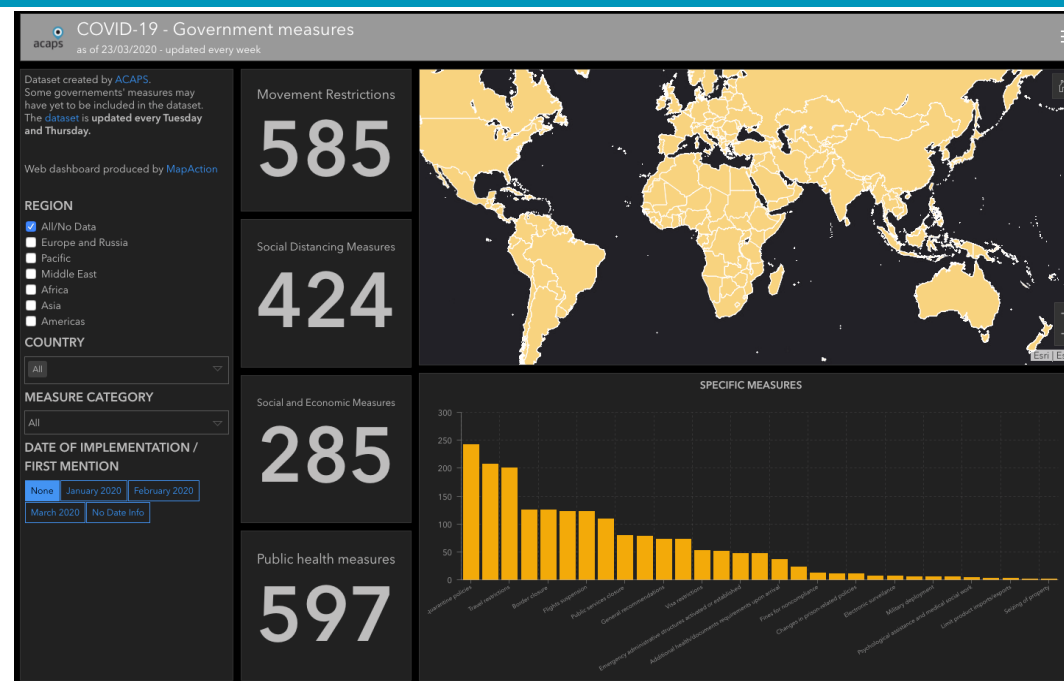


# COVID-19

## Government measures

This report provides an update to the first ACAPS report on government measures published on 19 March (ACAPS 19/03/2020). ACAPS' report on government measures maps initial measures adopted by governments in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is a component of ACAPS' broader effort to monitor the impact of the pandemic.

Our reports are based on publicly available data assembled by our team through a wide scanning of information across the globe. This second report seeks to provide further preliminary analysis on government measures being implemented worldwide. Given the speed in which governments are amending or introducing new measures in response to COVID-19, the dataset and analysis are likely to have information gaps.



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### Limitations

The COVID-19 response provides abundant sources of information. Care is needed to identify the most reliable sources.

Government measures are changing rapidly. Often information is outdated by the time it has been identified. The number of countries implementing or amending measures increases daily.

Information gaps exist for some countries.

At this stage it is still a challenge to retrieve clear information and frame it in a way that is analytically consistent.

## Methodology

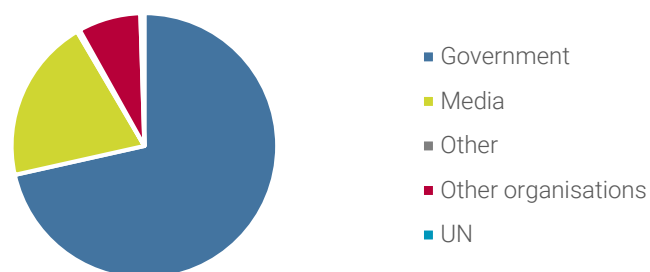
This report summarises and provides preliminary analysis of the data collected in the [ACAPS #COVID19 Government Measures Dataset](#) (updated 26/03/20). It outlines the taxonomy used for data collection and collates information on current actions being taken by governments to address COVID-19.

Data is available for over 190 countries. The information included in the dataset comes from a broad range of sources: government, media, United Nations, and other organisations. The Secondary Data Review that populated the dataset was structured around five broad categories used to group the interventions governments were taking in response to COVID-19:

- Social distancing
- Movement restrictions
- Public health measures
- Social and economic measures
- Lockdown

For an overview of the **Government Measures Taxonomy**, including overall structure and definitions, please see the *Annex*. The taxonomy is frequently updated to reflect the evolving situation as governments adopt and amend measures. Following ACAPS' first government measures report, an additional element has been added to the dataset in order to track government enforcement in response to noncompliance by the population. In addition, a category to track the implementation of partial and full lockdowns (both on national and local levels) has been introduced to the analytical framework.

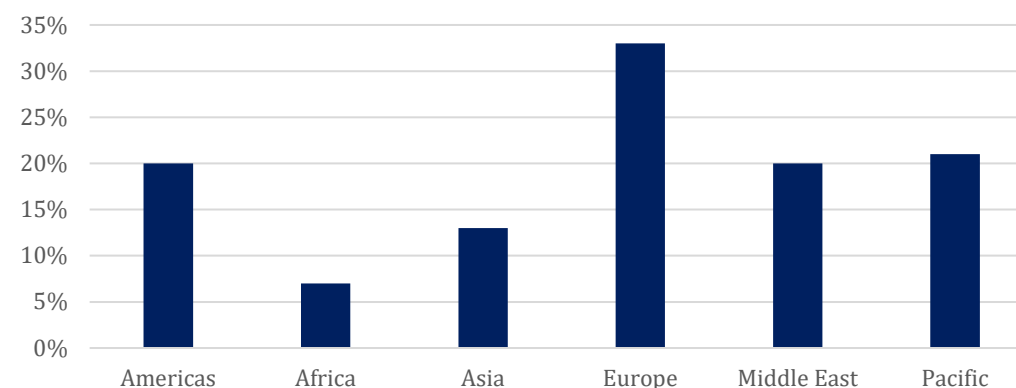
### Type of Sources



## Global developments

An outbreak of respiratory disease caused by a novel coronavirus was first detected in China in December 2019 and has now been detected in most countries. The virus (abbreviated "COVID-19") (CDC 2020), was declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 11 March 2020 (WHO 11/03/2020). On 23 March, the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, called for a global ceasefire in light of the COVID-19 pandemic (UN News 23/03/2020).

### % of countries per region having adopted at least one measure per category



Following the publication of the first ACAPS report on 19 March, there has been an increase in number of countries adopting more than one measure. However, given the changes to the government measures taxonomy, it is not possible to directly compare the % of countries per each region from the first report to the second. At the same time, it is clear from the analysis that there has been a notable increase in the % of countries implementing more than one measure in both Pacific and Americas from the 19 March report to this report.

Several countries have entered a degree of lockdown or tightened previous lockdown protocols, such as the United Kingdom (Gov UK 23/03/2020)..

## Social distancing

Based on the analytical framework developed, social distancing refers to measures taken by governments in order to reduce physical social contact and ensure physical distance between individuals, particularly in public spaces. People may also be practicing social distancing on an individual level to reduce spread, including remaining at home where possible and refraining from meeting others. In terms of government actions, the measures being taken include:

- Closure of public services
- Limit to the number of people in gatherings
- Closure of schools
- Changes to prison policies

The **Closure of Schools** is the most common measure being implemented in terms of social distancing, as it has been identified. As of 26 March, at least 130 countries have closed educational facilities. UNESCO has recorded 165 country-wide school closures, which will be reviewed in subsequent releases of ACAPS' government measures datasets (UNESCO 25/03/2020). The school closures measure can apply to pre-school, primary, secondary, high-school, colleges, and universities. Following the previous ACAPS government measures report on 19 March, 18 countries in Africa, seven countries in the Pacific, five countries in the Americas, two countries in Europe, and one country in the Middle East have announced school closures.

The impact that prolonged school closures will have on education levels and education systems are not yet clear. Where possible, the continuation of education through distance learning is taking place. However, the ability to engage remotely requires a certain degree of access to technology and technology literacy, which may not be possible in all countries, regions, or for all individuals (UNESCO 24/03/2020).

**Closing Public Services** includes the restriction of services and facilities that are operated by the government to the general public. Services may be closed entirely, restricted in terms of operations, or moving online. As of 26 March, at

least 75 countries have announced the closure of public services. This measure also includes the termination of city-wide public transport.

**Limiting gatherings** is a common approach taken by governments to reduce the number of people in either an open or closed, public or private, space. To date, at least 133 countries are currently enforcing or recommending at least one limitation to public gatherings. In many cases this has included putting a cap on numbers of people in indoor and outdoor spaces, such as parks, closing entertainment and leisure establishments, and cancelling events. In some countries, such as Finland, visits to retirement homes or other institutions that care for at risk groups have been restricted or prohibited (GoF 16/03/2020). This measure also applies to the restriction of public transport capacity, such as setting maximum numbers or limiting standing space.

At least 12 countries have enacted **changes to prison policies**, mostly to reduce the risk of a COVID-19 outbreak in prisons and prevent spread. Actions include minimising or restricting prison visits and suspension of day release programmes. In some circumstances, such as Iran and Bahrain, prisoners have been pardoned or released (Zaman, 13/03/2020; BBC 03/03/2020). The most recent amendment to prison policies has been noted on 20 March, in Australia, where personal prison visits will be restructured or even halted in order to prevent and manage COVID-19 risks (GoA 20/03/2020).

Social distancing measures implemented	Total	Americas	Africa	Asia	Europe	Middle East	Pacific
Closure of Public Services	75	5	15	9	29	13	4
Limit Gatherings	133	18	39	20	39	10	7
Closure of Schools	130	13	40	19	37	15	7

## Movement restrictions

Measures taken by governments in order to restrict movement are currently implemented in almost all countries surveyed. Movement restriction measures are applied dynamically by governments and subject to amendments. Such measures have been expanded over the past weeks, both in terms of the number of countries where they are applied, as well as in terms of the degree of restrictions (e.g., introduction of curfew replacing recommendation to leave the homes only for essential trips).

Two broad sub-categories have been identified.

First, measures directed at **control of cross-border movement** including:

- Requirement of additional health documents and certificates at entry points such as airports or border crossings
- Intensified border controls
- Closure of selected border crossings or complete border crossing
- Suspension of international flights (to and from certain countries or general suspension)
- Visa restrictions, especially the suspension of visa issued upon arrival

Second, measures directed at **control of internal movement** including:

- Domestic travel restrictions, in some cases along with the establishment of checkpoints
- Curfews (local or national)
- Establishment of surveillance and monitoring systems

A specific type of movement restrictions are lockdowns imposed by authorities specifically in camps or camp-like settings with IDPs, refugees or other minorities. They were included in this category as they primarily focus on the restriction of movement in and out of camps. They are currently being implemented in two countries.

Measures controlling international travel are the three most often applied movement restrictions (border closure, international flights suspension, visa restrictions). They have either been introduced proactively by states without coronavirus cases, following the detection of cases, or after an outbreak of coronavirus in the country. With the temporary closure of all external borders of the Schengen territory on 17 March (EC 16/03/2020), movement restrictions currently apply to all Schengen member states.

Of measures related to internal movement restrictions, curfews are the type implemented by most states with 26 governments enacting curfew policies.

Top 3 Movement restriction measures	Total	Region					
		Americas	Africa	Asia	Europe	Middle East	Pacific
Border closure (non-complete closure)	114	24	22	14	33	11	11
International flights suspension	109	14	40	14	23	12	6
Visa restrictions	97	13	21	23	16	13	12

## Public health measures

A range of public health measures are being taken by governments to prepare, mitigate, and respond to COVID-19. The following have been identified:

- Awareness campaigns
- Introduction of quarantine measures
- Health screenings in airports and border crossings
- Psychological assistance and medical social work
- Strengthening public health system
- Mass population testing
- Testing policy
- Obligatory medical tests not related to COVID-19
- Amendments to funeral and burial regulations
- General recommendations

As of March 26, **awareness campaigns** have been conducted in more than 55 countries. The campaigns typically aim to disseminate proper sanitation and hygiene techniques, other preventative measures, and general information regarding COVID-19. Designated hotlines, online webpages, and helplines aimed at providing information on the virus have been introduced in several countries. Awareness campaigns are also distributed using public meetings, radio, television, social media, and mobile apps.

The **introduction of quarantine policies** is the most common public health measure taken by governments to control and slow the spread of COVID-19. As of 26 March, at least 145 countries have introduced some form of quarantine policy that in most cases apply to three general groups:

- Those arriving in the country (either from anywhere or specific countries or regions)
- Those who display symptoms or test positive
- Those identified as vulnerable groups, such as those with underlying health conditions or over specific ages

Quarantine measures vary greatly in terms of duration and stipulations. Most countries have recommended a self-quarantine at home, but others, such as South Korea and some cities in China, have designated government facilities to use as quarantine centres (KCDC 20/03/2020; NHC 20/03/2020). The average time for quarantine is 14 days, but in Democratic People's Republic of Korea and El Salvador it is 30 days. Guatemala, Brazil and the UK have quarantine measures in place for 7 days. Since the previous ACAPS government measures report on 19 March, more than 40 countries have introduced new or increased quarantine measures.

As of 26 March, **Health screenings in airports and border crossings** are being carried out in more than 110 countries. Screenings typically apply to all arrivals into designated airports, ports, or border points. In some circumstances, only passengers arriving from specified countries will be subject to health screenings. Typical actions include temperature checks, thermal screenings, COVID-19 testing, health questionnaires, and medical examinations.

**Testing** for COVID-19 is an essential public health measure for combating the spread of the virus. As of 26 March, nine countries have specific testing policies. As this measure has been recently refined, this number is likely an underrepresentation and will be updated in further dataset releases. In many circumstances, due to lack of capacity, countries are only testing high risk patients or health workers. In a limited number of cases, such as Iceland, citizens are offered or required to engage in **mass population testing** for the virus (GoI 09/03/2020). In Turkmenistan, it has been reported that arrivals into the country are subject to **obligatory medical tests not related to COVID 19**, including tests for HIV (US Embassy 17/03/2020).

In attempts to prepare or reduce the strain on healthcare services at least 70 countries are taking measures to **strengthen public health systems**. This includes actions such as construction of new facilities, such as isolation wards, the deployment of additional healthcare workers, and the production of essential equipment, such as masks. It also includes the release of additional funds specific for the health sector to combat COVID-19 outbreaks. Additionally, **psychological support** for those affected by COVID-19, including family members of victims and healthcare workers, has been provided by at

least four countries. China, Austria, South Korea, and Namibia are all providing some form of psychological support.

**General recommendations** include health related advice that contribute to public resilience toward COVID-19. They can include suggestions such as working from home where possible, avoiding non-essential travel, and health related advice. At least 70 countries have some form of recommendation for citizens in relation to the management of risk for COVID-19. However, this is likely an under-representation, as it can be difficult to capture every country's recommendation.

Following the first Government Measures report, **amendments to funeral and burial procedures** have also been documented, specifically in Namibia, Togo, and the Philippines. This includes restricting the number of people at funerals and governments taking over the management of funerals.

Top 3 Public Health Measures	Total	Africa	Americas	Asia	Europe	Middle East	Pacific
Quarantine Measures	145	42	27	21	31	13	11
Health screenings at border points	113	42	21	20	16	7	7
Strengthening health system	70	10	11	8	31	3	7

## Governance and socio-economic measures

Governments are introducing a variety of social and economic measures to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, aimed at mitigating social and economic disruptions rather than at disease control. Measures include:

- Declaration of emergency state
- Activation or establishment of administrative emergency structures
- Deployment of military forces
- Limits to product imports or exports
- Specific economic measures

### State of emergency

In many states, governments currently operate under emergency legislation frameworks that provide them special enforcement powers they normally do not have. This permits governments for example to activate special resources, implement curfews, or deploy the military. As of 26 March, over 50 governments have introduced special protocols under emergency status or similar modified operating status, entailing for instance a public health emergency, disaster state or other special state of heightened alert or exception.

### Administrative emergency structures

Over 40 governments have activated or established special emergency administrative structures such as special response committees or ministerial task forces. Emergency structures are tasked with coordinating and/or monitoring the implementation of the COVID-19 response and in some instances also given decision-making powers regarding measures. While most emergency structures have been set up since mid-March, several countries had already put structures in place in late January following the COVID-19 outbreak in China, such as Palau's MoH emergency operations centre (Palau MoH 22/01/2020).

## Deployment of military forces

Governments have begun deploying military forces, usually under emergency legislation, to support the implementation of COVID-19 related measures. Armies are requested to assist police and border forces with ensuring compliance with measures or to support medical operations. Currently more than ten countries are deploying military forces to strengthen their response to the pandemic.

## Import/Export regulations

Temporary restrictions of medical exports have been observed already by the time the last ACAPS Government Measures report has been published. Since then, there have been additional cases of countries limiting the export of selected staple foods to prevent domestic shortages. Import restrictions of certain food items amid fears of a potential risk of COVID-19 spread have been reported for at least one country.

## Economic measures

In more than 65 countries, a variety of measures have been taken aimed to mitigate the economic impacts of the pandemic. Measures can be directed at private businesses, entire industries, or individuals. Common tools entail special loan schemes, fiscal measures, changes to work regulations such as the suspension of Sunday working bans, and the release of special funds to support vulnerable economic sectors, private businesses, and workers. Additionally, some governments may provide financial assistance to individual COVID-19 victims and their families. Moreover, authorities in over ten countries are regulating prices of certain goods such as medical supplies or essential food items including for example Benin, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Philippines.

## Top 3 Governance and socio-economic measures

	Total	Americas	Africa	Asia	Europe	Middle East	Pacific
Specific economic measures	67	13	10	7	30	2	5
Declaration of state of emergency	57	14	8	4	22	3	6
Emergency administrative structures activated	49	11	8	7	15	1	7

## Lockdown

Lockdown protocols limit populations to only leave their homes for essential purposes. However, lockdowns go beyond movement restrictions and include orders for public establishments or non-essential businesses to close. The degree of lockdowns varies between countries and can be scaled up gradually. Some countries are in a degree of **partial lockdown** under which businesses, production and services considered non-essential are requested to close. In addition, there are restrictions to individual movement to ensure people stay at home but populations may still be permitted to leave their homes for outdoor recreation, visits to grocery shops or to travel to work. Other countries have introduced **full lockdowns** under which individual movement is further restricted for instance no longer permitting outdoor physical activity and all non-essential businesses and industries are closed including production systems as it is currently the case in Italy (GoI 23/03/2020).

Lockdowns of varying degree are currently implemented in over 46 countries, in some cases on a regional or municipal level only. Except for China and Italy, all lockdowns were implemented in mid-March or later. Most recently, the Indian prime minister declared a national lockdown on 24 March (IndiaTimes 25/03/2020).

## Annex - Government measures taxonomy

Category	Measure
<b>Movement restrictions</b>	1 Additional health or other document requirements upon arrival
	2 Border checks
	3 Border closure
	4 Complete border closure
	5 Checkpoints within the country
	6 International Flights suspension
	7 Lockdown of refugee/IDP camps or other minorities
	8 Domestic travel restrictions
	9 Visa restrictions
	10 Curfews
	11 Surveillance and monitoring
<b>Public health measures</b>	12 Awareness campaigns
	13 Introduction of quarantine policies
	14 General recommendations
	15 Health screenings in airports and border crossings
	16 Obligatory medical tests not related to COVID-19
	17 Psychological assistance and medical social work
	18 Mass population testing
	19 Strengthening the public health system
	20 Testing policy
	21 Amendments to funeral and burial regulations

Category	Measure
<b>Governance and socio-economic measures</b>	22 Economic measures
	23 Emergency administrative structures activated or established
	24 Limit product imports/exports
	25 State of emergency declared
	26 Military deployment
<b>Social distancing</b>	27 Limit public gatherings
	28 Public services closure
	29 Changes in prison policies
	30 Schools closure
<b>Lockdown</b>	31 Partial Lockdown
	32 Full lockdown