



COVID-19 Report

Exchange Rwanda

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Introduction

Since the virus first emerged in Wuhan, China in December 2019, the Rwandan government has established a multidisciplinary team to assess and strengthen preparedness and response to the pandemic. A huge screen used to detect fever among incoming passengers was installed at Kigali International Airport. Passengers undergo mandatory checks and provide information about travel history. Similar screening started at all Rwanda's borders.

The first case of COVID-19 in Rwanda was confirmed on 14 March 2020. Four other people were tested after the first case tested positive, bringing the number of cases to five.

By 16 March 2020, Rwanda confirmed two more cases in Kigali, bringing the total number of cases in the country to seven. In an attempt to stop the spread of coronavirus, the Rwandan Ministry of Health announced on 18 March, via Twitter, that all international commercial passenger flights would be suspended for 30 days, with effect from 20 March. Less than a day later, on 21 March, officials announced a two-week lockdown. Both public and private employees were to work from home, under strict measures. All borders were also to be closed, cargo and Rwandan nationals being exempt, with a mandatory 14-day quarantine.

Health and safety measures also increased to help prevent the spread of the virus, including urging citizens to avoid shaking hands and close body contact such as hugging, covering one's mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing in public and refraining from unnecessary travel. The Ministry of Health also called on citizens to ensure regular washing of hands with soap, limit unnecessary movements and avoid large gatherings.

500 health care workers, including lab technicians from hospitals across the country, were trained on the coronavirus response. All hospitals were asked to set up isolation areas where patients suspected of having COVID-19 could be attended to away from other patients. Preventive measures were also put in place to protect health care workers in the line of duty.



Generally, handshakes and hugs are a common practice in Rwanda, meaning the idea of social distancing due to COVID-19 did not initially go well. But as the number of cases grew, Rwandan people have come to understand the seriousness of the matter. Rwandan President Paul Kagame popularized the elbow bump as a safe way of greeting when he met American philanthropist Howard Buffett at a public function in the country.

Until now Rwanda has deplored 2 COVID-19 deceases and lockdown measures have been partly relaxed as from 4th of May 2020 so business can restart its activity to restore the Rwandan economy. Domestic travel has been relaxed also. On the 18th of May and the 2nd of June Cabinet meetings were held to further relax lockdown measures. Further details on those measures can be found in this report.

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The information in this volume is destined to provide a description of the COVID-19 status and its impact on social and economic life in the 5 Sub-Saharan African countries with cooperation programmes of Exchange vzw. The ambition is to give insights, based on information gathered by Exchange's business development managers based in these countries. Exchange vzw. can not be held responsible for errors, omissions or lack of accuracy and disclaims any liability in connection with the use of this information. Feedback is welcome at info@exchangevzw.be

Statistical information and recent developments

Situation 10th of June 2020 (most recent figures available)

1. Infections : total cases is 476 persons
2. Hospitalized : 167
3. Recovered :307
4. Tested :82.239 persons
5. Deaths : 2

Current situation: measures

The Rwanda Government approved the following measures to help contain the spread of the corona virus. The first measures were taken on the 4th of May, and were relaxed on the 18th of May and the 2nd of June. Below we list the measures that remain in force as from the 2nd of June (in bold the last adaptation of the 2nd of June). These measures will be reviewed after 15 days upon a health assessment.

General measures

Preventive measures:

- mass screening and testing for Covid-19 continues on nationwide level
- masks must be worn in public at all times
- all resumed services must adhere to health guidelines from the Ministry of Health (hand hygiene, mask wearing and social distancing)
- All traders are required to accept digital payments as an alternative form of payment
- Movements are prohibited from **9PM** to 5AM (instead of 8PM to 5PM)

Services to continue:

- Public and Private businesses will continue with essential staff while other employees continue working from home
- **Non-contact outdoor sports is permitted.**
- **Motos are permitted to carry passengers except in Rusizi and Rubavu Districts. Strict hygiene must be observed and masks worn at all times.**
- **Public and private transport between provinces shall resume except movement to and from Rusizi and Rubavu Districts. Transport of goods and cargo will continue with no more than two people onboard.**
- Bus operators will ensure passengers maintain social distancing and only passengers with masks are allowed on board
- Funeral gathering should not exceed 30 persons
- **Civil marriage ceremonies will continue but should not exceed 15 persons.**

Services to remain closed :

- Schools will remain closed until September 2020
- Places of worship will remain closed
- **Mass gatherings** in public spaces and homes are prohibited
- All bars will remain closed
- Borders will remain closed, except for goods and cargo, as well as returning Rwandan citizens and legal residents. **All returnees will be subjected to mandatory quarantine in accordance with existing health guidelines at their own cost.**

Important notice for Kamembe town (Rusizi) residents

- In light of the Cabinet decisions of 02 June 2020 and the assessment by the Ministry of Health, effective Thursday, 04 June 2020, residents of Kamembe town, including the Sectors of Kamembe, Mururu, Nyakarenzo and a part of Gihundwe are required to stay at home (lockdown) for at least two weeks:
- Public servants, private operators should work from home, except those offering essential services.
- Shops, markets, barber, beauty salons, garages, car wash, construction of houses and boat activities are suspended. Only the services offering hygienic, food and health necessities, together with petroleum products and other essential products are allowed to operate.
- Restaurants are required to employ a limited number of workers, only for takeaway services.
- Fishing and swimming on Lake Kivu are prohibited.
- Movements between the area under lockdown and other parts of Rusizi district are prohibited except for medical and other urgent services. Transport of goods remains operational.
-

Domestic transport (several restrictions documented in previous report have been lifted):

Domestic transport : www.rura.rw

- Public and private transport will be operational, with strict hygiene measures such as mandatory masks, handwashing, as well as appropriate physical distancing between passengers.
- Services providers are required to use of signs, permitted passenger seats on buses. All passengers should adhere to the new rules.
- Motos are not permitted to carry passengers, but may carry goods and continue to offer delivery services. Regular motos services shall resume on June 1st 2020.
- Public and private transport between different provinces and the City of Kigali remain closed. This shall resume on June 1st 2020
- Travels and displacements are prohibited from 9pm to 5am, except with permission.

International transport

On May 18th, 2020, following measures have been implemented in relation to international travel. These measures remain the same until this date:



Republic of Rwanda
Ministry of Health

INFORMATION ON MANDATORY QUARANTINE ON ENTRY INTO RWANDA

Welcome to Rwanda. We hope you are well and we appreciate your patience and cooperation.

Following new Government measures to prevent the spread of Covid-19, the following is mandatory upon entry into Rwanda.

- All travellers arriving in Rwanda will be screened and tested upon entry
- All travellers are required to complete 7 days in mandatory quarantine
- Travellers are required to contribute to the costs of quarantine which include: accommodation, meals and other services during the 7 days period, starting with the day of arrival

Quarantine Facilities

As of 18 May 2020, every traveller arriving in Rwanda on a flight which departs from another country must proceed to one of four select facilities, for a minimum of 7 days.

1. As a first step, you will be tested for COVID-19,
2. If tested positive, you will be taken to a treatment facility with specialized medical care.
3. If you test negative, you must remain in mandatory quarantine for 7 days, you will be tested again on the 5th day in quarantine, and if negative discharged on the 7th day;
4. You will continue to self-quarantine at home for a further 7 days with follow-up by Rwanda Biomedical Centre professionals.

Quarantine sites in Kigali

Options	Hotel name	Cost per day	Other considerations	Contact number
Option 1	Nyarutarama Apartment	Rwf 55,000	Full board and includes guest amenities and housekeeping services	0788354494
	Kicukiro Apartment	Rwf 55,000	Full board and includes guest amenities and housekeeping services	0788944547
	Dove Hotel	Rwf 45,000	Full board and includes guest amenities and housekeeping services	0788771562
Option 2	Hilltop Hotel	Rwf 40,000	Full board and includes guest amenities and housekeeping services	0788303451
Option 3	Greenwich Hotel	Rwf 25,000	Full board and includes guest amenities and housekeeping services	0783761086
Option 4 <i>(recommended for students)</i>	IPRC Kicukiro	Rwf 12,000	Full board and housekeeping services. Note: Tenants buy their own amenities (soap, toothpaste, brush, lotion, etc)	0788303451

REMINDER
The preventive measures announced by the Ministry of Health must be observed by all, especially frequent hand-washing, wearing of face masks in public and maintaining safe physical distance from others (at least one meter apart). For more details about COVID-19 clinical management guidelines, please visit www.rbc.gov.rw

Tourist and business travel:

All accommodation establishments, restaurants and cafes with valid tourism operating license or occupational permit from districts or City of Kigali, can reopen. Home delivery of food and beverages from restaurants can continue to operate.

Employers must provide staff with masks, which they are to wear at all times while on duty and in public places. Clients not wearing masks must not be admitted into the premises.

Live bands, karaoke, and all other entertainment activities within hotels, bars and restaurants will remain closed. Night clubs and activities such as sauna, massage, swimming pool, gym, pool games, within hospitality establishments, will also remain closed.

Hospitality facilities will be open from 6am to 7pm. In-house guests may receive room services beyond 7pm, as long as staff providing these services are resident within the hotels. Restaurants operating within a hotel must also close by 7pm.

Education

Students in pre-primary, primary and secondary schools will only restart the academic year in September 2020.

Students can access select e-learning platforms at no cost. Radio and TV will continue to broadcast lessons on a schedule shared regularly by MINEDUC and on radio. In addition, a USSD-based quiz on different subjects is available. All students should actively follow these alternative platforms until schools reopen.

More info on <https://mineduc.gov.rw/index.php?id=23>

Social and economic impact

Rwanda has implemented a strict lockdown for several weeks in a bid to curb the spread of coronavirus, which has forced many low-income earners and unemployed people to struggle to get food and other basic necessities.

Rwanda's ministry of Local Government started distributing food to households and individuals most hit by the Covid19 lockdown.

Top Rwandan officials did not get their April salaries in one of the drastic measures the government has enforced to raise funds for social protection programmes aimed for the most vulnerable in the community.

In the context of the fight against Covid-19, and in solidarity with the most affected Rwandans, the Government of Rwanda has decided, over and above ongoing social protection initiatives, that all Cabinet Members, Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Public Institutions and other senior officials shall forfeit one month's salary (April),

Those who did not get their April pay are 34 Cabinet members, 26 senators, 106 members of Parliament, and hundreds of heads of public institutions – who earn an average of Rwf2 million (about \$2140) per month.

This is likely to generate close to \$1 million to be used to combat effects of coronavirus on the vulnerable.

The number of those needing government assistance has been rising since the food distribution began as many have lost jobs or been unable to make a living due to the lockdown.

In Kigali alone, the number of households eligible for food distribution grew from 26,572 to more than 50,000 in a matter of days, with more people expected to be identified.

The government is providing relief to households where individuals depended on daily income such as casual jobs workers and those whose work was suspended over the lockdown measures.

The exercise is supervised by the respective local leaders and involves distribution of basic food rations. The food distribution also aims at stopping the urban poor from trying to flee the city for the villages – a move that could lead to importation of the virus from the city to the rural areas.

Impact on private sector and SME's

Hospitality

All accommodation establishments, restaurants and cafes with valid tourism operating license or occupational permit from districts or City of Kigali, were able to reopen as from Monday 4th of May. Home delivery of food and beverages from restaurants can continue to operate.

Hospitality facilities will be open from 6am to 7pm. In-house guests may receive room services beyond 7pm, as long as staff providing these services are resident within the hotels. Restaurants operating within a hotel must also close by 7pm.

Full guidelines for the hospitality sector can be found here <https://rdb.rw/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/GUIDELINES-FOR-HOSPITALITY-SECTOR-BUSINESS-RE-OPENING-DURING-COVID-19-...pdf>

Tourism

Tourism is one of Rwanda's revenue sources. Rwanda targets \$800 million from tourism by 2024 from \$438 million in 2017.

The country had this year projected to generate \$88 million from about 147 international conferences under the Meetings, Incentives, Conventions, and Exhibitions (MICE). About 20 meetings which had been scheduled in March and April were indefinitely postponed. These meetings were expected to generate \$8 million, about 10% of the projected revenue from MICE this year.

Following the COVID-19 outbreak, several tourists cancelled bookings, leaving tour operators and other stakeholders counting losses.

This year's Nyungwe marathon -- an annual event that gathers more than 700 participants from Africa and Europe, attracted fewer participants leading organizers to register a loss of \$200,000. Organizers handed out just 300 medals instead of 600 because they could not import from China.

Agriculture

All food supply chain services are essential services and continued to operate during the lockdown. All agriculture construction projects resumed and in accordance with the Ministry of Health measures to prevent COVID-19 transmission.

All industries, farmers and exporters in the agriculture sector who travel to and from Kigali for work were required to write to the Ministry of Agriculture and Animal resources to obtain special clearance.

More info on www.minagri.gov.rw

Easing economic impact

On the 18th of March Rwanda's central bank announced a series of measures to mitigate the economic impact of the virus.

These included introducing the extended lending facility of roughly \$52 million which commercial banks with liquidity challenges can borrow from at the central bank rate and lowering reserve requirement ratio effective April 1 from 5% to 4% to allow banks more liquidity to support affected businesses.

The bank also allowed banks to restructure outstanding loans of borrowers facing temporary cash flow challenges arising from the pandemic.

Rwanda COVID-19 Emergency Response Project

The Rwanda COVID-19 Emergency Response Project is designed to help the government prevent, detect and respond to the threat posed by the coronavirus and strengthen national systems for public health preparedness. It will support the COVID-19 National Preparedness and Response Plan by financing critical interventions, such as prompt diagnosis of suspected coronavirus cases; contact tracing to minimize risk of transmission; risk assessments to identify hot spot areas; and screening travellers at ports of entry. The emergency project will also bolster clinical care capacity and establish isolation capacity at a selected number of national and district hospitals responsible for triaging and treating COVID-19 cases.

The Rwanda COVID-19 Emergency Response project also focuses on harnessing digital solutions and data analytical tools that will improve the management and containment of the COVID-19 response. Building on the country's strong track record on digital solutions, several innovations will be explored, including digital maps that allow to visualize the spread of the disease in real time;

mobile apps for sending health messages; and telemedicine capability to allow for suspected cases to be assessed without the need for physical movements by patients.

Financial support for Rwanda's response to COVID-19

On the 7th of April 2020 the **World Bank Group** approved \$14.25 million International Development Association (IDA) credit in immediate funding to support Rwanda's response to the global COVID-19 pandemic under the Rwanda COVID-19 Emergency Response project.

On the 2nd of April 2020 The Executive Board of the **International Monetary Fund** (IMF) approved the disbursement of about US\$109.4 million to be drawn under the Rapid Credit Facility (RCF). This will serve to meet Rwanda's urgent balance of payment needs stemming from the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Other forms of support have also been coming in from different private sector entities like the **big corporate firms** that have donated money and supplies to be used by the national task force charged with stopping the spread of coronavirus in the country. Some of the big donors include the major banks.

On 5 April, a statement from the office of the prime minister announced that senior government officials had agreed to forfeit their April salary as a contribution to the funds needed in the fight against COVID-19.

In solidarity with the most affected Rwandans, the Government of Rwanda has decided, over and above ongoing social protection initiatives, that all Cabinet Members, Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Public Institutions, and other senior officials shall forfeit one month's salary (April).

Due to the lockdown in place to slow the spread of the virus, Rwandans were for the first time compelled to commemorate the 1994 Genocide from their homes without any gatherings allowed.

Support to the private sector and entrepreneurs

The Private Sector Federation on Monday, May 4, signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Access to Finance Rwanda in a new initiative aimed at supporting entrepreneurs in Rwanda to adjust to economic realities of COVID-19.

Both parties, seek to share their respective strengths, experiences, technologies, including technical assistance to facilitate Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) during the COVID-19 pandemic.

SME Response Clinic as its termed, is a digital platform that will translate new policies and financial advisory services and access to finance related information in a clear and straightforward language in English and Kinyarwanda.

The SME Response Clinic will provide and collect needed information that will enable key stakeholders to support resilience of the MSME Sector in this period of Covid-19.

The Rwandan Government and financial sector have taken several significant measures to support MSMEs during this challenging period, reads part of the joint statement.

The SME Response Clinic will ensure that these important measures are communicated to MSMEs in an accessible and timely manner.

Medium and long term economic recovery and resilience plan

The government of Rwanda is working on a medium and long term economic recovery and resilience plan. Latest discussion on this plan were held on the 2nd of June during the last cabinet meeting. We expect to have more news on this plan in the following COVID-19 status report.
