

"Mobility trends in the MENA region since the onset of the pandemic – Data from IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) Points of Entry Analysis"

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COVID-19's socio-economic impact on migrants and displaced in the Middle East and North Africa

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Research Question

What was the Impact on Mobility of measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 virus in the Middle East and North African country in the first part of the global pandemic in 2020?

Framework

UNDP Framework to Assess the Socio-Economic Impact of COVID-19

Pillar 1: Health first - Protecting health services & health system

Pillar 2: Protecting people – Social Protection and basic services

Pillar 3: Economic Recovery – Protecting jobs, SMEs and informal sector workers

Pillar 4: Macro-economic Response

Pillar 5: Social Cohesion and Community Resilience

Pillar 6: Mobility

Indicator Bank

Pillar 1 - Health First: Protecting Health Services and Systems during the Crisis	Pillar 2 - Protecting People: Social Protection and Basic Services	Pillar 3 - Economic Response and Recovery: Protecting Jobs, SME Enterprises, and Informal Sector Workers	Pillar 4 - Macroeconomic Response and Multilateral Collaboration	Pillar 5 - Social Cohesion and Community Resilience	IOM Pillar 6 - Mobility
1.1 Access and presence of functional health facilities	2.1 Availability of and access to basic services (basic food items and markets; education; banks and financial institutions & WASH)	3.1 Access and availability of employment and / or income generating opportunity	4.1 Changes in monthly price stability for basic consumer price index	5.1 Changes in perception of security and safety?	6.1 Changes in freedom of movement
1.2 Awareness and interest in COVID-19 vaccination	2.2 Access and availability of social protection and/or humanitarian assistance	3.2 Changes in business environment due to COVID-19	4.2 Changes in capacity to send and receive remittances	5.2 Changes in tension and/or conflict between mobile and host communities?	6.2 Changes in mobility plans
1.3 Impact of COVID-19 on health outcomes	2.3 Forms of exploitation	3.3. Presence of coping strategies		5.3. Availability of CBOs	6.3 Changes in migratory routes

DTM Tracking Mobility Impact: Rational

- To better understand how COVID-19 affects global and regional mobility.

Operational reasons:

- I. to provide information on the capacity of current ports entry to mitigate and/or respond adequately,
- II. to address any identified gaps or opportunities in health security and border management.
- III. to help States in the Region, the UN and other stakeholders to address specific needs faced by migrants and mobile populations affected by the global mobility restrictions.

From a broader research perspective:

- Analyse the trend of the status of Points of Entry in the Region and its impact on mobility
- Link this dimension to the overall impact of COVID-19 on migrants and other types of mobile populations.

DTM Tracking Mobility Impact: Basic Methodological Note

- IOM Country Mission's contributing to the Region
- Data updated on ongoing basis through a web application
- Data Compilation and Collection activities use standard methods and tools and rely on existing info.

DTM Tracking Mobility Impact: PoEs

Data is collected on the following geographic units:

- **Airport**
- **Land Border Crossing Point**
- **Sea Border Crossing Point**

...and there are Modules relative to Country level mobility restrictions

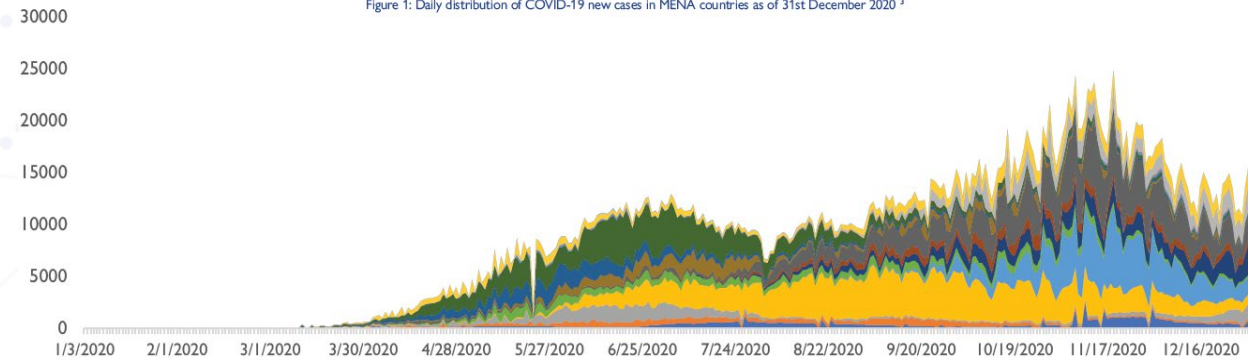
Internal Transit Point

Areas of interest 1: City, Town or Region

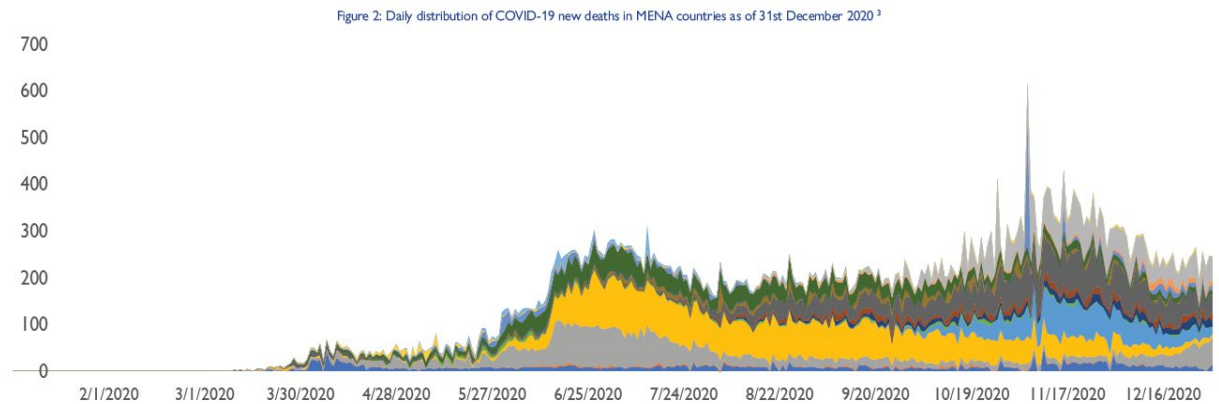
Areas of interest 2: Sites with populations of interest (e.g. stranded migrants and IDPs)

COVID -19 Situation in MENA region

- In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, the first case of COVID-19 was reported in the United Arab Emirates on 29th January 2020, imported from China.
- The region peaked between June and July and towards the end of the year
- The top three countries in terms of COVID-19 burden were Iraq, Morocco and Saudi Arabia and accounted for 48% of all the cases in the region. Yemen (29.1%), Sudan (6.4%) and Egypt (5.7%) had the highest case fatality ratios.



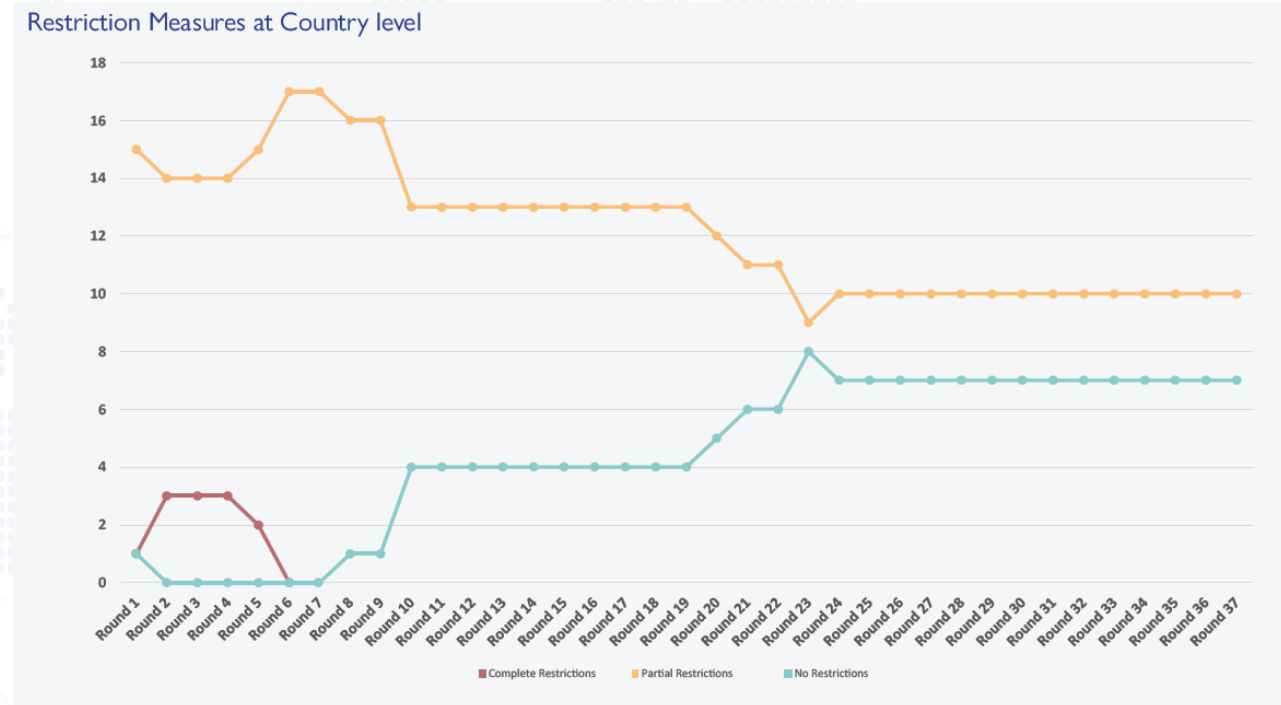
■ Algeria ■ Bahrain ■ Egypt ■ Iraq ■ Jordan ■ Kuwait ■ Lebanon ■ Libya ■ Morocco ■ Oman ■ Qatar ■ Saudi Arabia ■ Sudan ■ Syria ■ Tunisia ■ UAE ■ Yemen



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Internal mobility restrictions

- **Complete restrictions** at national territory level were implemented in few countries at the beginning of the considered period till the end of May;
- **Partial restrictions** have always been the most common measures applied in the region
- **No significant changes** happened during the second wave of the Pandemic.

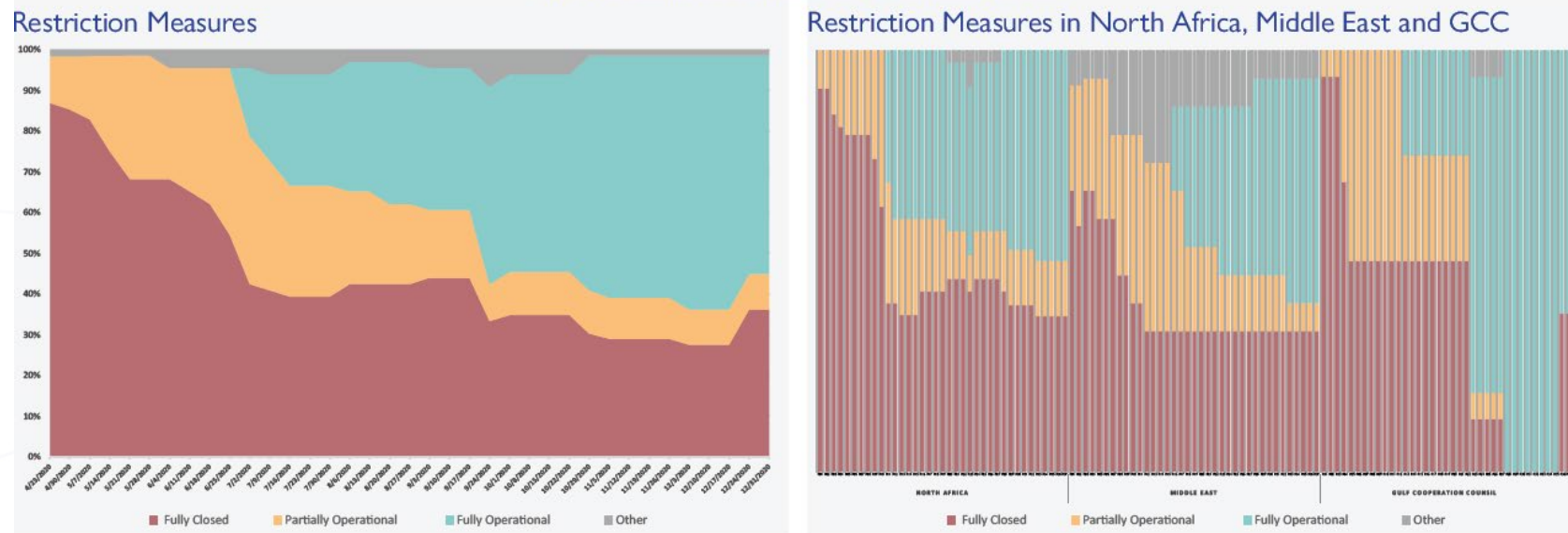


Moreover, this is used to build the indicators that will be presented later for the analysis of the impact of movement restrictions measures on migrants and mobile population in the region

International Airports mobility restrictions

- **Northern African countries** differed in the operational status of their airports, with countries, such as Tunisia and Egypt that have left their airports open for the largest part of the considered period;
- **GCC countries' airports** were mostly closed until September when a reopening trend was observed in the sub-region. All airports re-opened in the months of October and November.
- By the end of 2020, a regional overview showed that around **36 per cent** of international airports were fully closed, **nine per cent** were partially operational and **54 per cent** of these Points of Entry remained fully operational.

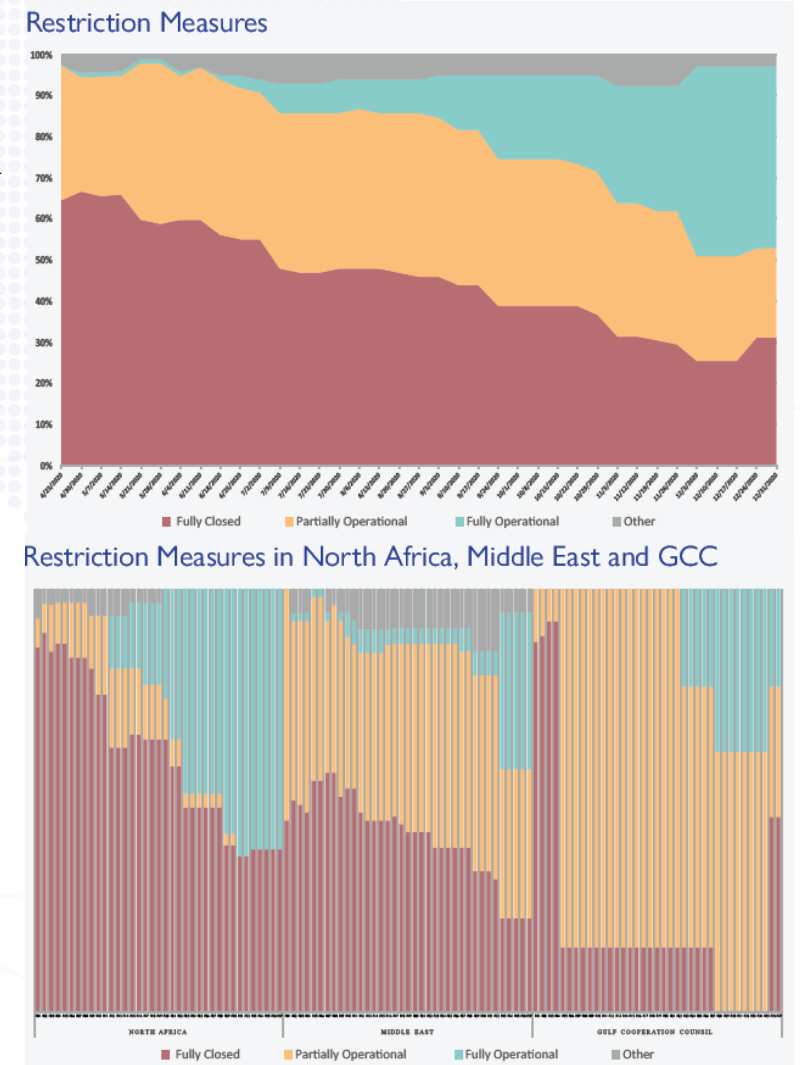
Figure 4: Restriction Measures by Round at Regional and Sub-regional level



Notes: • Under the category "Partially Operational" we include "closed for entry", "closed for exit", "open only to returning nationals and residents" and "open only for commercial traffic only". The totals are relative to the monitored Points of Entry.
• Sub Regions are North Africa: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt and Sudan, Middle East is: Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, Syrian Arab Republic and Republic of Yemen and GCC are: Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates

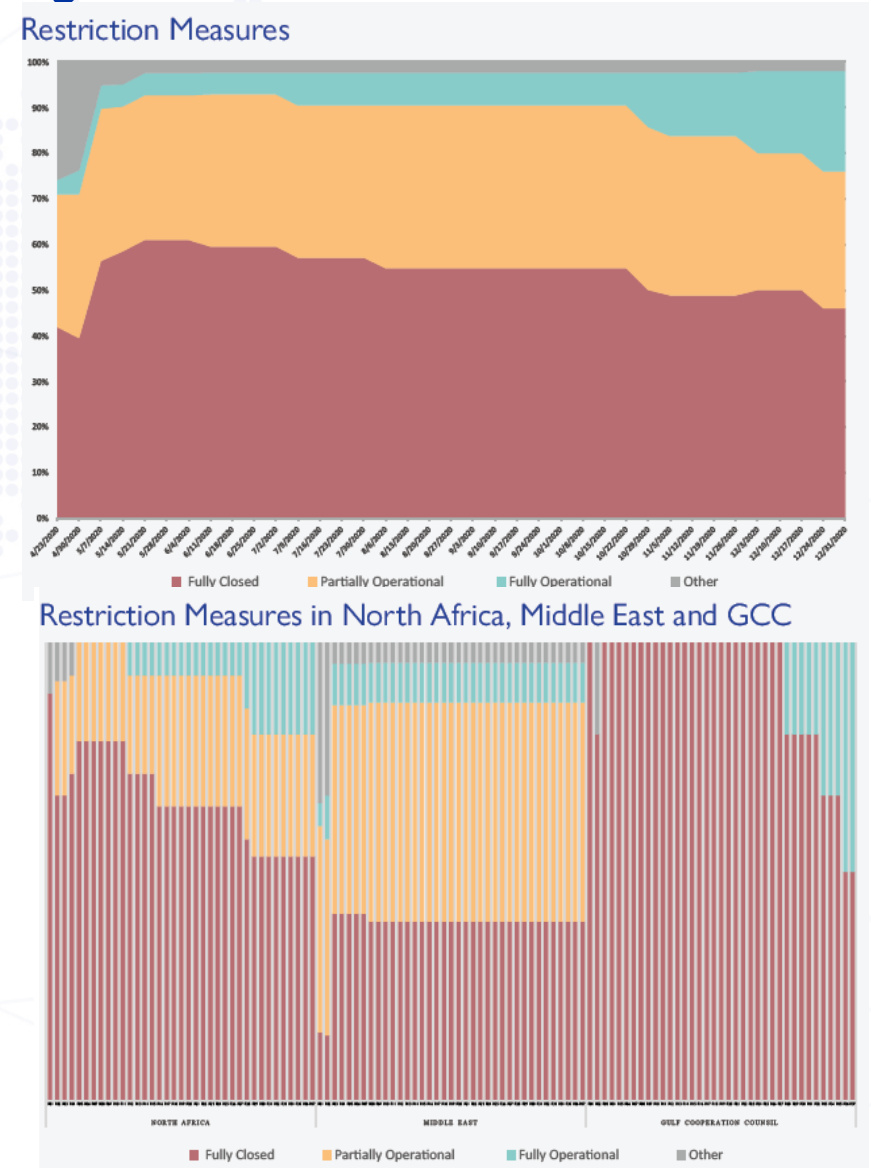
International Land crossing points mobility restrictions

- In **North Africa**, most of land border crossing points were classified as fully or partially closed till the end of June, until they began to reopen.
- In **Middle East countries** most of the land borders remained fully closed during the period considered except for the month of December;
- In **GCC countries**, the number of completely and partially closed land border points remained stable till late September when countries started to re-open their land borders.



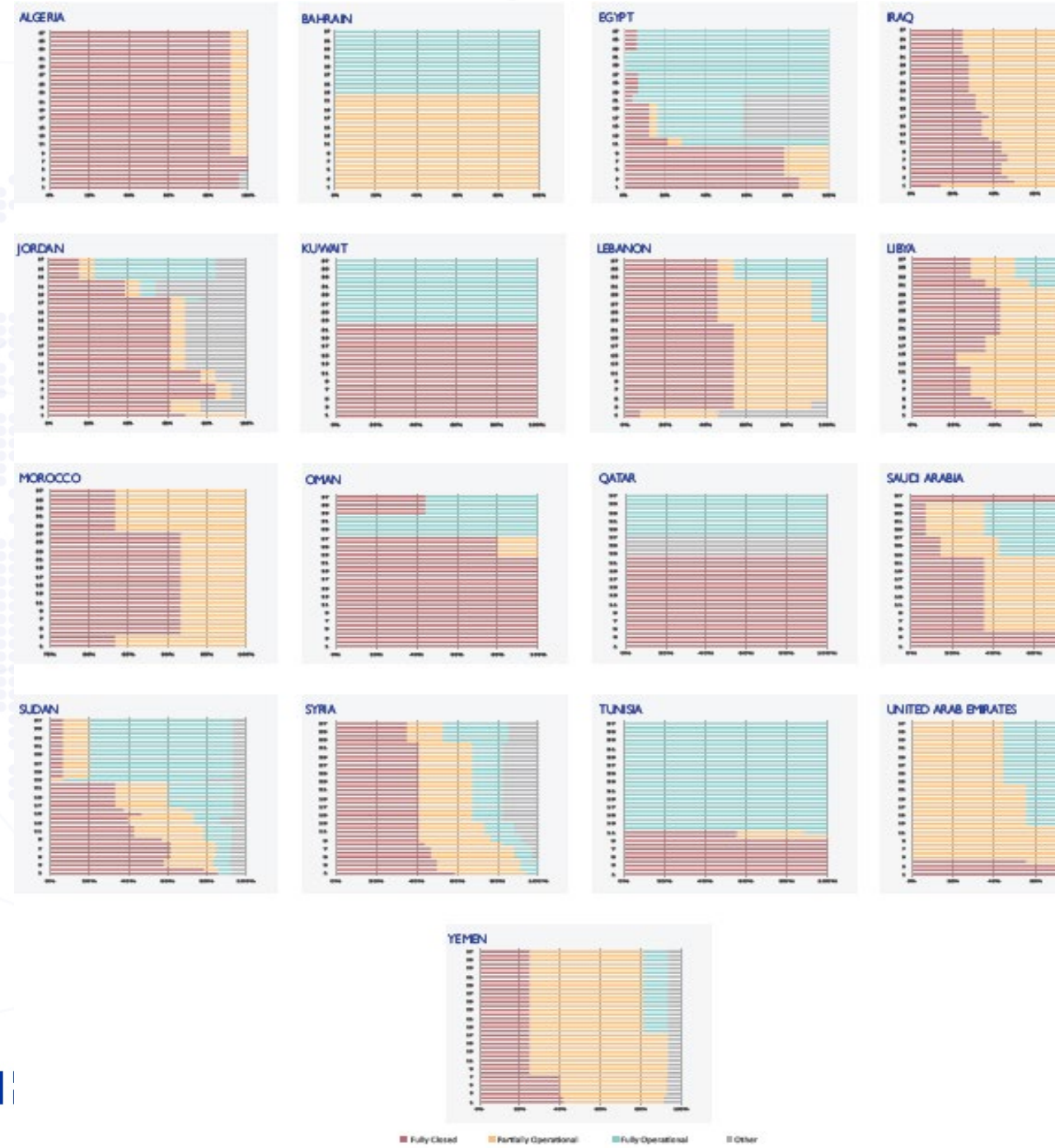
Sea Ports points mobility restrictions

- In **GCC countries**, all blue border crossing points were closed to passengers till October when half of them returned fully operational;
- In **North Africa**, most of the seaports, more than half, remained fully closed while, at the end of the year around, one fifth of the seaports in the region was fully operational;
- In the **Middle East**, it was classified as partially operational in 48 per cent of cases, while 39 per cent were closed. The status did not change from May onwards.

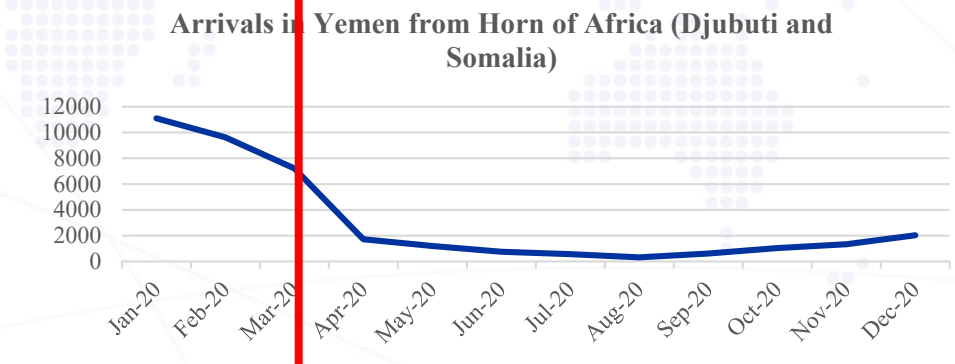
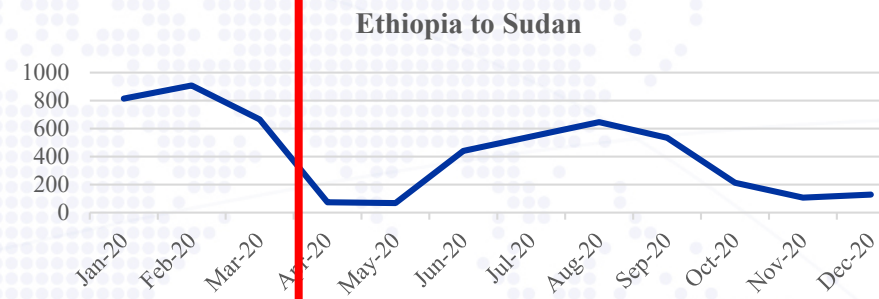
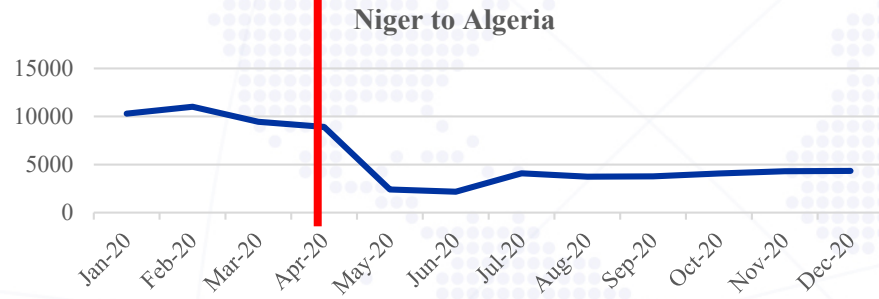
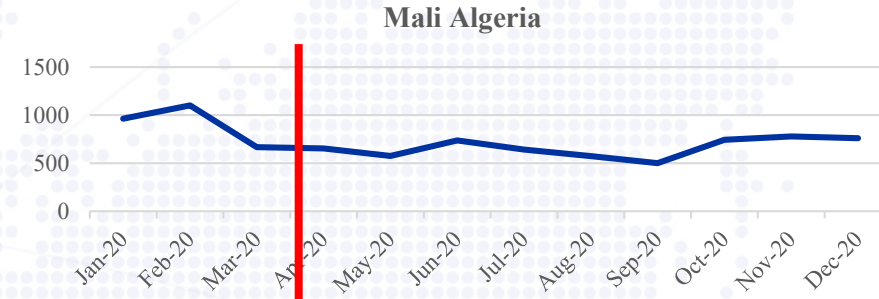
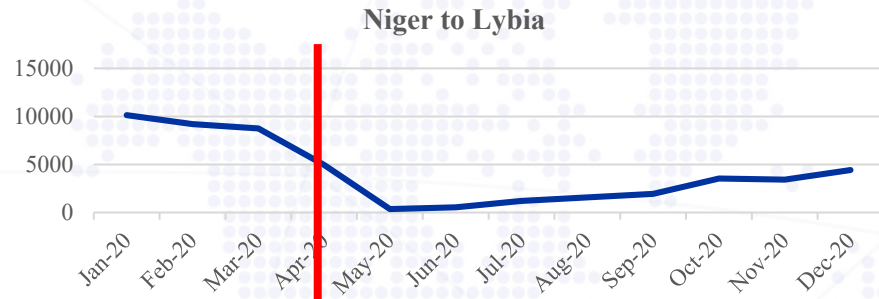


Country level analysis

- During the first part of the considered period shows that in most of the countries the largest number of PoEs were completely or partially closed
- Country cases are different within the same subregions, where it can be observed
- Only Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and Tunisia in the Region present fully operational points of entry.



Migrants flows to MENA countries



The outbreak of COVID-19 Pandemic affected the flows of migrants in 2020 towards the region as observed in the land and sea border points monitored here

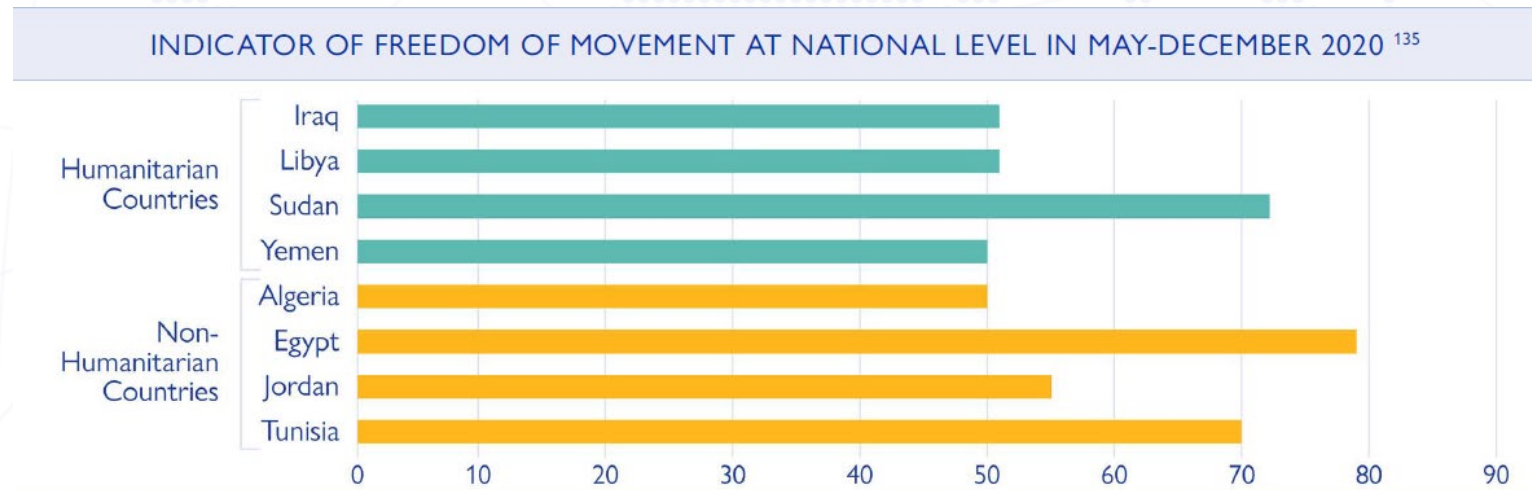
Pillar Six of the Socio-Economic Impact tool

Bases on the data presented we developed a methodology to estimate the impact on mobility of the restrictions imposed at national and international border point level.

1. Authors' calculations based on the Points of Entry exercise and the data have been collected by the country offices in the Region in the considered period (data available here).
2. Data are aggregated at national level. Data considered runs from beginning of May until the most recent data available for December 2020.

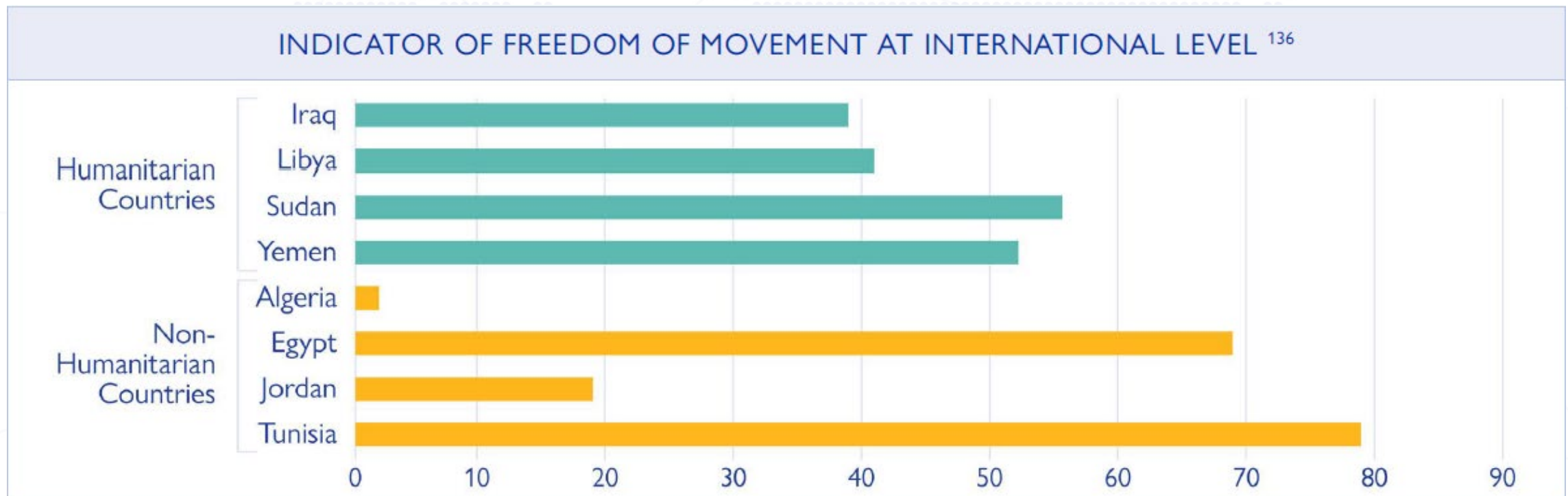
Freedom of movement at national level

- The first indicator looks at freedom of movement at national level, which assesses the time spent by each country in lockdown/under movement restriction. Countries who spent the least time under lockdown score the higher on freedom of movement indicator.
- Results show no significant difference between humanitarian and non-humanitarian contexts.
- Egypt, Sudan, and Tunisia are the countries with highest degree of freedom of movement internally at least measuring the time spent under complete or partial lockdown.



Freedom of movement at international level

- Interestingly, Algeria and Jordan reported very low levels of freedom of movements through PoEs
- With data currently available, it is not possible to determine the specific ways through which these restrictions influenced mobility patterns of migrants and displaced persons in the MENA region.



Conclusions

- Restrictions in access and departure from PoE have deeply impacted the mobility patterns in the Region
- Points of Entry were variously all affected by the mobility restrictions
- Most of the PoEs remained closed in the beginning of the first Wave of the Pandemic
- Egypt, Sudan, and Tunisia are the countries with highest degree of freedom of movement internally while Interestingly, Algeria and Jordan reported very low levels of freedom of movements through PoEs.

Potential developments

Potential room for developing related analysis based on RO MENA experience:

- PoE restrictions and COVID overall outcomes and their impact on Main Migration Routes in the long term
- Restrictions and COVID-19 Pandemic Spread
- Integration of Data and Information collection systems at PoE level

**Thanks a lot for your
attention**

