

## Zimbabwe COVID-19 Lockdown Weekly Monitoring Report 19 to 25 February 2021, Days 46 to 52

### 1. Introduction

This report covers the period 19 February to 25 February 2021 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 another 14 days on 15 February 2021. As of 25 February, the confirmed number of COVID-19 cases had increased to 35 994, with 34 new cases being reported on the same day. The death toll increased to 1 458 with 2 deaths being reported on the day. So far 11 007 frontline workers have received the vaccine.

### 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. Cabinet Decision Matrix (23 February 2021)

Cabinet received an update on the country's response to the COVID-19 outbreak, which the Minister of Defence and War Veterans Affairs presented as the Chairperson of the Inter-Ministerial Task Force on the COVID-19 Outbreak on 23 February 2021.

The following developments were highlighted:

- Security personnel were directed to intensify monitoring and enforcement of lockdown regulations to enhance compliance.
- The Minister of Primary and Secondary Education was directed to liaise with the Ministry of Health and Child Care to prepare for the re-opening of schools.
- The training of school health coordinators and the assessment of the schools' preparations for the resumption of learning is ongoing.

### 4. COVID-19 vaccination update

According to the Ministry of Health and Child Care, the cumulative number of frontline workers who have received the vaccine as of 25 February stands at 11 007. Among the frontline workers who received the vaccination include:

- Members of Parliament,
- Great Zimbabwe University frontline staff,
- Hospital Staff, and
- Security services.

The following developments were highlighted as part of the Cabinet decision matrix:

- Vaccine distribution and training of vaccinators is underway across the country.
- Vaccination of target groups commenced on 22 February 2021 in all the provinces.
- The Republics of India and the Russian Federation have donated COVID-19 vaccines to the tune of 75 000 and 12 000 doses to Zimbabwe, respectively.
- Cabinet approved the request by the Ministry of Information, Publicity and Broadcasting Services to include journalists in phase one of the inoculation.

Addressing journalists, Presidential Spokesperson George Charamba said Zimbabwe could consider mandatory vaccination against COVID-19 following resistance from some sections of the population. This sentiment was also echoed by President Mnangagwa when he advised ZANU-PF supporters gathered in Matabeleland North that though people are not being forced to be vaccinated, there will come a time when those who are not vaccinated will not get jobs or access to public transport.

## 5. Lockdown defiance

Numerous reports of the continuous defiance of the lockdown by the public, particularly in high-density suburbs, were received. In most cases, the pursuit of economic activities and basic livelihood was the main reason for the defiance. However, in some incidents, citizens defy the lockdown for leisure activities such as drinking alcohol and participating in unsanctioned close contact sporting activities. Of concern was the defiance of the lockdown by President Mnangagwa on 25 February when he addressed a crowd of ZANU-PF supporters during the commissioning of Eping Forest boreholes in Nyamandlovu, Matabeleland North. Similarly, on 21 February ZANU-PF supporters defied the lockdown regulations when they held a meeting at the party district offices in Kwekwe. On the contrary, 11 MDC Alliance officials who had gathered for a meeting in Chinhoyi were arrested and released of bail after spending 48 hours in detention. Based on these incidents, the selective enforcement of the lockdown regulations has been raised by citizens as a concern.

## 6. Attacks against journalists

Masvingo freelance journalists, Godfrey Mtimba and Tonderai Saharo, were on 24 February 2021 reportedly harassed and barred by the police from covering the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccination programme at Mushagashe Training Centre. According to Mtimba, the police barred them from covering the event at the instigation of the sister-in-charge who was leading the medical team. The sister-in-charge, who reportedly refused to identify herself, told the journalists that she had not received authorisation from her superiors to entertain or allow the presence of media practitioners.

## 7. Assault and torture

The Forum received a report on the assault and torture of Pachedu Samakande who was allegedly assaulted by soldiers at his house in Mutare. It is alleged that on 11 February, Samkande was outside his gate in his car when police officers and soldiers enforcing lockdown regulations ordered him to disembark. A soldier descended on the victim and assaulted him indiscriminately with fists and booted feet. The victim sustained serious injuries and sought medical attention.

## 8. 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 25 February 2021.

Nature of Violation	Number of Victims	Location
Assaults and Torture	24	Hwange, Binga, Bulawayo, Chipinge, Fig tree, Gweru, Mt Darwin, Harare, Beitbridge, Mutare
Arbitrary arrests	29	Gweru, Nkulumane
Attacks against journalists	4	Harare, Masvingo

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