Hebron Municipality measures to confront Covid 19

Introduction:

Since the beginning of the spread of the Covid 19 in the Palestinian territories, and in line with the state of emergency declared by the National Palestinian Authority at the beginning of March 2020, the municipality of Hebron has been reacted quickly to take many preventive measures to protect its citizens and to limit the spread of the virus.

Since the first moment of the spread of Covid 19, the municipality of Hebron recruiting all its capabilities, facilities and employees to be ready to confront the virus, in addition to the coordination efforts that has been achieved with the governmental and civil institutions of the city. The municipality has set a complete plan that contains the implementation of all activities and procedures easily, which helped limit the spread of the virus.

The activities of the Hebron municipality during Covid 19 and its preventive measures came in line with the decision of the Palestinian government to impose a state of emergency, and took into account all instructions issued by governmental parties which include Hebron governorate, the Ministry of Local Government and the Palestinian Ministry of Health. It is noticed a full commitment from the citizens of Hebron to all instructions and preventive measures issued by the official ministries and parties in which it helped the municipality to implement its work and continue providing service to citizens smoothly in a manner that ensures the safety of its emergency staff in the field. it was clear how effective the activities of the municipality in all quarters of the city.
Strengths during the pandemic of Covid 19:

1- The responsiveness of local volunteers to stand with the municipality and local institutions.

2- Continuity of the work of the emergency teams in the health, water, electricity, sanitation and solid waste departments.

3- Helping the humanitarian cases in charging electricity and postponing the financial installments in accordance with the municipal council’s decision.

4- An amount of one million shekels has been dedicated to help the humanitarian cases in the municipality of Hebron concession area.
5- The great interaction from the local community by providing logistical support such as machines, sterilizers, cement for barriers, and other contributions that have strengthened the spirit of solidarity and teamwork.

6- The cooperation of Hebron municipality’s staff and working in a team spirit to maintain the continuity of providing services and the priorities of the municipality’s work.

7- Providing qualitative media informational flyers to the citizens and the voluntary participation of media agencies in preparing the necessary media materials.

8- The harmony of achieving and coordinating the work between Mayor, city council and municipality’s staff and follow up of work with its small details.

9- The contribution of Hebron municipality in transferring dialysis and humanitarian cases to hospitals.

10- The presence of emergency teams from all section of the municipality over 24 hours.

11- Providing logistical support and integration of work with the local institutions such as hospitals, local police, associations...etc.

12- Launching the home farming initiative in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, where more than 1500 seed parcels and seedlings were distributed.

**Weaknesses during the pandemic of Covid 19:**

1- Insufficient logistical resources for the sterilization operations that cover all parts of the city of Hebron.

2- Overcrowding by merchants and citizens in the central vegetable market and failure to comply with the instruction issued by the governmental police.
3- The inability of the Palestinian police to impose lockdown and control of citizens in Hebron 2 area due to the political division of Hebron and its control by the Israeli occupation.

4- Grumbling of some citizens as of their bad economical situation and inability to acquire food as a result of the lockdown, which led to big pressure on the municipality and its financial situation.

5- Rumors on social media by citizens, which sometimes distracted the municipality’s work.

6- Difficulty in obtaining sterilization materials and protective clothing for the emergency municipal staff from the local market.

First: Hebron municipality preventive measures at the internal level.

From the first moment of the declaration of a state of emergency by the PNA and directing instructions to all its Ministries, facilities and institutions to implement the emergency plan, the municipality of Hebron sought to implement those instructions starting from its internal level in a manner that ensures the continuity of providing health services, electricity and water to citizens and that guarantees the safety of its emergency staff which include:

1- Transferring employees attendance management system from fingerprint to eye-print in order to ensure that Covid 19 infection is not transmitted through touching.

2- Working in the shifts system to make sure that services continues through the use of the lowest possible number of employees,
reducing mixing, and conducting other work through home work via online.

3- Providing all protective sterilization materials, clothing, gloves to all Hebron municipality’s emergency staff to guarantees their safety during the performance of their work.

4- The closure of all Hebron municipality community centers that contain activities for all segments of the society in order to reduce mixing.

4- Reducing the working hours for the municipality staff to minimum to ensure their safety.

5- Sterilization of all facilities, centers and offices of the municipality for the safety of citizens reviewers, and putting sterilization materials at the entrances of all municipal facilities.

6- Training of the municipal staff and instructing them on how to protect themselves while performing their work in the field.
A detailed schedule for the staff working hours with the minimum system in the emergency plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dept/Section</th>
<th>Staff in Normal situation</th>
<th>Staff in the Emergency plan</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultants</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>100%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Legal unit</td>
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<td>22%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cultural centers</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>14%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Planning and development</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>98%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Affiliate services</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Management</td>
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<td>18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health, Environment and Agriculture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tenders</td>
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<td>2</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Water and sanitation</td>
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<td>Roads and projects</td>
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<td>66%</td>
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<tr>
<td>IT</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mayor office</td>
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<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Brigade</td>
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<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Planning and International Relations Unit</td>
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<td>50%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Local Economic Development Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Guarding and inspection</td>
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<tr>
<td>Control and Internal Audit Unit</td>
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<td>33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Public Relations and Media</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>33%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Municipal Security</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>1081</strong></td>
<td><strong>672</strong></td>
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</table>
Second: Hebron municipality coordination measures.

The municipality played an important role in coordinating all actions devoted to tackling Covid 19, as many meetings were held with the civil and governmental institutions, neighborhood, district committees, and youth initiatives:

1- Coordination between the municipality and the governmental Police to define steps to confront Covid 19 and implementing them in a manner that guarantees the safety of all segments of society in addition to setting a plan to close the neighborhoods and divide them into closed areas while ensuring the provision of the basic commodities to citizens in each closed area.

2- Several meetings with the civil society organizations and personalities of Hebron, adopting their initiatives in social solidarity campaigns, and delivering food supplies to less fortunate families.

3- Providing preventive sterilization materials for the Palestinian police and youth initiatives, supporting the Palestinian Ministry of Health in its work and coordinating actions to integration the work.
4- Coordination and interaction with all institutions and media agencies to develop media plans to raise the awareness of the citizens.

5- Continuous communication with the directors of the premises that designated for the treatment of the infected people with Covid 19 and support them in transferring the infected patients and providing sterilization materials.

Third: Follow-up of the progress of Hebron municipality and providing services via the Internet (online services).

Due to the closure of the Municipality's offices during the lockdown period, and in order not to delay the transactions for the interests of citizens, the Public Service Center in the municipality has developed a special electronic system through which applications can be submitted and followed up online and at the same time this system has been opened for the employees of the Public Service Center to work and respond to it from home.

Fourth: Hebron municipality health preventive measures.

The Department of Health and Environment in Hebron Municipality had the biggest role in the work during the announcement of the national emergency plan, as all the staff of this section worked 24 hours a day in the field who exceed more than 400 employees. Most achievements:
1- Forming committees of volunteers and committees formed to the different neighborhoods in order to carry out cleaning and sterilization campaigns for streets and sidewalks. These committees worked in full coordination with the Health and Environment Department in municipality of Hebron.

2- Sterilization of all facilities in the city of Hebron with the support of the fire brigade, which includes streets, sidewalks, neighborhoods, commercial markets, hospitals, public vehicles, public squares, schools and universities.
3- Sterilize all the places where those infected with Covid 19 were present.

4- Replacing waste collection containers to a new one and distributing small home containers to the residents in the closed areas of Hebron 2.

5- Sterilization of plants and street trees in the streets and squares.

6- Intensifying health inspection on foods, fruits, vegetables and restaurants in order to ensure the safety of sterilization conditions and the safe delivery to the consumer.

7- Increasing the waste collection process by collecting approximately 350 tons of waste daily

Achievements:
- 140 regular sterilizations of the city
- 5 cases of sterilization of homes infected with Covid 19.
- 35 cases of sterilization for those interacted with Covid 19 patients.
-Supporting sterilization of villages and camps in the Hebron Governorate, including Halhul, Al-Fawar and Al-Rayyah.

-10 sterilization teams working 24 hours a day.

**Fifth: Achievements of the various departments in the municipality.**

**Fire Brigade Section**

1- Participation in 60 sterilization cases.

2- The participation of 7 firefighters in the sterilization teams.

**Traffic Section:**

1- Close 62 internal barriers.

2- Close 25 of the city’s neighborhoods.

3- Supplying 45 metal barriers.

4- Set of 50 Cement blocks in different places in the city.

**Vehicles Management Section:**

1- Ensuring the arrival and departure of all municipal employees during the emergency period.

2- Delivering kidney patients and various humanitarian cases to the hospitals and health centers.

3- Providing municipal vehicles to support civil institutions.

4- Opening water points, supplying water and delivering it to citizens homes through municipal vehicles.

5- Providing logistical support to the health department during sterilization works.
IT Department:

1- Completion of 250 electronic objections.
2- Completion of 500 office objections.
3- Developing the online working system for the municipality staff to work from home.
4- Development of a procurement system and vehicle movement system.

Hebron Electricity

1- Giving permissions to all electrical charging stations and agents to ensure their continued work and domestic electricity charging service.
2- Opening the main center for charging cards and collecting bills in the main Hebron electricity building (24) hours a day.
3- Providing a mobile car during the lockdown to charge electricity for the prepaid card users and focusing on the humanitarian and emergency cases.
4- Based on the decision of the Municipal Council, all installments on the users were postponed until the end of the pandemic.
5- According to the council’s decision, an amount of (100) shekels per month was granted to the home users as a debt.
6- According to the decision of the Municipal Council, the waste premiums have been postponed until the end of the pandemic.
Sixth: Social and Media measures during Covid 19.

Covid 19 and its danger posed a great challenge to many municipalities of the world in how to deal with it and how to strike a balance between limiting its spread and developing a comprehensive media plan to raise the awareness of the citizens about the prevention measures, in addition to the community work and youth initiatives.

The municipality of Hebron, through its municipal council, and its media in the various visual, audio, print media and social media, has attached great importance to raise the awareness of its citizens in cooperation with the Palestinian police and the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

Experiences and Achievements

A- Community initiatives :

1- Adopting youth initiatives, including the vehicle sterilization station initiative, at the northern entrance to the city of Hebron, in cooperation with the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

2- Adopting a youth initiative to develop a hose to pump sterilization liquid in the streets, neighborhoods of Hebron city.

3- An initiative of home farming project launched by the municipality of Hebron which providing citizens with a different agricultural
seedlings to take advantage of time during the lockdown in agriculture and environmental development.

B- Media communication with citizens and raising awareness:

The media section of in the municipality in its various forms (audio-visual and readable) played a big role in directing citizens and spreading health and guidance awareness on how to deal in the emergency situations, its discourse was in line with the media plan of the Palestinian National Authority and the Palestinian Ministry of Health. And it formed the link between the municipality with the citizens.

The most prominent works of the media section in Hebron municipality during Covid 19:

1– Publish all instructions issued by the Palestinian government and urge citizens to abide follow them.

2– Launching a lot of awareness and guidance leaflets for citizens and giving instructions of how to deal in the infection situation.

3– Publishing all contact numbers for all institutions operating during the lockdown, such as hospitals, health clinics and pharmacies.
4– Follow-up all comments and complains published by citizens on social media and follow up them with the related departments of Hebron municipality.

5– Publishing short videos to raise the awareness of the citizens by the Mayor, Municipality staff, Palestinian police, medical staff and personalities of Hebron.

6– Media coverage of all preventive and precautionary measures taken by the municipality, such as sterilization works for the city's streets and its various institutions.
Hebron Municipal Council decisions related to Covid-19 period and the International solidarity messages:

Since the announcement of the lockdown and the emergency state by the Palestinian government, Mayor of Hebron and the city council has worked to estimate the general situation in the city of Hebron, specifically the economical situation of the citizens. In line with the difficult economical situation of the population in the Palestinian territories, the Municipal Council issued a decision to postpone all installments of citizens from water, electricity and waste and announced that the service would not be interrupted for citizens even if citizens were unable to meet its financial obligations to the municipality in addition to delaying the payment of checks due to citizens.

Hebron municipality through the directions of its mayor, sent many international solidarity messages to the twin cities and all the international partners which showed its willingness to help with all the available capabilities to confront the Covid-19.
Recommendations:

1– Intensifying awareness-raising and prepare an integrated awareness plan in which all city institutions participate.

2– Developing a mechanism for transporting patients and emergency cases and expanding the range of volunteers involved in it within a studied system that provides the service at the lowest possible costs.

3– Preparing a comprehensive and clear emergency plan by Hebron municipality staff to work on it in the crises case.

4– Prepare a clear and permanent plan to close down the city’s neighborhoods based on the geographical and spatial division in the emergency situation.

5– Set of a permanent periodic plan to sterilize the city.

6– Increase the reserves and stocks of the municipality from the sterilization materials, protective clothing and gloves.

7– Form permanent neighborhood volunteer teams by spatial division.

8– Increasing and developing the environmental and health awareness campaigns for citizens.

9– Developing the electronic services in the municipality and the easy access by citizens.
Conclusion:

As Covid 19 and the state of emergency imposed on most of the cities in the world and as it is the first of its kind in the city of Hebron specifically, the municipality with all its staff, supporters, volunteers, and partnerships with the civil institutions, approved that it is effectively dealt with this pandemic. The municipality is still working within the emergency plan until the day this report was prepared. wishing safety, security and stability to all cities of the world and to the human everywhere.

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