



THE FIFTEENTH [15TH] PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS ON THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

FRIDAY

26TH MARCH, 2021

STATE HOUSE
NAIROBI

Fellow Kenyans,

1. The last time I addressed you on **the COVID-19** pandemic, was on **Friday, 12 March this Year**. I did not intend to speak on this matter until the measures we took on March 12th, 2021 lapses **in 30 days to 60 days**.

2. Today, **14 days later**, I have been compelled by **medical and empirical evidence** to revise the measures we took on **March 12th**, this Year.



3. The number of COVID-19 confirmed cases in January 2021 was **4,380**; this has now shot to **15,916** confirmed cases by 21st March 2021. At the end of January 2021, our COVID-19 **positivity rate** stood at **2.6%**. By **Monday 22nd March 2021**, the positivity rate had jumped to **19%**; and indications by our experts is that the positivity rate is now settling at **22%**.

4. What this means is that, if you test **100 Kenyans** for COVID today, **20 will be positive; compared to January this Year**, when only **2** would have been **positive**. This tells us that our rate of infection has gone up **10 times** between **January** and **March 2021**. Indeed, it is a clear indication of a new trend, that now Kenya is squarely in the grip of a third wave of the Pandemic.

5. In terms of geographical impact, Nairobi County accounts for **close to 60%** of the recorded cases. What this means is that, out of every **10 positive** cases countrywide, **six (6) are from Nairobi**. In other words if we took a random sample of **five (5) people** in Nairobi and tested them



for COVID, **three (3) are likely to be positive.** This **unfortunate turn of events calls for urgent and drastic measures.**

Fellow Kenyans,

6. What is even more worrying is the rising death rate from COVID. **Between** January and February 2021, three (3) people died every day from COVID; in March 2021, the number has gone up to **seven (7)** every day, the highest since this pandemic hit us.

7. Equally worrisome is how this COVID crisis has **TESTED** our **health system.** Over the last one month, we have experienced a steep and sustained rise in the number of admissions for COVID-19 across the country.

8. Since my last address to the nation on 12th March, **7,630** Kenyans have been admitted into our hospitals for COVID-19. Yet before my address to the nation on March 12th, **4,990** Kenyans had been admitted. In 13 days only, our admission rate increased by **52%.**



9. In the month of **January 2021**, an average of **20** Kenyans were in **Intensive Care Units**, needing **Oxygen**. This number went up to just under **30** persons in the **month of February**. Since my address on 12th of March, over **950** Kenyans were in ICU wards for COVID related complications.

10. This confirms the fact that a **Third Wave of COVID-19** is at hand in Kenya. The **positivity rate** is at its highest since the pandemic hit us; the **death rate** is devastating by all measures; and the **stress** the pandemic is placing on our **health system** is unparalleled.

11. Indeed, according to our **health experts**, our third wave began to gain **momentum** at the beginning of **March 2021**. This wave is expected to peak in the **next 30 days** with more than **2,500 to 3,000** cases reported daily.

12. Based on experience, this peak will **flatten only by Mid-May 2021**, which is about **60 days from now**.



Fellow Kenyans,

13. To avert a **national health crisis** and upon the advice of the National Security Council, the Council of Governors, and also in keeping with the recommendations of the National Emergency Response Committee on COVID-19, I hereby issue **the Public Order No. 2 of 2021 on the Coronavirus Pandemic**, as follows:

- I.** That fully conscious that 70% of Kenya's reported cases of COVID-19 have been recorded in the Counties of **Nairobi, Kajiado, Machakos, Kiambu** and **Nakuru**, those Counties are individually and collectively declared **a disease infected area**;
- II.** That there shall be **cessation of all movement** by **road, rail, or air into and out** of the disease infected area as **one zoned area** comprising of the Counties of **Nairobi, Kajiado, Machakos, Kiambu** and **Nakuru**, effective Midnight tonight



– Meaning, Saturday 27th March, 2021; until otherwise notified;

III. That all public gatherings and in-person meetings of whatever nature are suspended within the Counties of **Nairobi, Kajiado, Machakos, Kiambu** and **Nakuru** until further notice;

IV. That all in-person meetings of the Cabinet and its Committees, with the exception of meetings of the National Security Council are suspended until further notice;

V. That with the concurrence of the parliamentary leadership of both Houses of Parliament, and with the concurrence of County leadership; the Ordinary Sessions of the August Houses including those of their Committees, and the Ordinary Sessions of the County Assemblies of Nairobi, Machakos, Kajiado, Kiambu and Nakuru, are hereby suspended, until further notice;



- VI.** In accordance with the Standing Orders of the National Assembly and the Senate, the Two Speakers of Parliament will move to effect this decision as well as the Speakers of the respective County Assemblies;
- VII.** That international travel into and out of the territory of the Republic shall continue in accordance with the existing guidelines on Foreign/International Travel.
- VIII.** That all persons coming into the Country must be in possession of a negative **COVID-19 PCR Certificate, acquired no more than 96 hours prior to arrival** into the Country; with the PCR Certificate also having been validated under the Trusted Travel platform for those travelling by air;
- IX.** That the hours of the ongoing nationwide curfew are revised to commence at **8:00pm** and end at **4:00am** in the **Zoned Area** comprising of the **Counties of Nairobi, Machakos,**



Kajiado, Kiambu and Nakuru. In that regard, the rest of the country will observe curfew between **10:00 p.m.** and **4:00 a.m.** daily, effective **tomorrow, Saturday, 27th day of March, 2021;**

X. In light of the abuse of curfew passes and exemptions and its role in the steep increase in infections, The Ministry of Interior and Co-ordination of National Government jointly with the Ministry of Health are directed to immediately review the protocols for reissuance of curfew passes and exemptions. In that regard, in the intervening period all **passes issued are hereby vacated;**

XI. That all physical/In-person and congregational worship in **ALL** places of worship in the Counties of **Nairobi, Kajiado, Machakos, Kiambu** and **Nakuru** stands suspended until otherwise notified;



XII. That in regard to the other **forty-two (42) counties** in/person worship and congregational worship shall continue to be conducted in keeping with the one-third rule and in accordance with the guidelines of the Inter-Faith Council;

XIII. With respect to Education in Kenya, there shall be the immediate **suspension of all on-going physical learning** in all our education institutions including universities and tertiary and vocational colleges, other than for candidates sitting for their examinations and those in medical training institutions, until otherwise notified;

XIV. That all sporting activities are hereby suspended, similarly operations of sporting and recreational facilities including Members Clubs are suspended until it is otherwise directed;

XV. That in line with the directive on Public Gatherings including Social Gatherings, the following measures are to come into effect commencing **Midnight on Friday, 26th March, 2021:**



1. Operations of bars is suspended in the **Counties of Nairobi, Machakos, Kajiado, Kiambu and Nakuru.** Similarly, the sale of alcohol in restaurants and eateries in the five (5) Counties is prohibited, until further notice;
2. All restaurants and eateries in the **Counties of Nairobi, Machakos, Kajiado, Kiambu and Nakuru** shall provide takeaway services only;
3. The operations of bars, restaurants and eateries in the other **forty-two (42) Counties shall continue as is**, but they shall at all times be conducted in strict fidelity to Ministry of Health Guidelines, failure to which appropriate action against management, staff, patrons, and premises shall be taken;



4. Public Transport Operators are directed to strictly uphold the re-designated 60% carrying capacity; and
5. The County Emergency Response Committees are directed to enforce implementation of infection prevention control measures in markets-such as hand washing stations; while also ensuring that all sellers and buyers must be fully masked and maintain physical distance.

XVI. That all employers and enterprises of whatever nature including public bodies, the private sector, government offices, and others are directed to allow employees to work from home, with the exception of employees working in critical or essential services that cannot be delivered remotely, until further notified;



- XVII.** That the Judiciary, Law Enforcement, Remand and Correctional Facilities, the Director of Public Prosecutions, and other players and stakeholders in the criminal justice and civil justice systems are to take immediate action to eliminate non-essential physical contact or situations within their areas of mandate that may lead to crowding or propagation of the Disease;
- XVIII.** That all hospitals are directed to limit the number of visitors for hospitalized patients to two visitors per patient;
- XIX.** That all physical meetings or events including social gatherings shall have a cap of no more than 15 persons until further notified;
- XX.** **In** regard to funerals, cremations and other interment ceremonies, it is directed that these ceremonies shall be conducted strictly within **72 hours** of confirmation of death;



- XXI.** That the attendees, officiators, and facilitators of funerals or graveside/cremation ceremonies shall be limited to **50 persons** in total;
- XXII.** That the attendees, officiators, and facilitators of weddings, celebrations of marriage or traditional unions, ceremonies of rites of passage, and all other similar events or ceremonies shall be limited to **30 persons** in total;
- XXIII.** That the prohibition against political gatherings is extended until otherwise directed; and
- XXIV.** That in view of the high morbidity and mortality rates among those who are above 50 years of age, those **above 58 years of age shall be vaccinated as a priority during this 1st vaccination phase.**

Fellow Kenyans,



14. Whereas the foregoing measures will have adverse effects on the economy and constrain our usual way of life, the measures are temporary and necessary to contain the spread of the Disease and therefore stop further loss of lives.

15. I am convinced that the cost of not acting now would be far greater.

16. In moments like this, as a caring Government, it is our **solemn duty and cardinal responsibility to protect life above all else. One** life lost is one too many. **Our** thoughts and prayers are with the families of those who have succumbed to this disease.

Fellow Kenyans,

17. This is not an enemy that we are called upon to fight with bullets and bombs; but rather one that can be defeated by physical and social distancing, wearing of appropriate facemasks, frequent hand washing with



soap and running water, and compliance with all other **anti-coronavirus guidelines and protocols.**

18. I want to emphasize that COVID-19 is an **invisible ENEMY**; and the war against it is **complex**. Government alone cannot fight it and win. As government, we have **co-created solutions** where we act together with citizens, the private sector, faith groups, civil society, and community organizations in order to wage and win this war.

19. On its part, My Administration will uphold its **duty of care** to the People of Kenya. **We** will go to any **length** and **breadth** required to ensure that every Kenyan is safe.

20. You, **kama wananchi watukufu**, have equally an important role to play. The starting point is for us to agree that the Government cannot **police your morality** or impose prudence, and love for self and others. Individual Kenyans must shoulder their role in the fight against COVID-19.



21. Your health, that of your family, that of your friends and neighbours; depends on the decisions you make and the actions you take. Government can and will undertake its duty, but ultimately the success or failure of our nation's efforts boils down to individual and communal behaviour by our citizenry.

22. Even as we do so, I urge all law enforcement officers to live true to their oath of office and discharge their duties without fear or favour in enforcing the containment measures.

23. **Fellow Kenyans, I** am confident, that **working together**, we, as a government **upholding our duty of care** to you, our citizens; and you, as citizens, responding by exercising your **civic responsibility**, we will defeat this **Third Wave of COVID**. We will defeat it because **we all did our part** to the best of our ability.

God Bless You; God Bless Kenya.

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