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"Covid-19" Virus Doubles the Work and responsibilities of the Local Authorities across the Country Local Authorities carry out their Normal Duties, and More...

Following the declaration of a state of emergency in Palestine and the subsequent reduction and disruption of the work in the majority of public and private institutions, local authorities in all Palestinian territories have been working with the highest level of preparedness to prevent the outbreak of the emerging "Covid-19" virus among their citizens; they were among the few institutions that remained at the head of their work, due to the vitality of the services they deliver. Moreover, in addition to continuing their day-to-day work and providing public services to citizens, local authorities have set contingency plans and programs to cope with the outbreak of covid-19 virus; they have formed emergency committees which comprised of the councils' members and their executive staffs and volunteers. Through their teams and committees, the local authorities continue to carry out thorough monitoring to the needs of citizens to ensure their safety, as well as providing optimal services through their commission of a series of strict precautionary measures.

Sterilization of Public Areas and Institutions:

One of the first precautionary steps taken for reducing the outbreak of the pandemic that has been occupying the world lately, local authorities across the country have begun to sanitize and sterilize the streets and public facilities since the announcement of the first infected cases in Palestine. The frequency of the sterilization process has increased with the increase in the number of infected people in the different governorates; thus, local authorities have started to sterilize public areas, health facilities and all areas adjacent to checkpoints, the apartheid wall and the indoor quarantine sectors.



Intensified Efforts for Waste Collection and Hygiene Safeguarding:

Through the implementation of strict preventive measures, local authorities have stepped up their efforts to keep cities, villages and towns clean, especially as the volume of house – generated waste has increased in light of the declared state of emergency. Local authorities have also stepped up their procedures to keep the streets and public facilities clean through collecting and transporting solid waste from all neighborhoods, streets and markets as well as removing the compiled waste. They also were keen to guarantee the safeguard of transporting the solid waste in quarantine centres, and deporting it according to the appropriate health standards.



Continuing the Delivery of Basic Services to Citizens:

In order to guarantee optimum control on the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic in Palestine, and to efficiently manage the existing situation and ensure the continuation of delivering the basic services to citizens, local authorities have worked with a high efficacy level and readiness to ensure that citizens receive the basic public services; such as water, electricity, sanitation, public hygiene, public health and more.



Providing Support and Assistance to the Medical Personnel:

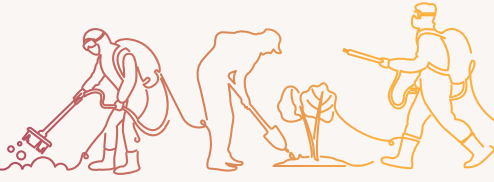
The local authorities have been able to provide support and assistance to the medical teams at various levels through innovative initiatives; starting with equipping the quarantine centers, to forming health committees within the local authorities themselves, to collaborating with volunteers and arranging clinics and health centres to deal with any imminent cases, to setting up tents, rooms and centres to handle the suspected cases in order to avoid sending them to the emergency units in hospitals so as to guarantee the safety of other patients and medical teams.



Social Responsibility:

Similar to the roles assumed by leading national institutions in the service of citizens, the role of local authorities in these circumstances was not limited to delivering services only; they have also played a leading role in providing support and assistance to citizens in many different aspects. Social responsibility was on top of the local authorities' agenda in such emergency circumstances; they have formed committees specialized in recruiting humanitarian and relief aids to those affected and in need for help to overcome this crisis, launched several societal initiatives targeting students through creating supporting schooling groups, as well as other initiatives that aimed at supporting the elderly and persons with special needs. In addition, local authorities also declared several decisions and measures which aimed at facilitating the citizens' continuous access to basic services; such as water, electricity and others.





Emergency and Volunteering Teams:

Local authorities have formed volunteering support committees which comprised of individuals, institutions and community and national forces to provide all means of community support to citizens and endorse all exerted efforts nationwide. These emergency committees stemmed from the local authorities' nonstop work day and night, in order to ensure the prevalence of a healthy environment and maintain the public health. They are also keen to provide social services to the citizens, raise their awareness and educate them. Furthermore, they intervene to help the families affected by the quarantine, assist the elderly and those with special needs, and contribute to the monitoring and follow-up of the markets.



Guidelines and Awareness Support for Citizens:

From the very first moments of the spread of the Corona virus, and before the first infected cases were recorded in Palestine, local authorities have started to launch awareness and informative programs and activities aimed at raising the citizens' awareness and knowledge about the risks of this virus, enlightened them about means of protection, prevention methods, house-quarantine and determinants, etc., and disseminated scientific information on the covid-19 virus, its prevalence and health risks and consequences.



In the So-called Area "C"... The burden is Greater.

In areas under the control of the Israeli occupation, local authorities face multifaceted responsibilities that do not begin nor end with the continued delivery of basic services or the emerging services that should assist in coping with the outbreak of the covid-19 virus, but rather they bear the responsibility of dealing with the incomparable needs of these areas; They have to have control on the movement and on the bordering zones, keep up the management of the "workers in Israel", as well as provide health and preventive services. Hence, local authorities in such areas have extra added responsibilities which require them to coordinate with the various competent authorities in order to fulfill the whole spectrum of these responsibilities. However, what is happening in these areas, is definitely a part of a more comprehensive, arduous and additional complex work.



In difficult Circumstances... Creativity arises to ease the Service Delivery.

The sensitivity of the current situation has prompted local authorities to recruit all the available potentials in order to deliver services to citizens and to emerge out of this crisis with the minimum damage possible. Consequently, under the pressure local authorities are undergoing, they have devised creative tools and ideas to ensure the delivery of their services; such as developing new methods and mechanisms to prevent the spread of the emerging Covid-19 virus, including the development of new sterilization mechanisms. They also diligently working on equipping mobile centers to handle the suspected cases, establishing preliminary screening tents for citizens, developing mechanisms for electronic service delivery, coming up with creative community initiatives to support the needs of citizens, and creating modern means of communication with citizens to follow-up on their needs.



The Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA) Plays its Supporting Role

As part of APLAs' plan to provide support and assistance to local authorities in order to better manage their work under the current emergency phase and to ensure the continued delivery of basic services to citizens, a number of proposals regarding mechanism of action of local authorities have been presented to ensure the safety of all staffs working in the field.

The Association of Palestinian Local Authorities (APLA) have also been following up the news of the local authorities around the clock, in order to meet their needs and provide them with support whenever necessary on the one hand, and in order to disseminate the news as much as possible so as to shed light on the achievements and efforts of the teams working day and night for the well-being of our country and its citizen on the other hand. In the same context, APLA broadcasts several messages of support to the different local authorities through its intervallic and widely circulated media productions, and works with several local and international partners to provide support and assistance that would back up the efforts exerted by the different local authorities.

