

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY
HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA,
COVID-19 UPDATE ON ADDITIONAL MEASURES FOR THE WALVIS BAY,
SWAKOPMUND & ARANDIS LOCAL AUTHORITY AREAS**

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STATE HOUSE

Check Against Delivery

Good afternoon, fellow Namibians.

As of today, 485 COVID-19 cases have been confirmed in Namibia since the Index Case on 13 March 2020. Of the total number of cases confirmed nationally, 436 (or 90 percent) are from the Erongo region, with 391 of these cases specifically in Walvis Bay. With 81 percent share of the total cases reported countrywide, it is clear that the local authority area of Walvis Bay has become the epicenter of the spread of coronavirus in our country.

Therefore, I have convened this Media Briefing to announce additional measures, necessary for the Local Authority Areas of Walvis Bay, Swakopmund and Arandis, which have been placed under a special dispensation during the COVID-19 State of Emergency. The introduction of these measures is done with the sole objective of containing the spread of disease within and beyond these three towns.

Furthermore, Namibia's rate of new infections is accelerating rapidly.

Over the last 7 days, 303 new cases have been confirmed, of which 294 are from Walvis Bay. While the remaining 8 cases were reported in other regions, 6 of these are travel related to Walvis Bay, as I have stated. This morning we reported the highest number of new infections – with 73 new cases confirmed. Of these, 72 are from Walvis Bay and one from the Khomas Region, but with a travel history from Walvis Bay.

Other towns and localities where new cases have been recently confirmed include: Karasburg in the //Karas Region, Katima Mulilo in the Zambezi Region, Engela in the Ohangwena Region, Oshakati in the Oshana Region, Swakopmund in the Erongo Region and Windhoek in the Khomas Region.

We are recording different types of transmission, in the different towns. At Swakopmund we are mitigating a cluster of cases (where most cases have been locally transmitted but can be traced to chains of transmission). What is frightening is that

there is community transmission at Walvis Bay. To date, in other parts of the country, we recorded sporadic cases.

I wish to assure the nation that government is closely monitoring the unfolding situation in the country, as well as the effectiveness of measures being implemented to combat the pandemic.

The evidence before us reveals that Namibia is dealing with two very distinct COVID-19 situations, the one prevailing at Walvis Bay and the rest of the country. It is, therefore, necessary to apply rational and targeted interventions to respond effectively to both situations. The rising number of cases at Walvis Bay warrants additional containment measures to slow the rate of transmission and prevent the disease from spreading beyond the three Local Authority Areas.

To decongest informal settlements in the three local authority areas, the Ministry of Urban and Rural Development, together with the Regional and Local Authorities will identify suitable venues or facilities with adequate provision of water and ablution facilities, where residents can be temporarily relocated. In this regard and as stated previously, I have requested the Governor to investigate the feasibility of using the unallocated Mass Houses at both Swakopmund and Walvis Bay to place people there.

The Governor has reported that 60 Mass Houses are available at Walvis Bay and 100 at Swakopmund. We will determine how to utilize those for this purpose.

Fellow Namibians,

There is no evidence at the moment of transmission of the virus within the community, in the rest of the country. The current STAGE 4 measures will therefore be maintained for all 13 regions with exception of the Erongo region, which remains under STAGE 3.

Work to finalize preparations for the announced Tourism Revival Initiative is ongoing, further modalities will be communicated. We want to be meticulous in the execution of this initiative, so as to safeguard our public health gains in the other regions of the

country and deliver on our intended objective of reviving the Tourism and Hospitality sectors.

In conclusion,

We are fully aware that restrictions on the movement of people and the lockdowns necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic have had an adverse effect on our economy. However, Namibia's incidence curve for COVID-19 cases has risen sharply in recent weeks. Flattening this sharp rise, will now more than ever, require Government to remain firm and responsive to the changing realities on the ground.

Similarly, our communities and each and every Namibian should take responsibility for personal safety and compliance, for our country to successfully contain and suppress the spread of this disease.

In this regard Government will continue to disseminate relevant information, in all languages, so as to empower our People with the correct information and knowledge.

Let us also look out for one another during this trying time and keep our Brothers and Sisters who have been diagnosed positive for COVID-19, in our prayers for a speedy recovery. Let me reiterate that we endeavour, to the best of our abilities, to suppress the spread of this disease, by practicing good hand hygiene, frequent sanitizing and practicing Physical and Social Distancing

I now invite the Minister of Health to announce the remaining measures under this special dispensation for the three Local Authority Areas.

I thank you.