

Mechanism relating to the opening of Rafik Hariri International Airport for the repatriation of Lebanese expatriates

The Lebanese Government recalls the need for citizens to restrict their movements and stay in their places of residence, wherever they are, as it is safer for them, their parents and families. Expatriates wishing to exercise their natural right to repatriation should comply with the measures provided for in the present decision.

1. Returnees shall undergo the PCR for COVID-19 or the two laboratory tests “Antigen & Antibody for COVID-19” outside Lebanon no longer than three days before repatriation. Tests shall be approved by relevant Lebanese embassies or consulates. In the event that tests are not available in the country of departure, returnees must prove it by virtue of a report from the Lebanese embassy or consulate; upon arrival in Lebanon, they must comply with the guidelines of the Ministry of Public Health mentioned in Item No. 11 of the present decision.

2. A special form will be filled in at the Lebanese embassies abroad, to ensure the repatriation of the Lebanese. This form includes basic information about each person, including age, type and result of the laboratory diagnostic test- if any, social status (number and age of family members) and health status (fever, chronic respiratory and lung diseases, pregnancy, health emergencies, disability, aging, allergy, etc.). This form will be drawn up in coordination with the Ministries of Health and Foreign Affairs.

3. Lists including the names of expatriates wishing to return to Lebanon via the airport will be prepared by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as follows:

a- Priority will be given to persons with critical health conditions, persons in the critical age category, and families.

For the purpose of applying this criterion, persons suffering from the following diseases, as per their medical records, will be considered as health risk groups: diabetes, cancer, coronary heart disease, hypertension, asthma, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Pregnant women residing in Lebanon, whose spouses are abroad, also fall within this category.

The category of vulnerable groups includes persons over 60 years of age and under 18 years of age.

All of these people will be evacuated with their immediate family (spouse and children).

b- The second category encompasses persons with critical social status, individuals who have left Lebanon under a temporary or short-stay visa, and all other returnees.

4. Expatriates will be responsible for the purchase of the airline ticket on the basis of the price defined by the MEA after calculating the ticket price according to the seat allocation mechanism adopted in the present decision, without any profits or additional costs.

The Ministry of Public Works and Transport will be in charge of preparing the itineraries and flight schedules in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in light of the repatriation forms and requests submitted to the Lebanese embassies abroad. Flight times will be announced 72 hours before take-off so as to allow travellers and focal points in charge of flight coordination to take all necessary measures.

5. Planes will take off from Rafik Hariri International Airport with crew members and the following persons on board: A medical and nursing team (comprised of 3 persons for large aircrafts and 2 persons for small ones) mandated by the Ministry of Public Health, equipped with relevant medical supplies, and seconded by a Lebanese General Security team selected by the Director General of General Security.

6. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs will require the ambassador or consul general (or a Lebanese embassy member) in the country of expatriation to be present at the airport to monitor the implementation of the repatriation measures and verify their compliance with the present decision. The said person shall be responsible for drawing up the lists of returnees in coordination with the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, in light of seat occupancy, taking into account priorities set forth in Item 4 above. In addition to the basic departure list, a waiting list comprising half the number of returnees on the basic list shall also be prepared.

7. The medical team will perform, at the airport of departure, a corroborative medical examination (temperature taking – respiratory disease symptoms – coughing...) on board to make sure the passenger is uncontaminated.

8. Prior to boarding, every virus-free person shall sign a commitment form before the Lebanese General Security team. The said persons shall commit to self-confinement at the address mentioned in the form or in other quarantine centers (hotels, complexes and others) under the supervision of the Ministries of Public Health, Interior and Defense under penalty of prosecution.

9. Passengers on board the Lebanon-bound aircraft will be distributed, in different flying classes, according to relevant medical standards, in particular the necessity to leave a safe distance around the traveller in all directions. Passengers shall abide by the preventive instructions provided by crew members and the medical team on board, mainly wearing masks (/ N95 / type) and gloves for the duration of the trip. General Security team members will draw up reports against passengers who refuse to comply.

10. At the airport of departure, a report including the Lebanese expatriate's name, passport number and medical tests, if any, will be established. The report shall also mention the relevant decision of the Council of Ministers which shall be communicated to the person concerned, with a copy of the list of safety and preventive measures. The person concerned will be required to sign the commitment form. The report shall bear the signature and name of the delegate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the person in charge within the General Security team, and the doctor in charge of the medical team, as well as the report drafting date and time. The General Security team will collect, on board the aircraft, reports and commitment forms, a copy of which will be deposited with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Public Health and the crisis unit attached to the Ministry of the Interior.

11. Upon arrival at Rafik Hariri International Airport, elderly and chronically-ill passengers will be transported to the airport's Business Class Lounge while other passengers will be transported to the regular lounges. The PCR diagnostic test will be carried out for all passengers by specialized medical teams affiliated with the Ministry of Public Health. All returnees will be transported to quarantine centers approved by the Ministry of Public Health.

12. All passengers carrying documented negative laboratory results, conducted in the country of departure less than three days before departure, will be exempted from PCR tests. They will be directly allowed to leave for home quarantine in the event that mandatory conditions are met, after

completing the social form, provided that safety and preventive conditions relevant to the means of transportation are met.

13. Upon arrival and before leaving the airport, a health - social - logistical questionnaire (prepared by the Ministry of Public Health beforehand) will be completed for each Lebanese returnee by a special team mandated by the Ministry of Health. The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess the social status of the persons concerned, with a view to adopting appropriate preventive and quarantine measures once PCR test results are released for every returnee, in coordination with relevant ministries, in particular the Ministry of Social Affairs, Tourism, Interior, and Defense, if necessary.

14. No gatherings of people coming to welcome passengers will be allowed outside or inside the airport. Each Lebanese returnee must, once the health and social assessment has been carried out, leave the airport and follow the instructions of the Ministry of Public Works and Transport, in coordination with the Ministries of Public Health, Interior and Defense, defining the modalities relating to the means of transportation made available as well as the safety and preventive measures to be observed. ISF members will ensure compliance with the preventive measures on board the means of transportation, the trajectory adopted and compatibility with the content of the commitment form signed by the passengers and the social assessment. A report will be drawn up, setting out the details of the means of transportation provided, the registration plate number of the vehicle, and the name of the driver after checking his identity.

15. PCR samples taken from the returnees are collected by the Ministry of Health and dispatched to specialized laboratories to make sure results are obtained within 24 hours.

16. Based on the results of PCR tests analysed at Lebanese laboratories:

a. **If the person tests positive for coronavirus**, he/she will be transported to collective compulsory quarantine centers or to one of the treatment centers approved by the Ministry of Public Health. Lebanese Red Cross paramedics will be in charge of transporting each infected person, separately, on board a medically-equipped ambulance, to a specialized treatment centre, escorted by an ISF patrol.

b. **If the person tests negative for coronavirus**, he/she will be authorized to leave for home-quarantine, in light of the social assessment results, on the basis of preventive and safety controls and conditions regarding transportation means.

The Ministry of Health will follow up on the cases of expatriates who have returned to Lebanon through the Ministry's electronic application, in cooperation with the Ministry of Telecommunications and relevant authorities, for a period of 15 days. Persons under supervision will not be allowed to leave their homes or the place of confinement before the end of the quarantine period. Each municipality shall cooperate, within its administrative scope, with the security forces to ensure observance of measures.

c. Upon expiration of the quarantine period, and after making sure the person is not infected with the virus, he/she will be granted movement authorization, on the basis of a special report prepared by the person mandated by the Ministry of Public Health, in coordination with the Ministry of Interior.

d. If, during the quarantine period, the person concerned tests positive for coronavirus, he/she shall be transported to a quarantine or treatment centre by decision of the Ministry of Health.

17. A file will be established for each Lebanese returnee, including a copy of the report established at the airport of the country of expatriation as well as results of medical tests, social assessment, confinement measures planned by the Ministry of Health team, and a copy of the final report established at the end of the quarantine period.

18. If the result of the laboratory test carried out at the airport of the country of expatriation is positive, the infected person will be prohibited from boarding the aircraft and will be subsequently evacuated on board a medical aircraft. Upon arrival at Rafik Hariri International Airport, the aircraft will remain on the tarmac and each infected person will be transported separately by Lebanese Red Cross paramedics on board a fully equipped ambulance to a specialized treatment centre, escorted by the ISF.

19. The Ministry of Public Health is in charge of preparing, Thursday, April 2, 2020 at the latest:

- The personal information form to be filled in at the Lebanese embassies abroad, in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- The social and logistical inquiry form to be filled out upon arrival of passengers at Rafik Hariri International Airport.
- The list of safety and preventive measures that passengers are required to observe.

- The list of centres for the quarantine and treatment of coronavirus cases among Lebanese expatriates, in coordination with the relevant ministries, including the Ministries of Social Affairs, Tourism, Interior and Defense, as appropriate.

20. We will start operating flights on Sunday 5th April 2020. A sanitary-epidemiological assessment will be conducted on Monday. The first wave of repatriation will take place as such (one travel day followed by one assessment day) from Sunday 5th to Sunday 12th April 2020 in the evening. The second wave will take place from Monday 27th April to Monday 4th May 2020, following the same mechanism. The maximum number of returnees during the second wave will be defined in light of data related to the first wave. Subsequent phases will be considered if necessary, in the light of available data.

21. The frequency of daily flights during each phase will be defined in light of the capacities and number of aircrafts available, as well as prevention and safety requirements relating to crew members.

22. With regard to the Lebanese returning on private jets from evacuation countries, PCR tests should be conducted abroad not more than 72 hours before flying into Lebanon. They can even conduct the test in Beirut at their own expense, while having to self-quarantine pending test results' approval by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The said persons shall take and implement the same preventive and safety conditions stipulated above, after obtaining prior approval from the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

23. Procedures set forth in this mechanism will be evaluated by the Ministerial Committee established by Cabinet Decision No. / 4 / dated 26/3/2020 upon return of first day flights and arrival of 1000 persons; reported results will be presented to the Council of Ministers.

24. Every Lebanese expatriate wishing to return to Lebanon is required to sign the following commitment form, at the airport of departure, before the Lebanese General Security team in charge of accompanying the repatriation process.

Commitment Form

I, _____ the _____ undersigned,
.....
holder of Lebanese passport No.,
Wishing to return to Lebanon from (City) in
..... (Country),

Acknowledge receipt of Lebanese Cabinet Decision No. 2 of 3/31/2020 relating to the opening of Rafik Hariri International Airport for the repatriation of Lebanese expatriates, and understanding of the content of the decision, especially the preventive and self-quarantine measures set forth therein. I am also aware that there is a possibility of exposure to the virus during the trip, despite the precautions taken. With a view to ensuring my own safety and that of my family members, as well as the well-being of fellow Lebanese, I pledge to abide by all these measures, strictly apply them, and self-confine in Lebanon, for a period of 15 days, at the following address:

.....
.....

I also undertake to undergo the compulsory medical examinations provided for by the Lebanese Ministry of Health and to leave my home only after having been authorized to do so by the Ministry of Health in light of carried out tests.

Failing to do so will entail being prosecuted for an offence under Article 604 of the Penal Code (causing the spread of an epidemic) and Article 770 of the Penal Code (failure to apply the procedures in force).

Date:

Full Name

Signature