

# Amid silent Easter, Aoun says: Never give in to the culture of death

Author:

Sun, 2020-04-12 23:07

BEIRUT: Lebanese President Michel Aoun abided by the government's decision to enforce social distancing on Easter and did not attend the traditional mass held in Bkerke, the episcopal see of the Maronite Church in Lebanon.

Maronite Patriarch Bechara Al-Rahi performed mass with a few priests, which was broadcast on television.

Aoun called on the Lebanese people "not to give in to the culture of death and its repercussions."

He added: "This shared suffering must bear the fruit of spiritual solidarity and effective values with which our country will be renewed to move forward, proud of all its people regardless of their affiliations, towards the horizons of life after having recovered from its pain."

Lebanon enforced a curfew on Sunday to stop the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

The Ministry of Health sent out awareness messages through traditional and social media, calling on people to stay home and warning of a fine of 50,000 liras (\$33) in cases of violation.

Health Minister Hamad Hassan said that Lebanon is containing the pandemic given the non-dramatic daily rise in the number of COVID-19 cases.

The Ministry of Health announced in its daily report on Sunday 11 new confirmed cases, bringing the total number in Lebanon since the discovery of the first case on Feb. 21 to 630 cases.

69 percent of the cases are mild and moderate, while 22 percent have shown no symptoms and 9 percent are critical. A noticeable increase in the number of cases in the isolated town of Bsharri has been recorded. As of Sunday, the number of cases has reached 56, an increase of one new case.

The number of tests performed on people in Lebanon has reached 12,713.

The Ministry of Health highlighted that the tests performed on the Lebanese expatriates who returned on Saturday yielded negative results. These include 123 Lebanese people who have returned from Kuwait, 126 from Dubai, 148 from Lunda and 122 from Rome.

The ministry stressed that the returnees must commit to home quarantine and must be monitored daily by the ministry.

As in other countries, there is panic towards people who may have the

disease, their families and those who were asked to self-isolate to make sure they have not caught COVID-19. Ostracism is affecting vulnerable groups.

A taxi driver, who is a Palestinian refugee in Tira, has undergone a test after his flu symptoms raised concerns in Burj El-Shimali camp. The Palestinian National Security Forces, the Palestinian Civil Defence, committees and the security forces transferred him to Al-Hamshari Hospital in Sidon, quarantined all members of his family, and kept track of all the people with whom he came in contact. The director of the hospital, Riad Abu Al-Einen, announced that the test result was negative, but the patient was asked to commit to home quarantine for 14 days and to have his health monitored daily.

Matn district in Mount Lebanon continues to be one of the areas with the highest number of cases, with the mayor, Marilyn Haddad, said that “the virus can infect any of us, so patients cannot be ostracized or treated in a negative way – this is to protect their human dignity.”

Haddad called on the residents of Matn to “look out for one another without causing harm” and to continue to perform humanitarian work under the slogan “together we serve without discrimination.”

Dr. Ahmed Al-Maghrabi, a psychologist and social health doctor, told Arab News: “COVID-19 has caused mass panic everywhere in the world that reaction to the disease is no longer innocent. People hear news of the disease killing 2,000 people per day. This causes panic and justifies it, but what cannot be justified is treating patients like killers. The epidemic is killing people, the patient is not.”

Al-Maghrabi added: “The blood of recovered patients is being used abroad to find a treatment, while we, on the other hand, run from people who were patients and recovered from the disease. People today are in the middle of the event and are not acting logically. The repercussions must be significant after the pandemic ends.”



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Lebanon scrambles to fight pandemic, as cases reach 619

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## [Dubai Health Authority to start treating coronavirus patients with blood plasma](#)

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Sun, 2020-04-12 22:55

DUBAI: Dubai Health Authority (DHA) announced on Sunday that it will start using blood plasma from recovered coronavirus patients to treat critical

COVID-19 cases after the UAE announced that it will adopt this treatment method.

The treatment, known as convalescent plasma therapy, will be adopted sometime this week.

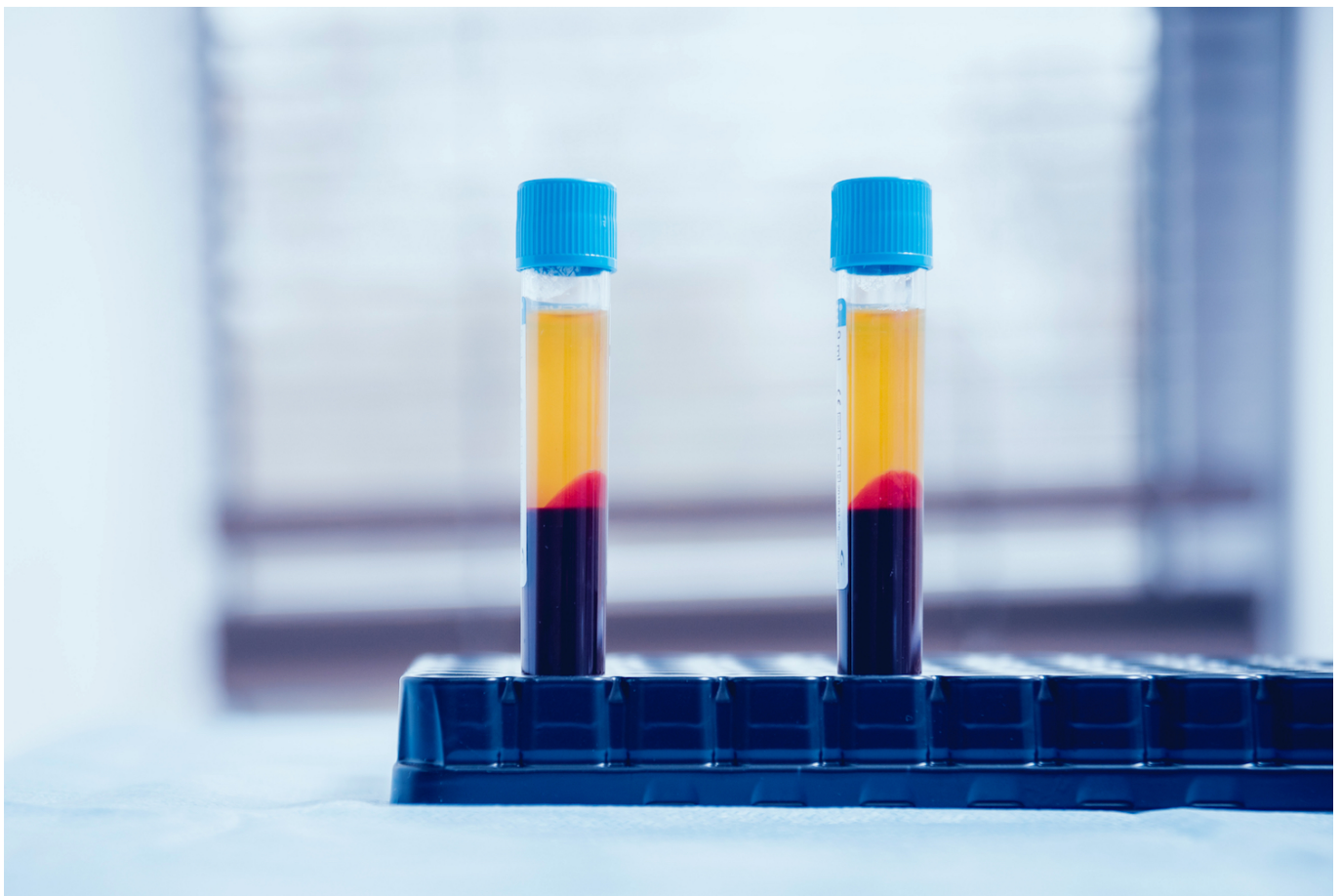
Dr. Younis Kazim, the CEO of Dubai Healthcare Corporation at the DHA, said that the authority has introduced the protocol for convalescent plasma therapy at hospitals in Dubai to prevent the spread of the virus.

He added that a number of specialized doctors from the DHA have put in place protocols for using convalescent plasma therapy based on international standards. They have also outlined rules and guidelines to specify who can make plasma donations and who is eligible to receive this treatment.

Kazim also said that the DHA took this step after international medical results found that once a person recovers from the virus, they develop antibodies that will stay in their blood to fight it.

Doctors believe the plasma of patients who have completely recovered from COVID-19 is rich in antibodies that can fight off the virus. They believe that when such plasma is injected into another person with the disease, it will recognize the virus as something to attack.

He added that the US Food and Drug Administration revealed that it was scientifically proven that the use of convalescent plasma therapy helped speed up the recovery of COVID-19 patients and decreased the number of days they spent in hospital.



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## [Houthi militia breach cease-fire 241 times – Arab coalition](#)

Sun, 2020-04-12 21:49

RIYADH: The Houthi militia has breached a cease-fire 241 times since its implementation, the Arab coalition fighting to restore the internationally-recognized government in Yemen said.

The Arab coalition announced a two-week cease-fire on April 9, in an effort to combat the coronavirus outbreak.

The coalition added that the Iran-backed Houthi militia's violations included the use of ballistic missiles and heavy weapons

"The coalition is committed to the Yemeni National Army and to a comprehensive cease-fire," it said.



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War-ravaged Yemen moves to stem spread of virus  
Yemen confirms first coronavirus case

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## Turkey's interior minister says resigns over short-notice coronavirus curfew

Sun, 2020-04-12 21:43

ISTANBUL: Turkey's Interior Minister Suleyman Soylu said on Twitter on Sunday that he was resigning from his post over the implementation of a two-day curfew in major Turkish cities to tackle the coronavirus outbreak. Turkey announced the weekend lockdown late on Friday, but in the brief time before it went into effect many people rushed out to buy food and drink in the country's commercial hub Istanbul, a city of 16 million people, and other cities.

"Although in a limited period of time, the incidents that occurred ahead of the implementation of the curfew was not befitting with the perfect management of the outbreak process," Soylu said in his statement.

The lockdown decision was taken with good intention and aimed at slowing the spread of coronavirus, he said. The lockdown will end at 2100 GMT on Sunday. Turkey's death toll from COVID-19 has risen above 1,100, with more than 50,000 confirmed cases since first patient diagnosed a little over a month ago.

If his resignation is accepted by President Tayyip Erdogan, Soylu would be the second Turkish minister to leave his post since the coronavirus pandemic struck.

Transport minister Mehmet Cahit Turhan was removed two weeks ago after the ministry drew criticism for holding a tender amid the outbreak to prepare to build a huge canal on the edge of Istanbul.



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## [Son of Egyptian coronavirus victim doctor recalls terror of mob attack](#)

Sun, 2020-04-12 20:12

CAIRO: The burial of an Egyptian doctor who died from coronavirus was delayed by residents trying to prevent her funeral from taking place in the village's cemetery, fearing the spread of the virus, her son has told Arab News.

Security forces managed to disperse angry crowds in the village in Dakahlia governorate, north of Cairo, before the doctor, Sonia Abdel-Azim, was buried.

The incident reflects a worrying trend of some Egyptians changing their

perception of doctors, from heroes to carriers of the virus.

Dr. Ahmed Al-Hindawi, Abdel-Azim's son, told Arab News that a mob had gathered around the road leading to the grave site to prevent the ambulance from reaching the cemetery. Ambulance windows were smashed by rocks thrown by crowds, forcing the procession to wait for police and the governorate's security director to arrive.

Al-Hindawi said negotiations with villagers in order to bury his mother continued for a full five hours. He said he failed to reach an agreement, despite the fact that the washing, shrouding and burial ceremonies had been carried out in accordance with the Ministry of Health's medical standards.

He said his mother was diabetic and had had problems with her foot, which had been operated on for gangrene. He said his mother was in intensive care, then went to Al-Sadr Hospital when her health deteriorated. She later tested positive for coronavirus.

There have been other incidents of hostility toward healthcare workers in Egypt since the outbreak.

Dr. Dina Magdy, who works in Ismailia's Fever Hospital, had to move to a new residence, which was relatively isolated, as a precaution. Even so, crowds demanded she be kicked out of her house, claiming she was infected with coronavirus.

Magdy said she was harassed by residents who accused her of transmitting the disease to them. She said in a video that was posted on social media that residents claimed they were in possession of a report stating she was infected, prompting her to call police.

On Friday the people of Bolus village in Kafr El-Dawwar, Beheira governorate, refused to bury the mother of a doctor who died from the coronavirus after contracting the disease from her son. Security forces intervened, clashing with villagers in a dawn confrontation.

In another incident a nurse at Al-Sadr Hospital, also in Dakahlia, was bullied after she became infected. She said she cried when her phone number and those of her colleagues were posted on social media. She added she had received calls accusing her of being the source of the pandemic and the reason for its spread.

"We are sick and in agony, and suffering from a bad psychological state," the nurse said in a video circulated among Facebook users.

"People are supposed to thank and appreciate doctors fighting the coronavirus because they are risking their lives on a regular basis," chest diseases consultant and president of the Egyptian Society for Allergy and Immunology Dr. Nabil Al-Dabaraki told Arab News.

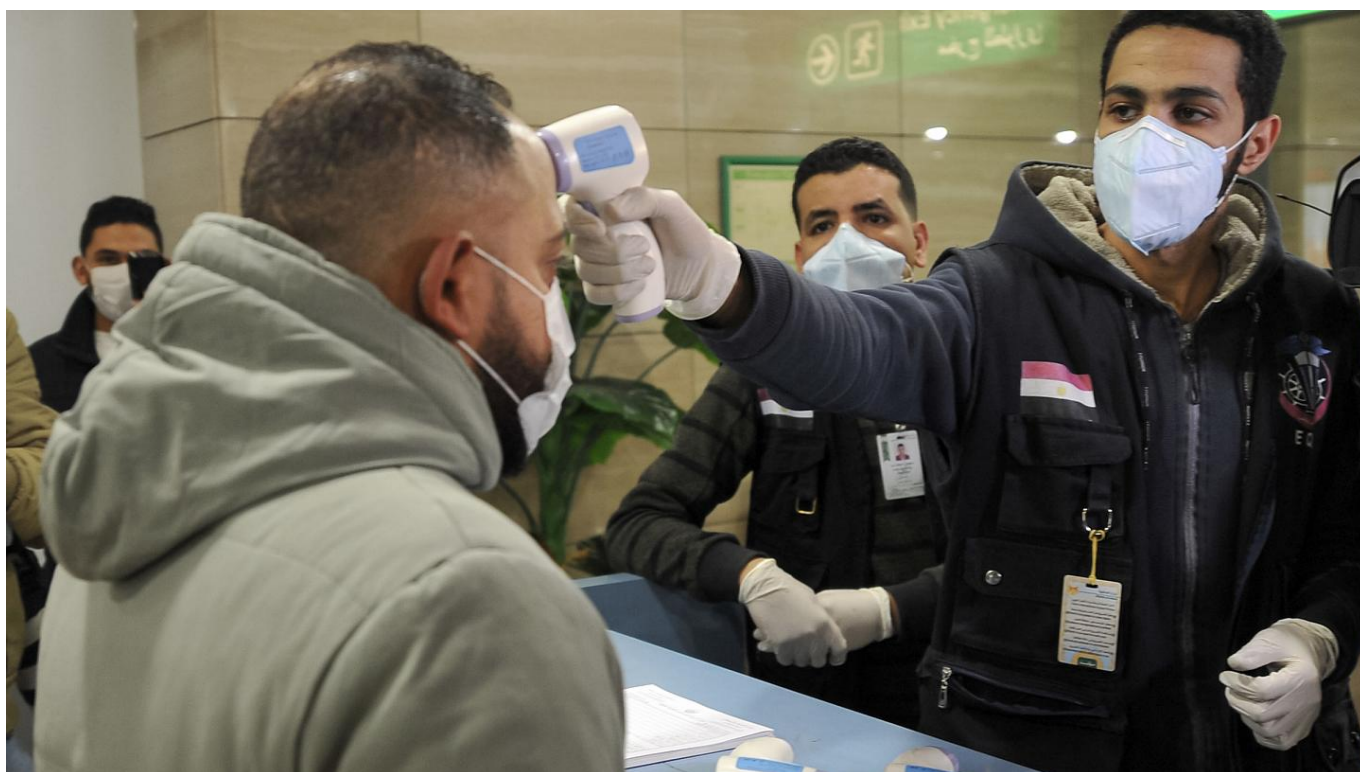
Al-Dabaraki said different cultures and the low level of awareness among some people could be blamed for the harassment doctors were facing.

He said it indicated ignorance and shortsightedness by some because the causes of the infection were well known and could not be measured in that way.

“What happened with some doctors is unacceptable, but they are isolated actions, because the majority of citizens appreciate the effort that doctors are making,” Secretary-General of the Medical Union Ehab Al-TaHER told Arab News.

The General Union of Egyptian Physicians had initially monitored the death of three doctors and the infection of 43 others, and indicated that the number of patients would increase.

By Saturday, Egypt had registered 1,939 coronavirus cases and 146 deaths.



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Egypt's Grand Mufti slams refusal to bury dead COVID-19 patients as 'religiously rejected'