Global – COVID-19 Pandemic

On Call International’s Incident Level: WATCH

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<td>October 6, 2021</td>
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<td>Issued by</td>
<td>On Call International Global Security &amp; Medical Teams</td>
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NOTABLE WEEKLY UPDATES:

**Africa**
- South Africa launches digital COVID-19 certificate.
- COVID-19 prevention device launches in Nigeria.
- Angola plans to vaccinate 60% of the population by end of 2022.

**Americas**
- Argentina beginning November 1 will permit tourists entry without requiring quarantine provided travelers are fully vaccinated and provide a negative PCR test result.
- Barbados has been added to the CDC Level 4: COVID-19 Very High list as it experiences record case levels in an ongoing spike.

**Asia-Pacific**
- Australia based medical tech manufacture Ellume issue recall for 195,000 faulty COVID-19 home testing kits.
- India extends international flight restrictions until 31 October.
- Macao order mandatory COVID-19 testing for all residents.

**Europe**
- COVID-19 cases rising as English students resume in-person learning.
- European Medicines Agency recommends booster shots for broader population.
- Irish Public Health officials announce they are on track to lift restrictions on October 22.

**Middle East & North Africa**
- Qatar Airways announced $4.1 billion in losses during the last fiscal year.
- Algeria began producing the Chinese COVID-19 Sinovac vaccine last week.
- Egypt will reduce the cost to conduct a PCR test for all travelers.
- Turkey is considering administering a third booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine.
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 6 October, there have been 235,908,859 confirmed cases of COVID-19 globally with 4,818,982 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

South Africa’s Department of Health launched a digital COVID-19 vaccine certificate, which features a scannable QR code enabling users to access their records digitally. The certificate, which is currently only available to people fully vaccinated against the virus, can be downloaded as a PDF to use on a mobile device or it can be printed. While the Department of Health has not confirmed what the certificate will be used for, there is an indication that it could facilitate the further reopening of the travel industry in South Africa.

A device to check the spread of COVID-19 has made its debut in Nigeria. The Shycocan Virus Attenuation Device is a cylindrical device that is evidenced to prevent the spread of COVID-19 with up to 99.5% efficacy. It can also work against current and future variants of the virus. The device is certified by Standard’s Organization of Nigeria (SON) and is a part of the country’s fight to bring businesses and daily life back to normal.

Angola’s government has received approximately 3 million doses of the SinoPharm COVID-19 Vaccine. The country plans to vaccinate 60% of the population, or 7.8 million people by next December. Cases in Angola have increased significantly in the past weeks, forcing the government to delay easing restrictions in the country. Citizens are now required to show proof of vaccination or provide a negative test to access public spaces. About 3% of Angola’s population is fully vaccinated against the virus.

AMERICAS

Argentina has provided additional details confirming that beginning November 1 travelers from around the world will be permitted to enter the country for the purpose of tourism without being required to quarantine. To be allowed entry without quarantine travelers must have been fully vaccinated at least two weeks prior to entry and provide a negative COVID-19 PCR test result from within 72 hours of entry. Cases have continued to decline and are currently at their lowest levels since June 2020.
Barbados has been added to the US CDC list of Level 4: COVID-19 Very High destinations. This designation is given to countries who record more than 500 new cases per 100,000 people over the previous 28 days. Barbados has been experiencing a sharp rise in daily case counts since late August and is currently recording a record 220 new cases per day with no indication the trend subsiding.

ASIA-PACIFIC

The Australia based medical technology manufacturer Ellume has announced a recall of 195,000 faulty COVID-19 home testing kits this week. The decision to issue the recall was made due to the home testing kits having an increased chance of false positive COVID-19 results. The majority of the testing kits were issued in the United States, primarily to the US Department of Defense which was distributing the kits to various community health facilities. Ellume has stated that they have identified the defect and are working to correct the issue. There is no information to indicate that any additional Ellume COVID-19 home testing kits have been compromised.

While the COVID-19 situation in India is generally improving, the government has nonetheless decided to extend its ban on most international commercial air travel until at least 31 October. International commercial flights between India and countries with which India has established Air Transport Bubbles will not be affected by this extension. The majority of India’s COVID-19 cases are being reported in Kerala state.

Due to the discovery of a minimal localized COVID-19 cluster, officials in the Chinese semi-autonomous region of Macao have instituted a mass testing policy whereby all residents must obtain a nucleic acid COVID-19 test within a three-day timeframe. This requirement was instituted as of 1200 local time on 4 October and all residents must obtain their tests no later than 2100 local time on 7 October. Macao maintains 41 testing stations across the region which operate 24 hours a day.

EUROPE

Covid cases are rising in English schools as students have been returning to in-person learning. English students are not currently required to be vaccinated or wear masks in the classroom. Over 186,000 students have been marked absent do to COVID-19, which is a 78 percent increase since the beginning of September and the highest infection rate among students since the beginning of the pandemic. The 10-19 age group is currently experiencing the greatest rise of cases in England.

England also adjusted international travel restrictions on Monday, replacing the three-tiered “traffic light” system with a single list of “red-light” countries that have the highest cases of Covid-19. Under the new system, fully vaccinated travelers do not need to take a pre-departure Covid test, though they are still
required to test two days after arrival. Entry and testing requirements are still the same for unvaccinated travelers and travelers arriving from red-list countries.

On Monday, The European Medicines Agency endorsed the Pfizer vaccine as a booster shot for anyone over the age of 18. An expert committee for the EMA recommended that the booster shots be administered at least six months after the second dose for the average population and at least 28 days after the second dose for people with weakened immune systems. This endorsement serves as a recommendation for European Union, however the decision to implement booster shots remains with individual member states. The EMA committee has not yet reached a decision for the Moderna vaccine as a booster shot.

The Irish National Public Health Emergency Team (NPHET) chairman Philip Nolan announced Tuesday that the high vaccination rate and close adherence to social distancing restrictions has brought the country close to suppressing Covid-19. The number of new Covid-19 cases dropped below 1,000 on Monday, and approximately 349 people are hospitalized due to Covid. With steady decrease in case counts, Nolan stated that Ireland was “in a good place” to lift remaining Covid restrictions on October 22 as planned.

MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

Qatar Airways has announced $4.1 billion in losses during the last fiscal year due to COVID-19. The fiscal year ran from April 2020 to March 2021. Over half the loss was related to a value drop in the airline’s planes that were grounded because of the pandemic. Qatar Airways continued flying during the pandemic, but it dramatically reduced its passenger flights in March 2020. Other airlines reported major losses over the last year including Emirates in Dubai and Ethiad in Abu Dhabi.

Algeria began producing the Chinese COVID-19 Sinovac vaccine last week. Production is expected to be eight million doses a month. Officials say production could be doubled if needed. Algeria’s Minister for the Pharmaceutical Industry says the country plans to export some of the doses. Algeria is hoping to vaccinate 40% of its population by the end of the year.

Egypt will reduce the cost to conduct a PCR test for travelers. The Egyptian Cabinet agreed to reduce the value of administrative expenses involved during PCR testing. The price of the PCR test for non-Egyptians will be LE1200 instead of LE1600. The price of the PCR test for Egyptians will be LE900 instead of LE1200. The country is introducing a new service delivering test results within two hours for the cost of LE1800 for non-Egyptians and LE1600 for Egyptians. Results for other PCR tests generally take 4-6 hours.

Turkey is considering administering a third booster dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine as the country sees record case numbers. The country registered 29,802 new COVID-19 cases on Tuesday, the highest daily average since 30 April. The ministry is expected to announce eligibility rules for the booster dose soon.
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 are implementing complete entry/exit bans, applicable to citizens and non-citizens alike. Review a country’s specific travel restrictions prior to making travel arrangements.
- Consider that commercial flight availability is 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 lockdown 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.