

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



THE PRESIDENCY

STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT
DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB AT A MEDIA BRIEFING ON THE PARTIAL LIFTING OF
THE LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS

APRIL 30, 2020

WINDHOEK

Check Against Delivery

Fellow Namibians,

Following the first confirmed cases of COVID-19 in our country, I declared a State of Emergency on 17 March 2020. Government took bold and decisive measures to contain further spread of the Coronavirus. Since 28 March 2020, our country has been on Lockdown, which started with the partial lockdown of Erongo and Khomas Regions, including the local authority areas of Okahandja and Rehoboth, which Lockdown was extended countrywide from 18 April 2020.

The cases recorded in Namibia have all been classified as sporadic. The incidence curve flattened at 16 cases, with 8 recoveries. I wish the 8 remaining people a speedy recovery.

We are thankful that there have been no community transmissions to this end and zero deaths recorded in Namibia so far.

I have indicated that the health of Namibians remains our greatest priority. Our prompt action to close all points of entry and issue comprehensive restrictions on the movement of people, has therefore helped to contain the spread of disease. While we recognize that these extraordinary measures have caused great disruptions to our daily lives, they were necessary and effective. I therefore urge all Namibians to continue to comply with the Regulations.

Although the number of cases has remained static for 25 days, this does not mean that the current Measures must be lifted completely and suddenly.

Today Cabinet met to review the status of COVID-19 in Namibia and deliberated on how to reopen the economy, without reversing the gains made. The countrywide lockdown will lapse at midnight on Monday the 4th May 2020. Based on our experience, available data and gauging our level of national preparedness, there is merit to relax some of the restrictions. As we prepare to gradually reopen social and economic activities, a balance must be found between protecting life, mental health and livelihoods.

The State of Emergency declared on 17 March 2020 will remain in force for a period of 6 months and may be extended, subject to the changing country situation. In conformity with global guidelines on the national response to COVID-19, Namibia has adopted 4 stages of restrictions.

STAGE 1 is the current situation of a countrywide lockdown for a period of 38 days, from 28 March until midnight, 04 May 2020.

STAGE 2 will be a gradual re-opening under Strict Precautions, from Tuesday 05 May 2020 to 2nd June 2020.

STAGE 3 will see more Moderate Precautions and could come into effect from the 2nd of June 2020 to 30 June 2020.

The final STAGE 4 from 30 June 2020 will introduce a New Normal and could last until the end of the State of Emergency.

Each Stage of restriction will have an average observance period of two incubation periods, which is 28 days.

With the end of STAGE 1 at midnight on the 04th of May 2020, I wish to announce that STAGE 2 will come into force for 28 days from 05 May 2020 to 01 June 2020.

During STAGE 2 the following measures will apply to all Namibians:

1. All members of the public are required to wear facemasks in public spaces. Government will assist vulnerable persons to acquire masks.
2. People will be permitted to travel domestically between regions and within towns and cities, without restriction.

3. Our borders will remain closed for non-Namibians but returning Namibians will be permitted to re-enter the country, subject to screening at points of entry and supervised quarantine for 14 days.
4. Businesses and productive activities, unless prohibited will be permitted to reopen, subject to responsible personal and organizational conduct and in compliance with the prescribed Health & Hygiene Guidelines.
5. In addition to fulfilling the established protocols, the following businesses will be allowed to resume, subject to specified conditions:
 - Shopping Malls and Retail Outlets.
 - Restaurants to continue operating on a take-away basis as before. Buying and selling of alcohol is prohibited.
 - Kapana traders may only operate for takeaway and private consumption.
 - Beauty, Hair Dressers & Barbers subject to proper personal protective equipment.
 - Laundromats and Tailors: subject to proper personal protective equipment.
6. The following activities are deemed to be high-risk under the circumstances and will not be permitted to resume activity during STAGE 2. These are:
 - a. Theatres and cinemas;
 - b. Gyms and exercise centres;
 - c. Contact sports and sporting events;
 - d. Gambling houses and nightclubs;
 - e. Liquor outlets, Bars and Shebeens;
 - f. Entertainment events and concerts;
 - g. Seminars, Conferences, Workshops and Summits.

7. The buying and selling of alcohol remains prohibited throughout the country.
8. The progression from one Stage to another will be informed by developments on the cases and the details of Stages may change. As such, before we move into a subsequent Stage, review will be undertaken to enable Government to agree on what activities will be allowed.
9. The Stage 3 and Stage 4 in terms of timelines are indicative and intended to assist with business planning. The actual duration of each stage may be reduced or extended, subject to monitoring reports and the changing situation in the country. The tentative activities for Stages 3 and 4 are available in a document.

In conclusion,

This were immensely difficult few weeks for all of us. These extraordinary measures have disrupted our lives. The fight against COVID-19 will not be a sprint. It will be a marathon that will demand our collective endurance. We must therefore summon the courage to wage an enduring battle and prevail against this invisible enemy.

I commend the perseverance of Namibians from all walks of life and thank you for your cooperation.

Thank You.