



Interfaith Council for National Response to Corona Virus Pandemic

**Press Release
27th March 2021**

Dear Kenyans,

In spite of our great hopes, the third wave of the Covid infections has not abated its aggression. As His Excellency the President has expressed in his speech, we are now at a very critical point. On one hand because the cases are increasing and the number of deaths rising, and on the other, that we are close to the limit of the capacity of our health facilities. In the light of these new circumstances, we find ourselves compelled to review the directives we issued just a week ago.

Following the directives given by His Excellency the President in his 26th March address, we would like to clarify and give direction on how the places of worship will comply, within these directives:

1. In the Counties where a lockdown has been ordered, these are Nairobi, Kajiado, Kiambu, Machakos and Nakuru Counties, the prohibition of gathering includes worship gatherings. We therefore will not have in-person worship for the period of the restriction.
2. Therefore, in the areas where total restriction has been imposed, we will revert to on-line worship.
3. This will mean that each faith community will organize to have their worship relayed online for the benefit of the congregants.
4. The leaders of the various worship services will be allowed to run the on-line service, with the number of people needed for the transmission, that should not exceed 15 persons. These should not exceed one hour. This is for the weekly day of Worship.
5. The same can apply where possible for daily transmissions of worship services.

6. All other gatherings of worshippers also stand suspended for the time being.
7. The religious communities with their leaders will find innovative ways to continue giving hope, especially to the sick or bereaved with their families, as well as spiritual and human support to the congregants, using the available means of communication.
8. These directives will apply even for the holy celebrations of Easter, Ramadhan and Hindu feasts that fall within this period of restrictions.
9. In the regions where restrictions have not been imposed, we will continue with the stringent compliance that we gave in our last communication, as we continue to monitor the situation.
10. We should restrict the number of congregants strictly following the 1.5m social distancing.
11. All measures of hygiene MUST BE followed: Washing of hands or Sanitization, before and after the service; Strict Social Distancing of 1.5m when seated or when moving; sanitization of Microphones; and most important of all, the proper wearing of face masks over the nose and mouth, throughout the service. The masks should be worn even when talking to the Microphone.
12. All the elderly persons over 65 years and those with comorbidities should worship from home.
13. We should use all occasions to sensitize and convince our congregants of the real threat of a total crisis should we not take seriously our responsibility to comply with the guidelines and protocols issued by the Interfaith Council and the Ministry of Health.
14. Funerals will be carried out with full adherence to the same guidelines, but with a maximum attendance of 50 persons. They should also not exceed 60 minutes.
15. Weddings will also have to adhere with the guidelines with a cap of 30 participants.
16. Besides the Hygiene indications, great care should be observed in the regions not under restrictions, in the upcoming Holy festivities of Easter and Ramadhan, to truly reduce the number of congregants by offering more services with reduced numbers. Faith communities should be encouraged to revive online services.

We are aware that the current Covid-19 surge has greatly interfered with our normal worship traditions, but we also believe that saving lives comes ahead of our aspirations to our normal worship.

We urge our Religious leaders to help the congregants understand the reasons behind these strict measures. We also ask you to remain close to all health workers in this time when they are being stretched as the health facilities become more and more strained. They continue being our heroes. Our prayers and condolences go to all those who have lost their loved ones. We also accompany in prayer all those now going through trying times due to illness or the illness of a loved one.

Finally, we wish to still encourage all Religious leaders and all Kenyans to also seek the extra defense offered by the vaccines. By being vaccinated, we are not only protecting ourselves from severe illness, but also protecting our community by reducing infection spread.

Again, let us not fail to pray intensely for an end to this terrible pandemic. With a common voice let us make special prayers, according to our faith tradition, especially in this critical time.

May God bless you all!



Archbishop Anthony Muheria
Chairman, Interfaith Council