



ADRU
Academy of the
Disaster Research Unit



SARS CoV 2 Monitoring Report

Week June 1st – June 8th 2020

Academy of the
Disaster Research Unit (ADRU)

Rationale

As part of a real time evaluation of the SARS CoV 2 pandemic (with focus on epidemiological, economical, societal, and cultural developments in Germany and Iran) the research team, under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Martin Voss, is conducting a weekly monitoring of real time developments. Multiple national and international media outlets, research platforms and scientific and organisational guidelines, briefs and updates are screened on a daily basis to feed into this weekly outlet. The rationale behind this is to support the projects' network partners in Iran and Germany with a condensed overview of key developments, trends and events that are shaping the global, German and Iranian outbreak response and recovery. The selection of subjects are driven by 3 factors:

- relevance to network partners – based on regular bilateral and multilateral feedback/input
- the focus area of the real time evaluation (epidemiological trends, economic, societal and cultural effects, escalating risks and downstream effects, risk communication and vulnerabilities)
- global trends and developments as the pandemic evolves

The setup of these short briefs is structured by technical area, with country relevance and specificities included under each main headline. The chapters are precluded by pertinent general observations. This could be mainstream big ticket items or fringe subjects that are easily overlooked in the global flood of information. Some topics will be followed through their evolution in time while others may only appear once. While subjectively selected, the briefs are descriptive in nature and leave analysis and critical interpretation to the reader. Initially based on the research teams' perception of relevance, the content will gradually represent the importance of topics for network partners in both countries.

Keywords: pandemic, covid-19, health, epidemiology, data, science, treatment, trial, risk, escalating risks, vulnerability, global, , economy, society, culture, risk management

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Academy of the Disaster Research Unit (ADRU) gGmbH
C/O Katastrophenforschungsstelle
Carl-Heinrich-Becker-Weg 6-10
D-12165 Berlin



General Observations June 1st – June 8th 2020

Pressured by economic downturn every single country affected by SARS CoV 2 is high-pressured to reopen businesses and curb recession. Scientists warn that **easing restrictions** must be guided by epidemiological trends over economic interests. However, the last weeks have shown just how complex the decision making process is, especially under the mounting pressure from the general public. In numerous countries the public began taking their anger and frustration over the often draconic restrictions put in place to limit the spread of the pandemic. While the first months of the pandemic have seen an outpour of solidarity the atmosphere has clearly changed. Countries like Iran, Mexico, Russia, India and many more open up their economy before the peak of the outbreak has been reached. A shift in mind set seem to be taking place away from protecting their people from disease and death to protecting the economy from collapse.

As the pandemic spreads around the globe countries affected relatively late in time have the opportunity to learn from experiences made by those affected early on. This accounted as much for restrictions put in place as is the case with lifting them again. The spike in new cases experienced in [Iran](#) following its relaxation of restrictive measures in Mid-May must be a stark warning to other countries that are beginning to ease restrictions¹. Italy, the first country in Europe that put drastic lock down measures in place when it was hit by the virus in February, is taking a “calculated risk” in easing restrictions. Albeit pressure from different regions in the country reopening is taking place in steps to avoid a [second wave](#).²

In Iran a new record in daily infections ([3574 new infection cases](#) on Wednesday 3rd June.³) is causing a challenge for the government in following the lifting strategy, as it can facilitate the pathways of spreading of the virus and the possibility of a widespread second wave of the outbreak. A balance is yet to be found.

The death of George Floyd caused global outrage over police brutality and social injustice with large and continuous demonstrations in all 50 states of the US and around the world. The black Lives Matter protests also encompass the fact that COVID 19 disproportionately effects people of colour and other minorities, as highlighted below. The risk of the virus transmission during the ongoing protests which can lead to ignoring social distancing measure, has become a great concern for public health authorities. A countless outlets like the Huffington Post have issued guidance on how to [protect](#) oneself and others during the marches⁴.

Health

Epidemiologically the week kicked off with good news for Europe: On June 2nd the continent reported the lowest number of cases reported since March 22nd. However, over the previous 5 days globally

¹ Callaghan L. for the Times (07.06.2020): Coronavirus: Iran swamped by a second wave after lockdown eased to save jobs <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/coronavirus-iran-swamped-by-a-second-wave-after-lockdown-eased-to-save-jobs-9rt0359dx?shareToken=553f0b3abc01b3bbb8b4ebd13ace181c>

² BBC world (15.05.2020): Coronavirus: Italy takes 'calculated risk' in easing restrictions - PM <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-52687448>

³ National Committee on COVID-19 Epidemiology and Iranian CDC - Ministry of Health and Medical Education, IR Iran (6.06.2020). Situation Report on Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Iran: Title: Analysis of epidemic trend by provinces of Iran (till June 5). Retrieved from http://corona.behdasht.gov.ir/files/site1/files/IRAN_COVID19_Factsheet_N.44_-6June_En.pdf

⁴ Holmes, L. (01.06.2020): How To Protest Safely During The Coronavirus Pandemic https://www.huffpost.com/entry/protest-safely-coronavirus-pandemic_15ed50c5fc5b617333aa0c63b

more than 100.000 cases were reported each day with increasing numbers in the Americas and in particular Central and South America, Eastern Mediterranean, South-East Asia and Africa, although there the numbers are much smaller. The Americas continue to account for the most cases. For several weeks, the number of cases reported each day in the Americas has been more than the rest of the world put together⁵.

6 months into the pandemic there are still multiple questions surrounding the spread of the virus. While droplet transmission was discussed from the beginning and strongly influenced social distancing rules and the wearing of masks, **aerosols** are now more broadly discussed to be also bearing responsibility in the spread of the disease, although experts disagree to what **extent**⁶. Less than 5 microns in diameter aerosols can linger in the air and travel further than the relatively heavier droplets, again scientists disagree over how long and how far⁷. Three factors seem to be particularly important for aerosol transmission: proximity to the infected person, air flow and **timing**⁸. However, while still unclear how many viral particles are required to make someone fall ill it is obvious that aerosols can only hold a much smaller load of pathogens than droplets⁹.

As multiple countries are in the process of making the wearing of **masks in public spaces/transport** mandatory there is considerable debate among scientists on every aspect of the issue and especially on the effect the respective policies will have on the spread of the virus.

A **scandal**¹⁰ over the **Lancet-published** study¹¹ on the effects of Chloroquine and Hydro chloroquine causes considerable concern over the reliability of data that is rapidly assembled in a race for drugs and vaccines in response to the pandemic¹². In an interview with the **Frankfurter Allgemeine**¹³ Prof. Dr. Klaus Lieb, Leiter des Leibniz-Instituts für Resilienzforschung, explains:

„Es wird erwartet, dass die Wissenschaft schnell Daten liefert, die gleichzeitig auch so zuverlässig sein sollen, dass sie möglichst schnell zu einem Impfstoff und zu Medikamenten führen und gleichzeitig auch zu belastbaren Empfehlungen, etwa wie die Menschen in der Pandemie miteinander umgehen und wann Quarantänen nötig sein sollen. Das sind Zielkonflikte. Schnelle

⁵ World Health Organisation (03.06.2020): WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 3 June 2020 <https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19--03-june-2020>

⁶ Deutschlandfunk Nachrichten (7.6.2020): Welche Rolle spielen Aerosol-Partikel bei der Übertragung des Coronavirus? https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/covid-19-welche-rolle-spielen-aerosol-partikel-bei-der.1939.de.html?drn:news_id=1138489

⁷ *ibid*

⁸ Mandavilli A., for The New York Times (29.05.2020): It's Not Whether You Were Exposed to the Virus. It's How Much. https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/29/health/coronavirus-transmission-dose.html?campaign_id=154&emc=edit_cb_20200529&instance_id=18946&nl=coronavirus-briefing®i_id=130358435&segment_id=29614&te=1&user_id=0298fb3b9b8efff4fbf3c83b3760090a

⁹ *ibid*

¹⁰ Frankfurter Allgemeine, Joachim Mueller Jung (04.06.2020): Wissenschaftsskandal: Manipulation mit Malaria-Mitteln? <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/wissen/corona-arzneiforschung-manipulation-mit-malaria-mitteln-16799671.html?GEPc=s9>

¹¹ Prof Mandeep R Mehra, MD, Sapan S Desai, MD, Prof Frank Ruschitzka, MD, et al (22.05.2020): Hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine with or without a macrolide for treatment of COVID-19: a multinational registry analysis Published: May 22, 2020 DOI:[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736\(20\)31180-6](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0140-6736(20)31180-6)

[https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(20\)31180-6/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(20)31180-6/fulltext)

¹² Rabin, R., for The New York Times (29.05.2020): Scientists Question Validity of Major Hydroxychloroquine Study, retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/29/health/coronavirus-hydroxychloroquine.html>

¹³ Jung, J., Frankfurter Allgemeine, (04.06.2020): Qualitätsmangel der Forschung: „Die riesige Datenflut wird zum Problem“, retrieved from: <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/wissen/qualitaetsmangel-der-forschung-die-riesige-datenflut-wird-zum-problem-16795920.html>



und zuverlässige Daten sind schon ein Widerspruch in sich. Gute, zuverlässige Daten erfordern Sorgfalt und die Einhaltung der wissenschaftlichen Standards und auch einen guten Diskussionsprozess innerhalb der Wissenschaft, im Idealfall ein Peer-Review-Verfahren.“ (Science is expected to quickly deliver data that is supposed to be reliable enough that it will lead to a vaccine and medication as quickly as possible, and at the same time provide robust recommendations, such as how people deal with each other in the pandemic and when quarantines are needed. These are conflicting goals. Fast and reliable data are a contradiction in terms. Good, reliable data require care and compliance with scientific standards and also a good discussion process within science, ideally a peer review process.)

Meanwhile multiple research projects, including the WHO led [solidarity trial](#)¹⁴ and studies conducted at the University Hospital in Tuebingen¹⁵ resume their trials with Hydro-chloroquine and Chloroquine after having postponed their research in light of the scandal.

In Iran, the rapid rise in the number of new infections reports a new high with [3574 new infection cases](#) on Wednesday 3rd June.¹⁶ It was the highest number since the COVID-19 outbreak, which has raised concerns about a second wave of the outbreak in the country. The Ministry of health officials, however, are reluctant to approve that the country is now facing the second wave. Instead, they refer to the increased testing capacity as the main reason for the rise in the number of the new daily cases. At the same time, the government officials are increasingly criticizing the public for ignoring social distancing rules and hygiene protocols. Despite the increase in the daily infections, the government has been lifting the restrictions on religious places, shops, and the activities related to [tourism](#), to avoid further damages of the [country's sanction-hit economy](#)^{17,18}.

Political, Economic, Social, Cultural Effects

[The death of George Floyd](#) has driven an ongoing series of [Black Lives Matter](#) protests against police brutality and racism in the USA and other parts of the world. Regardless of social distancing rules thousands of people flooded the streets, which [could facilitate SARS-Cov2 transmission](#).^{19,20,21} COVID-19 pandemic and [the pandemic of racism](#), discrimination, and police brutality against people of colour

¹⁴ World Health Organisation (03.06.2020): WHO Director-General's opening remarks at the media briefing on COVID-19 - 3 June 2020, retrieved from: <https://www.who.int/dg/speeches/detail/who-director-general-s-opening-remarks-at-the-media-briefing-on-covid-19---03-june-2020>

¹⁵ Deutschlandfunk (04.06.2020): Verwirrung um die Wirkung von Hydroxychloroquin, audio recording of interview with Infektiologe Peter Kremsner, retrieved from: https://ondemand-mp3.dradio.de/file/dradio/2020/06/03/mehr_scha-den_als_nutzen_einsatz_von_hydroxychloroquin_bei_dlf_20200603_1642_dbb8111a.mp3

¹⁶ National Committee on COVID-19 Epidemiology and Iranian CDC - Ministry of Health and Medical Education, IR Iran (6.06.2020). Situation Report on Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Iran: Title: Analysis of epidemic trend by provinces of Iran (till June 5). Retrieved from: http://corona.behdasht.gov.ir/files/site1/files/IRAN_COVID19_Factsheet_N.44_-6June_En.pdf

¹⁷ Aljazeera (29.03.2020). As Iran coronavirus deaths rise, Rouhani hits back at criticism. Retrieved from <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/iran-coronavirus-deaths-rise-rouhani-hits-criticism-200329113250455.html>

¹⁸ Iran Press (06.06.2020). Rouhani calls for reopening of tourism, handicrafts centers. Retrieved from https://iran-press.com/iran-i148122-rouhani_calls_for_reopening_of_tourism_handicrafts_centers

¹⁹ The New York Times (27.05.2020). What We Know About the Death of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/27/us/george-floyd-minneapolis-death.html>

²⁰ The Guardian (06.06.2020). Black lives matter movement. Retrieved from <https://www.theguardian.com/world/black-lives-matter-movement>

²¹ Rabin, R.C. (31.05.2020). Will Protests Set Off a Second Viral Wave? In The New York Times. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/31/health/protests-coronavirus.html>

have collided in the United States; as rage over the death of George Floyd was fuelled [by a sense of injustice](#) over the impact of COVID-19.^{22,23} A series of structural socio-economic [factors](#) including racial inequalities, housing discrimination, poverty, unequal and discriminatory treatment as well as limited access to public health insurances result in increased health risk factors among black Americans.²⁴

Travel restrictions across the world and within Europe are going to fall within the month of June. With each country having slightly different approaches as to “where to and where not to go” and “who to and who not to receive”²⁵, there is plenty of room for confusion, even as the EU aims for a “coordinated approach”²⁶. Germany’s foreign ministry continues to its warning against all non-essential travel outside the Schengen and Schengen associated states²⁷.

The pandemic has not only short-term effects but also can have long-term effects on social-cultural behaviours. [A New York times/Siena College Institute poll](#) shows the theatre-goers are reluctant to return to Broadway shows if it reopens around Sep. 1. The main concern for people who are hesitant to return to see the shows is that they worry their fellow audience members will not wear face masks or ignore social distancing rules.²⁸ Only 39 percent of people who attend the Broadway shows said that they would likely to see a show if they were reopened on 1st September²⁹.

Vulnerabilities

Underlying racial and ethnic inequalities contribute to the increased vulnerability to COVID-19. Kim and Bostwick (2020) examined “[social vulnerability and racial inequality in COVID-19 death in Chicago](#).”³⁰ They argued that the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 in African American people are a mirror of social inequality and exclusion that existed before the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same, [xenophobia](#) and racist incidents such as verbal and physical assaults, social exclusions and discriminatory movement restrictions are rising during the pandemic, which can be another factors contributing to increased sense of vulnerability among not only people of color but also, foreign nationals including migrants and refugees.³¹ The [International Organization for Migration \(IOM\)](#)

²² American Psychological Association (29.05.2020). 'We Are Living in a Racism Pandemic,' Says APA President. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/2020/05/racism-pandemic>

²³ Crow, D. (9.06.2020). Coronavirus fuels black America’s sense of injustice. In Financial Times. retrieved from <https://www.ft.com/content/7f679362-0084-47d0-a67f-661da639e78c>

²⁴ Hawkins, D. for The Guardian (16.04.2020) The Coronavirus burden is falling heavily on black Americans. Why? Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/apr/16/black-workers-coronavirus-covid-19>

²⁵ Henley, J., Boffey, D., Smith, H. for the Guardian (03.06.2020): Global report: confusion over travel restrictions as EU starts opening borders. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/03/global-report-confusion-over-travel-restrictions-as-eu-starts-opening-borders>

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Auswaertiges Amt (06.2020): Coronavirus/Covid-19: Reisewarnung für Staaten außerhalb der EU/Schengen-Gebiet <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/de/ReiseUndSicherheit/covid-19/2296762>

²⁸ Jacobs, M. (26.05.2020). Poll Shows One Hurdle to Reopening Broadway: Fear of Jerks. In. The New York Times. Retrieved from https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/26/theater/broadway-coronavirus-poll.html?campaign_id=154&emc=edit_cb_20200526&instance_id=18830&nl=coronavirus-briefing®i_id=130358435&segment_id=29230&te=1&user_id=0298fb3b9b8efff4fbf3c83b3760090a

²⁹ Ibid

³⁰ Kim, S., Bostwick, W. Sage Journals Health Education and Behaviour (21.05.2020): Social Vulnerability and Racial Inequality in COVID-19 Deaths in Chicago. retrieved from: <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1090198120929677>

³¹ Williamson, E., Wang, V. for The New York Times (02.06.2020) ‘We Need Help’: Coronavirus Fuels Racism Against Black Americans in China. Retrieved from: https://www.nytimes.com/2020/06/02/us/politics/african-americans-china-coronavirus.html?campaign_id=154&emc=edit_cb_20200602&instance_id=19032&nl=coronavirus-briefing®i_id=130358435&segment_id=29915&te=1&user_id=0298fb3b9b8efff4fbf3c83b3760090a



emphasized that fear and uncertainty in times of the pandemic should not justify xenophobia, racism and hate crimes against foreigners and, therefore, it is essential that combatting xenophobia is to be integrated into social and economic response and recovery policies.³²

Due to the high density of residents in the restricted spaces of shared living facilities [Asylum seekers](#) are particularly vulnerable as following social distancing rules and hygiene protocols provides extremely challenging.³³ In Germany, [two centers for asylum seekers](#) in Mainz and Regensburg have reported new COVID-19 cases. The public health authority of the city of Mainz reported 52 residents of the asylum center had tested positive. At that asylum center three people usually share one room which can increase the risk of the virus transmission. At the anchor center in Bavarian city of Regensburg several COVID-19 cases have been reported during a mass screening. Anchor centers are generally large facility buildings where several hundred asylum seekers live during their asylum process.³⁴

Risk Communication

The spread of misinformation, disinformation, and conspiracy theories about COVID-10 widely make tackling falsehoods a strong imperative in pandemic response. [Researchers tracking and analyzing these falsehoods](#) aim to understand where such information comes from, how it spread and how it affects facts over fiction.³⁵ In this regard, a research team at George Washington University mapped how [malicious information](#) about a pneumonia-like disease, possibly COVID-19, started on 4chan, a simple image-based bulletin board where anyone can post comments and share images, in December.³⁶ The information had spread to other platforms, including Telegram, Facebook and Gab, by January. To combat with misinformation and conspiracy theories about the COVID-19 pandemic, Fact-checking is a continuous effort to correct misleading information spreading online. In January, 88 media organizations joined to record fact-checks of COVID-19 information spreading online³⁷. Fact-checkers at Independent organizations are also playing an important role to correct COVID-19 falsehoods.³⁸

[A group of researchers conducting an experiment](#) about public understanding of the logarithmic graphs which are widely used by media to illustrate the information about COVID-19 deaths, suggested that people looking at a linear scale graph have different attitudes and policy preferences that those look at the same data on a logarithmic graph. As a result, changing the scale on which data is presented

³² International Organization for Migration (22.05.2020): Combatting Xenophobia is Key to an Effective COVID-19 Recovery. Retrieved from <https://www.iom.int/news/combating-xenophobia-key-effective-covid-19-recovery>

³³ Boyle, C. In Center for Labour and Social Studies (8.04.2020). Asylum Seekers Vulnerable to Coronavirus. Retrieved from: <http://classonline.org.uk/blog/item/asylum-seekers-vulnerable-to-coronavirus>

³⁴ Hauswedell C. for InfoMigrants (28.5.2020): Coronavirus hits two more asylum shelters in Germany <https://www.in-fomigrants.net/en/post/25022/coronavirus-hits-two-more-asylum-shelters-in-germany>

³⁵ Ball, P., Maxmen, A. for Nature (27.05.2020): The epic battle against coronavirus misinformation and conspiracy theories: Analysts are tracking false rumors about COVID-19 in hopes of curbing their spread. Retrieved from: <https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-01452-z>

³⁶ Nature (29.05.2020): Coronavirus in charts: the fact-checkers correcting falsehoods: Data and infographic updates on the COVID-19 pandemic. Retrieved from: https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-01136-8?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_content=organic&utm_campaign=NGMT_USG_JC01_GL_Nature

³⁷ Poynter.org (2020): Fighting the Infodemic: The #CoronaVirusFacts Alliance <https://www.poynter.org/coronavirusfactsalliance/>



can change the public policy preferences and the level of anxiety. Based on their finding, they suggest the use of linear graphs by media and government agencies.³⁹

³⁹ Romano, A., Sotis, C.; Dominioni, G., Guidi, S. (29.05.2020). The public do not understand logarithmic graphs used to portray COVID-19. Retrieved from: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/impactofsocialsciences/2020/05/29/the-public-do-not-understand-logarithmic-graphs-used-to-portray-covid-19/>



Imprint

Title

Real time analysis of the global response to the SARS CoV 2 pandemic and identification of best practices to strengthen Health Systems in Iran and Germany

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Academy of the Disaster Research Unit (ADRU)
c/o Katastrophenforschungsstelle
Carl-Heinrich-Becker-Weg 6-10
12165 Berlin