

## ED extends lockdown... as Delta variant hits Zim

Newsday by Miriam Mangwaya

July 14, 2021



Photo added from Internet, photo credit: Reuters

GOVERNMENT yesterday extended the level 4 lockdown by two more weeks and deferred the reopening of schools, as the country recorded an 80% prevalence of the vicious Delta COVID-19 variant.

Announcing the fresh lockdown measures, President Emmerson Mnangagwa said his administration was targeting one million people for vaccination against the virus during the extended two-week lockdown period.

He said approximately 80% of the fresh COVID-19 cases in the country were of the Delta variant.

On Monday, 2 681 people tested positive to the virus while 59 others succumbed to the respiratory disease.

The number of active cases stood at 21 258.

“Our vaccination programme remains one of the most successful in Africa,” Mnangagwa said.

“The Delta variant of COVID-19 is now circulating in Zimbabwe. Approximately 80% of the fresh COVID-19 cases in Zimbabwe are of the Delta variant.”

The Delta variant, which originated in India, has been described as one of the most virulent that killed over 4 000 people daily in the Asian country.

Addressing a post-Cabinet media briefing yesterday, Information minister Monica Mutsvangwa said the national COVID-19 vaccination programme was now open to everyone, but frontline personnel would be prioritised at vaccination centres.

“The nation is advised that the surge reported the previous week continued, with a total of 11 751 cases recorded during the period under review, compared to 8 042 cases reported the previous week. The country remains under level 4 lockdown following the surge in COVID-19 cases,” Mutsvangwa said.

“The surge in cases has led to an increase in demand for beds, hence government is expediting the full capacitation of isolation and treatment centres throughout the country.”

She said Treasury had released funds for the enforcement of the lockdown measures to effectively contain the spread of the respiratory disease.

“Regarding resource mobilization, the nation is informed that Treasury released an amount of \$368,5 million to the ministries of Home Affairs and Cultural Heritage; and Defence and War Veterans Affairs, with an additional \$41 million to be released to the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services,” Mutsvangwa said.

She said Chinese Sinopharm and Sinovac COVID-19 vaccines were now available on the Covax platform and government would take advantage of the African Union facility to boost local supplies of the vaccines.

Following reports of delays in the delivery of grain by farmers, Mutsvangwa said Cabinet had directed that farmers would not be required to produce COVID-19 vaccination certificates when delivering maize to the Grain Marketing Board.

Cabinet also reported that the Vehicle Inspectorate Department and police had escalated enforcement of lockdown measures for public transport operations, including a ban of intercity travel.

<https://www.newsday.co.zw/2021/07/ed-extends-lockdown-as-delta-variant-hits-zim/>