



# Managing the COVID-19 Crisis in the Arab States: Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Qatar

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## Abstract

Like many parts of the world, the Middle East has been severely affected by the COVID-19 damages. It's vitally important to consider the COVID-19 crisis management essentials in different countries with the aim of measuring their capability and efficiency. This comparative research has been conducted with the aim of considering the results of the crisis management in the three leading Arab states namely Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Qatar during the COVID-19 crisis. The comparable – case strategies used in the related research along with the library and internet data would be used to compare the performance of these governments in the crisis management indicators and COVID-19 statistics and results. The research findings indicate that the above governments have made more effective measures in this regard due to the economic situation, health infrastructure, government integrity and immediate response to the crisis. The research results are that there is a direct correlation between the small structure of the government, the amount of saving, the cost of state and the management of the social crisis such as COVID-19.

**Keywords:** Crisis Management, COVID-19, Qatar, The Saudi Arabia, Iraq.

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## 1. Introduction

Coronavirus disease named "Covid-19" reported in China's Wuhan on 31 Dec 2019. The disease was first referred to as "Pneumonia"; but on December 30, 2019, the Chinese National health Commission, officially announced the outbreak of the virus in China. Since then, the COVID-19 viral disease has swept through the world, which WHO has called it the first pandemic after the Second World War. The virus also spread rapidly in West Asia. Iran was the first country in the Middle East to be exposed to the rapid outbreak of the Corona virus, also other countries weren't spared from its effects. The disease and its consequences made an unprecedented crisis in human social life, when different governments responded to it in different ways and created a proper context to evaluate the

effectiveness of government measures in response to the crisis.

Response to the outbreak of the Corona virus, has been carried out in a distinctive way in western Asia. Despite, implementing of public health measures such as quarantines, testing methods used for the diagnosis of COVID-19 and travel related measures like border closures for incoming travelers, some countries considered Corona virus more of a security threat than a public health issue. In terms of the health system and the available facilities, there are significant differences between the 22 Arab governments and over 435 million people in Arab world live in countries where government – sponsored health care is provided. It's necessary to study how to manage the Corona crisis in the countries of the region to measure their

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capability and efficiency. It should be noted that all the information about the prevalence of the mentioned disease isn't reported, so this has made it difficult to access definitive statistics on patients, recoveries and the number of performed tests.

The current project intends to evaluate the Corona disease status through examining indicators in countries like Qatar, Iraq and Saudi Arabia by comparative study method, aims to answer the question of how these countries performed in the crisis and which has taken more effective measures. For this purpose, after explaining the research method and performance evaluation indicators of governments, first an explanation about Corona is given, then the performance of the governments of Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Iraq is examined based on these indicators. Finally, by comparing the performance of governments, the results of the research are presented.

## 2. Research Method

This research has conducted based on a comparative analysis method to evaluate and achieve the desired results. The comparative research method is one of the most important and widely used research methods in the field of major issues of social and political sciences. It enjoys a distinctive feature which is having an experimental approach based on the adaptive method. According to the "Lijphart<sup>2</sup>" in comparative politics, the focus is on how to analyze, not what is being analyzed. In other words, the comparative method isn't defined based on the subject under study, but it is determined through studying political phenomena. (Basiri, Momeni and Ostovar, 2017: 55-56).

In fact, using the comparative method in studying societies, systems, crisis and creating the policies and government's main lines, enjoy a crucial importance. In other words, this method would enhance the researcher awareness of the phenomenon under study and enable the use of desirable experiences of other societies in policy making and optimal use of resources and facilities (Hersij, 2001: 9). In this study, a comparative method is designed to examine the indicators that include information, security view of Corona virus, preventive and treatment measures of the government, economic situation, the impact of Corona virus on the popularity of rulers and government system, following health orders and the statistics and results of the Corona virus and finally the results would be used in Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Qatar.

## 3. Discussion

### 1. Coronavirus crisis in the world

The first case of someone suffering from Covid-19 can be traced back to December 8, 2019 in Wuhan, Haiti and China. Affected cases increased to 4, 17 and 59 on January 16, 17 and 18. At that time, the Wuhan municipality, suspended all outbound public transport like city buses, subways, ships, long-distance passenger transport, airports and train stations from Wuhan. Wuhan city was locked down - with all travel in and out of Wuhan prohibited - and movement inside the city was restricted. This virus was initially referred to as Wuhan Pneumonia, then with the official announcement of the Chinese ministry of health on January 25, 2020, it was named COVID-19 and finally on March 11, 2020, the world health organization announced its outbreak (Zijg Shangwan et al., 3-2020). The disease affected more than 200 countries and 3 million people. It not only has caused an unprecedented health crisis in the world, but also, it's causing an economic recession in the world (Francis Emmett et al., 2-2020). "COVID-19" has brought suffering to people everywhere, and in order to escape and deal with it, they experience quarantine and spend more time indoors and postpone their travels. Coronavirus is named "World War III". Due to the increase in the number of Coronavirus sufferers in the countries, WHO has warned that severe and mounting disruption to the global supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as medical masks, gloves and diagnosis kits and supplement of medical equipment caused by rising demand.

The COVID-19 pandemic is considered as the most crucial society health calamity which has transformed into a global well-being shock. This not only affects authoritarian governments, but also makes it difficult for democratic governments to respond to the well-being of their citizens (Francis Emmett et al., 12-2020). According to the research, the negative economic shock has a significant negative impact on political trust which has led to an increased public dissatisfaction in various countries around the world. The damages caused by coronavirus has prompted the governments to take steps to control and reduce them.

The current crisis has disrupted the economic structure of the world. The world economic growth expected to be decreased from 3% to 2.4% in 2020 (Lemmy and Bugal, 2020-14). The available statistics and sources show that most of the deaths caused by the virus were due to a history of chronic diseases, lack of access to knowledgeable information resources as well as inappropriate guidelines or delay in appropriate responding to disease in different countries of the world. The total number of affected people in the world were 62,158,503, the rate of recoveries were 42,946,733

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<sup>2</sup>. Arend Lijphart

and the number of deaths were 1,452,371 (World meter, 2020).

## **2. Corona crisis in the Persian Gulf countries**

The WHO, warned in March that the Covid-19 epidemic hadn't yet reached its peak in west Asia, but the region needed to be prepared for the worst. The mentioned organization complained that despite the seriousness of the situation, the countries of the region didn't provide specific information about these cases. They also are asked to make more efforts to fight against this virus and inform people about the health issues and number of affected. (Amire Fernanush, 2020). The United Arab Emirates was the first country to close its airports to Iranian flights to prevent the spread of the Coronavirus. Until March 6, Dubai confirmed 28, Iraq 40, Bahrain 60 and Kuwait 58 cases of COVID-19 affected. Egypt, Lebanon and Qatar also reported the first cases this month. The role that the small Persian Gulf states play as the world's aviation poles, make them vulnerable as global epidemics (Linch and Mark, 2020).

On March 24, 2020, the GCC convened an emergency virtual meeting and brought together the Minister of Economy and Finance to take integrated actions to combat the epidemic. The Persian Gulf countries have experienced outbreak of some disease including acute respiratory syndrome in 2013 and Middle East respiratory syndrome in 2012 in Eastern Saudi Arabia. The COVID-19 isn't limited to one specific area and cover the whole world. This global epidemic has caused an unprecedented drop in oil prices and endangered the region's main source of income. In general, the west Asian economy has hit a record high in the first three months of 2020, despite stimulus dependencies and lower interest rates by governments to mitigate the effects of the Coronavirus. This record is expected to be even more severe due to increasing decline in oil prices (the General Secretariat of the Federation of Arab Chambers, 2020). Most middle eastern countries are in poverty and bad economic conditions and economically, they have little or no ability to manage the coronavirus crisis. Consequently, as a result of the economic unrest, it may cause regional governments to face crisis and internal protests. Before the coronavirus outbreak, countries such as Iraq and Lebanon were involved in popular protests over the dismal economic situations and financial crisis. This can cause major problems in meeting the demands during and after the crisis. Meanwhile, the governments have sought to reduce the economic losses caused by the virus, by means of intervening economic and financial affairs, which has hurt the private sector. The performance of governments in the context of the corona virus will

be examined separately by the three countries of Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Qatar.

## **4. Result**

### **3. The performance of the Arab countries on the Persian Gulf in the Corona crisis**

In this section, the comparative indicators proposed in three under studying countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Qatar are examined and compared.

#### **3.1 The Saudi Arabia**

**3.1.1 Information index.** In late February 2020, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman announced the first cases of Coronavirus among their citizens. The virus was officially announced in Saudi Arabia on January 23, and the government began preventive and curative measures.

In the early days of the crisis, the Saudi Ministry of health didn't disclose updated information about the infected and didn't communicate properly with the public about it. As a result, the people of the Saudi Arabia began exchanging information on social media, particularly Twitter about COVID-19 and access to hospital and promote health issues. The Saudi Arabia's Health Ministry doesn't issue exact figures about Coronavirus deaths on its official website. This is one of the major weaknesses of this country in information section.

Among the social networks, Twitter and Face book have the highest performance in the field of information (Aljazire, 2020). On the website of the Ministry of Health Information Department, the Saudi government has launched a software called "mytleath" to provide medical services to the citizens of the Saudi Arabia. The software allows the user to access information about the public health tips and health issues. Information services provided in the field of health by various officials in the Ministry of Health, including the provision of services to update statistics and follow the process of virus spread, and also follow the health and recovery of people who used the drugs, evaluating the sick leave, enhancing a healthy lifestyle by providing health programs on "AppleHealthKit" and other services related to personal and social health, and raising awareness about disease prevention methods.

"Tatmum" is another electronic program launched by the center for Crisis Management and Health problems at the Ministry of Health which aims to provide services to citizens who don't have direct access to medical centers due to the crisis in Corona and Economic problems and quarantine. The Ministry has also provided the users with the contact number (937) for direct information and announce the symptoms of the virus.

**3.1.2 Economic status.** The Saudi Arabia, once known as a tax-free country, it has now increased VAT from 5 to 15 percent and abolished monthly

subsidies for its citizens. These measures followed by the decrease in the oil prices and reduced the government revenues by 22 percent. The drop in oil prices also halted the Aramco projects, the state-owned oil company. The outbreak of the corona

virus and the fall in oil prices, posed a serious challenge to the Saudi Arabia, in addition to implementing the oil projects.

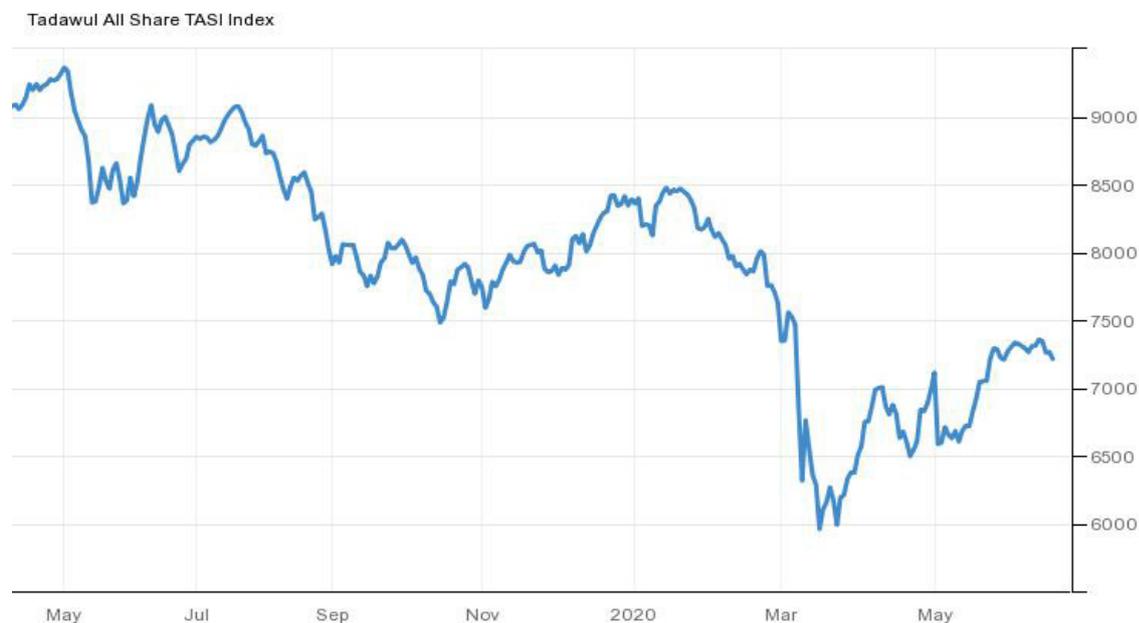


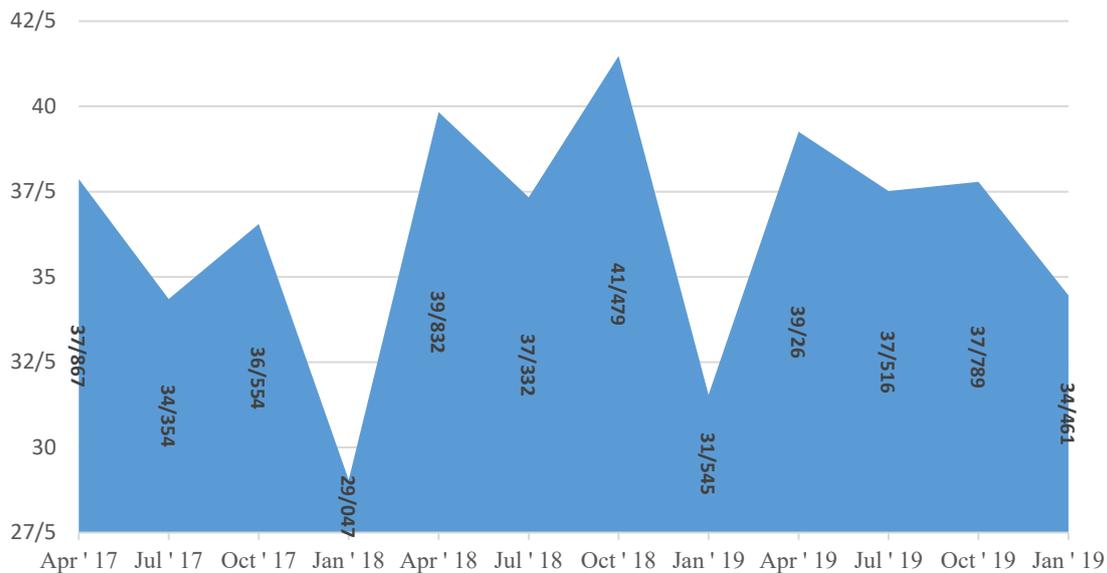
Chart of changes in the Saudi Arabia stock exchange index  
(Source: tradingeconomics.com)

According to the chart above, the beginning of the downtrend of the Saudi Arabia stock exchange index reached from 8427 index on January 26 to 7625 on 26 February with some fluctuations. This one - month decline embarked on the outbreak of the coronavirus through the world. With the outbreak of the coronavirus in the Saudi Arabia in late February, the stock market price index of this country, fell faster. This decline hit a record low of 6000 on March 16. The government reports from the second quarter of this year indicate that the Saudi Arabia's economic growth has decreased sharply, even from the level set by the organization of petroleum Exporting countries due to declining oil exports. The country's stock market lost 48.7 billion in one week due to an unprecedented drop in oil prices. This downward trend continued with the ups and downs of the Saudi Arabia stock market. Finally, with the increase in oil production of Aramco and the efforts of the Saudi Arabia government to return the lost capital to the market on June 18, it reached 8287 in the stock market. In addition to the important stock market index in discussing the economic situation, the amount of

government saving and spending is also important in controlling and managing the Coronavirus crisis. In this regard, the Saudi Arabia has a gas and oil-based economy and in addition to exporting such products, it earns lots of money from the pilgrimage sector.

The chart below shows the country's saving rate from the revenues from April 2017 to October 2019. The Saudi Arabia 's gross saving rate was 34,5 in December 2019, while it was 37,8 percent in the previous quarters. It's available from March 2003 to December 2019 with an average of 45,2 %. The data peaked at 60.2 percent in June 2008 and hit a record low of 27,3 % in December 2015. Domestic gross savings are calculated as nominal GDP less than consumption expenditure. In the General Directorate of Statistics, the consumption expenditures and nominal GDP provide in local currency.

According to the latest reports, the Saudi Arabia's GDP fell to negative 6.8 in March 2020.



■ Gross Domestic Savings Rate: Quarterly: Saudi Arabia

(The Saudi Arabia saving chart)  
 (Source: <https://www.ceicdata.com/en/>)

### 3.1.3 The system of government and the popularity of rulers.

According to the Article 44 of the statute of the government of the Saudi Arabia, the government of Saudi Arabia is based on 3 powers: Legislature, Executor and judicial power. These three powers act in a coordinated manner in performing their duties in accordance with this law and other laws, and at the same time the king is the reference of all these powers. In the kingdom of the Saudi Arabia, all actions are based on Salafi teachings. There is an open attitude in the field of economics and trade, but in the field of family law and social behavior, it's one of the most conservative attitudes (Karami, Bit). Meanwhile, the view of the young Saudi ruler isn't positive. In an academic poll among those who believe in the continuation of Al-Saud's rule over Saudi Arabia, they consider 14% of Muhammad bin Salman as a suitable successor of his father. The brutal assassination of Khashgechi and the dark future of 2030 are among the most important reasons for this attitude, which has been intensified by the Coronavirus (Geopolitics Alert, 2020).

**3.1.4 Health statue index.** The Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia is responsible for primary health care, health and vital statistics, setting guidelines and requirements for preventing the spread of infectious diseases and pandemic disease in quarantine and reporting them, judging the performance of health institutions, creating rules for doing the research and medical and pharmaceutical tests and provide programs for health education and etc (ministry of Health, 2020:43). In the Saudi Arabia, the construction of

hospitals and health centers is one of the challenges facing the Saudi Ministry of health. According to the Saudi Ministry of Health reports, this is severe shortage of facilities in this area, so another dimension of this challenge would be the provision of specialized medical staff. According to the report, only 20% of physicians and 30% of the Saudi Arabia medical staff work in the country's hospitals, which includes 139 thousand people. The report adds that 80% of the Saudi Arabia's need for physician (102 ,000 people) is met from abroad. This also applies to the pharmaceutical sector. The Saudi Arabia pharmacists supply only 18% of their country's needs (70,000), the rest is supplied from abroad (38,000). In the medical staff sector, Saudis provide only 29% (72,000 people) of their country's needs, which is so low on a global scale, and compensate for the shortcomings in this sector, 173,000 foreign medical staff are at work (Mashreq, 2015). This indicates a lack of medical and experienced staff in dealing with crisis like Corona. The amount of money allocated to the health sector since the beginning of the Coronavirus outbreak has been 47 billion rials (ministry of Health, 2020).

### 3.1.5 The index of the government actions and security outlook on the COVID-19.

The Saudi Arabia has taken measures to prevent the COVID-19 outbreak, including suspending tourists and pilgrimage visas, evacuating its students from Wuhan, China, providing warnings to all Saudi citizens outside of the kingdom, communicating with 108 foreign embassies in the kingdom to send educational files to their citizens living in the Saudi Arabia, G20 virtual meeting, creating an electronic service for the citizens wishing to return to the

kingdom, postponing the Saudi – African and Arab-Saudi meetings put on his agenda (Information Ministry, 2020).

In the field of the economic exemptions, the Saudi Arabia government provided the conditions to reduce economic pressure on the disabled. Exemption of the guarantor for obtaining a loan and exemption of orphans and the disabled from paying the 3-months loan installments has been one of these measures.

The foreign and domestic actions of the Saudi Arabia to control and prevention of COVID-19 outbreak:

1. Suspending the entry of foreign travelers into the country for the purpose of Umrah and visiting mosques.
2. Suspension of international flights.
3. Suspension of presence in government workplaces except security and health sections for 16 days.
4. The prohibition of traffic and leaving the house from 7 p.m. to 6 a.m.
5. Traffic ban in the neighborhoods (Ashrabat, Bani Zafar, Qorban and part of Bani Khazra) from Medina until further notice.
6. Closing all domestic flights, buses, planes, taxis and trains (Center for Communication and Financial Knowledge, 2020).

The Saudi Monetary Agency also developed a 1 billion rial program aimed at supporting and empowering the private sector. The Saudi banks postpone installments for all government and public health workers.

Small enterprises with a total of 9 or fewer workers were exempted from tax. The Saudi banks also

support 12 medical government funds at a cost of one million rials (Center for Communication and Financial Knowledge, 2020). The Saudi Arabia Monetary Agency allocates a package worth 50 billion rials (13 billion \$) to small and medium-sized companies to support the private centers. It also cut its loan repayment rate twice in March. Other economic programs on the Saudi government's agenda include a one-meal plan initiated by the Saudi Ministry of Human Resources to support the affected families in all areas of the kingdom, from which more than 37 million rials are provided and more than 37,000 families have benefited from it (Ministry of Humanitarian issues and social security, 2020).

The Saudi interior Ministry will sentence anyone who intentionally outbreaks the COVID-19, to a fine of 500,000 rials (\$ 133,3 thousand) or a five-year prison sentence or a fine and imprisonment. If this is repeated, the punishment will be doubled. Anyone who spreads rumors or misinformation about the Coronavirus through social media that causes controversy or incites people to oppose the relevant actions and measures, would be sentenced to pay a fine of 100,000 to one million rials (\$ 266.7 thousand) to serve imprisonment of one to five years or to pay a fine and endure imprisonment (ISNA, 2020).

**3.1.6 Statistics on the number of patients, deaths and recovery.** The table below shows the statistics of the sick, killed and recovered according to the statistics published by the Ministry of Health of Saudi Arabia shows by province.

Table (1): statistics on the number of patients, deaths and recovery from March 14 to November 26, 2020

Province	Recovery	Patients	Deaths
Meca	84141	87142	<b>2249</b>
Rayaz	71290	73268	<b>776</b>
Alsharqieh	85586	87288	<b>776</b>
Medina	28305	29052	<b>143</b>
Asir	26987	27685	<b>379</b>
Qasim	13069	13771	<b>185</b>
jazan	11142	13078	<b>429</b>
Tabouk	4715	4874	<b>79</b>
Hael	6819	7163	<b>113</b>
Najran	6170	6373	<b>64</b>
Albahe	4174	4382	<b>60</b>
North hodud	3069	2497	<b>84</b>
Aljof	1116	1187	<b>52</b>
Total	346023	356,911	<b>5870</b>

(Source: Saudi Ministry of Health)

### 3.2 Iraq

In this section, six indicators on the performance and activity of the Qatari government during the

COVID-19 outbreak and dealing with it are examined.

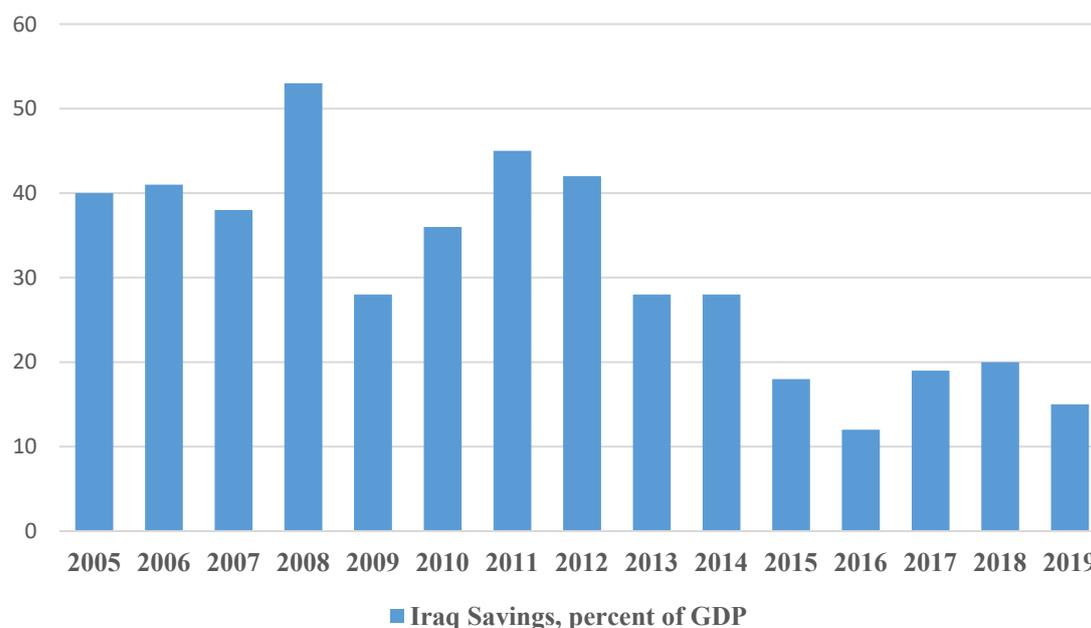
**3.2.1 Information index.** Iraq, like other countries in the world, contracted the COVID-19 disease in mid – March 1998. The first patients were identified in Najaf. The Basra province has also been seriously exposed to this virus since the end of March. The first case of Coronary heart disease was registered on February 24 (Islamic Republic News Agency 2020). Since early February, Iraqi officials have met immediately and provided medical care to land borders and airports. According to the issued instructions, medical teams were deployed on the land border with Iran, whose sole purpose was to check the health of travelers from Iran to Iraq. At airports, people traveling from China and East Asia to Iraq were also closely monitored. Other preventive measures were the distribution of posters and introduction Catalogs and ways to prevent Coronary heart disease to passengers at airports and the installation of banners in the entrance and exit halls to be aware of the disease prevention. It also coordinated with the Health center of Airports and Airlines to immediately inform the medical centers in case of any suspicious cases so that the necessary measures can be taken. Then Iraqi cabinet convened and passed several urgent resolutions to prevent the outbreak of Coronary heart disease (Tasnim, 2020).

The first reason for the increase in the number of Coronary patients in Iraq is the lack of adherence of citizens to preventive measures and the lack of active quarantine in the cities. The second reason is to isolate the cities that were cut off from other cities but life was normal. The third reason for the increase in the number of people infected with the Corona virus is that citizens don't believe in its existence (Isna, 2020). Since August the existence of this virus in the country has been denied and the restrictions imposed have been reduced. Also, the government and the Ministry of health haven't updated the statistics of patients by city on official and news sites. In general, the effective information and awareness – raising services provided by the media and the Iraqi government have been so weak that patients diagnosed with the disease have left the hospital by their family request (AljazeeraNet, 2020).

**3.2.2 Economic status index.** What increases the risk of crisis in Iraq is the dependence of the Iraqi economy on oil as the mainstay of the government's overall resources. The economy is one of the most important ways to determine the impact of this disease, as the interests of citizens in a country that suffers from high average poverty and lack of job

opportunities in the government apparatus is disrupted, in addition to the dependence of many citizens on daily incomes lost due to the forced travel bans.

The Iraq economy is heavily dependent on oil financially and commercially, in a way that oil revenue account for 90% of the country's total revenue and the country oil includes more than 45% of GDP and 99% of export goods. Precautions to avoid the dangers of the Virus and save the lives of citizens by closing educational centers and reducing office hours other than medical centers as well as stopping air and land travel from countries affected by the virus and other measures that paralyzed the economic activities. The weakness of the virtual world at the formal and informal levels has made it impossible for Iraq to shift administrative, economic and service activities from the real world to the virtual world to compensate or at least reduce the severity of the crisis and the reason is that in 2018, Iraq ranked 155<sup>th</sup> out of 197 in the e-government development index. Falling the oil prices due to declining the global demand and the aftermath of the Saudi – Russian price war have created further problems for the Iraqi economy, which has lost a third of its oil revenues. Meanwhile, there would be a talk of setting a price of \$30 as the basis of the 2020 budget, which means losing more than half of oil revenues (MDEAST NEWS, 2020). In the economic index, the situation of the Iraqi stock market and stocks in the shadow of the political events in the country and region is still sluggish, and one of the limitations of this study is the lack of access to appropriate information resources about the stock market in this country. Another indicator of a government's economic ability to deal with a crisis in the economic situation is the amount of savings and the government's ability to reduce or control the damage caused by the crisis. In this regard to present this index, according to the chart below, Iraqi data from 2005 to 2019 have been presented. The average value of Iraq in that period has been 30.94% in 2005 with at least 12.63% in 2016 and at most 52,51% in 2008. The last value in 2019 has been 14.95 that with a decrease of a few percent compared to last year, it has shown a decrease in the amount of savings in this country. Because Iraq doesn't have many sources of income and the internal crises in this country have caused a large amount of these revenues to be spent for domestic purposes, and as a result, the services and effective measures for efficient crisis management are disrupted and lacks funds.



■ Iraq Savings, percent of GDP  
 A chart of Iraq saving  
 (Source: global economy, 2020)

**3.2.3 Index of government system and popularity of rulers.**

The structure of the Iraqi government is parliamentary in that the executive branch is the hands of the Iraqi prime Minister, who is elected by the representative of the majority coalition in the Iraqi House of Representatives for a four – year team. The prime Minister’s Council consists of a prime Minister, two deputies and 37 cabinet ministers. The Iraqi presidency also consists of the president and two vice presidents (Alkosar, 2016). Since October 2019, Iraq has confronted the internal protests. The protesters have been trying to eradicate the poverty and corruption (The publication of the city, 2020). Despite of being the surface peace in Iraq, the problems that have sent more than 10000 Iraqi men and women to the street remain. More than 60% of Iraq population is under the age of 24, and at the same time the youth unemployment rate is very high and access to employment for many depends on family ties and the ability to pay bribes.

Now, Mostafa Alkazemi is the Iraq prime Minister. Even though Mustafa Alkazemi has recently become the prime Minister of Iraq, the results of the poll show that his popularity among Iraqis has reached more than 60% (Shafqana, 2020).

**3.2.4 Health status index.** The health care services are distributed through medical centers in all Iraqi provinces. Despite of all the relative improvements in health conditions and the provision of government services in this area, the country's health conditions are facing many shortcomings.

At the health situation deteriorates, people's health increases the rate of deprivation in all areas of life

and at the top of health field. The sanitary deprivation wouldn't be limited to a specific area in Iraq, but covers all urban and rural areas of Iraq, and the gap in access to health care is greater between urban and rural areas (Omara al – Rawi, Bita).

For a couple of years, Iraqis have preferred treatment to hospitals in Iran, Jordan and Turkey to treatment in Iraq hospitals and one of the most important reasons of this is the Citizens' lack of confidence in Iraqi medical science level and the continued negligence of the health sector, especially in public hospitals, which are no longer free, but many of them benefit without observing the difficult living conditions of the poor.

The absence of the government among the people and the spread of terrorist forces has forced Iraqi occupational therapy to migrate to Britain, Jordan, the United states, and so on. The amount allocated to the medicines and the medical equipment in the current budget is about 1.5 trillion dinars, which is not even enough to meet the general needs of essential medicines, especially as the country suffers from a severe drug crisis (MEDEAST NEWS, 2020).

One of the most important goals of sustainable development in Iraq is to provide health services to the highest standards in a fair way for all citizens in different urban or rural areas between different social sectors. The National Health Organization seeks to provide a solid foundation for the private health sector and to play a supporting role in the public health sector in order to raise evaluation standards to ensure the quality of services (ministry of public Health,2020).

**3.2.5 Indicator of the security perspective on the COVID-19 and government actions.** The national Bank of Iraq has announced \$20 million in first aid to financial institutions to support small and medium – sized enterprises and companies through targeted lending, and has also encouraged banks to extend maturity of all loans. The Iraqi government also encouraged the central bank to use electronic payments to curb the transmission of the COVID-19.

In June 15, 2020, the united states Agency for International Development has committed more than \$10 million of combat against the Coronavirus in Iraq. This budget is allocated to finance the province's project activities in deprived areas with the cooperation of the Iraqi government and to rehabilitate the medical centers and provide medical equipment, beds, masks and gloves for hospitals in Basra, Ninawa, Kirkuk, Karbala, Najaf and Dohuk and 3 other areas including Babylon and Maysan. This budget would also be used to revive a pharmaceutical factory in East of Mosul (UN, 2020). The Iraqi Ministry of Labor announced that due to the current situation, the payment of small loans granted to stakeholders has been postponed for 3 months. Also, at the initiative of this ministry, the campaign) one million food baskets (in cooperation with the civil society organization is distributing more than 75,000 food packages among the families that benefit from the subsidy. In addition, some humanitarian organizations distribute 37000 food packages to poor, low – income families and breadwinners, in order to reduce the burden on those families according to the imposed conditions (The publication of the city, 2020).

Other measures taken by the Iraqi government for those who suffer from the Coronavirus:

- Monthly bonus of 500,000 dinars for people who are in direct contact with the Coronary heart disease until the end of the current crisis.
- Delegate authority to the Ministry of Health agree with the retired experts and other specialists,

except for the executive instructions of the general budget of the country.

- Delegate authority to the Ministry of Health to rent suitable buildings and hotels in Baghdad and the provinces for use as quarantine sites, in addition to providing the necessities for the reception of patients.

- The Interior Ministry actions to close crowded public and private places, which will be determined later by the Executive Committee in cooperation with the responsible parties.

- Actions of the Ministry of industry and mines to make health masks and other requirements and provide them to support the Ministry of Health free or at a subsidized price.

- The action of the mentioned committee to coordinate with the religious places and holy shrines to take the desired measures to prevent the transmission of the virus through pilgrimage, gathering, congregational prayers and religious ceremonies.

- 50% reduction in working hours of Ministries and Coronavirus parties and other government agencies except security and health services.

In parallel with the Ministry of Health, the Iraq judiciary took action to combat with the Coronavirus outbreak. In this regard, the Iraq Supreme Judicial Council issued a statement announcing that anyone who spreads the Coronavirus by gossiping or downplaying the risk of the virus or encouraging citizens to gather in any way will be imprisoned for up to 3 years. The council called on the country's security services to fully implement the curfew and hand over any violators to the judiciary (Tasnim, 2020).

**3.2.6 Statistics on the number of patients, deaths and the recovery.** The table below shows the statistics of Casualties, deaths and recovery from March 14 to June 27,2020 according to statistics released by the Iraqi Ministry of Health by province.

Table (2): Statistics of Casualties, deaths and recovery from March 14 to June 27, 2020

Province	Improved	patients	Death
Baqdad	941	2234	97
Alvaset	139	1018	18
Soleimanieh	246	811	23
Basra	578	747	18
Alanbar	102	448	17
Najaf	324	431	6
Arbil	243	397	4
Karbala	118	152	8
Salohodin	18	127	0
Almosana	95	117	4
Dehouk	26	102	0
Ziqar	72	96	4
Karkouk	59	72	2

Meisan	45	52	2
Babol	39	49	5
Dayali	21	45	5
Halabche	22	25	0
Alqadesieh	11	15	1
Neinava	6	12	0
Total	478537	548821	12200

(Source: Iraqi ministry of Health)

### 3.3 Qatar

In third section, six indicators on the performance and activity of the Qatari government during the Coronavirus and in dealing with this disease are examined.

**3.3.1 Information index.** On February 31, 2020, the Qatari Ministry of Health announced the first case of Coronavirus. The patient was a 36-year-old man who had arrived in Qatar by air. Following this, Qatar Airways canceled all this flights until March 14, 2020 (Alarabia, 2020). This Ministry designed and introduced several websites to provide information on how to prevent and care for the Coronavirus. Providing health services allows people to call a specialist doctor or get a certificate of need for rest and have their medications delivered at home.

In Qatar, there is a team called Helplif, which includes mental health professionals, and its goal is to provide a support line for easy access for people who need the professional counseling and care. The hotline is available daily from 7 am to 10 pm with the number 16,000. This contact number is frequently advertised by medical centers and official local news agencies to provide services and information about the Coronavirus. Presenting health books in mosques, launching a web page on the latest virus developments, establishing a Coronavirus inquiry center in the command and control center to answer people's questions, providing virtual services, telecommunications, providing secluded housing in residential city emergencies of patients and medical teams, delivery of patients to their homes upon discharge from the hospital to facilitate their relocation, especially in conditions of prohibition (Information Ministry, 2020).

The Qatari Ministry of Health, in cooperation with the health and medical centers, as well as the national medical department, is trying to take an effective step on preventing the outbreak of disease and positive advertising by broadcasting videos and educational images to observe public health issues. Communication has been effective in the electronic and media sectors.

**3.3.2 Economic status index.** The Qatar economy is one of the richest countries in the world in terms of the GDP per capita, ranked between the 2015 and 2016 in the fifth and seventh world, collected by the

World Bank, the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund. The Oil and natural gas are the cornerstones of the Qatar's economy, accounting for more than 70 percent of the total government revenue, more than 60 percent of GDP and about 85 percent of export earnings. The Qatar has the third largest proven natural gas reserves in the world and is the second largest exporter of natural gas. The Qatar's net income from oil and gas exports in 2014 is estimated at \$38 billion. The high gas income and low population in this country has created a complete welfare structure for Qatari citizens. The country has the highest per capita income in the world at around \$130,000 per year (Ixpert, 2020).

The Qatari government allocated about \$20.6 billion in March 2020 to tackle with the Coronavirus outbreak. "Sheikh Tamim bin Hamed, the king of Qatar, instructs central bank to set up an appropriate mechanism to encourage the banks to delay loan installments. He also called on the government funds to increase their investments in the market. In Qatar, food and medical equipment are exempt from customs duties for six months, which has a positive effect on price however, the outbreak of the Coronavirus in Qatar has had several economic consequences. In addition to the sharp drop in oil prices due to declining demands due to the global recession, the country's aviation industry is also in serious danger. With the outbreak of the Coronavirus in the world and the accommodation of travelers from different countries, many airlines have stopped all or a large part of it.

In addition to airlines, the closure of large commercial complexes and the closure of many economic activities, except for jobs related to the food needs of the people have caused heavy damage to clothing and electronics stores, and the private sectors in general. In particular, the rising slope of the number of coronary heart disease patients in Qatar has prompted the country's authorities to increase restrictions on trade and order the closure of all commercial centers and commercial activities except pharmacies and grocery stores by date issue May 30, 2020. In general, it can be said that the outbreak of the Coronavirus and the inability to control it will increase the Economic pressures and will have a direct impact on the resources of the Qatar National Development Fund. One percent,

while the previous forecast of the institute showed a surplus of 3.6 percent (Buhamid, 2020). The stock market is another economic resource in Qatar that

has been affected by the outbreak of the Coronavirus in the country and the world.

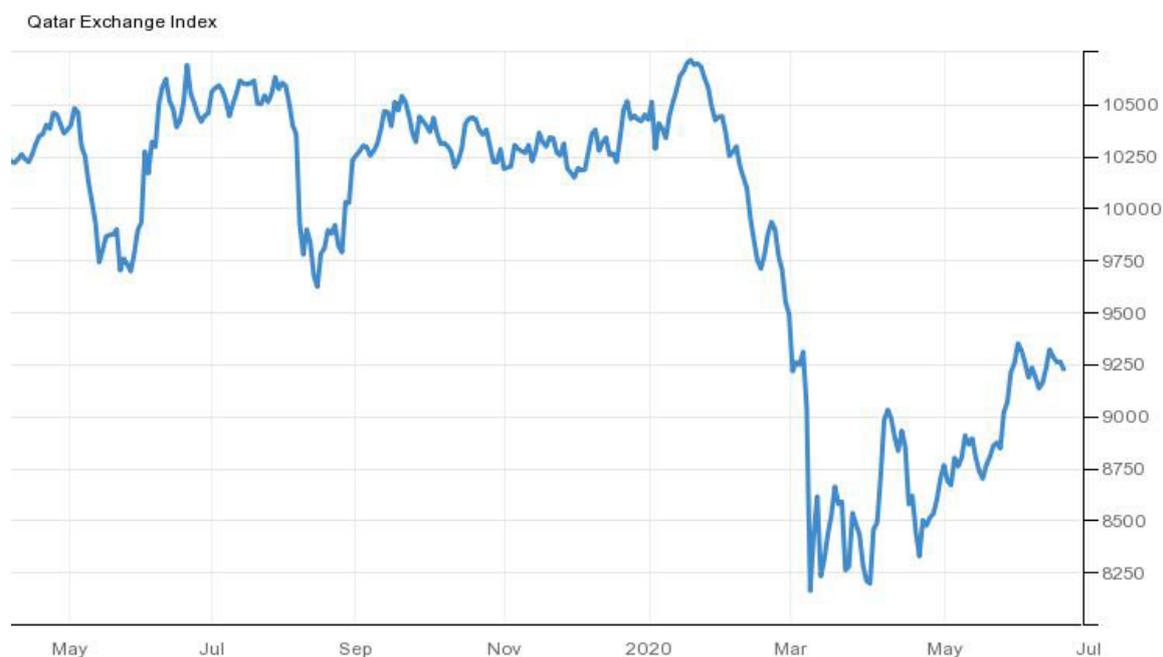


Chart of changes in Qatar stock Exchange market index  
(Source: tradingeconomics.com)

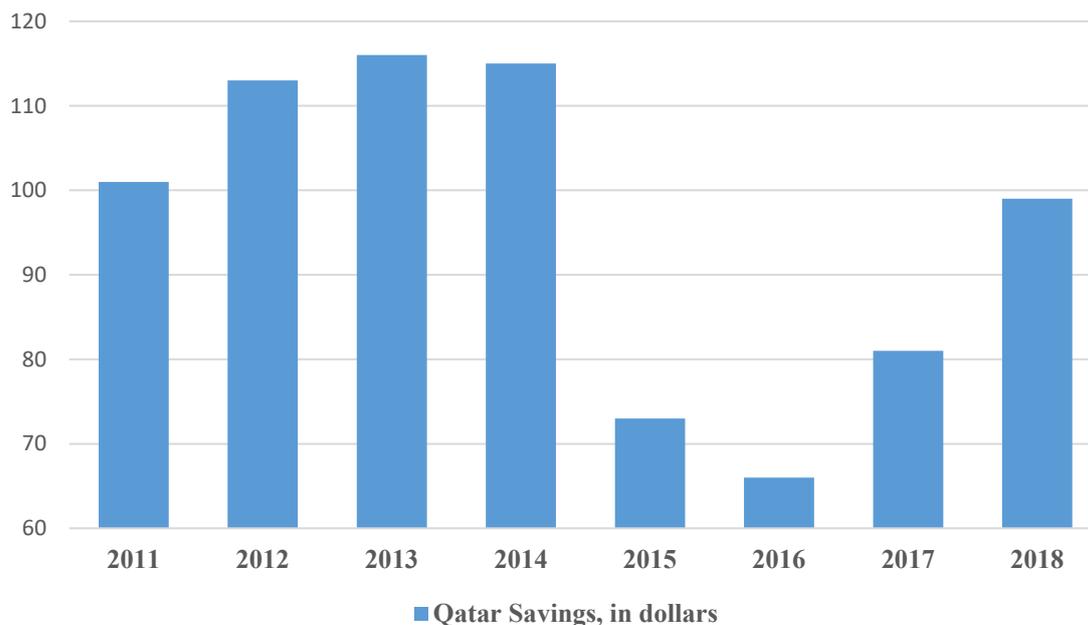
The price of Qatar stock Exchange index was 10729 on January 20, on this day all Qatar stock indexes were positive which shows a very high growth of the country's stock market compared to previous months. On March 8, all major indexes of the Qatar stock Exchange faced a certain decline and the price of the stock index fell to 8179 and its lowest level on this day. The price of the crude oil fell by more than 50% this month, and this had a direct impact on the country's stock market indexes. The downward trend in the stock market index in this country's market continued until finally, on June 7, the price of each index reached 9372. The Coronavirus outbreak had a severe impact on the Qatari market, causing a decrease in all Qatar stock indexes. The losses of the country's market due to the two Coronavirus crises and the price of oil in Qatar's Economic body were so high, but the government's effective measures to compensate for its financial losses, as shown in the chart below, were effective in June. The change in the mere downward trend took place in the market of this country.

Despite all the interpretations and losses that the Qatari government has suffered from the damage caused by the Coronavirus crisis, the international Monetary Fund has predicted that Qatar will be one of the few countries in the world to escape the

recession in 2020 (CBS News, 2020). To show the amount of saving and spending power of the Qatari government as another factor affecting the Economic situation suitable for optimal crisis management, data from 2011 to 2018 for Qatari is shown in the chart below. The average value for Qatar at the time was \$95.41 billion, with a minimum of \$65.79 billion in 2016 and a maximum of \$115.76 billion in 2013. The latest value of the country's saving from 2018 is \$98.66 billion. Compared to the Saudi Arabia, the country has less savings in the latest statistics provided in 2018. However, according to the data and statistics provided by the investments of this country in 2019 and 2020. This amount of savings hasn't decreased and may have had a minimal growth.

This will provide the government with appropriate measures and services due to the financial reserves of this country, better management of the crisis than the two countries of Iraq and the Saudi Arabia. They have suffered a lot of financial losses due to the fall in oil prices.

The average value for Qatar at the time was \$95.41 billion, with a minimum of \$65.79 billion in 2016 and a maximum of \$115.76 billion in 2013. The latest value of the country's saving from 2018 is \$98.66 billion.



Qatar country savings chart  
(Source: theglobaleconomy.com, The World Bank)

### 3.3.3 Index of the government system and popularity of rulers.

Qatar is an independent country in west Asia and a Peninsula in the Persian Gulf. The laws of this country are in accordance with Islamic laws, and Sheikh Tamim bin Muhammad bin Khalifa Al Thani has been in power in this country since 2013. The government of Qatar has launched an e-participation strategy in a simple, fast and secure way from any region and at any time in order to increase public participation in the policy-making process and to know the performance of governments, organizations and governmental and non-governmental companies. This strategy enjoys a clear view. All individuals and businesses benefit from digital communication with government agencies that strive to provide more transparent and efficient services. Likewise, e-participation will be one of the main initiatives that will help to create a positive image of Qatar as a leader in e-government and raises the Qatar's position in the global ranking for e-participation. The popularity of the ruling family in Qatar is high and no independent research has been conducted to examine the change in the popularity of the Emir of Qatar during the Coronavirus.

**3.3.4 The health status index.** In mid – March, the Emir of Qatar, Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, ordered the allocation of six tonnes of medical equipment. According to the Qatari Ministry of Health website, during the crisis, medical teams in all parts of the Qatar's healthcare system are working to combat with the outbreak of the virus and make sure that anyone who is suspected or infected with the

Coronavirus has the best medical care available to treat their illness. In collaboration with the Ministry of Public Health and the Primary Health Care Foundation, Hamad Medical Company provides medical services to help people with mental health problems (ministry of public Health, 2020).

According to the Qatar Ministry of Health, the Republic of Qatar has too much medical equipment and manpower to deal with the current epidemic. The health care system is available to all Qatari citizens with state of the art medical equipment and a team of the skilled staff covering a chain of the hospitals and health care facilities across the country (Al-Hamd Al-Taiba institute). In this country, Hezam Al Mubarak State hospital has been introduced as a Coronavirus treatment center and its capacity has almost tripled. In addition, the inauguration of "Ras Lafan" and "Masiaid" hospitals has helped to increase the capacity of the healthcare system to provide intensive care to acute patients suffering from the Covid-19 in Qatar, and the country can increase its capacity if needed.

### 3.3.5 The index of the security perspective on the Coronavirus and the government actions.

Following the increase in the number of people infected with the Coronavirus, the Qatari government has made it mandatory for all residents to wear masks. According to the statement, people who don't wear masks in public places will face up to three years in prison. In addition to imprisonment, violators are also fined 200000 Rials of Qatar. The Qatar Central Bank provide additional liquidity to active Qatari banks to delay loan installments by granting new loans at

0% interest rate (College of Management and Economics,2020).

According to the Qatari Ministry of Health, since the start of the combat against the Coronavirus in Qatar in March 2020, more than 35000 citizens have volunteered to combat against the COVID-19 in Qatar. To register for the Voluntary assistance, a registration page has been installed on the website of the Ministry of Health (Adhwaa center for research and studies, 2020).

The country has allocated more than 11000 hospital beds for 19 patients and more than 30 government – blocked hotels to be used as the quarantine facilities. The Qatari government has announced that anyone with a positive Coronavirus test will receive high quality treatment immediately at no cost (CBS News, 2020).

The announced working hours in Qatar during the Coronavirus for the public and private sector employees are six hours a day, from 7 A.M to 1 P.M (Tasnim, 2020).

The Qatar canceled the "DIMIX" international Maritime Defence Exhibition, which was scheduled to hold its seventh edition on March 16-18, 2020 with 80 countries in Doha (Alarabia, 2020).

Other decisions taken by the Arab government to manage the crisis and reduce the prevalence of the Coronavirus in Qatar, include closing part of the industrial area from 1 to 32nd street for 2 weeks

and extending the closure of all shops, cafes, shopping malls and banks .The quarantine for the health of the community, the unimpeded return of citizens to the country at any time with their willing.

The Qatari government transferred \$824 million into the local banks in a precautionary measure against the bankruptcy of local banks caused by the Coronavirus. Food and the medical equipment, are exempt from customs duties for 6 months which has a positive effect on prices.

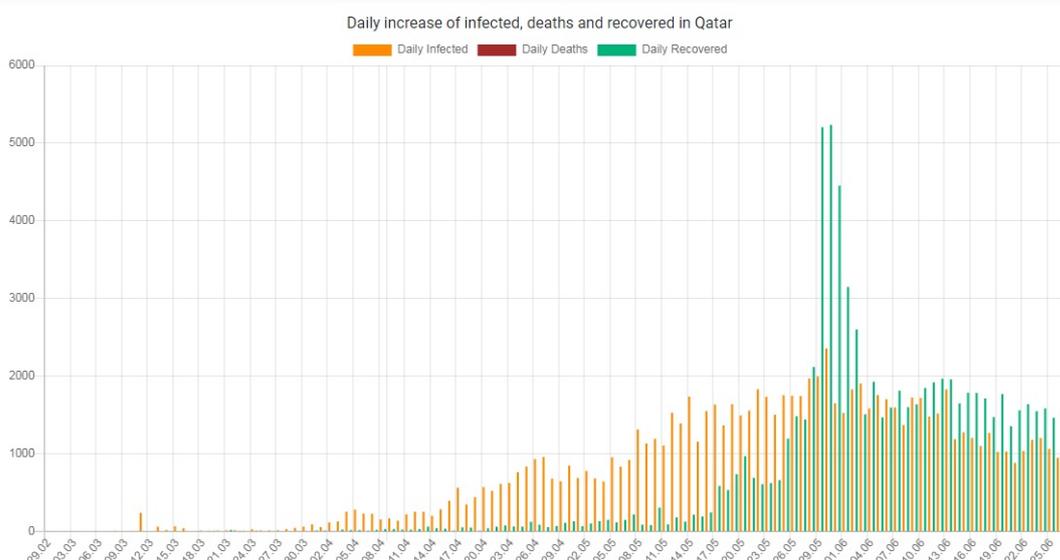
**3.3.6 Statistics on the number of patients, deaths and recovery.** The Qatari government has posted the latest statistics on Coronary heart disease through effective communication channels and statistical information on official website and news agencies. It is worth mentioning that all the statistics of deaths, recoveries and patients caused by the coronavirus within 24 hours and the number of cases admitted to the intensive care unit during the last 24 hours will be updated on the website of the Qatari Ministry of Health (Worldometes, June 2020) (ministry of public health, 2020). Therefore, the chart below shows the number of patients, diseased and recovered from March 14 to November 27, 2020, according to the statistics released by the Qatari Ministry of Health and latest data.

The chart related to the statistics of casualties, deaths and recovery from February 2 to November 27, 2020

**Recoveries**  
**135,651**

**Deaths**  
**237**

**Total affected**  
**138,477**



Source: WHO& Qatari ministry of health

## 5. Conclusion

In this paper, an attempt was made to examine the management of the Arab states on the Persian Gulf in the face of the crisis caused by the COVID-19. For

this purpose, 6 indicators were considered and the performance of 3 governments of Qatar, the Saudi Arabia and Iraq with 3 political systems, government model and population and with income

based on oil and gas exports were studied and the result of this comparison in the table below has been summarized:

Table (3): The comparative analysis of 3 countries

Index / country	Iraq	The Saudi Arabia	Qatar
Informing	Weak	Good	Good
Government measures	Good	Very good	Very good
Economic status	Poor	Good	Good
Rulers popularity	Poor	Good	Good
Health	Poor	Poor	Good
Total affected	548,821	356,911	138,477

Source: Research findings

As it has shown in the above table, the three countries: The Saudi Arabia, Iraq and Qatar have different performance in the field of indicators provided. The Saudi Arabia indicates a desirable performance in the field of government measures. This country has closed flights to and from countries infected with the virus before the first patient in the country became infected. The Qatari government has also provided good support to staff, and due to its financial resources and good economic situation, it has performed well to support patients and provide medical supplies, including masks and gloves, but the country has a low population and low level of population, public health has a higher number of patients among the cases studied. The Qatar has the lowest rate of Coronavirus compared to the Saudi Arabia and Iraq. As a rich country with desirable economic structures, it has performed well in dealing with the virus and providing solutions and supporting the affected ones. It has also been able to fight the virus well in the last decade by strengthening its health infrastructure and medical equipment. Iraq has suffered the most damage compared to the other two countries. The Iraqi government is facing more problems due to the internal protests and the unrest in recent months, as well as the fall in oil prices and its negative effects on government revenue sources and the lack of proper health infrastructure, and provide effective control and response performance. Finally, according to the statistics of the number of patients, diseased and recovered in response to the main question of the study, Qatar, Iraq and the Saudi Arabia respectively had the lowest number of patients compared to

each other, but in terms of percentage, the highest number of cases belongs to Qatar, then the Saudi Arabia and finally to Iraq. So, in this regard, the proper performance and effective measures have been very good, good and poor performance according to the indicators raised by Qatar, The Saudi Arabia and Iraq. The study concludes that there is a direct relationship between the small structure of the government, the amount of savings and government spending and the management of the social crises such as the Coronavirus.

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