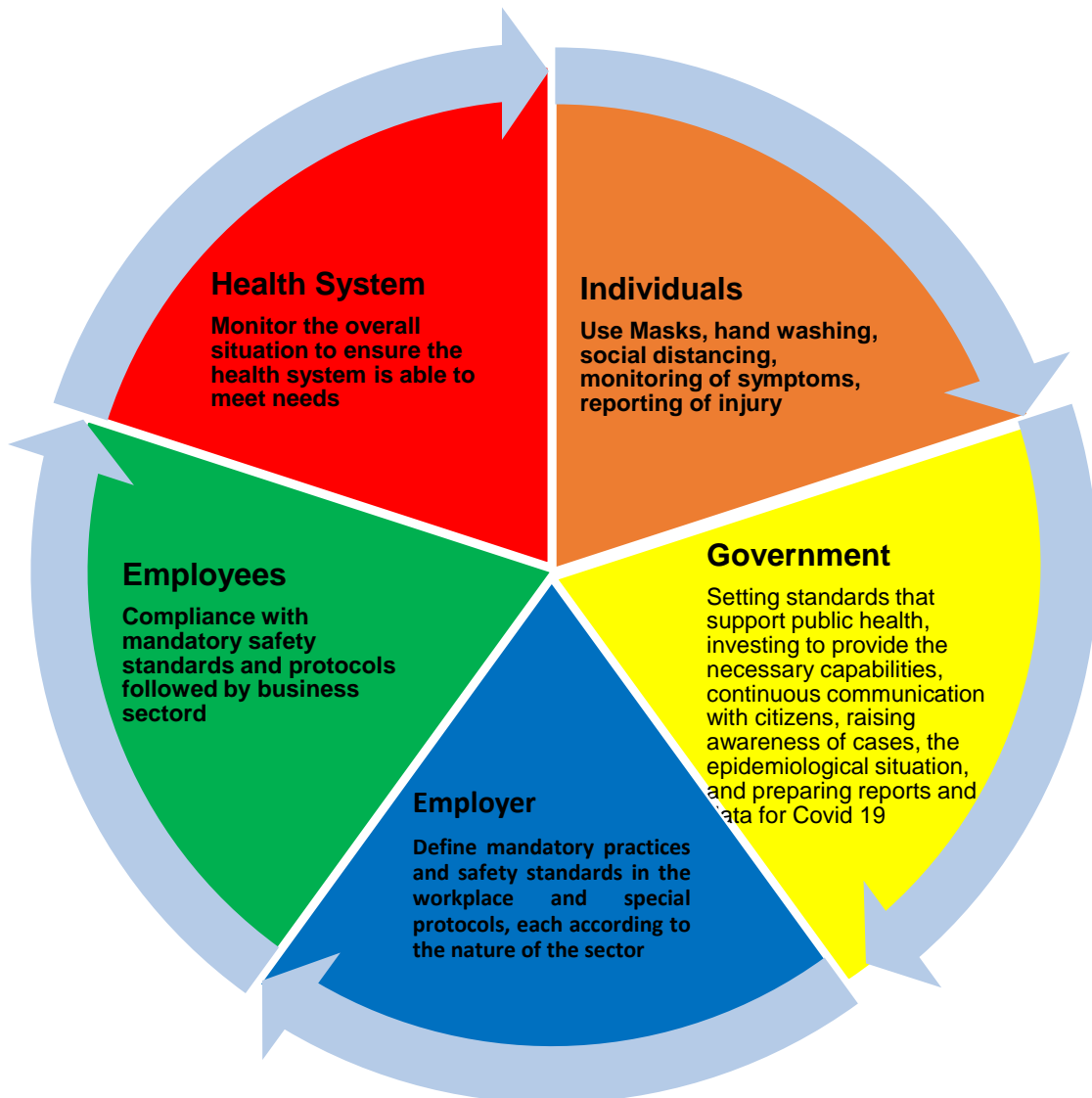


Figure (5)

AMAN APPLICATION

It's an application launched by the Ministry of Health to protect citizens and society from the spread of the Corona Epidemic in order to preserve the health of citizens and society from infection with the Corona virus, the Ministry of Health launched a safety application, through alerts that reveal the possibility of exposure to the Corona virus, which leads to a halt of the chain of infections faster.

The aim of the security application to detect exposure to the virus by using geographical positioning system technology (GPS), and later Bluetooth, which makes tracing and isolation of cases of infection with Corona emerging faster and more efficient, leading to contain the virus and ensure the safety of its users, their families and their community.

HOW DOES THE AMAN APP WORK?

The security application works in two interconnected Methods:

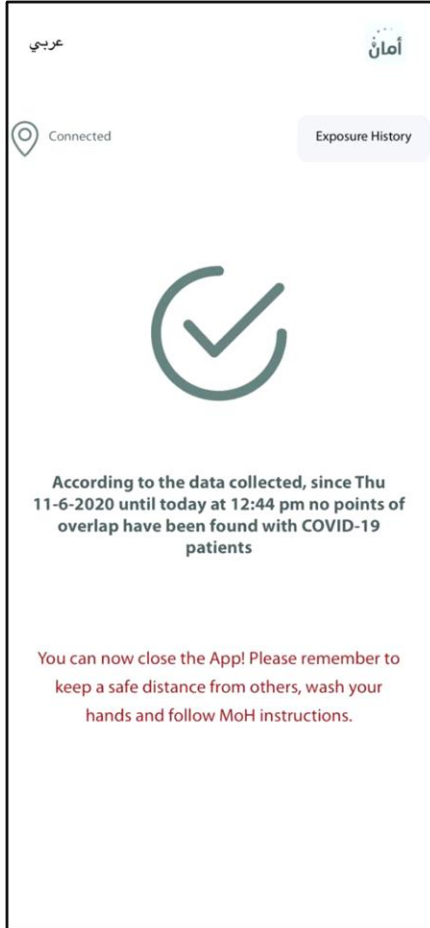
- **The first method:** the application works to save the site data exclusively on the user's phone to compare the movement of the user with the movement of users who can be diagnosed later with the new Corona virus by the Ministry of Health, and in the event of a meeting between the user and another person proving that he was infected with the virus later, the application sends an alert to the users who were present in the vicinity of the infected person, according to the place and time. The application also provides instructions and steps to be taken after receiving the alert.

- **The second method:** The user diagnosed with the emerging virus of Corona, from this method he can easily retrieve his whereabouts and movements over the last 14 days through the application, including the dates, times and places he was in. The primary goal of this level is to alert other users who happen to be near the personalized user, ultimately speeding up the diagnosis of infections and controlling the spread of the virus.

HOW IMPORTANT IS THE APPLICATION OF AMAN?

AMAN application is to protect citizens and society. It alerts family members if they are exposed to the virus and mix with an infected person. It is a safety application that protects businesses and employees, it reduces the speed of infection among employees,

AMAN respects privacy, as downloading the application does not need to disclose any personal information and violates privacy see Figure (6) (Arabia Weather ,2020).



AMAN Application

Figure (6)

USING ELECTRONIC BRACELET

Jordan has launched a programme to use electronic bracelets to monitor confirmed or suspected coronavirus patients, the trial period, which started on 24th June, will be used for a limited number of people at the beginning since, the authorities are still working on the technicalities of the bracelet.

The aim of the bracelet is to ensure that the public commits to official coronavirus quarantine measures, including social distancing (The New Arab,2020).

CURRENT SITUATION

In Jordan, the dynamic of the outbreak is relatively reassuring, and it is going in the right direction. However, the outbreak is still at a relatively early stage, and it is untimely to conclude that Jordan has fully contained the virus transmission within the country especially after opening most of the sectors. The cumulative number of tests that have been conducted throughout the Kingdom until Wednesday, 17th June 2020 has reached to **(302502)** test. Also, the number of beds which, allocated to treat confirmed cases was limited at the beginning of the pandemic to be now (1513) bed and we have now (160) Epidemiological Investigation Team (EIT), see Chart (2).

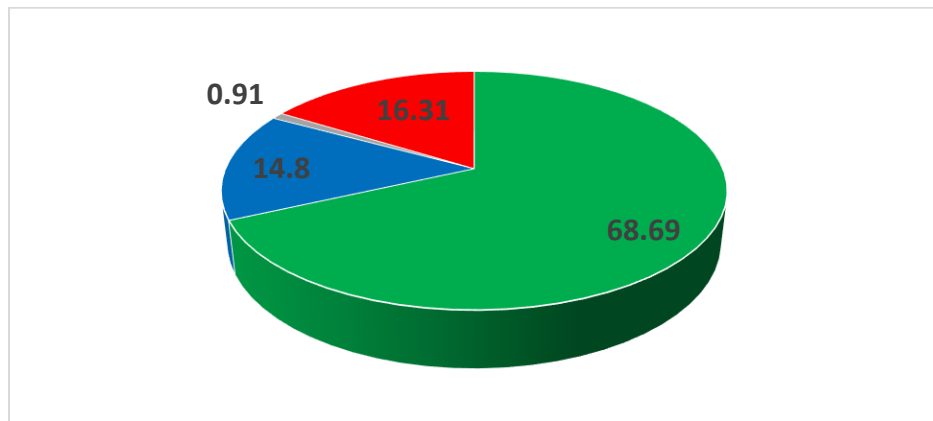
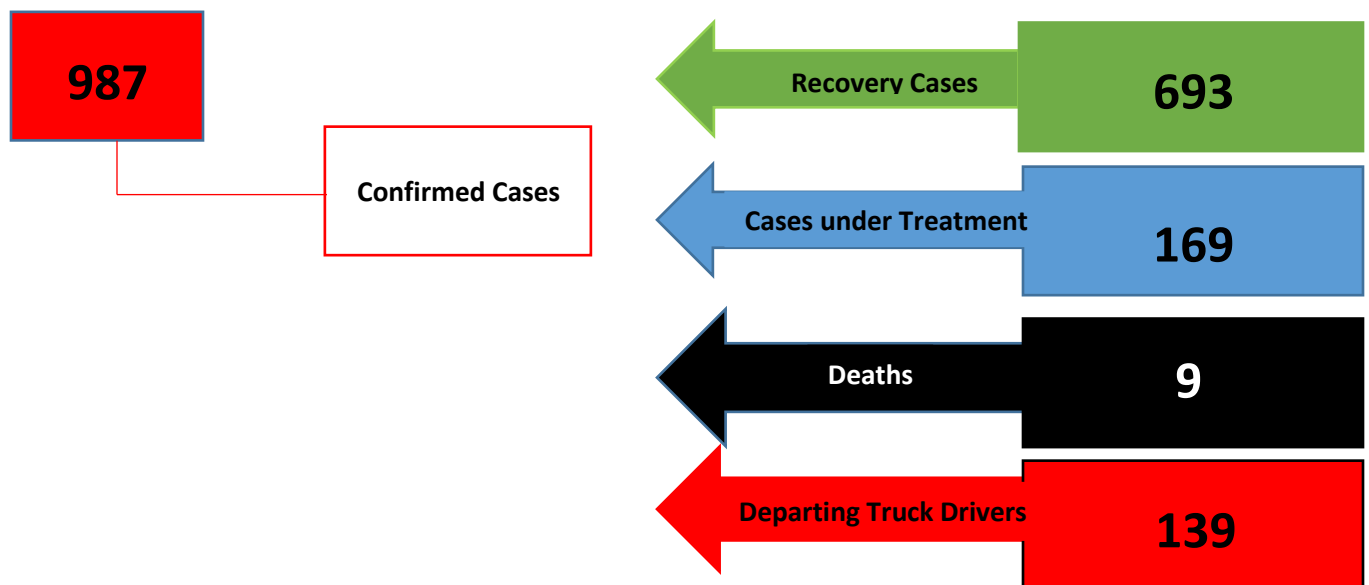


CHART 2 | Last updated cases of COVID-19 as 17th of June 2020. Developed according to Directorate of Operations & Plans /NCSCM statistics on the NCSCM website (5).



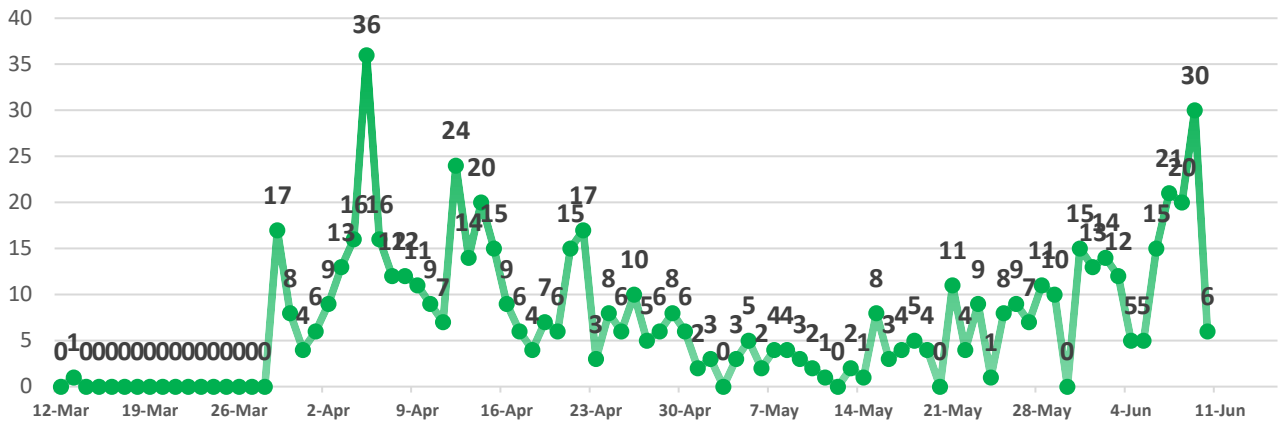


CHART 3 | Recovery Cases of COVID-19 as 11th of June 2020. Developed according to Directorate of Operations & Plans /NCSCM statistics on the NCSCM website (5).

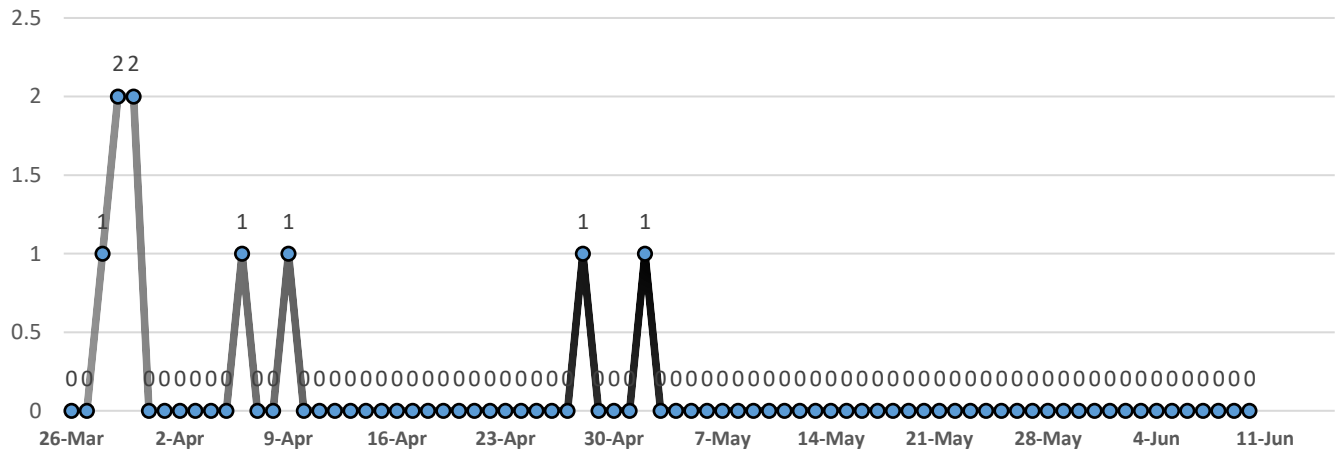


CHART 4 | Deaths Cases of COVID-19 as 11th of June 2020. Developed according to Directorate of Operations & Plans /NCSCM statistics on the NCSCM website (5).

SUMMARY

Actually, the most successful decision taken by the Government was declaring a state of emergency and imposed a curfew on the Kingdom in a very early stage and halting all air travel from/to the Kingdom as well as all land/sea border crossings for passenger movement until further notice, so we were able to control the outbreak and minimize the spread of the corona virus cases in Jordan.

We can say that in Jordan there was a kind of sense making, in spite that its very difficult to predict crises in a very early stages but, it was possible to detect an emerging crisis time to shift the course of events in the right direction beside using all available resources of the Country (Boin et al,2015, P15).

It's impossible for Jordan to remain empty of this pandemic in the light of its spread widely in the whole region and the world, and the zero situation besides low number of cases that passed through the past few weeks did not mean the end of this pandemic, but rather broke the chain of its infection and control its spread internally temporarily, and it is not possible for the Kingdom to continue closing on itself for an unknown period and we have to be ready also for the second wave of this epidemic. Coexistence and adaptation to this virus and its consequences is the inevitable way until the emergence of a global remedy, and adherence to the protocols of social distancing and the Public Safety Procedures are the only solution. Therefore, I have to deal with people as I'm infected and to treat them as they are infected too, otherwise things remain in the circle of wishes. Most of the discovered cases now were reported to those staying on the quarantine whom, arrived from abroad besides the truck drivers coming from some bordering countries, with limited cases cause of direct contact with the infected cases which, reflects the good control of the spread of the Virus in the country. Of course a plan for the Government to resume the Life gradually in all Sectors is already started according to **(Five-Stage Response & Recovery Framework)**, taking in consideration the social distancing and the public safety procedures.

After taking the decision of reopening borders and allow traveling to and from the Kingdom the difficulty now is how to deal with the arrivals, since the number of infected cases in most of the countries is increasing. Therefore, instructions, controls and procedures for public protection and safety are being developed that must be implemented and adhered to, when reopening the borders.

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