

## Tabadlab Policy Roundtable 05 - Locking out the Virus

### Policy Brief

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJkTK7j\\_HCQ&t=1017s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aJkTK7j_HCQ&t=1017s)

As Pakistan progresses into its third month of grappling with COVID-19, debates over the easing and intensifying of a “smart lockdown” dominate the public discourse. Tabadlab called together its fifth Policy Roundtable to accumulate a diverse range of opinions on the efficacy of our lockdown thus far and the recommendations we might follow to successfully lock out the virus in the near future.



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## Recommendations

- No easing of lockdown until adequate preparations are in place
- Coherent messaging, simple SOPs and compassionate enforcement
- Increasing testing capacity based on the latest available innovations
- Testing based on stratified sampling, colour-coded zones and differentiated responses
- Continuous collection of data to inform our decision-making
- Rapid implementation schemes based on the latest information

## Discussion Summary

### ● Design

Our panelists shed light on how the government has envisioned their plan to tackle COVID-19 as of now. What are the exact factors that constitute a “smart” lockdown? And how can it be designed differently going forward?

### ● Timing

What could be the implications of easing the lockdown too soon and how difficult will it be to reinforce it if need be? Is it possible that the comparative success of our early lockdown has given us a false sense of security?

### ● Perspectives

What are the factors and perspectives based on which our policymakers are making crucial decisions? How far do our values, worldviews and politics inform how we respond to COVID-19? Our speakers discuss how our decisions might be based on selected views and indicators.

### ● Priorities

Should preventing the loss of human life remain our sole priority or should economic concerns remain a significant part of the debate? Our panelists argue that the linkages between both might be far more nuanced than our discourse has allowed for.

### ● Communication

How coherently has the government communicated its policies to the public? Has the mixed messaging regarding SOPs confounded the process instead of simplifying it? And does the term “lockdown” convey an inherently oppressive picture?

### ● Testing

Our speakers make a unanimous case for an increase in testing capacity above all else. A blueprint for stratified sampling and differentiated responses is laid out, while emphasizing the need and challenges of identifying asymptomatic patients.

### ● Data

What steps have been taken to ensure an exhaustive compilation of data from the grassroots level to the highest decision-making authorities? How do we build flexible systems of information that can receive and send data accurately and quickly?

### ● Implementation

Our speakers argue here that the most comprehensive information systems could be rendered useless if the data is not utilized effectively. What is the best way to convert the input our policymakers are getting into tangible, on-ground implementation?