

Date:	08-05-2020	Document:	F20-019 EN
Title:	National Report Cyprus		
Author:	TCMA, TCPU		

First of all, as Turkish Cypriot Medical Association and Physician's Union, we would like to express our deepest sympathies and heartfelt condolences for the loses in your countries. We wish a quick recovery in health and also in economic and social impacts, we hope world overcomes Covid-19 pandemic soon.

Our divided island Cyprus reported its first case of COVID-19 on 9 March in Greek Cypriot Community and on 10 March in Turkish Cypriot Community. In Turkish Cypriot Community the first case was an elderly German tourist. Soon we had local cases.

Until now we have confirmed 108 patients , approximately 20.000 tests done which are mostly quick cart tests and PCR tests, 103 discharges, 4 deaths. Greek Cypriot Community has 889 patients, more than 70.000 tests, 125 discharges, 15 deaths. Overall 997 confirmed patients and 19 deaths. So far, the infrastructure on both sides has been sufficient to deal with the cases. Few Covid-19 positive health care workers in Turkish Cypriot Community.

We responded quickly and close down movement and activity, and create quarantine places. This quick response was because of the fact that the public health system was already in a poor state and is not equipped to deal with a large number of cases.

Crossing points between two communities closed on 28 of February partially, on 15 March completely. Entries to the country from air and sea also restricted.

Measures were announced on 14 March stating all retail outlets except pharmacies, petrol stations, bakeries, supermarkets and "other businesses that are necessary for people's basic needs" were closed, including for takeaway or delivery services. Medical facilities, veterinary services and banks remained open. Only "TRNC" citizens and legal residents were allowed entry by land, air or sea, on condition that they self-isolated to 14 days.

On 20 March the presidential election due on 26 April was postponed until 11 October, one argument being that it would help the political parties work together on tackling the virus.

On 22 March a partial curfew was imposed, allowing people to leave their homes only for visits to supermarkets, pharmacies, petrol stations, hospitals and banks, where they must keep a 2-metre distance from others.

We received medical supplies from Turkey. The European Commission (which has offices in the TCc) announced the release of €5 million to fund medical equipment and other economic needs. The funds will be spent via UNDP and overseen by the Bicomunal Technical Committee on Health, we recieved part of them.

The Medical Association signed a protocol with UNDP concerning a fund for the doctor needs in the coming days.

We handled virus cases in a single (separate) hospital in Nicosia which is the main public hospital of Turkish Cypriot Community. Nowadays is not a separate hospital.

The government unabled to raise funds externally, the coalition has focused on trying both to reduce governments regular expenditure and on supporting businesses and individuals.

-25% cut in public-sector salaries above Turkish Lira (TL) 5,000 (€690), with some exceptions for "essential services" like health sector workers. The Union worked hard to prevent cut in doctors' salaries.

-25% cut in budget contributions to public bodies, local governments and political parties.

-Increase taxes.

As there is no "life-line" of funds from Turkey is expected, and no access to European Union funds because of the political situation the economic impact is catastrophic in our country. The poverty and the number of people losing their jobs are increasing in a threatening way.

As Turkish Cypriot Medical Association and Physician's Union we under took an important role during this period. The government was highly insufficient in taking the measures of health issues. Health care workers were deprived of personal protective equipment. To protect our doctors we maintained personal protective equipment and forced the government to maintain more. We made a lot of press briefing for the safety of the doctors and also community. The association raised a scientific court abruptly giving advices to the government and raised and supported help campaigns for the medical supplies.

Pandemic hospital issue became a polemic combat. The government couldn't decide which hospital will be the pandemic hospital. They changed their mind day to day and made wrong decisions. They transferred the main hospital of the whole country with 600 beds to another smaller private hospital. This concluded as weaken of the general health services , so the government had to take back its decision.

We put a great pressure on the Ministry to give education the health workers and also to the police, local government works. But unfortunately the education of the workers were insufficient. Also we put a great pressure on the Ministry to empower laboratory, hospital, intensive care unit services.

Until now number and reliability of the the tests done are not satisfactory which in turn raises a suspicion on the number of patients and the total public immunity.

The Ministry of Health declared that there is no new patient for the last 15 days and the government decided to reopen work places quite rapidly with poor inspection of the measurements.

As our country is an island and as we locked down early we overcame from the first wave. But we are alert for the second wave.

So, to conclude our doctors and health workers did a good job as other colleagues all over the world heroically. Both the public and the government saw that strength of the public health system has a vital importance for the countries maintenance.

I want to finish my words with our belief in that the world can overcome the Covid problem only with solidarity, cooperation and knowledge sharing.