



**NATIONAL EMERGENCY RESPONSE COMMITTEE ON
CORONAVIRUS**

**UPDATE OF CORONAVIRUS IN THE COUNTRY AND
RESPONSE MEASURES, AS AT 22nd APRIL, 2020**

Day: 41

Brief No: 36

I would like to begin today's briefing on a positive note; one that recognizes that there are positive aspects - a silver lining - in everything, including moments of uncertainty, anxiety and despair. When our Nation was ravaged by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, we saw firsthand what the power of love can do for a society. Grandparents from every corner of Kenya came forth to raise children orphaned by the pandemic, and we saw such pulling together during the 2011 drought, the Westgate attack and the 2015 massacring of students in Garissa. In the short period since,

we first discovered our first Covid-19 patient and more so since you started internalizing the implications of it, I have seen your gradual but steady coalescing on an emotional and spiritual level.

People have set-up informal groups that are cooking for, or distributing food hampers to the needy, organizations and companies are joining hands with the Government through various contributions, the religious community has continued to provide spiritual nourishment within the stipulated guidelines and for the most part, you, the Kenyans have joined the Government in this fight against the coronavirus. And so I thank you. This fight might be housed in the Ministry of Health, but it is one that belongs to each of us: Kenyans, the EAC, Africa as a continent and indeed, the globe.

Fellow Kenyans, a few days ago, the World Health Organization (WHO) warned that despite the seemingly slow pace of infections in Africa, the number of Coronavirus cases could surge from just thousands now to **10** million

within three to six months. While this is a projection, it might just as well be the reality in the coming days. Consider that within this past week alone, we have seen significant changes of infections in our own neighborhood, where the Covid-19 cases in Somalia have multiplied **nine-fold in a single week** from **26** cases on April **13** to **237**, by yesterday. In our neighboring Tanzania, the numbers have swollen sevenfold from **32** cases to **254** within the same period.

These developments should concern us. They might translate into a frightening reality for the Horn of Africa. What we are learning is that this virus transmits silently. Initially, it may move at a slow pace but, as we have also seen in countries such as Spain and Italy, it takes on such frantic speed that even the most developed of nations cannot catch up with it. Between March 18 and 25, a span of a week, the cases in Spain grew five-fold from **11,741** to **50,019**.

Given these realities, the general sentiment of comfort we are witnessing is misplaced. When we as a Nation are complacent with a few officials exploiting this pandemic for personal gain or, conversely, the idea that we can break curfews and not suffer any ramifications, then we know that we are heading in the wrong direction. Indeed, there is nothing to celebrate when runaway impunity takes place at the risk of each of us.

As a Government, our planning and actions are informed by the global trends and analysis. A slight lapse in behaviour, like the ones we have witnessed in the last few days, could roll back all the gains we have made so far, and by effect the destiny of our Nation. The days when everything was left to the Government are long gone. This disease is now calling for our total and undivided unity.

While I appreciate and acknowledge the cooperation by many Kenyans, I must say that there are a few Kenyans who deliberately rebuke the efforts that we have put in place, to contain the spread of the virus. Our daily update

briefings have served to rally Kenyans to their individual responsibilities while at the same time painting the picture of our situation. It is unfortunate that some nay-sayers have dismissed them as "mere daily ledgers." Elsewhere, the disease has thrived on similar cloud of silence and ignorance that we are being pushed to adopt. We refuse to sit back, and will continue to inform Kenyans of our situation and measures they need to continuously take in order to flatten our curve.

Regarding mass testing, the exercise is on-going in targeted high risk areas, which include healthcare workers. We currently have 25,000 testing kits which have been deployed for the activity. Globally, every country is working on testing targets. All have fallen short of these targets because of the disrupted global supply chain. Our plan is to conduct 250,000 tests by June. However, this 250,000 will not match our population, hence we are collaborating with our development partners to ramp up our surveillance testing mechanism. The plan entails community based surveillance, hospital based surveillance and population

based surveillance. For the community based surveillance, we are looking at 100,000 households. For the hospital based surveillance, we have mapped out 20 hospitals in 16 regions.

All this is being done under an overarching five year public health security framework that we have worked out.

Our Corona response is therefore nested on this policy. The challenge we have, over and above Corona, is to keep an eye on the other healthcare challenges. I therefore want to call on all Counties to ensure continuity of health services, without losing sight of Corona. We should therefore be prepared, in the coming days, to share our County health service delivery scorecards.

Ladies and gentlemen, in times as these, we have to be alive to the effect that COVID-19 management measures have had on our people. We are particularly concerned about the mental health. Towards this end, we have established a psychiatric and psychological care help

framework over this period. If you feel distressed and needing counselling or psychological care, please call **1199** and you will be attended to. For any inquiries on continuity of psychological care or psychiatric emergencies or crisis, please call our hotline; **0721 336017**.

Today, we have looked at the unfolding situation in Mandera County. So far, the County has eight (8) cases, the latest being two cases of urban refugees. As part of the containment measures, the Government has today directed restriction of movement into and out of Mandera County. The County therefore becomes the fifth county where movement has been restricted.

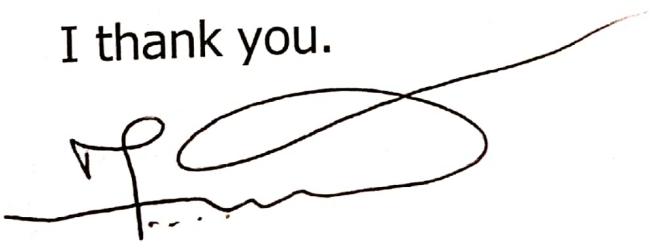
Today, our coronavirus situation is as follows; in the last 24 hours, we tested **707** samples, out of which seven (**7**) persons have tested positive for Coronavirus disease. This brings to **303** the total number of confirmed cases in the country.

All the seven (7) are Kenyans, six (6) from Mombasa and one (1) from Nairobi. Six (6) are from the targeted mass testing and one (1) was picked by our surveillance teams. With regard to gender, five (5) are males and two (2) females. They are aged between **21-61** years. None have a recent history of travel.

I am glad to inform you that nine (9) patients have recovered and discharged. We now have a total of **83** recoveries.

A total of **15,124** samples have been tested so far.

I thank you.



**SEN. MUTAHI KAGWE, EGH,
CABINET SECRETARY.**