

Situations like the coronavirus pandemic quickly lead to misinformation, rumors and fake news, as we saw after the earthquakes in Nepal. We can all play a role in beating the virus by making sure that we are sharing validated information and using trusted sources to inform our decision-making.





The **Coronavirus CivActs Campaign (CCC)** gathers rumours, concerns and questions from communities across Nepal to eliminate information gaps between the government, media, NGOs and citizens. By providing the public with facts, the CCC ensures a better understanding of needs regarding the coronavirus and debunks rumours before they can do more harm.



Nepalis crossing the border into Nepal from India
 Photo: Dinesh Khabar



Government's package for the informal sector workers and helpless individuals

					
Rice	Dal	Salt	Cooking Oil	Soap	Sugar
30 Kilograms	3 Kilograms	2 Packets	2 Liters	4 Pieces	2 Kilograms

- ▶ Informal sector workers include construction workers, agricultural laborers, rickshaw drivers earning on a day to day basis.
- ▶ Helpless individuals include the people who do not have any caretakers, are homeless and are staying in temples, churches, monasteries, old-age homes, etc.
- ▶ These relief materials are only available for the lockdown period. [Relief Package Available for Informal Sector Workers and Helpless Individuals Criteria, 2076](#)

Rumors - Facts



The female health workers who are pregnant or with infants are not allowed to be involved in treating the patients suspected with Coronavirus.

Earlier, the health department had published a notice for health workers who are pregnant, with infants, or any long term disease to not be involved in COVID-19 treatment. However, with the increased seriousness of COVID-19, the Ministry of Health and Population has directed all the health care institutions across Nepal to operate and make arrangements for all health workers to be present and not take a leave.



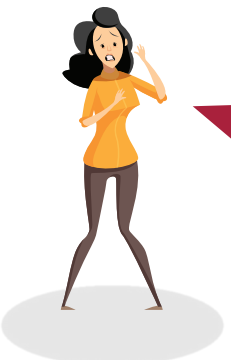
The government is sending back all the health equipment brought from China. If there is no equipment, won't the health workers stop the treatment?

The test kits brought from China have been verified by the Government of China. However, the Government of Nepal will only permit its usage after being verified by an expert team. After receiving the complaints that the people are conducting COVID-19 tests by illegally importing the kits and disillusioning the citizens, the government has not permitted the use of imported kits until now. The fake news on the kits has spread after the government's decision. The citizens do not need to be scared as the government has already made arrangements for sufficient equipment for COVID-19 tests.



The citizens of Nepal and India stranded in the borders are unable to go their own country, and neither they have any security. Why isn't the government take any steps towards it?

The Nepal-India High-Level Committee has decided to not let the people cross the borders during the lockdown period. Both countries have agreed to arrange quarantine facilities and food for the people stranded within their boundaries. Even after the lockdown ends, the people in India will be allowed to come to Nepal only after completing a 14 days quarantine period in India.



We heard a rumor that the government has given permission to open all the businesses? Will all the shops remain open now? Won't this further increase the risk of spread?

The government has decided to operate only the industries and large scale projects during the lockdown. It includes large scale projects such as Tamakoshi and Melamchi which will be monitored by the local administration without bringing the outside workers. Also, in the case of agriculture projects, the government has permitted the projects to run in coordination with the local government without bringing the outside workers. In the case of other businesses, earlier decisions will be taken into consideration.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

[World Health Organization](#) [Ministry of Health and Population](#)

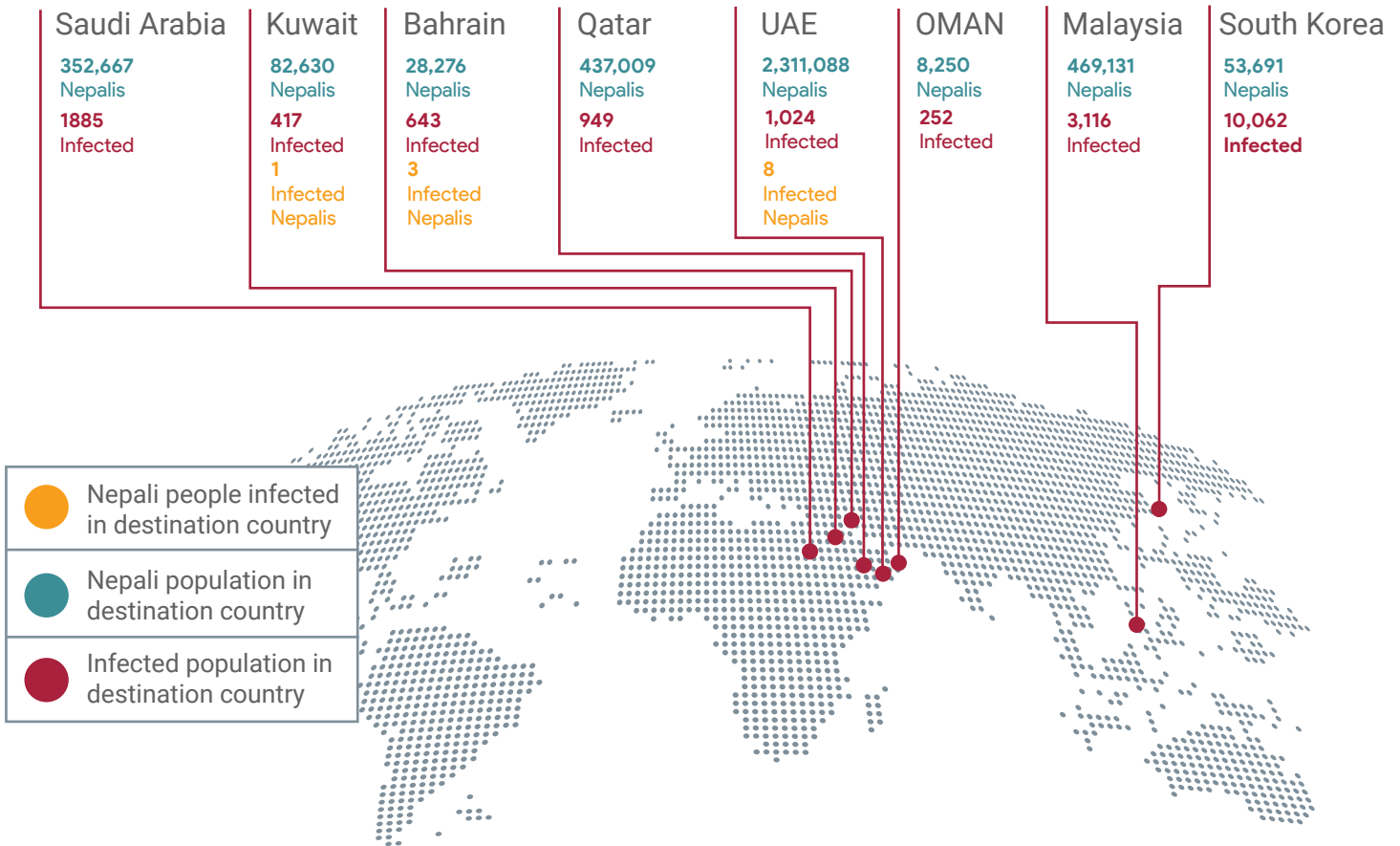
[Do's and don'ts](#) [Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center](#)

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Update, Ministry of Health and Population, Government of Nepal](#)

[Nepal Labour Force Survey Report](#) [COVID-19 Situation](#)



Migrant workers in major destination countries



ShramikSanjal

Decisions in Favor of Migrants Workers in Gulf Countries. Migrants can return home if Nepal government allow.



Kuwait

The Kuwait government is sending back the migrant workers who are staying there illegally from April 1st to April 20th without any fine and charge on flight tickets. Many Nepali migrant workers staying there illegally can use this as an opportunity to come back home.

UAE

The UAE government is not going to charge the migrant workers whose visa has expired and needs to be renewed for three months.

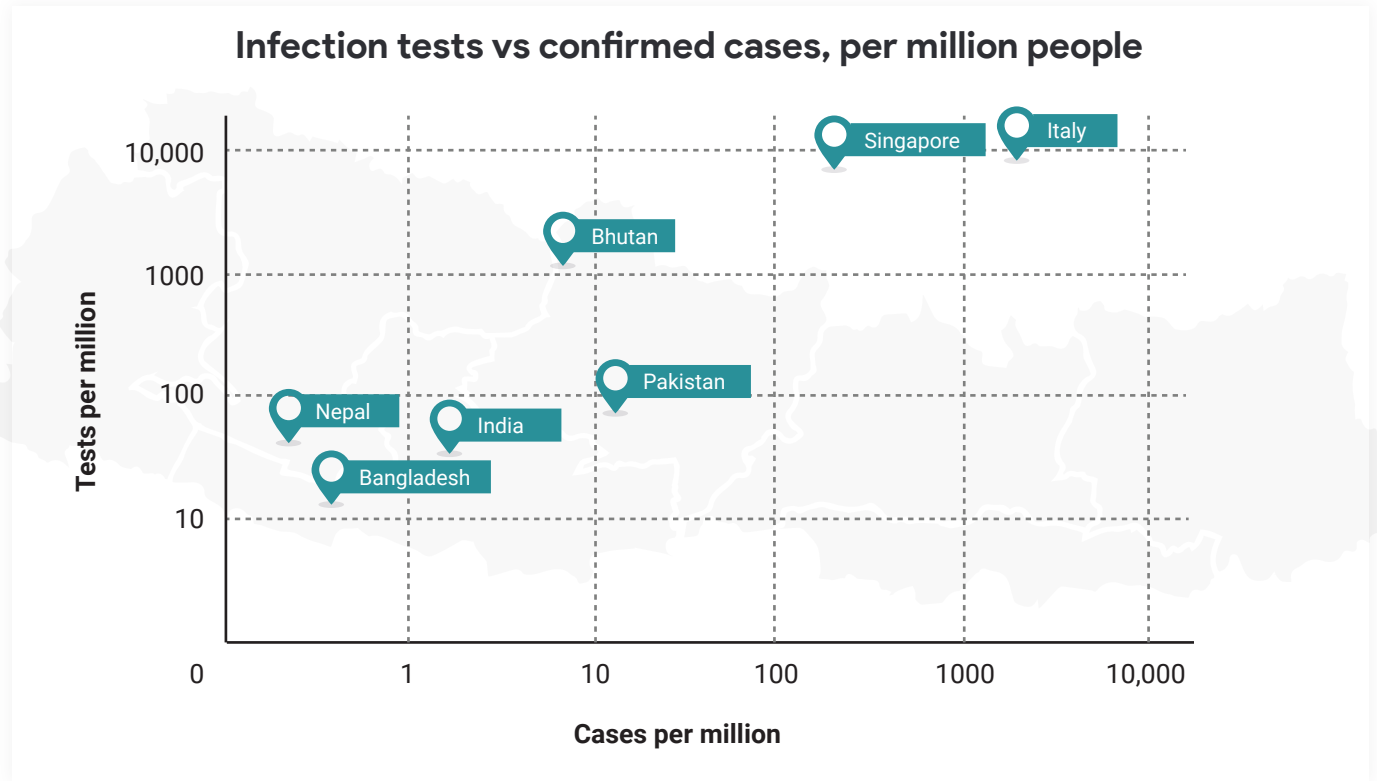
The UAE government has closed a lot of flights. However, they are ready to send back the migrant workers to their own country. But, the embassy of the concerned country needs to play a role here. If the government of Nepal is willing to bring back its citizens from UAE, then thousands of Nepalese can return home.



Saudi Arabia

If the visa of any migrant worker has expired in Saudi Arabia, they can renew the visa without paying any fine. This provision is valid until April 30th. The government has also suggested extending the date taking into consideration the situation of COVID-19 if required.

Is the government failing to test suspected individuals?



Above graph shows that Nepal has the least number of cases per million population compared to other countries in South Asia. Alike other countries in South Asia, tests performed by Nepal are way below the compared to countries worst hit by COVID pandemic. Nepal's test performance is 1 % of test performed by high test performing countries like Italy.

(Adapted from) Amit Aryal, 2020; COVID-19 tests per million-South Asia

Follow the Money



Human Rights During COVID-19 Crisis



The world is facing a public health crisis due to a pandemic. States are resorting to extraordinary measures such as sealing of border and lockdown on an entire country. In times of crisis, adhering to human rights is not just desirable but is required under international law. Human Rights obligations cannot be negated even in times of public emergencies.

Can states restrict human rights during the COVID-19 crisis?

Yes. States can take some measures which may restrict certain rights of citizens but it must be carried out in-line with the constitution, as well as international law. For e.g. Lockdown has restricted individuals' rights to movement but this is justifiable due to the extraordinary context of a public health crisis.

We must always remember:

- 1 Certain rights cannot be derogated even in times of emergency as well. Examples: right to life, rights against torture, right not to be enslaved, right to recognition as a person before the law, etc. These categories of rights are known as non-derogable rights.
- 2 Rights which can be restricted during emergencies also have limitations. Such restrictions must be:
 - Non-discriminatory
 - Legitimate
 - Necessary
 - Proportionate
 - Reasonable

More: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/453883fd1f.html>

Respect for Human Rights More Important in Crisis

Respect and compliance with human rights during times of crisis are more important. Some of the rights which must be ensured are:

- Freedom of expression and access to critical information.
- Travel restriction must comply with rights norms
- Protection of those in a vulnerable situation such as elderly persons, person with disabilities, persons in detention, non-nationals, migrant workers, daily wage workers etc.
- Protection against discrimination during the crisis.
- Compliance with the 'Code of Conduct for Law Enforcement Officials while enforcing 'quarantine' and 'lockdowns'.

<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/LawEnforcementOfficials.aspx>

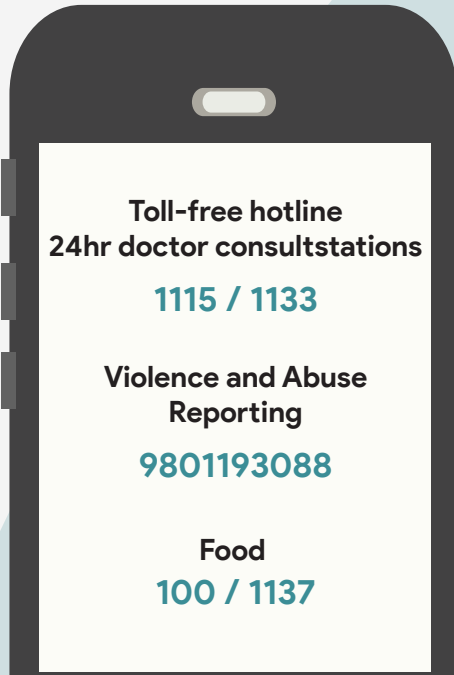
Closing

We must deal with the crisis the "right way" i.e. respecting the values that are dear to our society. Crisis cannot justify the violation of human rights and States will be held for its actions even in times of emergency.

Barun Ghimire, Human Rights Lawyer

What if I contract **coronavirus**?

COVID-19 HOTLINE



Where can I get a coronavirus test?

The National Public Health Laboratory (NPHL), Teku, Kathmandu as well as all provincial hospitals are conducting tests. As the person suspected to have the virus needs to be isolated, the sample is collected by hospitals and sent to the NPHL.

Is the sick person allowed to go to the lab to get tested? How much does it cost?

The sick person is not allowed to go to the lab directly. The local hospitals will refer to the NPHL to test if suspected. There is no cost for the test.

How long does it take to see the results of the test?

The test report is provided between 24-48 hours after the sample is submitted to the lab. If the report is positive, the concerned hospital or the doctor is informed.

The sources of rumors, information and issues presented here are collected from a variety of organizations and individuals including the Ministry of Health and Population, the World Health Organization (WHO), social media and the CivActs team based on their conversations with 1,276 people in March 2020. The issues highlighted are chosen based on prevalence, relevance and potential impact. The information presented here is correct at the time of issue.

Coronavirus CivActs Campaign is brought to you by
Accountability Lab Nepal.

