

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



THE PRESIDENCY

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB  
ON THE OCCASION OF THE 15TH COVID-19 MEDIA BRIEFING:  
COUNTRYWIDE MIGRATION TO STAGE 3 UNDER STATE OF EMERGENCY  
& ADDITIONAL MEASURES FOR THE WALVIS BAY, SWAKOPMUND,  
ARANDIS, WINDHOEK, OKAHANDJA AND REHOBOTH LOCAL AUTHORITY  
AREAS

12 AUGUST 2020

WINDHOEK

\*check against delivery

Good Afternoon,

Since the onset of this pandemic, the world passed the milestone of 20 million COVID-19 cases. Also, in the last week, Africa passed the mark of one million confirmed cases. More than half of those are in South Africa, putting our region of Southern Africa at particular risk. We are seeing cases rise rapidly.

More cases have been recorded during the month of July than any previous month, and August is projected to have more cases in our country. The last time I spoke on this matter at this platform, I stated that it took our country 4 months to reach 1000 cases and then only 14 days to reach 2,000 cases. It has now taken only 11 days to reach 3,000 cases in the country. Just as the rate of infection is accelerating, we continue to invest in our ability to respond and adapt national response measures to mitigate increasing risk.

Government is monitoring the evolving situation in the country on a daily basis, including the efficacy of measures being implemented to combat the pandemic. There are now confirmed cases in all 14 regions across the country. We are updating our models and projections to track the reality on the ground versus expectations. We must take informed decisions to safeguard both lives and livelihoods.

With the increased testing capacities commissioned last week at Windhoek, Walvis Bay and Oshakati, we can now detect the cases quickly. New cases in Windhoek have more than doubled over the past 5 days and are now outnumbering Walvis Bay, Swakopmund and the rest of the country. I am especially concerned about the number of healthcare workers who are becoming infected. There are at least 60 healthcare workers who have already been infected. We must do everything necessary to ensure the adequate provision of Personal Protective Equipment for all frontline workers in the country, at all times, so that they can continue to safely serve the nation.

I urge all citizens to appreciate the sacrifices our heroes are making and we must honour them with commensurate conduct and adherence to Health and Hygiene Protocols. The country recorded a total number of 3,406 confirmed cases. Thus, unfortunately the toll of COVID-19 related deaths continues to rise and 22 Namibians have passed away. The virus is spreading within our communities and has spared no race, ethnicity, age or class. At this juncture, I express our deepest condolences to the bereaved families.

Fellow Namibians,

On 29 June 2020, thirteen (13) Regions of the country migrated to STAGE 4 level of restriction under the COVID-19 State of Emergency. Erongo Region remained under STAGE 3, with restrictions put in place for Walvis Bay, Swakopmund and Arandis Local Authority Areas, where community transmission was detected.

Given the increasing number and distribution of cases across the country, there is now what can be classified as clustered community transmission, which warrants adjustment to our national level of response. This is consistent with our national response strategy - which is to migrate between Stages of restriction, depending on the changing situation in the country and our decision to implement targeted and localized responses to contain clustered outbreaks.

To suppress the further spread of COVID-19 as observed in recent weeks and after an in-depth study of the current situation, the Government has decided to adjust our COVID-19 interventions by migrating the entire country to STAGE 3 of the COVID-19 State of Emergency. Interventions will include targeted measures for specific localities in some parts of the country. Migration to STAGE 3 will have a bearing on the Tourism Revival Initiative, whose modalities were being worked out in recent weeks. The line Ministers will provide more details on these measures as approved by Cabinet.

These have not been easy decisions to take, but they are necessary. The measures being put in place have one singular objective - to suppress the spread of COVID-19, so as to protect the lives of Namibians. The confirmation of clustered community transmissions is of great concern. If left unchecked, this pandemic will be catastrophic for our country in terms of lives lost, the economy and increased physical suffering due to illness.

We are aware that the economy is hurting and this is why we cannot afford to take these measures lightly. All of us must play our part in the interest of our families, communities and the nation at large. Let us take personal responsibility to adhere to all measures for the good of our health, our economy and our future. None of us should do anything that will aid the spread of the virus in our country. The increasing numbers should remind us all that it is up to each and every one of us to make a difference.

The measures under STAGE 3 will come into force from midnight tonight, Wednesday 12 August 2020, for a period of 16 days, until 28 August 2020.

I Thank You