

ADDRESS TO THE NATION BY H.E. UHURU KENYATTA, C.G.H, PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCES ON COVID-19, COMMONLY KNOWN AS CORONAVIRUS AT HARAMBEE HOUSE, NAIROBI ON 15TH MARCH 2020

My Fellow Kenyans.

On Friday March 13th, 2020 the Government of Kenya received confirmation of the first case of COVID-19, commonly known as Coronavirus.

As you may recall, when we first announced the confirmation of the first case, we stated that we had traced 27 persons who had come into contact with the first patient. We have since tested the 27 people at our National Influenza Center.

Today, we have received confirmation of two more cases of the Coronavirus. The two have tested positive as a result of coming into contact with the first patient.

Our health officials have already moved them into Kenyatta National Hospital isolation facility. The medical teams are closely monitoring the patients, who are in stable condition and responding well to treatment. This gives us hope.

Fellow Kenyans,

My Government has been working to monitor the spread of the virus. We have set up necessary containment and treatment protocols across the country. However, following the result of the two additional cases, we are now directing the following additional protocols:

1. The Government is suspending travel for all persons coming into Kenya from any country with reported Coronavirus cases.
2. Only Kenyan Citizens, and any foreigners with valid residence permits will be allowed to come in provided they proceed on self quarantine or to a government designated quarantine facility. This will take effect within the next 48 hours to cater for any passengers who may be enroute. This directive will remain in effect for the next 30 days or as varied by the National Emergency Response Committee.
3. All persons who have come into Kenya in the last 14 days must self-quarantine. If any person exhibits symptoms such as cough, or fever, they should present themselves to the nearest health facility for testing;
4. We have suspended learning in all our education institutions with immediate effect. Consequently, and to facilitate a phased approach, primary and secondary day schools are to suspend operations from tomorrow.
5. For those in boarding schools, the school administration is to ensure that students are home by Wednesday, 18th March 2020 while Universities and Tertiary Institutions are to close by Friday, 20th March 2020;

6. Where possible, government offices, businesses and companies are encouraged to allow employees to work from home, with the exception of employees working in critical or essential services.
7. In order to avoid the risk of transmission through physical handling of money, we encourage the use of cashless transactions such as mobile money and credit cards.
8. We appeal to mobile operators and banks to take into consideration the situation, and reduce the cost of transactions during this period. In line with the directive to avoid crowded places, citizens are encouraged to:
 - a. Avoid congregating including in places of worship;
 - b. Minimize attendance to social gatherings including weddings and funerals, and restrict the same to immediate family members;
 - c. Avoid crowded places including shopping malls and entertainment premises;
 - d. Minimize congestion in public transport wherever possible;
 - e. Limitation of visitors to hospitalised patients in both public and private hospitals.
9. Hospitals and shopping malls are encouraged to provide soap, water and hand sanitizers and ensure that all their premises are regularly cleaned and disinfected.

Globally, the impact of the virus is still unfolding. I want to assure you that My Administration is at the forefront of assessing, containing and managing this pandemic in the country.

Some of the measures may cause inconvenience, but I want to assure you they are designed to ensure that we effectively contain the spread of the virus.

I appeal to all of us to strictly observe these measures. I would also like to appeal for calm.

Kenyans must avoid misinformation that causes panic and anxiety.

Let us remember that as Kenyans, we have been faced with other crisis in the past, and we have always triumphed by coming together in the spirit of national unity and cooperation.

Every single Kenyan has a responsibility in ensuring they play their part in safeguarding Kenyan lives.

This pandemic will test us, as it is testing all countries in every corner of the world, but I do not believe it will defeat us. If we pull together, and everybody does their part, we shall overcome its worst impacts.

God bless you all, God bless Kenya.