COVID-19 SECURITY FORECAST: 2020 & BEYOND

The following extract is taken from our detailed COVID-19 security insights report, exclusively available to International SOS premium intelligence subscribers. The full report contains a global forecast and security flashpoints. To learn more, please visit internationalsos.com/limitless.

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DOMESTIC & INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL

FIVE FACTORS WILL DETERMINE A GOVERNMENT'S DECISIONS ON PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS OF DOMESTIC TRAVEL

Beyond COVID-19 case volume and the local authorities' assessment of their public health system's ability to contain any outbreak, several factors will determine a government's decision to impose stringent internal restrictions:

1. **The administrative structure and division of authority among different tiers of a government**, for example between the central government and provinces/states as well as district/prefecture, which can reduce the ability to impose restrictions evenly countrywide.

2. **The legal framework or arrangements empowering administrative units to take emergency actions to impose restrictions on mobility in response to a health crisis.**

3. **Cultural specificities entailing discomfort with, or mistrust towards government-imposed restrictions on daily life.** This can lead to hesitation on the part of the authorities to proactively impose significant restrictions.

4. **Sensitivity to economic or political fallout from such restrictions**. Concerns over the potential economic impact and associated negative market reaction of such restrictions will also influence how the authorities react. Countries heading towards an election are likely to be particularly vulnerable to such considerations

5. **The capacity of the police or military to enforce COVID-19-related restrictions in certain locations.**

PRE-PANDEMIC LEVELS OF INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL WILL LIKELY ONLY BE RESTORED IF A VACCINE AND/OR AMPLE TESTING & QUARANTINE CAPABILITIES ARE AVAILABLE

Gradual de-escalation of internal restrictions will take place before lifting any inbound international travel restrictions. The recovery phase for global mobility can be expected to include a gradual increase in incoming travel in a given country, likely only from select locations and dependent on a country's capacity to test and quarantine.

However, the security dimension will have likely changed for certain countries – organisations will need to apply a new risk assessment prior to the recommencement of operations or the movement of staff.

EXISTING SECURITY CHALLENGES BEING EXACERBATED BY COVID-19

Many countries will find that COVID-19 exacerbates underlying or pre-existing security concerns associated with:

- Political violence (including terrorism, insurgency, politically motivated unrest and war)

- Social unrest (including sectarian, communal and ethnic violence)

- Violent and petty crime

- The effectiveness of the security and law enforcement services

THREE EMERGING SECURITY CHALLENGES IN LOCATIONS PREVIOUSLY VIEWED AS 'SAFE'

COVID-19 will also exacerbate underlying issues in other locations, notably economic inequality and political polarisation, which will fuel second-order security consequences.

1. **Social unrest and petty crime** - the severe worldwide economic downturn as a result of large-scale and prolonged restrictions on mobility, disruption to production and supply chains, and closure of businesses, will lead to a rise in social unrest and petty crime in certain locations

2. **Anti-government sentiment** - will be driven by perceived poor governmental responses to the pandemic as well as high unemployment levels, potentially prompting unrest or challenges to leadership, particularly in locations with polarised societies or those with major political oppositions.

3. **Xenophobia** - an increase in nationalistic trends has already been accompanied by a rise in xenophobia in some locations, targeted at those who are falsely seen as spreading the virus or having privileged access to medicine and food supplies.

SEVEN STEPS TO IMPROVE WORKFORCE RESILIENCE

With exacerbated operational and logistical challenges in delivering on-the-ground support to an organisation's workforce, robust planning based on an understanding and assessment of the medium- and long-term implications of the COVID-19 outbreak will be essential in ensuring resiliency and rapid operational recovery. Key components of a resilient plan include:

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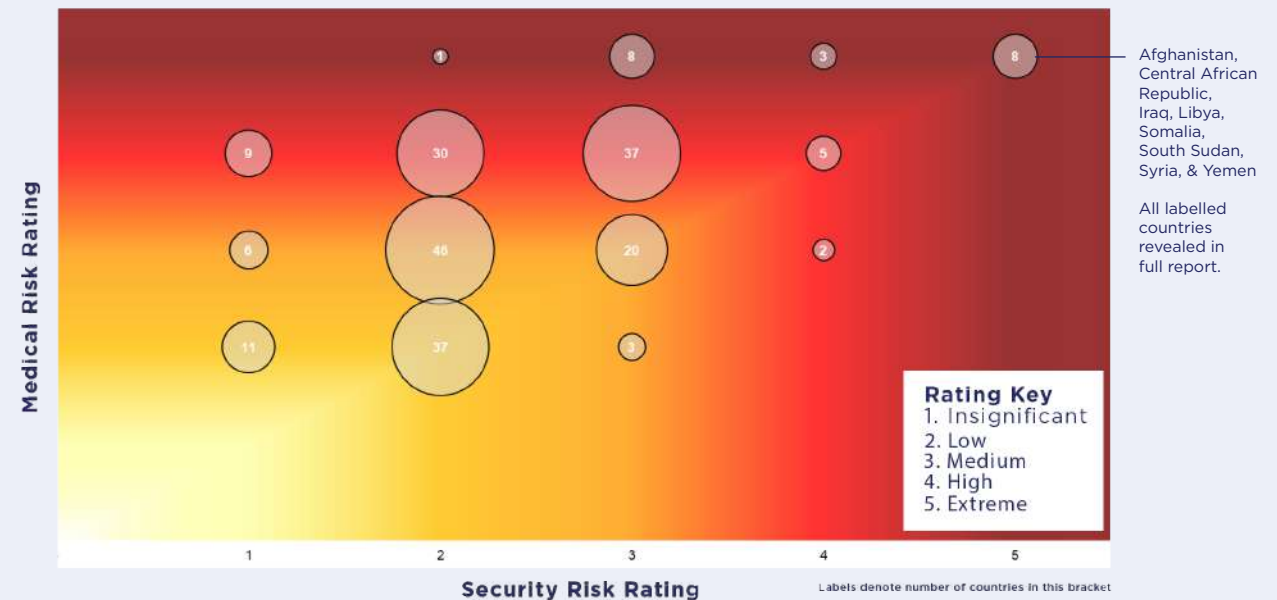### MAP YOUR OPERATING LOCATIONS' RISKS

The illustration below denotes the severity of risks for your locations by mapping medical risk rating (public health capability) and security risk rating. Your resilience plan should be built with this in mind. i.e. where you have locations in the 'red zone' these will require differing protocols to those in the in the 'yellow zone'.

The numbers in the circles represent the number of countries in any given zone.

2

ACCESS TO TIMELY & ACCURATE INFORMATION

One of the biggest challenges for any organisation in such a crisis is access to timely and reliable information. It is the cornerstone of decision making, communication with your workforce and the activation of relevant plans and procedures. Given the volume of information that is available to all members of the workforce, some of which is unverified, false or misleading, it is essential that organisations are able to access clear information and analysis on the situation.

Afghanistan, Central African Republic, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, South Sudan, Syria, & Yemen

All labelled countries revealed in full report.

Medical Risk Rating

Circle values: 1, 8, 3, 8 / 9, 30, 37, 5 / 6, 46, 20, 2 / 11, 37, 3

Rating Key
1. Insignificant
2. Low
3. Medium
4. High
5. Extreme

Security Risk Rating: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Labels denote number of countries in this bracket

3

DECISION MAKING

Crises such as this test organisational decision making and require nuanced and regionalised approaches at every phase. At a Headquarters level, clarity of decision-making responsibility and delegation is essential, as is ensuring there is an appropriate level of support for those individuals.

As many countries move into secondary or even tertiary phases of the COVID-19 crisis, managers should already be preparing and reviewing plans on the next steps. This should include deciding when to activate plans covering: Business Continuity, return to work, site operations, mobility management, insurance provisions, stand-fast/shelter-in-place protocols and relocation plans.

Having clear decision-making strategies will allow organisations to make timely and effective decisions based on the prevailing conditions in various operating environments.

4

COORDINATION

One of the key challenges organisations typically face in these scenarios is a lack of clear decision-making responsibility, complicated in this instance by the potential region-wide nature of the situation and variable risk environment in each country. It is essential that your mobility managers, your HR managers, and your legal team are closely coordinating on variable such as: staff exposure, country regulatory requirements, documentation, employee support, and protocols.

5

COMMUNICATION

Staff should be fully briefed on the prevailing risks, supported by trusted sources of information. News outlets can be prone to sensationalism while social media may convey unverified information: establish reliable information sources, distinguishing rumour from fact.

Managers should ensure awareness of the specific risks employees may face in relevant locations in the region and, importantly, how to mitigate these.

Regular briefings should be held with employees on changes to the situation, organisational approach and activities, or the local security environment. These briefings should allow for questions from employees and such sessions should be recorded.

6

SITE-SPECIFIC PLANS

Local management in higher-risk locations should be confident and trained in their responses to any incident; ensure that staff and dependants are familiar with local security plans and know what actions to take in the event of an incident. Actions should be appropriate to the risk environment and managers should be confident in their responsibilities to both the site and their staff.

Even in low risk environments, managers should be aware of their responsibilities and understand who can provide guidance and assistance if they

are concerned about the impact of regional tensions on their employees and business unit. It is also important to ensure communication is clear with all members of the workforce at the site. Having plans in place to manage rumours and hearsay information is critical, particularly where social media may influence employee behaviour. As the crisis evolves, one of the best ways to ensure manager confidence at all levels is to regularly run exercises testing different plausible scenarios. These exercises should be relevant to your organisation and the location(s) of sites.

7

REVIEW AND RECOVERY PREPARATION

Organisations should ensure they conduct regular reviews of actions carried out in the earlier phases of the crisis, as well as in their plans' relevance to dealing with the next phases. This should include ongoing Business Impact Analysis – ideally by trained business continuity professionals – to help identify gaps, disruption to product and service lines (where appropriate) and areas of focus.

Reviewing crisis management meetings and conducting After Action Reviews (AARs) will also help to validate plans and procedures in place and prepare effectively for the next phases.

Finally, by having procedures in place to enable managers to make effective decisions on de-escalation, ideally at a country-specific level, your organisation will be able to better identify the appropriate window for resumption of operations and mobility. This will also help to prepare should there be secondary occurrences that require a quick and effective response.