



PREPARED BY: BRITISH RED CROSS

IFRC – EMERGENCY DECREES IN RELATION TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Country Update: Chad (containing measures adopted until 30.03.2020 inclusive)

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Overview

On Thursday 19th March 2020, the Government of Chad confirmed the first case of COVID-19 in the country (a Moroccan passenger coming from Cameroon).¹ By Tuesday 30th March, a total seven cases had been registered.²

Chadian authorities had adopted measures to prevent and/or limit the diffusion of the virus in the national territory since late January 2020,³ as soon as the WHO asked all countries to be prepared for containment.⁴ Measures have been characterized by their progressive character. Early steps included screening at airports and the confinement of passengers arriving from the hotbed of the virus in China.⁵ The list of countries requiring testing and quarantine was expanded in early March,⁶ at the same time as

¹ Government of Chad, Press release, 19 March 2020, available at <https://www.presidence.td/fr-news-4150.html> (last accessed 30 March 2020).

² Government of Chad, Press release, 30 March 2020, available at <https://www.presidence.td/fr-news-4172.html> (last accessed 31 March 2020).

³ Ministry of Public Health of Chad, Press release, 27 January 2020, available at https://www.facebook.com/ministeresantetchad/posts/830333147413761?_tn_=-K-R (last accessed 30 March 2020), recalling that the first measures had been taken as early as 23rd January.

⁴ World Health Organization, *Statement on the meeting of the International Health Regulations (2005) Emergency Committee regarding the outbreak of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV)*, 23 January 2020, available at [https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/23-01-2020-statement-on-the-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-\(2005\)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)](https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/23-01-2020-statement-on-the-meeting-of-the-international-health-regulations-(2005)-emergency-committee-regarding-the-outbreak-of-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov)) (last accessed 30 March 2020).

⁵ Ministry of Public Health of Chad, Press release, 27 January 2020, *supra* note 3.

⁶ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Integration, International Cooperation and the Diaspora of Chad, Press release, 9 March 2020, available at <https://www.facebook.com/TchadDiplomatie/posts/2760534234029878>

controls at the land border with Cameroon were strengthened.⁷ Soon afterwards, Chadian authorities scaled up action, closing airports to all flights except cargos, prohibiting gatherings of more than 50 persons, and adopting strict sanitary controls on the national territory and at the frontiers (including closing the land border with Sudan and Central African Republic).⁸ After the first case of COVID-19 was diagnosed on March 19th, the Government of Chad further tightened decisions on urban and inter-urban transport,⁹ closed boutiques and shops selling non-alimentary products (except for pharmacies and essential goods),¹⁰ as well as schools and universities, restaurants and cafes, and places of worship.¹¹ The past few days have been characterized by calls on the population to comply with measures taken¹² and by the decision to extend for a further ten days (i.e., until 10th April 2020) the closure of Chadian airports to foreign passenger flights.¹³ So far, it appears that total confinement has not been adopted yet.

Documents relied on to draft this paper mainly include press releases, statements and declarations, as well as publications on social media channels by several Chadian authorities. Access to the original decrees and measures has proved impossible most of the times. This calls for the necessary *caveat* that the information provided in this sheet might be partial and could not cover the full extent of the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Chad.

Question 1. Is there co-ordination between state and non-state actors, e.g. through a national emergency response mechanism?

A monitoring unit (called *Cellule de Veille et de la Sécurité Sanitaire*) has been activated since 13th March 2020, comprising of members of the Chadian government as well as technical and financial partners.¹⁴ With a view to developing, discussing and implementing the government's response to COVID-19, the unit has coordinated meetings with representatives of civil society and State

(last accessed 31 March 2020). Countries then considered as being 'at risk' included: the Popular Republic of China, the Republic of South Korea, the Islamic Republic of Iran, the Italian Republic and the French Republic (*ibidem*).

⁷ Ministry of Public Health of Chad, Press release, 27 January 2020, available at <https://www.facebook.com/ministeresantetchad/posts/860496801064062> (last accessed 31 March 2020).

⁸ Government of Chad, Press release, 14 March 2020, available at <https://www.presidence.td/fr-news-4145.html> (last accessed 31 March 2020).

⁹ Government of Chad, Press release, 21 March 2020, available at <https://www.presidence.td/fr-news-4153.html> (last accessed 31 March 2020).

¹⁰ Government of Chad, Press release, 23 March 2020, available at <https://www.presidence.td/fr-news-4158.html> (last accessed 31 March 2020).

¹¹ President of the Republic of Chad, Message to the Population of Chad, 24 March 2020, available at <https://www.presidence.td/fr-news-4162.html> (last accessed 31 March 2020).

¹² Government of Chad, Press release, 30 March 2020, available at <https://www.presidence.td/fr-news-4173.html> (last accessed 31 March 2020).

¹³ Ministry of Public Health of Chad, Press release, 30 March 2020, available at <https://www.facebook.com/ministeresantetchad/posts/874229799690762> (last accessed 31 March 2020).

¹⁴ Government of Chad, Press release, 13 March 2020, available at <https://www.presidence.td/fr-news-4141.html> (last accessed 31 March 2020).

apparatuses, such as religious authorities,¹⁵ the commerce sector,¹⁶ and defence and security forces.¹⁷ As regards the governmental level, the Presidency of the Republic, the Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Integration, International Cooperation and the Diaspora are the most involved actors in the decision-making process.

Question 2. Is there mention of the role of the Red Cross/Red Crescent (RC) [national and/or international] or humanitarian actors? In what areas/sectors? What responsibilities are ascribed to the RC?

In his Message to the Population of Chad on March 24th, the President of the Republic made reference to ‘the doctors, the nurses, the paramedics and the relief workers of the Chadian Red Cross – in brief, the whole medical corps – who are involved on a daily basis to ensure the health and safety of everyone’.¹⁸ Without providing explicit information on the legal basis, the document bears witness to the role of the national Red Cross society in animating the response to the pandemic in the health sector.

Question 3. Are there exceptions to travel restrictions that will facilitate the movement of RC/humanitarian relief teams and/or aid across borders? What (if any) quarantine requirements or other conditions are attached?

The Government of Chad put in place travel restrictions as of midnight of Thursday March 19th: from that date, airports on its territory would be closed to foreign flight companies for two weeks.¹⁹ At the end of the month, following a review of the situation, this action was extended until 10th April.²⁰ Land borders with Sudan and Central African Republic were also closed initially;²¹ from one document, it would also appear that movement across borders with *all* the neighbouring States is forbidden.²²

The closing of airports is accompanied by at least one exception, i.e., cargo flights.²³ It would therefore seem that humanitarian relief goods could still be imported into Chad through flight. As regards physical persons, Chadian citizens residing abroad were only allowed to re-enter the country by flight in the limited time-window granted by the authorities (between the adoption of the measure on

¹⁵ Government of Chad, Press release, 21 March 2020, available at <https://www.presidence.td/fr-news-4152.html> (last accessed 31 March 2020).

¹⁶ Government of Chad, Press release, 22 March 2020, available at <https://www.presidence.td/fr-news-4154.html> (last accessed 31 March 2020).

¹⁷ Government of Chad, Press release, 25 March 2020, available at <https://www.presidence.td/fr-news-4165.html> (last accessed 31 March 2020).

¹⁸ President of the Republic of Chad, Message to the Population of Chad, 24 March 2020, *supra* note 11.

¹⁹ Government of Chad, Press release, 14 March 2020, *supra* note 8.

²⁰ Ministry of Public Health of Chad, Press release, 30 March 2020, *supra* note 13.

²¹ Government of Chad, Press release, 14 March 2020, *supra* note 8.

²² See Government of Chad, Press release, 30 March 2020, *supra* note 12.

²³ See Government of Chad, Press release, 14 March 2020, *supra* note 8, as well as Ministry of Public Health of Chad, Press release, 30 March 2020, *supra* note 13.

March 14th and the deadline of March 19th).²⁴ Judging from what could be argued *e contrario* from a press release, access by land frontier would seem to be still possible for persons doing so in a legal and authorized manner – which could be interpreted as allowing access to Red Cross/humanitarian relief teams.²⁵

Question 4. Are there exceptions to quarantines, curfews and other restrictions on movement that allow RC/humanitarian organizations access to vulnerable populations (including for psychosocial or non-medical aid)?

The documents found do not provide for any exceptions to quarantine and confinement measures. This does not exclude, however, that some of them are established in the text of the decrees and legislative measures that have been adopted but could not be accessed, particularly with regard to access for Red Cross/humanitarian organizations.

Question 5. Have any special legal facilities or exemptions been put in place for the importation of medical aid or other relief items or personnel (International Disaster Response Law)? What (if any) quarantine requirements or other conditions are attached?

The documents found do not include any reference to special legal facilities or exemptions for the importation of medical aid or other relief items or personnel. This does not exclude, however, that some of them are established in the text of the decrees and legislative measures that have been adopted but could not be accessed.

Question 6. Is the RC (or humanitarian organizations) categorised as 'essential' or 'emergency' services, for the purposes of exemptions to restrictions on business operations and opening hours?

The documents found do not qualify the Red Cross or any other humanitarian organization as delivering ‘essential’ or ‘emergency’ services. While providing for the closing of all commercial premises in markets, the press release by the Government of Chad of March 23rd makes the exception of shops selling alimentary goods and items, drugstores, shops selling essential goods (*‘produits de première nécessité’*) such as soap, bleach, gas, fuel and lubricant.²⁶ These references could suggest that other instruments adopted but not accessed could contain an explicit definition of such organizations as providers of ‘essential’ or ‘emergency’ services – or, at least, that they could be categorized as such by way of interpretation.

²⁴ Government of Chad, Press release, 14 March 2020, *supra* note 8.

²⁵ See Government of Chad, Press release, 30 March 2020, which reads: ‘Those who dare to cross the border *in an unauthorized and clandestine way* will be forcefully arrested and confined’ [translation by the author, emphasis added].

²⁶ Government of Chad, Press release, 23 March 2020, *supra* note 10.

Question 7. What other measures are provided in the emergency decrees? (for governmental actors, for communities, for health workers, etc).

Building on the Overview above, here is a list of measures taken by Chadian authorities to address the COVID-19 pandemic, in chronological order:

- 23.01.2020: Sanitary measures at the international airport of N'djamena, including a 14-day confinement of all passengers coming from the hotbed of the epidemy in China and the quarantine for all suspected passengers.²⁷
- 09.03.2020: Testing for COVID-19 and, in case, confinement or quarantine of 14 days for all passengers coming from countries considered at risk.²⁸
- 11.03.2020: Taking temperature for all people arriving into Chad from Cameroon.²⁹
- 13.03.2020: Deciding that no mission for Chadian officials will be ordered to a country where COVID-19 is present.³⁰
- 14.03.2020: closing of all airports to passenger flights for two weeks starting from March 19th; closing of land borders with Sudan and Central African Republic; systematic health controls at borders and quarantine for suspected cases; prohibition of gatherings of more than 50 persons and of forums and large meetings in Chad involving the participation of foreigners; strict limitation of movements outside of refugee camps; strict sanitary controls on the whole of the national territory.³¹
- 15.03.2020: Strengthening of the presence of medical staff at land borders to test travellers coming from Cameroon, Nigeria and Sudan; quarantine for all people coming from infected areas.³²
- 21.03.2020: Prohibiting the circulation of all buses and minibuses destined to the transport of persons, as well as the circulation of motorbikes with driver and more than one passenger; prohibiting the circulation of taxis and private vehicles that transport more than four people (driver included).³³
- 23.03.2020: Setting up a monitoring mechanism to prevent speculation of food prices on markets.³⁴

²⁷ Ministry of Public Health of Chad, Press release, 27 January 2020, *supra* note 3.

²⁸ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Integration, International Cooperation and the Diaspora of Chad, Press release, 9 March 2020, *supra* note 6.

²⁹ Ministry of Public Health of Chad, Press release, 11 March 2020, *supra* note 7.

³⁰ Ministry of Public Health of Chad, Press release, 13 March 2020, *supra* note 14.

³¹ Government of Chad, Press release, 14 March 2020, *supra* note 8.

³² Ministry of Public Health of Chad, Press release, 15 March 2020, available at <https://www.facebook.com/ministeresantetchad/posts/862928584154217> (last accessed 31 March 2020).

³³ Government of Chad, Press release, 21 March 2020, *supra* note 9.

³⁴ Government of Chad, Press release, 23 March 2020, available at <https://www.presidence.td/fr-news-4156.html> (last accessed 31 March 2020).

- 23.03.2020: Closing for all markets of grilling places, shops and commercial premises selling non-alimentary goods (at the exclusion of drugstores and shops selling essential goods).³⁵
- 24.03.2020: Definition of a contingency plan to fight COVID-19 (financed with 15 bn. FCFA); closing of all schools and universities (both public and private), of places of worship, of bars and restaurants, and of all places able to accommodate large numbers of persons and foster the propagation of the virus.³⁶
- 30.03.2020: Extending the closure of Chadian airports to all foreign passenger flights until April 10th.³⁷

³⁵ *Ibidem*.

³⁶ President of the Republic of Chad, Message to the Population of Chad, 24 March 2020, *supra* note 11.

³⁷ Ministry of Public Health of Chad, Press release, 30 March 2020, *supra* note 13.