**Case Report:**

**The Origin and Consequences of Sebiran Community COVID-19 Case**

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**Abstract:**

On March 2, 2020, the Ministry of Health announced four confirmed cases of COVID-19 with travel history. The health departments in Iraqi Kurdistan started to identify and monitor all individuals considered with close contact with confirmed COVID-19 patients. An individual who returned to the Sebiran community (in Erbil) from Iran on February 16, 2020, without announcing the authorities and later was tested positive for the coronavirus. The asymptomatic person behaved normally with other persons as a healthy person since his return. The health authorities reported that by March 24, 2020, 15 persons of this community had been affected among the first 200 tests. The confirmed cases were his wife and son (5 years old), neighbors who had close contact with the confirmed case, persons with household exposure, and community members with indirect contact with the case. The strict lockdown and curfew were applied to the Sebiran community for 14 days. Following March 24, 2020, no positive case was identified among the performed cases in the community. Accordingly, on 5/4/2020, the quarantine of the community was lifted. The success of the KRG is summarized in: timely quarantine, active surveillance/active symptom monitoring, and social distancing.

**Keywords:** COVID-19, Infection control, community confinement, public health.

**Introduction:**

The outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has spread quickly across China and several other countries and territories since its last occurrence in December 2019. It was declared to be a public health emergency of international concern. On Friday, February 25, the Kurdistan Region’s Ministry of Health announced that we take all necessary measures to prevent this new fatal virus within this region. On March 2, 2020, the Ministry of Health announced four confirmed COVID-19 cases in the region. The cases had a travel history to Iran with close household contacts in the Sulaymaniyah governorate. They were a family of three members and a woman who just returned from Iran. Later, few confirmed cases of COVID-19 were announced in the capital of the region (Erbil). Accordingly, the government closed all governmental organizations and the interconnected routes except for medical and security settings.

In January, local Iraqi Kurdistan health departments, in collaboration with medical teams, started to determine and monitor all individuals with close contacts with confirmed COVID-19 cases. On March 16, 2020, an individual returned to the Sebiran community from Iran. This person did not inform the authorities and later was tested positive for the coronavirus. He visited Iran for a preexisting medical condition of his son. He visited the Urology Unit of the East Emergency Hospital in Erbil for a renal medical condition on March 21, 2020. One of the doctors advised him to take the coronavirus test because he has returned
from Iran before 36 days. He had no symptoms of
the disease in the body, but he was tested positive
for the COVID-19. The affected person had normal
behavior with other persons as a healthy person.
Accordingly, the health authorities performed the
test for his family members. The tests revealed
that his wife and son were affected by the virus so.

Discussion
The Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) had
announced the curfew on 11 March 2020. The
curfew was extended inside the cities of Erbil
and Sulaymaniya for 72 hours at 12:00 Sunday
midnight, March 13, 2020. The government
announced that “The final deadline for people’s
return to the Kurdistan Region is 12:00 midnight of
Monday, March 15, 2020, beyond which all crossing
points will be closed to travelers”. In addition, the
government announced that persons who have
returned illegally to the Kurdistan Region from
Iran must immediately report to medical centers.
Failing to do so will lead to mandatory quarantine
and prosecution under the law for the intentional
spread of the virus and illegal border crossing.

The KRG had imposed a lockdown and suspended
all traffic within Erbil and Sulaimani cities on
March 11, and it was extended by April 1 across
Iraqi Kurdistan on Sunday by the Ministry of
the Interior. Travel between towns and provinces
had already been suspended, except for security
vehicles and medical teams. The person who
returned from Iran had not been quarantined. The
ministry of health had announced that the person
who returned from abroad between the first and
fourteenth February 2020 must take a test of
COVID-19.

Being positive his test and family members
for COVID-19, the health authorities decided
to quarantine his entire town of Sebiran. The
community is located in 9 km northwest of Erbil.
The population of Sebiran community is 5,300
(1500 households). This community has 431 IDPs
(108 households). The KRG decided to quarantine
the community for 14 days in 21 March 2020.

The government provided the required basic needs
of the community. The government did not allow
anyone to enter this community except for security
forces and medical teams. On March 23, 2020, the
Ministry of Health announced Sebiran community
to stay at home. It announced that the persons who
had close contact with the first case of Sebiran
must report the medical teams. The official
affirmed that the security forces surrounding the
compound would depart, but noted that the security
forces would remain to continue to implement the
ongoing curfew.

Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) health
officials placed Sebiran under quarantine to prevent
further spread of coronavirus. Sebiran residents
were not permitted out of their homes until the
quarantine is lifted. Food and daily provisions
were provided by the government and the Barzani
Charity Foundation.

The government decided to take the test of
coronavirus for 200 persons weekly for 14 days.
The health authorities reported that by March 24,
2020, 15 persons of this community had been
affected among the first 200 tests. The confirmed
cases were his wife and son (5 years old), neighbors
who had close contacts with the confirmed case,
persons with household exposure, and community
members with indirect contact with the case. The
affected cases were referred to the special health
center in Erbil. The close contact with a confirmed
case is the main way of infection by this virus.

Following March 24, 2020, no positive case
was identified among the performed cases in
the community. Although he did not show any
symptoms of the virus, he was able to infect others.
Infected individuals can carry the virus for 14 days
or more without experiencing any symptoms. The
strict lockdown and curfew were applied to the
Sebiran community for 14 days. Accordingly, on
5 April 2020, the quarantine of the community
was lifted. The medical team performed 200 tests
randomly following finishing the quarantine period
and found no confirmed cases of COVID-19.

Conclusions
The success of the KRG can be summarized in
the following measures; timely quarantine, active
surveillance/active symptom monitoring, and
social distancing.

Conflict of interest statement: The authors do not
declare any conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval issue: Not applicable. The
information used in this study was collected from
reports about Sebiran community documented in
media websites.

Individual authors’ contribution: The authors of
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collection, review, and analysis.
References:


