



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

MINISTRY OF HEALTH

PRESS STATEMENT ON THE UPDATE OF CORONAVIRUS IN THE COUNTRY AND RESPONSE MEASURES AS AT 18th MARCH 2020

Good afternoon Members of the Press.

Fellow Kenyans,

Yesterday afternoon, I gave you an update on the status of Coronavirus Disease in Kenya confirming our fourth case of the disease.

Today we have received confirmation of another three cases of the disease following tests that were carried out at the National Influenza Centre and KEMRI laboratories respectively bringing the total number of cases to Seven (7). It is important to note that all these have been imported cases from outside the country.

The first two cases (a couple) had travelled from Madrid, Spain on 4th March, 2020 through Dubai arriving in the country on 5th March, 2020. The third case involves a Burundian national who had travelled from Dubai to Kenya arriving on 17th March 2020 and was picked at JKIA by our surveillance team with high temperature during routine screening. Tracing of persons who may have come into contact with these patients is ongoing.

Eighteen (18) cases are currently admitted at the Mbagathi Isolation centre. Seven others have been screened and came out negative. Samples from the remaining eleven (11) suspected cases are currently being processed in our two designated laboratories. The seven (7) who tested negative are being processed for discharge to continue self-quarantine at home under close supervision of the Ministry of Health staff in collaboration with county surveillance teams.

Here I want to appeal to Kenyans who might know people who are supposed to self-quarantine and are not to report to our toll free number 719. Let me remind such people that it is an offence to violate the self-quarantine rule as they will be arrested and charged in a court of law.


So far our laboratories at the National Influenza Centre and KEMRI have tested a total of 132 cases since this pandemic struck in the country.

ADVISORY

We continue to emphasise that members of the public are encouraged to remain vigilant as the risk of spread is high and are advised to continue taking precautionary measures which include:

- i. Maintain basic hand and respiratory hygiene, and safe food practices.
- ii. Avoid close contact with people suffering from acute respiratory infections.
- iii. In addition, anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as fever, coughing, difficulty in breathing and sneezing with a history of recent travel to any of the affected countries is advised to go to the nearest health facility for assessment and prompt management.
- iv. In addition, anyone with recent history of travel to the affected countries or who have come in close contact with confirmed case are strongly advised to self-quarantine for 14 days and promptly report to the nearest health facility in case they develop any of the above symptoms.
- v. WE ARE ALSO MAKING A SPECIAL APPEAL FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC TO UTILISE THE **TOLL FREE NUMBER 719** WHENEVER THEY WANT TO REPORT A CASE AS OPPOSED TO CALLING EVERYONE AT THE MINISTRY.

We continue to appeal to our fellow Kenyans to remain calm and as His Excellency the President assured that this is a crisis that we shall overcome if we stay united.


Hon Mutahi Kagwe, EGH

CABINET SECRETARY