

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



**STATEMENT BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR. HAGE G. GEINGOB, PRESIDENT OF THE
REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA, ON THE IMPOSITION OF STAGE 1 RESTRICTIONS TO
THE ERONGO REGION**

08 JUNE 2020

STATE HOUSE

****Check Against Delivery***

Fellow Namibians,

Good Afternoon. As you are aware, Government is seized with ongoing efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in our country. The health situation remains dynamic, requiring equally dynamic interventions to suppress the risk of exponential spread of the disease. I thank each and every person who has made sacrifices in the fight against COVID-19. Those sacrifices have been difficult to endure, especially the economic hardships.

Although we are managing the coronavirus in Namibia, we all remain vulnerable. We have not defeated this virus yet and the battle is ongoing, as new cases continue to be reported. Although we are experiencing great socio-economic challenges, we have yet to experience death as a result of COVID-19. As leaders we will continue to do everything in our power to limit the impact of this pandemic.

As of 07 June 2020, Namibia has recorded 29 confirmed cases, of which 8 cases are from Erongo Region. 7 of the cases were reported within the last two weeks. Case No. 21 is that of a truck driver who breached quarantine regulations and may have been in contact with other members of the community. Fifty nine (59) contacts have been identified so far. Tracing of contacts was initiated and is ongoing. It is a meticulous process to ensure that no contact is left unidentified and untraced.

Case number No. 22 is that of a fish trader who plies the seas between Namibia and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. He is currently admitted to a private health facility in Walvis Bay, under intensive care. He has had contact with various members of the community. This poses a possibility of the transmission of the virus to others. Contact tracing has also commenced and is ongoing.

Case No. 26 is that of an employee of the private health facility where case No. 22 is admitted. This case too, has had contact with several people in and around Walvis Bay. So far, fifteen (15) contacts have been identified and traced. If not handled correctly, this could increase possibilities for community transmission of the virus. The risk profile for the spread of COVID-19 in Erongo Region warrants specific attention.

Furthermore, based on observation regarding the current lock down in the Walvis Bay Local Authority Area, members of the public are not adhering to lockdown measures. Therefore, the potential for community spread and the risk level for Walvis Bay and surrounding towns, is high. This necessitates more stringent measures to curb the spread beyond Walvis Bay.

For these reasons, I hereby inform the nation that STAGE 1 restrictions will be extended to the entire Erongo Region, for a period of 14 days, effective from midnight tonight, 8 June 2020 until midnight 22 June 2020. This time will be utilized to conduct expansive testing in the area surrounding the known cases. The Ministry will also expand the search for contacts to Secondary Contacts. We are working to avoid imposing national lockdowns, by effecting prompt and targeted, localized interventions.

We know that elderly Namibians are more vulnerable to this virus. I therefore direct all Old Age Homes in the Erongo Region to be placed under isolation. Caregivers should have the appropriate Personal Protective Equipment.

As a result of steps already taken, Namibia has the opportunity to contain possible community transmission within identified geographic areas and prevent the uncontrolled spread of infection throughout the country. We aim

to possibly stop the spread altogether, through effective detection, quarantine, testing and treatment.

I understand the economic hardships we are facing as a nation are devastating, but I am convinced the cost of inaction, allowing the virus to spread unfettered through our communities would be even more devastating. The restrictive measures are temporary and I ask each and every resident to work with the authorities. If we lose control now, these measures will be put in place for much longer time and that is a scenario we are working to avoid. Therefore, we need every citizen to comply with the Regulations, to achieve this shared goal.

Government is committed to restarting our economy. However, this cannot be achieved if the virus is spreading from person to person, community to community. We must control the spread of infection, with a view to stopping it, in order to resume economic activity optimally. We can maintain our health in a way that protects our families, communities and also creates a safe environment to welcome tourists back, as soon as possible. I thank each and every one of you in advance for committing to adhere to this lockdown. It is not easy, but it is necessary.

Let us not to jeopardize the progress we have made in the past several months. Government will use the time of the extended lockdown in Erongo Region to strengthen our defenses and our ability to care for affected communities.

I reiterate that safeguarding the health of Namibians is our number one priority. Therefore, we will continue adhering to this process and protect the people of Namibia, to the best of our ability.

I thank you.

