

Zimbabwe COVID-19 Lockdown Weekly Monitoring Report 20 February to 4 March 2021

1. Introduction

This report covers the period Saturday 20 February to Friday 5 March 2021. Until 1 March 2021, the country was operating under phase 4 of the national lockdown period that was declared by the Minister of Health and Child Care, Vice President Constantino Chiwenga on 2 January 2021, and subsequently extended for 14 days on two other occasions being 1 and 15 February 2021 respectively. On 1 March 2021, the President reviewed downwards the lockdown measures that had been initially implemented. Meanwhile, as of Thursday 4 March 2021, the confirmed number of COVID-19 cases had increased to 36 223, with 44 new cases being reported on the same day. The death toll increased to 1 483, with 5 deaths being reported on the day. On 5 March, 2688 frontline workers were inoculated with the Sinopharm vaccine bringing the cumulative total to 30 658.

2. Methodology

This report encompasses data gathered nationally by the Zimbabwe Peace Project (ZPP), Counselling Services Unit (CSU), and excerpts from a report generated by the Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights (ZADHR).

3. State of the Nation Address (1 March 2021)

Following the end of the 14 days of national lockdown that was announced on 15 February 2021, President Emmerson Mnangagwa reviewed the national lockdown regulations. The following reviews are now in effect:

- the wearing of face masks, temperature checks as well as washing of hands or use of sanitisers in all public areas remain mandatory;
- the curfew which was starting from 8pm and ending at 5.30am is now between 10pm and 5am.
- Exemption letters are no longer required for movement;
- Supermarkets can now operate up to 7pm to reduce congestion, and must enforce social distancing within their premises;
- Industry can open, with strict adherence to World Health Organisation set standards and National COVID-19 Guidelines such as the regular disinfection of premises, social distancing, hand sanitising and body temperature checks at entrances. Noncompliance in this regard will attract targeted closures of entities.
- SMEs, food markets and the informal sector can re-open on condition that they strictly adhere to the World Health Organisation set standards and National COVID-19 Guidelines.
- Schools must prepare to open and put in place measures which observe the World Health Organisation Protocols and National COVID-19 Guidelines. Virtual learning or long-distance learning is encouraged where possible.
- Universities and Colleges must also prepare to open and ensure compliance with the World Health Organisation Protocols and National COVID-19 Guidelines. Virtual learning or long-distance learning is encouraged where possible.
- Inter-city travel can now resume. Bus operators, however, must ensure the disinfection of their buses, wearing of masks, temperature checks and sanitisation of passengers.
- Social gatherings and funerals shall maintain a maximum number of 30 people. Other gatherings, including churches, shall not exceed 50 people.
- Restaurants can open for take-aways and deliveries, with no sit-ins permitted. Beer halls, bars, night clubs and gymnasiums remain closed. Bottle stores must strictly operate take-aways as required by the law.

4. COVID-19 vaccination update

Cabinet received an update on the roll-out of the COVID-19 vaccination programme, which was presented by Vice President Constantino Chiwenga as the Minister of Health and Child Care. The following issues were raised:

- President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China donated a further 200 000 doses of the Sinopharm vaccine, taking China's total donation of vaccines to 400 000 doses.
- Another 600 000 doses of Chinese vaccines purchased by Government will be arriving in the coming weeks.
- The Russian Federation, India and the United Kingdom have also pledged donations of various vaccines, with Russia promising 20 000 doses of the Sputnik V Vaccine and India promising 75 000 doses of the COVAXIN vaccine.
- Government has established a team of experts drawn from the field of academia, Ministry of Health and Child Care, and Research and Clinical Practitioners to monitor the effectiveness of the vaccine. The team's recommendations will guide the country's vaccination rollout programme at all times.
- No major adverse reactions have been recorded to date, except for a single case of a minor reaction which manifested in a rash.
- Schools will re-open in a phased approach with the 2021 examination classes going to school on 15 March 2021 and the rest on 22 March 2022.

5. Practice directive 5 of 2021

The Chief Justice of Zimbabwe, Hon. Luke Malaba issued Practice Directive 4 of 2021 which sets out guidelines on court operations for the period 16 February 2021 to 1 March 2021, being the indicated expiration of the extended level IV national lockdown. The following are key guidelines established by the practice directive:

- Normal court operations, including the offices of the Master and the Sheriff of the High Court, shall resume with effect from 2 March 2021,
- Solemnisation of marriages shall be conducted provided that only the parties to the marriage and their witnesses shall be allowed to attend.
- Entry into court premises/courthouses/courtrooms shall be limited to litigants, their legal practitioners, necessary witnesses and identified members of the press.
- All persons who attend Court shall at all times:-
 - o be subjected to temperature checks;
 - o be required to sanitise their hands at entry into court premises;
 - o wear face masks in the manner prescribed by law;
 - o avoid person to person contact; and
 - o maintain social distancing as prescribed by law.

6. Attacks against journalists

On 26 February 2021, police officers arrested journalist, Nyashadzashe Ndoro, while covering a Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) demonstration at the Harare Magistrates Court. Ndoro was taken to Harare Central Police Station where he was later released without any charge. In the same vein, veteran journalist Kumbirai Mafunda, was also arrested at the Harare Magistrates Court where he was covering the court appearance of pro-democracy campaigner, Makomborero Haruzivishe. Mafunda was accused of practising journalism without accreditation from the Zimbabwe Media Commission (ZMC) after he produced his accreditation card which on the face of it, was expired. Mafunda was also detained at Harare Central Police Station before being released after the intervention of his lawyers who indicated ZMC's position, that cards issued in 2019 and 2020 remain valid

7. Arbitrary Arrest

On 26 February 2021 police officers arrested three students, namely Richard Paradzayi, Paidamoyo Masaraure and Leam Kanengoni, who were apprehended at Harare Magistrates Court on allegations of unnecessary movement. ZRP officers also arrested Zimbabwe National Students Union (ZINASU) leaders who include Tafadzwa Ngadziore and Tapiwa Chiriga among others. Earlier, on 25 February 2021, ZRP officers arrested Edmond Chimwene at Harare Magistrates Court and detained him at Harare Central Police for allegedly staging a one-man demonstration at Harare Magistrates Court, where he wore a t-shirt inscribed with words such as “Marxist for Life”, “Justice for All”, “Peace” and “Freedom”.

In Chitungwiza, ZRP members arrested five juveniles and eight adult residents, who were detained for about five hours at Town Centre Police Station where they were charged with committing public violence. The accused were allegedly part of a group that attacked police officers who wanted to arrest a bar and restaurant owner for breaching national lockdown regulations.

8. Extrajudicial killing

On 28 February 2021, police officers in Gweru arrested Tatenda Pasinyore for allegedly pelting stones at an elderly citizen’s roof. It is alleged that police officers assaulted Pasinyore as evidenced by bruises on both hips, a deep cut on the right wrist, a scratch on the leg and bruises under the armpit. It is further alleged that at about 5 am, Pasinyore died in police custody. The Forum is seized with this matter and is awaiting a post-mortem report.

9. Assault and Torture

On 27 February 2021, five police officers led by an officer identified as Shoko, assaulted Tendai Magwaza and Tawanda Gojo with baton sticks at a residential home in Zaranyika, Gweru, at around 10pm. It is alleged that the police officers accused the victims of defying the national lockdown curfew regulations. Tendai Magwaza sustained injuries to his left arm and right thigh whilst Tawanda sustained injuries on his right thigh, back, ribs and right arm. After the assault, the duo was arrested and later released from police custody without any formal charge.

Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) officers from Machipisa Police Station allegedly arrested a pregnant woman, Fungai Mutsvairo, in Highfield for not wearing a face mask and detained her for over 48 hours after she failed to pay a solicited bribe of US\$10 to police officers. She was subsequently released without charge.

10. Summary of Violations

The table below summarises COVID-19 related human rights violations documented by the Forum Secretariat and Forum Members from 5 January 2021 to 26 February 2021.

Nature of Violation	Number of Victims	Location
Assaults and Torture	26	Hwange, Binga, Bulawayo, Chipinge, Fig tree, Gweru, Mt Darwin, Harare, Beitbridge, Mutare
Arbitrary arrests	35	Gweru, Nkulumane
Attacks against journalists	6	Harare, Masvingo
Extrajudicial killing	1	Gweru