

NOTE : There are 2 new cases, to bring the total to 13 Confirmed in Namibia. However these 2 New Cases were not confirmed when the statement was prepared and released.



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

**STATEMENT BY DR. KALUMBI SHANGULA (MP), MINISTER OF HEALTH
AND SOCIAL SERVICES ON THE OCCASION OF A PRESS BRIEFING ON
COVID-19 IN NAMIBIA**

1 APRIL 2020

STATE HOUSE

**Check Against Delivery*

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Your Excellency, The President

Right Hon. Prime Minister

Hon Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of International Relations and Cooperation

Hon Ministers and Deputy Ministers

Members of the Media

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I wish to remind ourselves that Namibia is in a State of Emergency which was declared by H.E. The President of the 17th March 2020. Subsequently, The President issued Proclamation 9 of 2020 that defines parameters under which we have to operate during the currency of the State of Emergency.
2. Namibia continues to confront the threat posed by COVID-19. This situation demands the co-operation of all Namibians from all works of life. Government is mindful of the fact that the measures introduced recently as part of the State of Emergency, will have far-reaching effects on the lives of our people in all parts of the country. These measures are put in place to enable our country to combat the further spread of COVID-19 in our communities, and specifically to prevent community transmission of the disease.
3. Those with access to television, social and other forms of media can bear witness to the devastation that covid-19 has unleashed in different parts of the world. Our aim is to ensure that Namibia does not reach such a stage. It is for this reason that the steps we are taking are important and absolutely necessary. In this regard, the Ministry calls on all Namibians to co-operate fully and to comply with the guidelines that are being implemented by officials from the Ministry of Health and Social Services, the Namibian Defence Force and the Namibian Police and other public authorities. We need to co-operate for the sake of our nation and for the sake of our own health.
4. As part of the ongoing activities the Ministry will, in the coming weeks, enhance testing for COVID-19, especially for persons with respiratory ailments. In addition, we will undertake active case detection by expanding the scope of work of Community Health Workers. We do this in order to determine the extent of community transmission in Namibia. Our focus will be on the three Regions with confirmed COVID-19 cases, namely, Karas, Khomas and Erongo Regions. At this juncture, I wish to specifically caution the nation to be weary of the *infodemic* of fake news. It has become a disturbing trend that fake news is spread with frequent regularity. This causes unnecessary public angst and panic. It undermines the sterling work being done by our dedicated health workers who are on the frontline in this battle. Our energies should be directed at concrete measures to contain the spread of the coronavirus in our communities.

5. The Ministry of Health and Social Services will continue to provide regular updates on the COVID-19 epidemic to the nation. As I informed the nation on 29th of March 2020, there are currently eleven (11) confirmed COVID-19 cases in Namibia as follow:

- one (1) in //Karas
- two (2) in Erongo and
- eight (8) in Khomas Region.

Out of the 11 cases, one (1) is a local transmission between Case No. 8 and Case No 3. The remainder are all imported. There were reports of a confirmed case missing. I want to give an unequivocal assurance that all the positive cases are accounted for and all are under active monitoring.

6. Our medical professionals are doing great work to treat patients admitted for confirmed COVID-19 cases. The only patient who was admitted in the hospital tested negative on two consecutive tests and was discharged on the 31st March 2020. This is Case No. 3 who will soon be going to his home country as a healthy person. The other ten confirmed cases are in stable conditions. To us as a Ministry, this is a great achievement and an important milestone.

7. To date, the number of suspected COVID-19 samples taken in Namibia and submitted to laboratories in Namibia and South Africa for testing stand at 306. Of these, one hundred and fifty (150) were submitted to the Namibia Institute of Pathology (NIP) and 156 were submitted to PathCare, which in turn sent the samples to South Africa for testing. Out of all the samples received to date, 265 have been tested. Of these, 111 samples were tested by NIP and 154 by PathCare. All the results have been received.

8. As of this morning, twenty-two (22) samples were collected for testing. The results are as follow:

- Three (3) are inconclusive and tests will be repeated;
- Nineteen (19) are negative;
- Zero positive.

9. The Team responsible for contact tracing is actively following up with all contacts of all positive and suspected cases to ensure proper quarantine and monitoring for symptoms.

Your Excellency,

Allow me to briefly clarify the issue of inbound delivery trucks.

10. Inbound trucks are managed at the border by the following government structures:
 - 10.1. The **immigration officials** carry out enhanced and thorough immigration functions as per prescribed standard practice.
 - 10.2. The **customs officials** carry out enhanced and thorough immigration functions as per prescribed standard practice.
 - 10.3. The **public health officials** do thorough screening at the borders.

- 10.4. After all the procedures have been completed at the borders, the truck drivers receive a proof of clearance by the immigration officials before proceeding to the final destination.
- 10.5. At the check points, the truck drivers present proof of clearance to the law enforcement officers at the points of entry into the lockdown region. No any other procedures are to be carried out at the check points.
- 10.6. Upon arrival at the final destination, the following need to happen:
- The public health official is informed and arrive at the destination point.
 - The truck owner shall arrange for the quarantine of the truck driver.
 - The public health official ensures compliance with the quarantine regime with the assistance of the Namibia Police.
11. We have a team of dedicated and committed health professionals who are involved in COVID-19 response both in public as well as in private health sectors and are working beyond the call of duty. As they are working in a risky environment, we need to give them encouragement. As a Ministry we provide for their temporary stay when they get exposed and provide means for them including transport to carry out their duty. They are playing a vital role.
12. I would also like to express our appreciation for the fact that the private health sector is forthcoming and partnering with the Ministry in this response. Individuals and corporate entities are joining this response. I would like to acknowledge them all.
13. We have received with great concern reports on non compliance with the measures of the State of Emergency. We are informed that mass gatherings are still taking place especially when it comes to funerals and church gatherings. Some unscrupulous individuals are using dubious ways to brew and consume alcohol. I would appeal to their conscience to observe the State of Emergency measures as these measures are applicable to the whole country and are meant to protect us all.

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