



ZIMBABWE PRESS RELEASE



LOCKDOWN STATEMENT BY THE ACTING MINISTER OF INFORMATION, PUBLICITY AND BROADCASTING SERVICES, HON J MUSWERE.

Fellow Zimbabweans, I address you on the first day of our National Lockdown that was pronounced by the Hon Minister of Health, who is also the Vice President, Cde CGDN Chiwenga on the 2nd of January 2021. This report also comes on the backdrop of the statement released by the Acting President, Cde KCD Mohadi on the 3rd of January, which gave policy direction and how the nation will conduct itself over the course of the lockdown.

Whilst the flattening of the curve of the Covid19 infections in the last few months gave us hope, the reality on the ground nationally and globally is that there is a spike in Covid-19 cases, and we ought to be vigilant as a nation, hence the need to adhere to the measures announced for the lockdown. For the avoidance of doubt, the country has reverted back to level 4 lockdown as stipulated within SI 10 of 2021. Essential services and emergencies will continue to operate within the confines of the regulations. Other commercial operations and services specified in Part 5 of the lockdown order, that is to say all formal businesses and registered informal traders, are suspended as from today.

My fellow countrymen and women, events of the past two to three weeks do not need me to remind you that Covid-19 kills. Let us be responsible and do our part to fight this war against Covid-19.

The Covid-19 Taskforce met yesterday, 4th of January 2021 to review the situation pertaining to the resurgence of Covid-19 cases and the following issues were raised and addressed:

1. On Surveillance, as of 1 January 2021, Zimbabwe's cumulative cases of COVID-19 stood at 14 084, with 11 347 recoveries, and

371 deaths. The number of new cases have almost doubled in two months from 8 374 on 1 November to the current 14 084. There is a recovery rate of 80,6%, with 12 753 being a result of local transmission. New cases increased from 833 in week 51 to 1 204 in week 52.

2. Regarding law and order, our security forces are on high alert and vigilant to arrest offenders. In particular, the Task Force noted the suspension of Matapi police officers for negligently allowing a super spreader event to proceed under their watch as well as the arrest of organisers of the big, illegal event that took place in Mbare on New Year's Eve.
3. On Primary and Secondary Education, the commencement of the 2021 School calendar has been deferred till further notice to allow for monitoring of the COVID-19 pattern. Further to this, the nation is advised that teachers including invigilators as well as pupils sitting for exams will be given free passage to their respective schools, subject to them having a clearance letter from the Ministry authorities. For Higher and Tertiary Education students, classes will continue online while final exam classes will be allowed free passage to sit for their examinations.
4. Media practitioners are considered to be part of essential services as stipulated in SI 200 and in this regard, pending the production of new Accreditation cards by the Zimbabwe Media Commission, journalists will continue to use 2019 Press cards whilst the ZMC puts in place modalities for registration for the current year with immediate effect. Support staff for the Media Industry at large will have exemption letters issued through the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services on request from their media houses.
5. Concerning information and risk communication, the Subcommittee will continue to hold awareness campaigns in line with Covid19 regulations and disseminate COVID-19 messages through the media focusing on behaviour change. Sub-national

structures have already begun engaging key stakeholders such as traditional, political and religious leaders to ensure that the message cascades down to the grassroots.

6. Pertaining to cross border movement, entry through land borders will only be permissible for citizens and returning residents upon production of valid Covid-19 Free Certificates issued within 48 hours. There shall be no exit of travellers through land border posts except for commercial and transit cargo transporting essential goods and services. It must be reiterated that only International Airports remain open to ordinary travellers for both exit and entry in which entry clearances are subject to strict production of Covid-19 Free Certificates. Government wishes to advise Zimbabweans abroad that use of fake Covid19 certificates not only puts your own loved ones at risk, but perpetrators are liable to prosecution.
7. Moving onto Government employees, The Public Service Commission has put in place measures to ensure safety of its workforce including streamlining the size of essential services workforce expected to be physically at work to 30% across Ministries. Face to face meetings have been suspended meanwhile strict Covid-19 protocols on PSC buses will be enforced. Knock-off time for Government employees shall be 15.00hrs.
8. Members of the public, entities in essential services such as mining, communication and telecommunication, agriculture production and security companies are advised that movement and exemption letters will now be issued by the respective line Ministries.

May I once again take this opportunity to reiterate the Acting President's call which said "We all have the responsibility to adhere to set guidelines. When we work together against the pandemic, we will save lives and ensure a healthy and productive citizenry". We all have a collective responsibility to ensure our personal safety, safety of our loved ones and that of the nation at large. We can stop covid19, let us all play our part. Social and physical distancing, staying at home, masking up

ones and that of the nation at large. We can stop covid19, let us all play our part. Social and physical distancing, staying at home, masking up and personal hygiene including sanitising and frequently washing our hands with soap and running water will do the trick.

Good Evening and God bless Zimbabwe. I thank you

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'J Muswere', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Hon J Muswere

Acting Minister of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services

05/01/21