MENA affiliates responses to Coronavirus outbreak

**Jordan: General Trade Union of Workers in Textile Garment & Clothing Industries - JTGCU**

As soon as the Jordanian government has issued the first defense law on applying the curfew, JTGCU has taken measures and notified the following recommendations to institutions operating in its sector:

1- Complete work and production stoppage in all the TGSL sector.

2- Migrant workers to stay in their dorms and Employers are to provide migrant workers with food, drink, cleaning materials and sterilizers.

3- Empathizing the payment of workers’ wages according to the Jordanian labor law as follows:

   A- The first ten days with full payment.
   B- After first ten days half of the wage will be paid until fifty days.
   C- If the period is prolonged, workers annual leave to be counted.

**Jordan: General Trade Union for Workers in Electricity in Jordan - GTUWEJ**

GTUWEJ has reacted fast to address the challenge of Coronavirus outbreak and even before discovering the first case in Jordan. We took the following procedures:

1 - The Union has asked companies’ management to take all measures to limit the spread of this virus by reducing employees gatherings and providing personal protection methods such as paws, sterile materials and masks, especially for workers who have direct contact with the public, and this was done by companies where there was significant cooperation between the union and corporate management.

2- The companies were asked to intensify cleaning and clearing the work sites through specialized companies to spray these sites and to clean and sanitize the toilets on a daily basis.

3- 50% of employees whose work does not affect the continuity of the electric current have stopped to work, especially women who have children. In addition some workers were asked to do their work from their homes.

4- As emergency was declared in the Kingdom and the curfew was imposed, thus disrupting all institutions, government departments and private sector companies stopped to work. Therefore it was necessary to follow all of our workers who were in their homes and who stayed on their job to maintain the continuity of electricity. The management provided the workers with the necessary permits to carry out their work.

5- Communication was made with workers through various social media to explain some government decisions and defense orders issued by the Minister of Defense. We also published some videos to raise the mood of workers.

6- we coordinated with the companies to change the work shifts to start from 7 am until 7 pm and from 7 pm until 7 am.

7- Companies have set up committees in which the union is represented in order to support workers who suffer from chronic diseases and provide them with the necessary medicines.
Our demands:

1 - We asked the companies to continue to provide the means of personal protection for workers who are still on the job and to provide protective clothing with all the necessary means to protect workers from infection.

2 - We asked the companies to pay the full wage for all working days during the curfew period, no matter how long and to give the workers who are still on the job additional work allowance according to the Labor Law.

3- We called for expansion of work from home during the curfew.

4- For the safety of our workers and their families, we asked the workers to abide by the decisions issued by the government and not to leave their houses in order not to spread the virus.

5- We now work from homes in respect of government decisions and in order to preserve public safety.

Tunisia: Fédération Générale de la Métallurgie et de l'Electronique - FGME

Suite à cette guerre bactérienne, on a pris des mesures préventives dans les entreprises comme la stérilisation de toutes espaces ainsi les ouvriers, après ils ont augmenté les bus pour le transport des employés mais après on a décidé avec les syndicats et les directions la fermeture totale de l'entreprise probablement jusqu'à le 4 avril comme :
yazaki : 100% du salaire et compensation de 20% des jours d’absence
Leoni: 100% du salaire
Chober: 100% du salaire et compensation de 50% des jours d’absence
Draxelmaier : 100% du salaire

Après le 4 avril on verra, sachant qu’on a des accords de chômage technique qui garantit 50% du salaire en minimum

Tunisia: Fédération Générale du Textile, de l'Habillement, Chaussure et Cuir - FGTHCC

The government has applied the a nationwide quarantine. We faced several problems in finding solutions that take into account the interest of workers and the companies. However, we have prioritized the payment of wages during the current 2 weeks quarantine. Therefore, there have been difference approaches to address the issue as the union entered into various agreements with the managements as follows :

A- In some companies the 2 weeks quarantine were considered as an extraordinary vacation to be deducted from the workers annual leaves.
B - Some companies will deduct 1 week from the workers annual leave and workers will have to worker extras working hours in a later stage to cover the second week.
C - some companies still operating despite the quarantine and the curfew

- What is really dangerous today and despite the assistance provided by the head of the government is that some companies started to apply the “technical unemployment” for one month that can be renewed /extended. According to this, workers are entitled to receives only two hundred dinars (60 euros) a month, from the Ministry of Social Affairs.

- We experience lack of protective supplies at workplace in the sector
We demand the companies which still operating to during the curfew to and the quarantine to apply an alternate system which means only 50% of the workforce can be at the workplace at the time in order and keep distance amongst workers at the workplace.

-We demand the continuity of paying wages and provide workers with the necessary means to prevent of virus outbreak at work.

**Morocco: Fédération nationale des travailleurs de l’énergie - FNTE/UMT**

Dans un élan de solidarité nationale pour alimenter le fond national pour la gestion de la pandémie, les cinq grandes centrales syndicales : UMT, CDT, FDT, UGTM et UNMT ont appelé les salariés et les travailleurs à une contribution de trois jours de salaire.

Plusieurs réunions entre le patronat et les syndicats (UMT et CDT le 20/3/2020) et qui se poursuivent pour organiser le télé-travail et fournir sur les lieux de travail les moyens de sécurité et santé aux travailleurs.

Le fond de gestion de la pandémie
- versera aux salariés inscrits à la caisse nationale de sécurité sociale
Donc les entreprises sont impactées par la situation

La somme de 2000 DH /mois avec les allocations familiales et la cotisation à l’assurance maladie obligatoire (AMO)
- possibilité de report des échéances des crédits de consommation et de logement jusqu’au mois de juin.

Concernant les travailleurs du secteur informel des solutions sont en cours

**Morocco: Syndicat National des Travailleurs de Phosphates - SNTP-CDT**

We demand the following:

1. Hold urgent meetings of health & safety and workplace committees - stated in the labor law
   - to define health and social measures to be taken in favor of workers due to the consequences of the crisis.
2. Maintain jobs in the public sector and support workers in the other affected sectors with a monthly wage as minimum to cover their living needs in such difficult times.
3. Maintain health coverage for all workers
4. Provide social grant for workers in the informal sector as well as for the poor families during such health emergency phase
5. Moving some public budgets to support the health sector
6. All should contribute - according with its ability - to the national fund of Coronavirus epidemic
7. Raise awareness among workers to respect health measures and enhancing labor solidarity
8. Using workers paid annual leave instead of layoffs
9. Reconsider work times and use of remote work
10. Priority to be given to working women, pregnant women and workers who have chronic diseases re allowing work absence during such times.
11. Significant revision of the state choices and giving the highest importance to education and public health as well as stopping privatizing public services.

**Morocco: Fédération Nationale des Travailleurs, Pétrole, Gaz et Produits Assimilés – UMT**
Recommandations :
1. Recours au télétravail pour le personnel

Les personnes fragiles atteintes de pathologies chroniques, maladies respiratoires, maladie cardio-vasculaire, personnes sous traitement immunosuppresseurs et femmes enceintes doivent systématiquement mises au télétravail.

Pour les activités essentielles, qui ne peuvent pas être gérées exclusivement en télétravail, un système de rotation des équipes doit être mis en place afin que soient alternées périodes de travail sur site et à domicile en télétravail.

2. Limitation et sécurisation des conditions de travail

L'ensemble des réunions physiques internes et externes doivent être réduites au strict minimum.

L'entreprise doit fournir les gels alcoolisés à tout le personnel.

L’entreprise doit veiller à l’application des consignes suivants :
- Contrôle température (thermomètre frontal infra-rouge )
- Suspendre tous les travaux non critiques qui nécessite l’intervention d’entreprises extérieures
- S’éparer les pauses pour le personnel par un intervalle du temps permettant le nettoyage
- Désinfecter les locaux par du matériel adéquat
- Augmenter le nombre de rotation ou de bus affectés au transport du personnel pour limiter le nombre de salarié par voyage
- Distance minimale de 1m à maintenir entre les opérateurs dans l’ensemble des opérations
- Personnel du bureau :
  - Port permanent de gants pour les opérateurs
  - Désinfecter les mains (gel ou lavage savon) à chaque fois que les gants sont enlevés
  - Désinfecter le bureau / clavier chaque heure et avant chaque shift
- Pour les opérateurs de dépôts :
  - Port des gants permanente en dehors des bureaux
  - Désinfecter les mains (gel ou lavage savon) à chaque fois que les gants sont enlevés
- Pour les chauffeurs :
  - A l’intérieur des sites et au dépôtage chez les clients, port des gants permanente en dehors de la cabine du camion

Désinfecter régulièrement les mains (gel ou lavage savon)

Iraq: Iraqi Federation of Oil Unions - IFOU

The reality of work in the oil sector during the outbreak of Coronavirus:

1- Iraq has taken a proactive step to reduce the outbreak of the virus and implemented a nationwide curfew until 28th of March as it may be extended for a longer period.

2- We intervened with the oil companies to change the shifts system in the oil fields and it became a full-time work day with the provision of all requirements for workers and a three-day break in order to reduce contacts amongst workers.

3- The morning shift system has been changed to be one working day and two days break as workers were divided into three shifts and taking into account bringing workers to the work site and returning them to their homes

4- Safety instructions were distributed with protective materials like gloves and masks by the
respective departments
5- IFOU and its affiliated unions produced videos to urge workers to commit to wearing special protective clothing to protect themselves and their families from this epidemic.

6- On March 22nd IFOU organized meetings via WhatsApp and Zoom for three hours. We discussed the situation of Iraq re Coronavirus epidemic and we have taken three decisions:

A - To issue a statement and distribute it at work sites together with gloves and masks as well as to citizens in some places such as markets and stores in order to raise the awareness on the hazards related to the virus outbreak.
B- Write a letter to the emergency committee and the police to inform them about our assistance in this regard .
C- Affiliated unions at the work sites to follow up with workers and urge them not to gather and meet and limit this to work related matters.

7- With regard to wage and precarious workers, we agreed with the oil companies to ensure that their salaries won’t be affected as they work in the public sector.

8- Important oil MNCs such as BP, ENI, Saipem and other companies have adhered to the emergency committee decisions as workers have been granted a paid leave.

9 - No injuries reported in the oil sector so far, with the exception of two suspected cases in Shell

**Iraq: General Trade Union of Electricity Sector Employees of Iraq (GTUESE)**

Regarding the outbreak of coronavirus, majority of citizens and observers expect that the damage will be very large in the coming days in Iraq due to hospitals mal status, environmental pollution and the lack of municipal services, especially in poor neighborhoods. A few days ago, the Minister of Health stated that the Ministry of Health is unable to face this threat.

- The government has taken some measures, including reducing the shift time by 50% alternately, i.e. half of the workers are off and the other half is working. Also, the matter has been left to the directors of the departments and companies to decide. All ministries are reducing the work, but each has its own conditions except for the Ministry of Health and the security authorities.
- Media took its role in guiding and raising awareness to prevent the spread of this virus. But the actual procedures are not up to the threat of such disease and were limited only to the distribution of some sterilizers to the departments/workplaces. It didn’t cover the workers crowded places as masks and gloves were not distributed to them as it was left to workers individual ability if they can afford them and citizens donations.

4 - Nearly 80,000 workers in the electricity sector are facing a current problem. As a result of the recent mass demonstrations and protests, they were appointed as a wage or contract workers. But their wages were not paid as some haven’t been paid since 5 months and others since 3 months. Their situation and the situation of their families became worse under the current conditions. So the Iraqi unions demand the payment their wages urgently.
5- As the government implemented a curfew the main roads are blocked by concrete blocks and vehicles are not allowed to pass. This has resulted in walking long distances to reach the work sites. The work/workers cars should be permitted to go through.

6- We demand the provision of examining devices periodically at work sites to detect cases early as well as specialist in sanitizing workplaces and tools at work. Also we demand protection material such as gloves, masks and other requirements - unfortunately, all this is missing at the workplaces.
**Lebanon: Federation of Petroleum Trade Unions of Lebanon - FPTUL**

FPTUL and Total Workers Union in Lebanon have taken the following measures in repose to the outbreak of the Coronavirus:

1- Educate workers and employees about corona virus, its risks and ways to prevent it and limit its spread.
2- Examine the workers temperature twice a day and record it.
3- Distributing sterile materials, medical face masks and gloves, establishing insulators and a spacing line as well as brochures on how to wash hands.
4- Adopting the method of working from home
5- Reducing the number of employees in offices to the minimum.
6- Paying the employees their full salaries and not to deduct the days of work stoppage as annual leave.
7- Continuous communication between management and employees by dividing them into groups.
8- Respect all the rules of occupational safety.

Finally, given the successive economic crises in Lebanon, the increase of prices, decreases in salaries, and the outbreak of Coronavirus which recently led to the deterioration of the oil barrel price globally and the losses incurred by companies and their impact on workers, Our priorities are the following:

1- To ensure work continuity and no negative impact on wages
2- To make sure Non-dismissal and layoffs.
3- To maintain health and welfare benefits of the employees.

**Lebanon: Professional Union of Syndicates for Workers & Employees of Chemical Materials and Alike**

- Lebanon is suffering currently unprecedented financial and economic crisis. Due to this many companies were closed, unemployment rate rose unprecedentedly approaching 40 to 45% and prices increased insanely which negatively affected the lives of workers and their families.

- Workers of the oil and gas sector have suffered the repercussions of this crisis, but the companies in the sector are still paying their workers, including full salaries and half salaries. Thousands of workers in other sectors lost their jobs as companies were shut down and dismissed the workers.

- In this crisis situation, the spread of the Corona epidemic came to increase the suffering, as the economic movement became paralyzed and the majority of those working for daily wages are actually below the poverty line.

- Under such circumstances our main demand today is ensure workers’ wages payments and health coverage.

**Lebanon: Syndicat des employés et Ouvriers de Holcim Liban**

- Lebanon is suffering financial and economic crisis for the last 6 months. The government has taken some measures in response to Coronavirus and asked the citizen to stay home for 2 weeks and until March 29th. This in turn have increased the problems faced by workers such as wages payment and unemployment.
- LafargeHolcim has adhered to the government decisions and asked workers to stay home until March 29th. The union has agreed with management to pay workers their full salaries for this period and apply work from home system.
- The key problem in the larger construction sector is how to cover the wage workers. We are working now on launching a campaign to support them.

**Algeria: Syndicat National Autonome des Travailleurs d'Electricité et de Gaz - SNATEG**

L'Algérie, comme tous les pays du monde, connaît un état d'urgence pour faire face au Coronavirus. Malheureusement, nous avons noté que le gouvernement algérien n'a pris aucune mesure pour limiter les voyages à destination et en provenance de pays où le virus Corona s'est propagé, comme la Chine et l'Italie, malgré que l'Organisation mondiale de la santé ait déclaré que le virus était une pandémie mondiale.

Après plusieurs appels de notre organisation et de nombreuses organisations en Algérie pour cesser d'importer le virus et prendre des mesures strictes pour faire face au virus, le président de la République Abdel Majid Teboun a prononcé à son discours le 18 mars 2020 un train de mesures pour faire face au coronavirus.

Pour SONELGAZ, plus de 30% des travailleurs ont été contraints de partir en congés annuels, et toutes les travailleurs de techniques ont été tenues en alerte car le secteur de l'électricité et du gaz est le secteur le plus sensible.

En ce qui concerne la prévention du coronavirus, la société n'a mené aucune campagne de terrain en sur la gravité du virus ou sur la manière de prévenir sa propagation. Garder 70% du nombre total de travailleurs à leur place peut engendrer une propagation du virus.

Nous avons remarqué que le virus a été sous estimé par les simples ouvriers en raison de l'absence de toute communication et sensibilisation de l'administration.

SONELGAZ a continué sa stratégie de restreindre les organisations indépendantes de sensibiliser les travailleurs du danger du virus sur la vie du travailleur.

Par conséquent, nous exigeons:

- Payer les salaires mensuel des travailleurs comme s'ils continuaient leur travail, et de ne pas les obligé de sortir en congés annuels ou reliquats.
- Réintégration de tous les travailleurs licenciés en raison de leur refus de rejoindre leur travaille faute de mesures de protection et par prévention contre la propagation du virus.
- Fournir des allocations et des aides financières aux familles des travailleurs, dont l'un est avéré infecté par le coronavirus.
- Fournir les moyens de prévenir et de protection contre ce virus en activant les tâches de médecine du travail.