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IFRC COVID-19 Emergency Decree Pro Bono Research: Somalia

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- **Questions to be answered by close of business Friday, 27 March are listed below.**
- **Please be sure to include English translations of relevant text where possible.**

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

The Ministry of Health & Human Services of the Federal Government of Somalia issued a National Contingency Plan for Preparedness and Response to Coronavirus (COVID-19) on March 24, 2020 (the “**Contingency Plan**”).¹ The Contingency Plan requests from Health Partners/Partners (other than Government stakeholders) to coordinate in the implementation of its plan, and mentions the establishment of a multi-sector force whose role is to coordinate the implementation of response activity in the country.² The scope and definition of such Health Partners/Partners is not clarified in the Contingency Plan.

Additionally, the Somali government, through both its Ministry of Health and Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, has made a number of announcements that set out measures to limit the spread of COVID-19, which are included in further detail below. In addition, Somali Prime Minister Hassan Ali Khaire announced the allocation of USD 5 million as precautionary budget to tackle the Coronavirus in a nationwide address to the public.³

Among all the announcements made regarding COVID-19, there was no mention of any specific non-state actors coordinating with the government. The Ministry of Health has spoken with charity organizations about Somalia’s fight against the disease.⁴ Since Somalia has an established Red Crescent Society and other non-state organizations operating in the country, it is likely that some of these organizations would participate in the Coronavirus prevention process, while also coordinating with the government.⁵ Additionally, the official twitter account of the Somali Ministry of Health tweeted a photo of people in a meeting room with a caption that says “a weekly coordination meeting between @MoH_Somalia (Ministry of Health) & @WHOSom (the World Health organization in Somalia) to discuss and update preparation level towards #COVID19”.⁶

Nevertheless, we are unaware of any official statement specifically speaking of coordination between the government and other non-state actors.

¹ National contingency plan for preparedness and response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), Ministry of Health & Human Services of the Federal Government of Somalia, March – June 2020 (dated March 5, 2020).

² *ibid.*

³ M.Sabir, *Somali Government allocates 5 million USD to combat Corona-virus outbreak*, March 18, 2020.

⁴ *Somalia and aid organizations hold emergency meeting on Corona virus threat*, Somali National News Agency (Somalia), March 18, 2020.

⁵ <https://www.ifrc.org/en/what-we-do/where-we-work/africa/somali-red-crescent-society/>.

⁶ https://twitter.com/MoH_Somalia/status/1234032771137449985.

2. Is there mention of the role of Red Cross (RC) or humanitarian actors? In what areas/sectors? What responsibilities are ascribed to RC?

At the time of this writing, there seems to be no publicly available information mentioning the role of the Red Cross specifically.

Humanitarian flights are excepted from the ban on international flights. And on March 17, the Somali prime minister announced that the government was in talks with international organizations for monetary support to fight the virus, although he did not provide specific details about the nature of such support.⁷ The Ministry of Health reportedly met with charity organizations to discuss the risk of the spread of the disease.⁸ Donors and other agencies were called upon to support the battle against the virus.⁹

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?

At the time of this writing, Somalia has suspended all international flights, other than humanitarian flights.¹⁰ This measure took effect on March 18 and the suspension is currently scheduled to last fifteen days.¹¹ This applies to both those arriving and leaving the country.¹² The government has said that special permission will be given to humanitarian flights.¹³ It is unclear whether this exception extends only to humanitarian cargo flights. Emergency cases will also be granted exception.¹⁴

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)?

There seems to be no information on exceptions to restrictions other than the aforementioned exceptions to travel restrictions at this time. Please note that Somalia has not yet declared a curfew as part of its measures to control COVID-19 as of the time of this writing.

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?

There seems to be no publicly available information regarding special legal facilities or International Disaster Response Law. However, Somalia has allowed medical shipments into the country in coordination with the Ethiopian prime minister.¹⁵ Thanks to a billionaire philanthropist's donation,

⁷ *Somalia closes schools and bans gatherings over Covid-19*, BBC Monitoring Africa – Political, March 18, 2020.

⁸ *Somalia and aid organizations hold emergency meeting on Corona virus threat*, Somali National News Agency (Somalia), March 18, 2020.

⁹ *Donors agree to help Somalia counter Covid-19*, BBC Monitoring Africa – Political, March 6, 2020.

¹⁰ Mohammed Omar Ahmed and Mohamed Sheikh Nor, *Somalia Reports First Coronavirus Case, Suspends Most Flights*, Bloomberg, March 16, 2020, <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-03-16/somalia-reports-first-coronavirus-case-suspends-most-flights>.

¹¹ Mohamed Olad Hassan, *Coronavirus Hits Somalia's Khat Sellers*, March 21, 2020, <https://www.voanews.com/science-health/coronavirus-outbreak/coronavirus-hits-somalias-khat-sellers>.

¹² *Somalia Suspends Flights to Prevent the Spread of Covid-19 in the Country*, Shabelle Media Netowrk (Mogadishu), March 19, 2020.

¹³ Harun Maruf, *Somalia Confirms First Case of Coronavirus*, VOA News, March 16, 2020 <https://www.voanews.com/science-health/coronavirus-outbreak/somalia-confirms-first-case-coronavirus>.

¹⁴ *1st Ld: Somalia confirms first COVID-19 case, all international flights suspended*, Zinhua General News Service, March 16, 2020.

¹⁵ *Ethiopia plane delivers medical supplies to Somalia amid coronavirus scare*, Garowe Online, March 25, 2020, <https://www.garoweonline.com/en/news/somalia/ethiopian-plane-delivers-medical-supplies-to-somalia-amid-coronavirus-scare>.

Somalia was able to coordinate with the Ethiopian prime minister for the receipt of a consignment of medical supplies sent via Ethiopian Airlines, which was then distributed throughout Somalia.¹⁶ More specifically, the delivery consisted of testing kits and medicine from China.¹⁷

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

There seems to be no publicly available information regarding the categorization of humanitarian organizations.

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

Effective March 19, schools and universities in the country were closed for a period of fifteen days and large public gatherings banned.¹⁸ These closures apply to both public and private educational facilities.¹⁹ Jubbaland regional ministers also shut down mosques, which took effect on March 24.²⁰ The Somali Minister of Youth and Sports issued a statement suspending all football matches for fifteen days.²¹

Further, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs ordered government employees, with the exception of general directors, to stay home, and the daily operations of the judiciary have been suspended.²² In addition, Somalia's trade minister threatened to take action against businesses raising prices following the outbreak.²³

Somali embassies are also taking action in light of the outbreak. The Somali embassies in Turkey and Kenya suspended operations.²⁴ The embassy in India suspended the issuance of visas for a period of two weeks as it continues to monitor developments.²⁵

8. Have restrictions been adopted or put in place that ban the export of protective medical equipment?

At the time of this writing, it appears there are no such restrictions.

¹⁶ *ibid.*

¹⁷ *Somalia receives donation of Covid-19 test kits from China*, BBC Monitoring Africa – Political, March 25, 2020.

¹⁸ Hamza Mohamed, *Coronavirus pandemic: Experts say Somalia risk greater than China*, Al Jazeera, March 19, 2020, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/coronavirus-pandemic-experts-somalia-risk-greater-china-200319052938789.html>.

¹⁹ *Coronavirus – Somalia suspends classes and prohibits meetings in public spaces because of the coronavirus*, international dpa (Spanischer Dienst), March 18, 2020.

²⁰ *Somalia's Jubbaland closes schools and mosques over Covid-19*, BBC Monitoring Africa – Political, March 25, 2020.

²¹ *Programme Summary of Somalia's Radio Risala News 1600 gmt*, BBC Monitoring Africa – Political, March 20, 2020.

²² *Programme summary of Somalia's Radio Kulmiye News 1700 gmt*, March 19, 2020, BBC Monitoring Africa – Political, March 19, 2020.

²³ *ibid.*

²⁴ *Programme summary of Somalia's Radio Goobjoog news 1130 gmt 24*, BBC Monitoring Africa – Political, March 24, 2020.

²⁵ *Programme summary of Somalia's Radio Gaalkayo news 1015 gmt 23*, BBC Monitoring Africa – Political, March 20, 2020.