

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY
HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB
ON THE OCCASSION OF THE 31st COVID-19 PUBLIC BRIEFING ON
THE NATIONAL RESPONSE MEASURES**

15 JULY 2021

WINDHOEK

Check Against Delivery

Fellow Namibians, good morning.

The country has crossed two significant milestones over the past 14-day observance period. We have exceeded 100,000 cumulative cases and over 2,000 deaths have been recorded due to COVID-19 and related illness.

As of 14 July, a total of one-hundred-and-eight-thousand-seven-hundred-and-eighty-five (108,785) Namibians have at some point contracted and been infected with the COVID-19, over the course of the past 16 months. Encouragingly, 75 percent have recovered, while twenty-four-thousand-six-hundred-and-seventy (24,670) are still infected. We remember in prayer, all those who are ill, battling for their lives, and the countless families, who mourn the loss of their loved ones. May you all be comforted.

True character is revealed in times of crisis. I thank all Namibians, our healthcare and frontline workers, for their tireless, daily sacrifices which they selflessly render for the common good. Let us continue to wage this war, unrelentingly in the face of adversity, unflinchingly when confronted by fear. Let us fight for the ultimate gifts of human life and health.

Notwithstanding the countrywide tightening of restrictions, to suppress the spread of the disease, the rate of transmission and positivity ratio remains high, averaging 41 percent over the past 2 weeks. This situation, left unabated, can become unmanageable. We can therefore protect our healthcare system from becoming overwhelmed, by reducing the rate of transmission. We protect our own lives and the healthcare system, by Social Distancing, keeping no less than 2meters between persons in public spaces; wearing of face masks; washing and sanitizing our hands regularly. The disease does not move unless we do, which increases our risk of walking into it. We should therefore avoid unnecessary movement and stay at home.

Vaccination remains an important and effective tool in limiting the chances of severe illness, hospitalization and death.

The national vaccination rate, for persons fully vaccinated, currently stands at 1.3 percent of total population, while 5 percent have received the first dose. As we strive towards inoculating 1,5 million Namibians to reach herd immunity, I call upon all Namibians who are eligible, to get vaccinated and help to save lives. Vaccination is an important defence in our war against COVID-19.

Over the past 2 weeks, 18,148 new cases were recorded, of which the Khomas region accounted for the highest share, with 20 percent of new cases in the country. The Erongo region recorded 15 percent of new infections, while the Otjozondjupa and Oshana regions recorded 9 percent share of new infections, each.

We are monitoring the rising incidence curve in the Oshana and Kavango East regions. Notably, 29 percent of fatalities during this period have occurred in the Khomas region, followed by the Erongo, Omaheke and Otjozondjupa regions and it is important to highlight that 55 percent of fatalities were recorded among people above the age of 60 years. Let us therefore shield the elderly and vulnerable members of our community. Those willing, should be prioritised to receive vaccination. During this time of crisis, ensuring healthcare access to those who need it most, requires an innovative approach.

With a rising number of cases reported to be succumbing at home, before presenting to health facilities, I was pleased to learn of the Rehoboth community-led response, which is providing home-care for COVID-19 affected community members, through the assistance of volunteering medical practitioners. I encourage other towns and regions who may be experiencing a sharp rise in incidence, to adopt a similar approach, of course in consultation with the Ministry of Health.

The Cabinet has assessed the impact of the current measures and has resolved, based on key indicators, to maintain and extend the current Public Health Regulations, from midnight tonight, Thursday 15 July 2021, for a period of sixteen (16) days until 31 July 2021.

Fellow Namibians,

It has been said that great challenges present opportunity for growth. Anticipated disruptions to the supply chains of essential goods and services in the Republic of South Africa, may present an opportunity to bolster our domestic capacity. Accelerated efforts are underway to, among others, increase local oxygen generating capacity through an investment by the GIPF and to fast-track the manufacturing of coffins locally, through the Ministry of Industrialisation & Trade and National Planning Commission. Such renewed investments should remain viable beyond this particular crisis, thereby creating new opportunities for our young people.

It is said that, it is in times of trouble that one knows who their true friends are. As I move to a close, I would like to use this opportunity to express sincere gratitude for the prompt response, by the following countries, to our appeal for support, rendered through the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism:

1. The Federal Republic of Germany delivered one of three consignments consisting of: 300,000 protective gowns; 60 high-care beds; 40,000 rapid tests; 20,000 protective eyewear and 500,000 face masks. A further 15 million masks, 50 ventilators and Astra Zeneca vaccines have been pledged to Namibia by the German Government.
2. The United States of America pledged to donate 168,000 doses of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine to us;

3. The Republic of Finland delivered 2,3 million face masks, testing swabs and protective gear and equipment.
4. The Kingdom of Norway pledged 3,2 million face masks, 3 million gloves and 1 million protective gowns; and
5. The Kingdom of Belgium, has pledged to donate 125,600 face masks.

We thank our friends for these acts of solidarity. After all, the world will only be safe for all of us, once all nations of the world have defeated COVID-19.

I now call upon the Ministers of Health, Justice, Education and the Attorney General to elaborate or provide further clarification on the technical issues.

Thank you.