



Status Report COVID-19

Exchange South Africa

[Abstract](#)

Report on the effects of COVID-19 in South Africa

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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



1. Summary

Day 1 in South Africa was 5 March. On the 15th of March there was the announcement of National Disaster by the statement of President Ramaphosa on COVID-19 and the travel restrictions imposed. President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that the country will be in lockdown as from midnight 26 March 2020.

The 12th of June marked exactly 100 days since the first person confirmed to have Covid-19 arrived back in the country from a holiday trip to Italy on 3 March. In the 100 days since the man first felt ill and visited his doctor, the country's response has been marked by a scramble to prevent the virus from spreading too far and too fast, a nationwide lockdown and emergency steps to alleviate hunger and job losses as the lockdown had an immediate impact on the economy.

The measures helped the country halt the initial spread of the virus, especially in the first 30 days, where the travel ban had a marked effect.

On the 24th of May, after 58 days of lockdown, President Cyril Ramaphosa addressed the nation and announced a scaling down of the lockdown to Alert Level 3 from 1 June 2020 to gradually open up economic activity, schools and educational institutions.

After 100 days of Covid-19 cases were increasing at the highest rate since outbreak began. The situation in the Western Cape was of particular concern.

After 108 days of Covid-19 lockdown President Cyril Ramaphosa addressed the nation and announced stricter enforcement of Level 3 measures including a ban on alcohol sales in order to conserve hospital capacity.

The 9th of August, the number of recoveries stands at 411.147, which translates to a rate of 73%. The death rate is also relatively low compared to other countries. While South Africa is the continent's hardest-hit nation in terms of infections, the mortality rate – at around 1,8% – is one of the lowest among countries with high numbers of cases. On the other hand, the economic impact of the pandemic is expected to be severe and lately corruption allegations relating to the procurement of Covid-19 supplies have eroded trust between the state and citizens.

President Cyril Ramaphosa has announced that the country will be moving to alert level 2 with bans on travel between provinces and the sale of alcohol and tobacco products being lifted. The easing from level 3 is effective from Monday 17th of August midnight, with trading in liquor and cigarettes set to resume on Tuesday 18th of August.



2. General overview and statistics

The latest South African Covid-19 statistics (in a tweet from the Minister of Health, Dr Zweli Mkhize <https://twitter.com/DrZweliMkhize/status/1292540428798042117?s=20>):





3. EXIT Strategy

On Sunday the 16th of August, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced **an easing of the lockdown to Level 2** as from Tuesday the 18th of August. The important changes include that domestic inter-provincial travel will be allowed and bars and restaurants will be operational and be allowed to serve alcohol with meals (prohibited hitherto). This will be a relief for the hospitality sector. However, international travel will still be restricted. Below is a TimesLive article on the changes ahead:

President Cyril Ramaphosa has announced that the country will be moving to alert level 2 with bans on travel between provinces and the sale of alcohol and tobacco products being lifted.

The easing from level 3 is effective from Monday 17 August midnight, with trading in liquor and cigarettes set to resume on Tuesday 18 August.

Ramaphosa has been in consultation with various stakeholders following advice from health experts that the country has been successful in arresting the spread of the Covid-19 virus.

“We have made progress in our fight against Covid-19. Over the last three weeks, the number of new confirmed cases has dropped from a peak of over 12.000 a day to an average over the past week of around 5.000 a day. The recovery rate from coronavirus has risen from 48% at the time of my last address and now stands at 80%,” Ramaphosa said.

“Fewer people are presenting with symptoms at our health facilities. We are also finding that fewer people are requiring admission in our hospitals and the demand for coronavirus tests has dropped. The number of patients hospitalised has decreased from 10.000 at the beginning of the month to around 4.000.”

The president's announcement comes on day 142 of the nationwide lockdown. Government is now confident that the easing of restrictions will no longer undermine health infrastructure.

“Guided by the advice of our health experts and after consultation with provincial and local government, cabinet has decided to place the entire country on alert level 2, with effect from midnight on Monday, the 17th of August 2020,” said Ramaphosa.

Among the easing of restrictions which will come with level 2 is:

- All restrictions on interprovincial travel will be lifted.
- Accommodation, hospitality venues and tours will be permitted according to approved protocols to ensure social distancing.
- Restaurants, bars and taverns will be permitted to operate according to approved protocols as to times of operation and numbers of people.
- Restrictions on the sale of tobacco will be lifted.
- The suspension of the sale of alcohol will be lifted subject to certain restrictions.
- Alcohol will be permitted for on-site consumption in licensed establishments only up until 10pm.
- Liquor outlets will be allowed to sell alcohol for off-site consumption from Monday to Thursday during the hours of 9am to 5pm only.
- Restrictions on family and social visits will also be lifted, though everyone is urged to exercise extreme caution and undertake such visits only if necessary.

A curfew will also remain in place between the hours of 10pm and 4am.

While domestic flights have been permitted since level 3, international travel remains restricted.

Government is urging South Africans to continue with social distancing, mask wearing and hand hygiene. It also wants those who can, to work from home.

A team of 43 health experts from the World Health Organisation touched down in the country in week 34 and will be bolstering government's efforts even as the country anticipates a second peak.



Government will now focus its energies on rebuilding the economy which was already on its knees even before the global pandemic which has all but collapsed it. Millions of jobs have been lost, with the number still set to grow.

The president is urging South Africans to continue with social distancing, mask wearing and hand hygiene, it also wants those who can to work from home.

“We have weathered a long and difficult storm. We have endured great hardship and suffered unbearable losses. But we have stood firm against this onslaught. We have taken action to protect ourselves, our communities and our country. A ray of light is visible on the horizon. Let us continue to exercise the greatest caution and care, and remain ever-vigilant.”

4. Impact

4.1 Domestic and international travel

From midnight on Monday, the 17th of August 2020, all restrictions on interprovincial travel will be lifted.

While domestic flights have been permitted since level 3, international travel remains restricted.

4.2 Economic Impact

The economic impact of the pandemic is expected to be severe and lately corruption allegations relating to the procurement of Covid-19 supplies have eroded trust between the state and citizens.

4.3 Consequences for private entrepreneurs

The following is an extract from a News24 article about President Ramaphosa's current weekly newsletter:

President Cyril Ramaphosa has praised what he calls a "new breed of young entrepreneurs" for coming up with "home-grown solutions to the contemporary challenges we face" as the country continues to battle the economic shock of the Covid-19 pandemic.

South Africa was already in recession when the nationwide lockdown was instituted in late March, and South Africa's already-high official unemployment rate is expected to surge as a result of the pandemic's impact on businesses, while tax revenue is expected to plunge by around R300 billion. According to a new study, roughly three million people may have lost their jobs between February and April. The country's youth unemployment is particularly acute.

In his weekly newsletter, Ramaphosa said even in South Africa's "darkest hour," the country has had to focus on green shoots of renewal, namely young entrepreneurs, which he said were the "silver lining to the dark Covid-19 cloud".

"Our economic recovery cannot wait until the coronavirus pandemic is over. It needs to start now. One of the defining developments during the lockdown was how businesses in the townships and rural areas came into their own as people were not able to travel around much," he said.

Ramaphosa named a number of young entrepreneurs who started business either just before or during the pandemic.

4.3.1 Tourism (including Hotel) sector

All restrictions on interprovincial travel is lifted.

Accommodation, hospitality venues and tours will be permitted according to approved protocols to ensure social distancing.

Restaurants, bars and taverns will be permitted to operate according to approved protocols as to times of operation and numbers of people.



The suspension of the sale of alcohol will be lifted subject to certain restrictions. Alcohol will be permitted for on-site consumption in licensed establishments only up until 10pm. Liquor outlets will be allowed to sell alcohol for off-site consumption from Monday to Thursday during the hours of 9am to 5pm only.

4.3.2 Manufacturing Sector

No new information.

4.3.3 Agro-Industry Sector

No new information.

4.3.4 Circular Economy, Sustainable and Renewable Economy

Waste management programmes will remain very relevant in the post-pandemic era.

4.3.5 Services Sector

No new information.

4.3.6 Informal and micro firms

No new information.

5. Government support to local economy

See version 4.