



COVID-19 RESPONSE

IOM Regional Office for Middle East and North Africa
Situation Report 27 (1 – 30 September 2021)



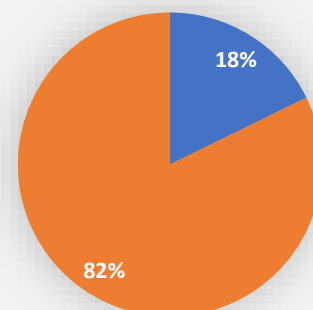
An IOM team member carries out a COVID-19 sensitization campaign in Ma'rib ©IOM Yemen

Key Regional Updates

- As of 30 September 2021, a total of **8,527,834 COVID-19 cases** have been confirmed in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, out of which **134,321 fatalities** have been reported.
- On 16 September 2021, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSRelief) co-organized a **virtual side event for the 76th Session of the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA 76) on durable solutions for protracted displacement**. The trans-regional side event, which covered experiences in the East Africa and Horn of Africa, alongside the MENA regions, **convened a panel of experts to discuss ways to improve approaches to ending displacement in a dynamic mobility landscape**. More than 100 audience members across Governments, donor organizations, the UN system, civil society and other partners participated in the session, which also discussed the implications of COVID-19 on displacement dynamics and assistance.
- Between 28 and 30 September 2021, the Naif Arab University for Security Sciences (NAUSS) and the Border Authorities of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, together with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) hosted a **high-level regional training workshop on Port Security: Border Guards and their Role in Maritime Search and Rescue (SAR) in Jeddah**. This workshop gathered more than 100 senior officials from 13 countries across the MENA region. The **workshop provided a space to exchange experiences between Arab law enforcement and security services and international and regional organizations** to enhance border guards understanding of the relevant international law norms. It also facilitated the exchange of experience in SAR operations, notably during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- On 29 September 2021, IOM and the League of Arab States (LAS), in coordination with the Regional COVID-19 Task Force on Migration and Mobility, **organized a webinar to discuss responses in the Arab Region to the COVID-19 pandemic**, the vaccine rollout programs and the inclusion of migrants, refugees and people on the move. The webinar **highlighted good practices and key achievements undertaken by Governments in the Arab region** to include these key groups in their responses to COVID-19, particularly within the context of the ongoing vaccination rollouts.

IOM's appeal for the MENA region for 2021
142,181,250 USD

Funding contributions to COVID-19 for 2021:
25,236,575 USD in funding, including **5.2 million USD** in COVID-19-specific projects and **20.1 million USD** in mixed projects.



■ Funding Received
■ Funding Gap

IOM National Response Plans related to COVID-19 can also be found at [IOM's Crisis Response Site](#)

Stories from the Field

How Sewing Face Masks is Helping Displaced Women in Yemen

At 13 years of age, Abdou¹ is the primary carer of five (5) young children. While his parents work, Abdou looks after his little brother and sisters, making sure they are safe and have something to eat throughout the day.

“In the early morning, my mother leaves for work,” Abdou said. “So, I make my brother and sisters breakfast, and I take care of them throughout the day. I can’t play with the other boys my age who live at the camp.”

When Abdou was three (3) years old, his parents left their home in Niger and made the dangerous journey across the desert to look for work in Libya.

“I remember our journey from Niger to Libya,” said Abdou’s mother, Fatima. “It was so hard, but we had no choice. We had to get through it for our kids to have a better life.”

After five years in Libya looking for work and struggling to get by, Abdou and his family moved to a migrant camp in Bani Waleed. Abdou’s father works in a village outside the camp and can only visit once a month, while Fatima works during the day as a housekeeper. With his parents barely at home, Abdou assumed the role of caregiver for his little brother and sisters.



“I make my brother and sisters breakfast, and I take care of them throughout the day. I can’t play with the other boys my age who live at the camp.”

Nigerien migrant

With support from the European Union, IOM and the World Food Programme have partnered together to help families like Abdou’s who have been impacted by the effects of COVID-19, the rising price of food and limited income due to the lack of employment opportunities. IOM teams distribute ready-to-eat kits to vulnerable migrants and displaced Libyans. The kits contain essential food items that do not need to be cooked and will last over a month.

“It will now become easier to make food for my brother and sisters,” said Abdou.



An IOM team member carries out a COVID-19 sensitization campaign in Ma'rib ©IOM Libya

¹ Individual's name has been changed to protect their identity.

Even with the evolving scope in public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic, **the impact of the disease continues to be felt both globally and regionally.** In the MENA region, a total of **8,527,834 cases** of COVID-19 have been reported, out of which **134,321 have proven fatal.** During the reporting period, **424,116 new infections,** and **8,383 new fatalities** were reported. This represents an increase of **5.2 per cent** and **6.7 per cent** in the number of cases and deaths reported respectively during the reporting period. The regional case fatality ratio (CFR) has reduced marginally to **1.6 per cent.** Iraq (2,003,303), Morocco (931,973), Jordan (822,892), UAE (735,992) and Tunisia (706,803) account for **61 per cent** of the cumulative regional caseload. Concurrently, Tunisia (24,868), Iraq (22,260), Egypt (17,294), Morocco (14,248), and Jordan (10,710) account for **66.5 per cent** of all COVID-19-related deaths reported in the region. Over the last one month, the number of new deaths has declined by **7.9 per cent.** **Countries affected by conflict and fragility remain highly vulnerability to new waves of the pandemic, with Yemen currently experiencing a surge of cases.** As of the end of September 2021, a total of **178,606,690 vaccinations** have been conducted out of which **86,517,251 people have been vaccinated with more than one dose** and **64,920,865 people have been fully vaccinated.** Seven (7) countries (Yemen, Syria, Sudan, Egypt, Algeria, Iraq, and Libya) are yet to achieve a 10 per cent coverage for full vaccination.

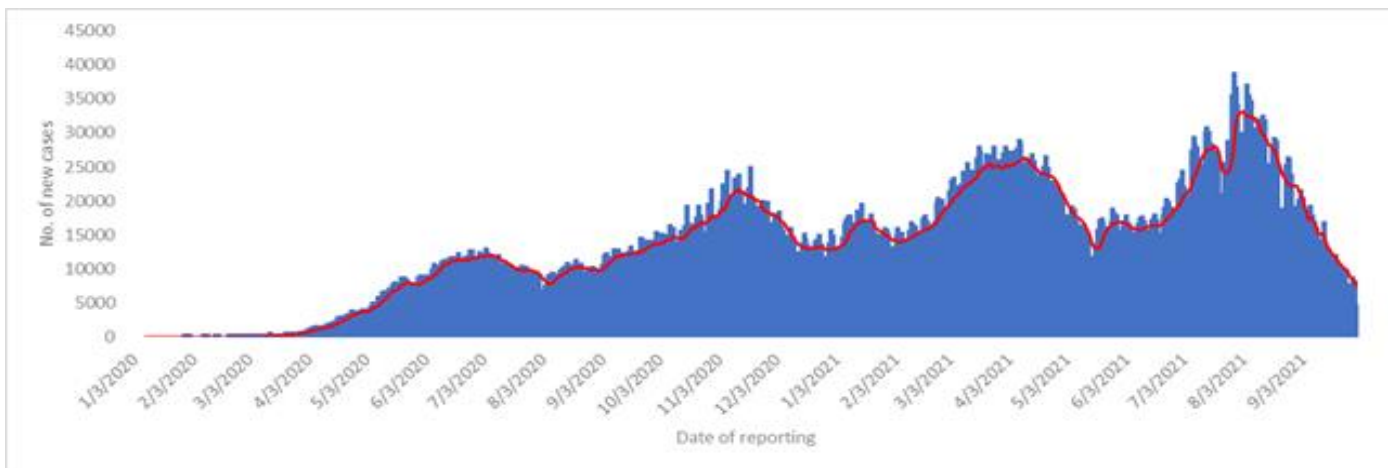


Figure 1: An epi-curve showing a seven-day moving average of new COVID-19 cases in MENA region as of 30 September 2021 ©WHO

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to significantly impact regional mobility in the form of various travel bans and mobility restrictions. No significant changes have been recorded in the operational status of international Points of Entry (PoEs) in the MENA region during the reporting period. To date, according to IOM’s Tracking Mobility Impact, around 78 per cent of monitored international airports are fully operational, 19 per cent are partially operational and only three (3) per cent remain fully closed. Around 12 per cent of the 106 monitored land border crossing points remain fully closed and 19 per cent are partially operational, while 70 of the monitored land border crossing points that are now classified as fully operational. Out of 50 monitored blue border crossing points in the region, only three (3) of them are fully closed and 23 are partially operational, while twenty-three (23) blue border crossing points are now fully operational for passengers²².

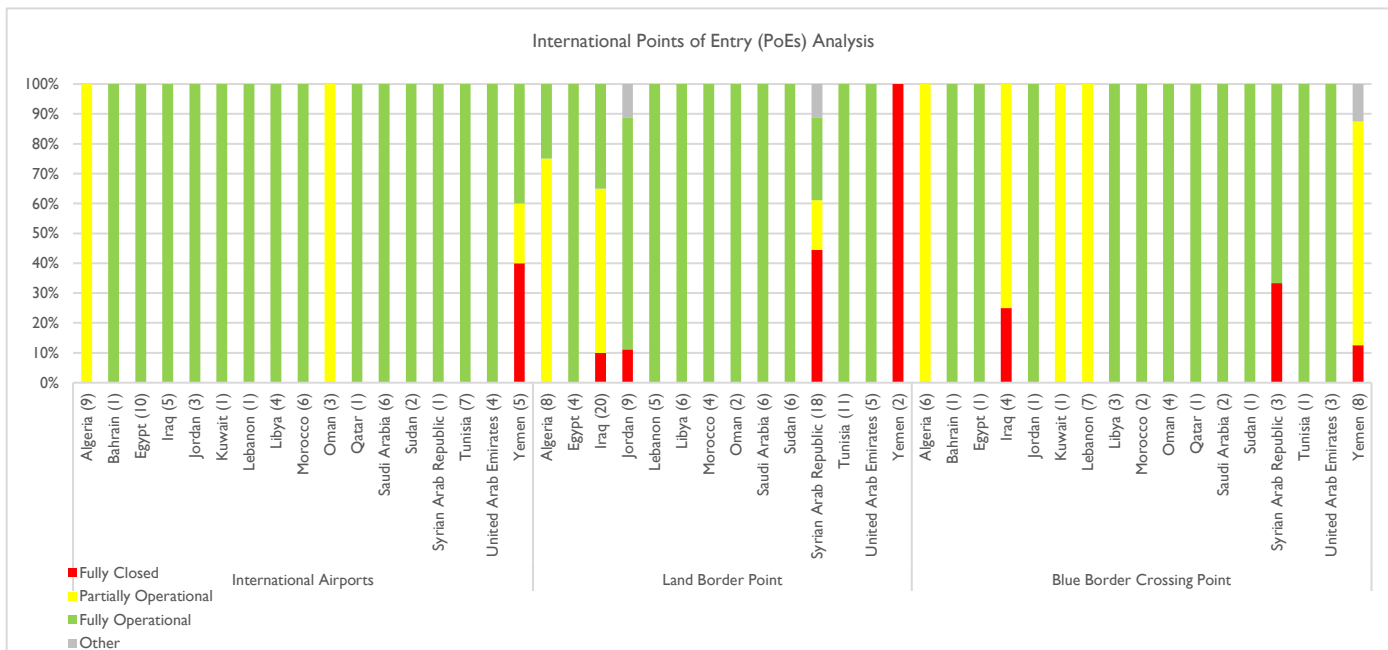


Figure 2: Operational Status of PoEs as of 26 August 2021 across the MENA Region ©IOM Tracking Mobility Impacts

²² Unknown status category for PoEs include three (3) per cent for land borders and one (1) for blue borders.

Response

COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

In **Libya**, IOM and the Ministry of Health (MoH) conducted a technical working group meeting to prepare a plan for initiating vaccination for migrants and refugees across the country. The meeting follows the outcomes of the Migration Health Sub-Working Group meeting convened on 30 August 2021. In total, 42 health partners, including government officials from MoH and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), NCDC vaccination focal points representing 13 districts, as well as key partner agencies such as the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), World Health Organization (WHO), Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), International Rescue Committee, among others participated in the meeting. During the meeting, it was agreed that the NCDC shall officially correspond with the Department for Combating Illegal Immigration (DCIM), as well as to vaccination centers in each municipality, to advocate for the inclusion of migrant and refugee populations in vaccination campaigns. The mass campaigns targeting detention centres (DCs) in the west and east of Libya are also expected to start from early October 2021.

In **Algeria**, IOM continues to coordinate with WHO and the Ministry of Health (MoH) to strengthen the capacity at entry points through the provision of technical support and equipment. IOM continues to coordinate with civil society actors for the protection of migrants through the establishment of referral mechanisms for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and mechanisms for reporting complaints from beneficiaries. IOM is also coordinating with the MoH and an external consultant to provide training for health personnel, civil society actors and community leaders

IOM **Morocco** continues to participate in different coordination meetings with the Ministry of Health (MoH) and advocate for the inclusion of migrant population in the COVID-19 vaccination campaign, irrespective of their status. IOM has been advocating for data collection on the number of migrants who have benefitted from the vaccination campaign. Data will be released by the MoH in the coming month and IOM Morocco will share this information.

In **Lebanon**, IOM supported vaccination marathons in coordination with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) targeting migrants. The marathons were conducted in collaboration with medical outreach partners, most recently being MSF. The latest marathon occurred in a school premises over two (2) days, reaching a total of 980 migrants.

RISK COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (RCCE)

In **Libya**, IOM medical teams conducted 338 outreach campaigns and awareness raising sessions in Sabha, Ubari, Zawara, Tripoli, Bani Walid, and Benghazi area. A total of 10,632 migrants were able to improve their awareness and knowledge on COVID-19 precautionary measures and responsible behaviour when suspecting infection.

In **Algeria**, IOM continues to raise awareness among beneficiaries through social networks and during preparation and voluntary return to countries of origin.

IOM in **Iraq** conducted 690 COVID-19 sensitization and awareness-raising sessions in health facilities and their catchment areas, reaching 4,829 people in Erbil, Dohuk,



IOM distributes first aid kits to more than 22 community centres in Cairo, serving different communities ©IOM Egypt

Ninewa, Kirkuk, Anbar, and Baghdad governorates. These activities were led by community mobilizers and organized jointly in collaboration with community-based organizations (CBOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), the directorates of health and education, community police, community and religious leaders, adolescent development groups, and women's groups. People who had recovered from COVID-19 were invited to engage with other participants and share their experiences and testimonies through one-on-one and group sessions. Information, education, and communication (IEC) materials (5,760), hygiene kits (3,078), and re-usable fabric/cloth facemasks (455) were distributed across all six (6) governorates to men and women of all ages in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, informal settlements, host communities, healthcare centers, public markets, community resource centers, and through door-to-door and household visits. Key messaging focused on infection, prevention and control (IPC) measures during upcoming elections and safe voting procedures, COVID-19 vaccines and vaccination, and continued precautions for the gradual reopening of schools. The RCCE team also supported with screening activities at health facilities to encourage community acceptance and crowd control/management, ensuring that all visitors safely access available health services. Television displays in health facility waiting areas regularly screened COVID-19 videos to target patients with key messages and suggestion/complaints boxes were maintained in all facilities for community feedback. In Anbar Governorate's Al-Mateen (AAF) IDP camp, IOM supported 307 returnees with educational briefings on the medical checkup and departure process for travel back to areas of origin, supporting with screening and

distribution of IEC materials and hygiene kits on medical checkup and departure days.

IOM in **Morocco** is supporting the MoH with printing and translations of IEC materials. Activities are the same that were reported in the previous report.

In **Yemen**, IOM conducted more than 3,155 awareness raising sessions on COVID-19 and hygiene practices, reaching approximately 17,118 individuals in Ma'rib and Ta'iz governorates and across the west coast of Yemen. IOM also distributed hygiene kits to 26,234 individuals, including 9,116 students in Ma'rib, Ta'iz governorates and the west coast.

In **Sudan**, IOM distributed more than 500 personal protective equipment kits (PPE) to Ethiopian refugees. IOM also distributed 6,000 IEC material to the refugees in their local language. IOM also continues to conduct its COVID-19 information campaign on social media, inclusive of vaccination messaging. IOM continues to provide PPE alongside health activities in West Darfur, North Darfur and Gedaref.

In **Lebanon**, health education awareness raising activities reached 5,179 individuals in the month of September 2021, IOM also continued to conduct activities to assist those with HIV and Tuberculosis, reaching 35 people in month of September 2021.

DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

In **Libya**, IOM and the Ministry of Health (MOH) conducted a technical working group meeting to strengthen the

surveillance mechanism through the expansion of the Early Warning Alert and Response Network (EWARN) system, including on COVID-19 in detention facilities. The meeting follows a recent Migration Health Sub Working Group meeting on 30 August 2021. A total of 31 health partners, including government officials from MoH, NCDC and DCIM, as well as key partner agencies such as UNHCR, WHO, MSF, IRC and the European Union (EU) delegation participated the meeting. Participants discussed the reporting focal points for each detention centres (DCs) managed by DCIM. Two trainings on the EWARN system are planned to take place soon.

In **Algeria**, IOM continues to conduct medical check-ups before the accommodation of beneficiaries at the DARV centre as well as PCR tests before the return and reintegration trip. As needed, IOM performs COVID-19 antigen tests for beneficiaries. Those found to be positive are placed in isolation and monitored until full recovery and then voluntarily returned to their country of origin.

In **Iraq**, IOM's community-based surveillance (CBS) teams continued to conduct CBS activities in four (4) IOM-supported IDP camps, including AAF, Sheikan, Debaga and Jadah 5 camps. During active case finding activities, 262 IDPs were identified, of which 186 were referred to camp health facilities. A total of 167 individuals (90 per cent) referred by the CBS team visited the clinics, where in-depth assessments by clinicians indicated 135 were either probable or suspect COVID-19 cases. IOM continues working on developing contact tracing activities in the four (4) mentioned camps



Students learn handwashing during a COVID-19 sensitization campaign in Ma'rib Governorate ©IOM Yemen

where CBS activities are already taking place. The contact tracing aims to limit disease transmission among IDP populations residing in these camps.

In **Yemen**, more than 20,205 COVID-19 screenings were conducted at IOM-supported health facilities. Yemen continues to go through another wave of COVID-19 after a significant uptake in new cases for the second month on row. The government suspended all official gatherings and events, and health authorities began operations to reactive containment wards, oxygen filling points and test sites in Ma'rib and the south. Due to the lack of access to testing and tracking of COVID-19 cases, the full extent of the spread of the virus in Yemen is expected to be much higher than the reported figures. The first COVID-19 vaccination campaign in Yemen was launched in Aden on 20 April 2021, and as of September 2021, a total of 356,173 COVID-19 vaccines doses have been administered throughout the country according to WHO. The country received a further 356,800 doses of the AstraZeneca on 23 September. The vaccination campaign is critical to containing the outbreak, however, ongoing conflict, limited vaccine supply and doubts around vaccine safety have slowed down the process in many areas of the country.

POINTS OF ENTRY (POE)

In **Libya**, IOM supported the NCDC staff at Misrata Airport and Ras Jedir PoE by providing medical checks to all passengers returning to Libya. A total of 32,050 cross-border travellers were screened through temperature measurement and general medical assessments during the reporting period.

In **Algeria**, IOM continues to support the Ministry of Health (MoH) in strengthening capacities at PoEs through the recruitment of an international consultant and a national consultant for the development of a PoE contingency plan. IOM and WHO are also supporting 51 PoEs through the purchase of a computer and medical equipment. The WHO, with the support of IOM, plans to recruit a national consultant for the development of standard operation procedures (SoPs) for PoEs.

INFECTION PREVENTION CONTROL (IPC)

In **Libya**, IOM conducted thorough disinfecting, fumigation and cleaning interventions as part of the campaign to combat COVID-19 outbreak and other contagious diseases. The interventions targeted ten (10) detention centers (DC) and seven (7) disembarkations points (DPs).



IOM conducts a technical working group meeting to prepare a micro-plan for initiating vaccination of migrants and refugees ©IOM Libya

In **Algeria**, IOM continues to provide access to water and soap for regular hand washing for beneficiaries housed at DARV. Through field visits, IOM provides migrants with masks and hydro-alcoholic gel for the prevention of infection transmissions. In addition, each returnee receives a COVID-19 prevention kit including masks, hydro-alcoholic gel, and information on COVID-19 prevention. In the DARV premises, IOM also established systematic temperature taking on entry and provides masks and hydroalcoholic gel to migrants and visitors.

In **Iraq**, IOM continues to conduct screening and triage processes at eleven (11) facilities including five (5) IDP camps and six (6) community facilities prior to patient consultations. A total of 31,707 people were screened in IOM-supported facilities across Anbar, Erbil, Dohuk, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Baghdad governorates.

In **Yemen**, IOM provided more than 16 million litres of safe water to more than 38,000 people across 19 displacement sites in Ma'rib and Ta'iz governorates and the west coast region. IOM also distributed hygiene kits to 26,234 individuals, including 9,116 students in Ma'rib and Ta'iz governorates and the west coast region. The teams continued solid waste collection and disposal activities as well as latrines construction, reaching a total of 6,848 displaced people in Lahj and Ta'iz governorates.

IOM in **Sudan** continues to support the rehabilitation of the Gedaref Isolation Center. IOM also constructed 250 latrines and 125 showers, four (4) communal safe laundry and bathing spaces, and desludging activities. IOM aims to cover the operation and maintenance (O&M) costs for at least six months for these activities alongside the provision of capacity building in Um-Rakouba refugees camp in Gaderaf State.

CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT (CCCM)

In **Syria**, IOM continues to pursue COVID-19 mitigative and response efforts across northwest Syria. This includes camp management and camp coordination activities to inform and support displaced populations to reduce their risks of transmission and including soap and hygiene awareness materials across IOM distributions, as well as water, sanitation and hygiene initiatives such as increased water provision. IOM also assists in addressing the socio-economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic through cash for work programs and livelihoods initiatives aimed at securing incomes for vulnerable households. IOM is also currently expanding its health sector response in support of health cluster priorities and urgent needs on the ground. IOM is in the final preparatory stages of deploying mobile testing equipment through its partners on ground. In coordination with WHO and the Syrian Immunization Group, IOM is also distributing COVAX vaccination awareness materials to partners and beneficiaries and continues to facilitate referrals across its areas of operation.

CASE MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUATION OF SERVICES

In **Libya**, IOM responded to a COVID-19 outbreak at Ganfouda Detention Centre by testing over 60 people, including migrants and DC staff. In total, 12 migrants tested positive, while all the staff tested negative. In collaboration with the Directorate for Combatting Illegal Migration (DCIM), NCDC and Benghazi municipality, IOM provided the migrants with necessary referrals for medical care and arranged the distribution of hygiene items, including masks

and hand sanitizers. IOM donated COVID-19 PPE, including face masks, gloves and hand sanitizers and lifesaving equipment to the Libyan Coast Guard and to the General Authority for Coastal Safety to help protect migrants and staff's health against the spread of COVID-19 infection.

In **Algeria**, IOM continues to provide isolation and medical follow-up of COVID-19 positive cases. IOM's medical team also continues to accompany people with medical needs to the polyclinics, including pregnant women. Migrants accommodated at the DARV facility are consulted once a week and receive medication as needed. In September 2021, 34 migrants, including eight (8) women, received a medical consultation for various health concerns.

In **Iraq**, IOM continued to support eleven (11) health facilities in Anbar, Erbil, Dohuk, Kirkuk, Ninewa, and Baghdad governorates. This included human resources support, capacity building, supplies and equipment, and technical support. A series of online training have been conducted for the doctors at the supported clinics in the six (6) governorates on the management of common disease and treatment and prevention of communicable diseases, to strengthen the quality-of-care provision.

In **Egypt**, IOM provided medical assistance and assessments for 230 migrants. IOM also followed-up on 209 medical cases for migrants that were provided with direct assistance or assistance voluntary return and reintegration. A total of 50 cases were also followed-up via phone. In commemoration of World Suicide Day, IOM held an awareness raising day for 90 young migrants from six (6) different communities to raise awareness on suicide, including the identification of warnings signs, risk factors and how to respond. IOM also conducted a medical convoy in Alexandria Governorate, in collaboration with the Alexandria Deputy Governor. The convoy provided free medications from a local pharmacy, serving 896 beneficiaries.

In **Yemen**, IOM continues to support 27 public health

facilities, including eleven (11) mobile teams in Aden, Lahj, Sana'a, Shabwah, Ta'iz, Al Hodeidah and Ma'rib governorates by providing medical supplies, medicine and capacity building activities. Across the IOM-supported health facilities, 40,410 health consultations were carried out, including 1,848 consultations for migrants up until 26 September 2021. IOM continues to work with the local authorities to increase surveillance, boosting testing capacity and protecting essential health services through the provision of testing machines, PPE and capacity building training to public health workers.

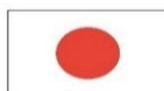
IOM in **Sudan** continues to support four (4) health clinics and community health programs in the four (4) states of north, south and west Darfur and West Kordofan.

PROTECTION

IOM in **Tunisia**, as part of its Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) programme, assisted 165 migrants and conducted two (2) family reunifications following requests to return from Tunisia to their countries of origin. The provided assistance and services included pre-departure cash, support at airports from departure until arrival, and COVID-19 testing and medical check for 89 individuals prior to departure from Tunisia. Additionally, for migrants that tested positive for COVID-19, IOM covered the costs of their accommodation and food during the period of quarantine and has ensured individual online follow up of their cases.

In **Libya**, the IOM mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS) helpline continues to provide migrants with remote counselling and psychosocial support (PSS) services. The MHPSS team have also been integrated into medical mobile clinics, providing assistance to 31 migrants in Soug Al jumaa urban locations and at an IOM centre in Hay Alandulus by conducting art-based PSS activities, and organizing PSS awareness sessions on coping with stress during COVID-19.

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