

Incident Brief

Global – COVID-19 Pandemic

On Call International's Incident Level: **WATCH**

Location	Global
Date	April 20, 2022
Issued by	On Call International Global Security & Medical Teams

NOTABLE WEEKLY UPDATES:

Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Africa records rise in COVID-19 infections. • Uganda discharges last hospitalized COVID-19 patient. • Africa is experiencing it's longest decline in COVID-19 infections.
Americas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jamaica on Friday removed its indoor mask requirement and Saturday its requirement that travelers provide a negative PCR test result for entry. • In the US Monday a Federal Judge ruled against the nationwide requirement that masks be worn on public transportation. • The US DOS downgraded 92 countries from Level 4: Do Not Travel this week to bring the number of countries designated Level 4 down to 29 (13%).
Asia-Pacific	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • South Korea drops majority of Covid Restrictions. • Shanghai officials release another 12 million people from lockdown. • Hong Kong's "Zero Covid" policy disrupts international travel.
Europe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Italy's Prime Minister tests positive for COVID-19 • Greece plans to co-exist with COVID-19 • Vaccination centers to close operations in Romania.
Middle East & North Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morocco has reported the lowest weekly COVID-19 deaths since the pandemic began. • Algeria reported no new COVID-19 cases on 17 April for the first time since the start of the pandemic. • Israel announced face masks will no longer be required in enclosed spaces as of 23 April. • Iraqi Kurdistan reported no new COVID-19 deaths between 15-17 April.



GLOBAL SUMMARY:

The On Call Security & Medical Teams are continuing to monitor the global outbreak COVID-19. As of the issuance of this report on Wednesday April 20, 2022, there have been 506,124,895 confirmed cases of COVID-19 globally with 6,204,397 deaths. For updated information on individual countries' travel advisories, COVID-19 case trends, travel restrictions, and healthcare capabilities review On Call International's [COVID-19 Travel Outlook Map](#).

REGIONAL SUMMARIES:

AFRICA

On Monday, **South Africa** recorded the highest COVID-19 positivity rate in the country since mid-February, indicating that there may be a resurgence of the virus in the country. The South African Medical Research Council stated that COVID-19 particles in wastewater is increasing in three provinces, which is seen as an early warning sign of the rise in infections. Despite the rise in infections, the number of daily COVID-19 tests taken has fallen in recent weeks and the country continues to ease prevention measures to curb the spread of the virus.

Uganda has discharged its final hospitalized COVID-19 patient. The latest statistics from the country's health ministry indicate that the average positivity rate these past few weeks has been about .3%, indicating that the pandemic is under control. Despite the low positivity rate, the risk of contracting COVID-19 in Uganda is still high and citizens should take precautions accordingly.

Africa is experiencing its longest running decline in COVID-19 infections. Cases have dropped from over 300,000 weekly cases at the start of the year to less than 20,000 cases weekly, in mid-April. This low level of infections has not been seen since Spring of 2020. In addition to this, no African country has experienced a significant resurgence in the past few weeks.

AMERICAS

Jamaica on Friday removed its indoor mask requirement and Saturday its requirement that travelers provide a negative PCR test result for entry. The requirement to receive "travel authorization" prior to entry had already been removed, meaning there are no longer any COVID-19 related requirements for entry into Jamaica. Case counts in Jamaica have been low and stagnant since early March at levels not seen since March 2020.

In the **US** Monday a Federal Judge ruled against the nationwide requirement that masks be worn on public transportation including planes, trains, and buses. A number of commercial airlines have stopped requiring masks onboard flights after the Transportation and Security Administration announced it would no longer enforce the mask rule following the judge's decision. The Biden administration has stated it is considering



appealing the decision if the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention should state the measure is necessary.

The **US** Department of State downgraded 92 countries from Level 4: Do Not Travel this week to bring the number of countries designated Level 4 down to 29 (13%). The move is a significant shift from early March when 72% of the world was designated Level 4: Do Not Travel and even last week when 55% of the world was designated as such. Possibly more significant is the fact that only 21% of those countries downgraded from Level 4 went to Level 3: Reconsider Travel. That means 79% of the countries previously Level 4 (72) are now designated either Level 2: Exercise Increased Caution or Level 1: Exercise Normal Precautions.

ASIA-PACIFIC

Following last week's discussions, the **South Korean** government lifted many of the country's Covid Restrictions on Monday. Restaurants and businesses can now operate past midnight with no capacity limits, and people will be allowed to eat snacks in large entertainment venues such as movie theaters and indoor stadiums beginning next week. South Korea's mask mandate is still in place but is expected to be reviewed in two weeks.

Shanghai officials released another four million citizens from the city-wide lockdown on Wednesday, claiming that the city was gradually regaining control of the most recent outbreak. Approximately 12 million out of the 25 million Shanghai residents can leave their homes, but most are still restricted to their neighborhoods and large gatherings are restricted. Those that remain under lockdown have grown increasingly frantic as access to food, medicine and other essential supplies remains limited.

Hong Kong's "Zero Covid" policy is severely disrupting international travel into the city. While the Hong Kong government recently lifted a flight ban from nine countries, the city currently only allows two flights per week from outside the Asia-Pacific region. Earlier this week, Hong Kong officials temporarily cancelled 11 flight routes from Europe, including London and Amsterdam. The city's covid policy mandates that routes must be suspended for seven days if three or more incoming passengers test positive for COVID-19 or fail to produce sufficient health documentation.

EUROPE

Italy's Prime Minister, Mario Draghi, has tested positive for COVID-19 earlier this week. According to a statement released on Monday, he has canceled his trip to Angola and the Congo due to his positive test. Infection rates in Italy have been on the rise since March, though mortality and hospitalization rates remain low. Draghi, who is 74 years old and fully vaccinated, is asymptomatic, but is taking necessary precautions to combat the spread of the virus.



Greece's Health Minister, Thanos Plevris said in a statement earlier this week that the country does not believe in a zero-covid strategy, and instead will take steps to co-exist with the virus. During the press briefing he stated that the government has prioritized bolstering healthcare and protecting vulnerable groups from the virus. The minister also denied criticism over Greece's high mortality rates from the virus claiming that it is well below the European Union's average. Approximately 29,000 people have died due to COVID-19 related complications since the start of the pandemic in Greece.

Starting July 1, vaccination centers will no longer operate in **Romania**. Instead, the distribution of vaccines will be moved exclusively to family doctor practices. Those who wish to receive the vaccine before 30 June can do so at vaccination centers and family doctors, however, many vaccination centers have already closed in Romania due to low interest. Currently, Romania has about 8.1 million people fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

Morocco has recorded the lowest weekly deaths since the beginning of the pandemic. The COVID-19 positivity rate has decreased from 1.3% to just .09%. The Coordinator for the National Center for Public Health Emergency Operations said a total of 14 patients were in intensive care units over the last week. Last month, the government extended the state of emergency until 30 April. As the epidemiological situation improves, Morocco is expected to ease remaining restrictions.

On 17 April, **Algeria** reported no new COVID-19 cases for the first time since the start of the pandemic. The Health Ministry announced that on Sunday, no new cases were reported over the past 24 hours. Algeria recorded its highest daily new case count on 25 January of 2022 at 2,521.

Beginning 23 April, face masks will no longer be required in enclosed spaces in **Israel**. Face masks will still be required in medical facilities. Prime Minister Naftali Bennet and Health Minister Nitzan Horowitz made the joint announcement saying, "We have finally learned how to live alongside the coronavirus – without panic, with responsibility, and with sound judgement." The Health Ministry did not provide the reasoning behind this new decision.

Iraqi Kurdistan did not record any new COVID-19 deaths between 15-17 April, the Ministry of Health announced. The Ministry of Health released statistics Sunday showing that only 26 COVID-19 tests came back positive out of 1,518 tests taken in the preceding 24 hours. On the day before, the region only reported seven new positive cases.



STANDING ADVICE:

- Review On Call International's [COVID-19 Travel Outlook Map](#) for updated information on individual countries' travel advisories, COVID-19 case trends, travel restrictions, and healthcare capabilities.
- Maintain enhanced personal hygiene. This includes washing your hands often with soap and water, clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe, wear a face covering at all times while in public locations, and avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Practice good cough etiquette by covering your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when coughing or sneezing. Do not use your hands because subsequent contact of your hands to surfaces or other people can spread the infection.
- If feeling ill, remain indoors and limit your contact with others.
- Be advised that many countries maintain entry/exit restrictions, applicable to citizens and non-citizens alike. Review a country's specific travel restrictions prior to making travel arrangements.
- Consider that commercial flight availability may be limited. Even if a country does not restrict entry, it may be difficult to find flights to the area.
- Expect enhanced health screening procedures to be conducted at transportation hubs such as airports.
- Many countries have imposed domestic social distancing measures in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. If traveling to a country, review its domestic restrictions prior to setting out.
- If you believe you may be infected with COVID-19, contact a medical facility by phone or email prior to arrival to ensure the medical facility have the proper time to prepare for your arrival. Be advised that due to the volume of confirmed cases in some locations, medical workers may advise you to self-isolate at home if your symptoms are not severe.
- Review the [CDC's website](#) and the [WHO's website](#) for the most up-to-date information relating to COVID-19 exposure, risk, and prevention.



Incident Classification

MONITOR

Definition: Continue to conduct normal operations without significant security concerns.

Conditions:

- Standard security operations protocols are in place
- Operating environment is considered stable
- Daily activities within the locality are proceeding as normal
- Operations expected to proceed with no impediments

Advice: Continue to follow best practices and travel safety tactics. Follow standing advice indicated in briefing.

WATCH

Definition: Continue to conduct normal operations. Indicators and warnings suggest heightened awareness and additional precautions may need to be implemented.

Conditions:

- Noticeable changes in daily activities within the locality
- A small-scale increase of civil unrest or crime
- Natural Disaster seasons are approaching

Advice: Review Emergency Action protocols, liaise with embassy sources and trusted local contacts to ascertain latest on the ground information, and report any pertinent information to travelers and security provider. Follow standing advice indicated in briefing.

WARNING

Definition: A specific threat or threats have been identified determined by accurate intelligence and assessment of the situation. The threat has the potential to be ongoing or escalate.

Conditions:

- State Department or relevant health authority issues a warning
- Significant natural disaster is forecast
- Significant intelligence indicating a potential disruptive incident

Advice: Consider restricting movement of personnel in impacted areas, have choice of action in place if situation worsens, ensure constituents have adequate emergency supplies, and establish daily communication windows with constituents in country.

TAKE ACTION

Definition: The current, credible, and specific threat is imminent, occurring or has occurred and has caused significant disruption to daily operations and activities in country.

Conditions:

- A major event occurs with significant economic, political or security disruptions expected over a short or long term period
- Large presence of military or police in streets with continuing presence expected; state of emergency declared
- US State department raises the travel rating or evacuates non-essential personnel or staff

Advice: Establish immediate communication with personnel, consider communicating with affected personnel's emergency contacts and family, and liaise with both local and non-local authorities and like-minded organizations to support your response.



The information provided to you within this briefing has been compiled from a multitude of available sources and is based on current news and analysis at the time of writing. The security team at On Call International, LLC. has provided this analysis, supporting advice, and recommendations in good faith to assist you in mitigating risks that could arise. However, no implied or express warranty against risk, changes in circumstance, or other fluid and unforeseen events can be provided. Based on your request for this assessment, you agree that any reliance you place on this information is therefore strictly at your own risk and that you will not hold On Call International, LLC. or the authors responsible for any inaccuracies, errors or oversights herein.