

Heal Zimbabwe

28-29 May 2020

lockdown update

Introduction

On the 19th of April, Zimbabwe extended its lockdown with 14 days as a way of escalating measures of reducing the spread of COVID-19. The country's extension illustrates the government's commitment towards effectively containing the virus in the country. The current partial lockdown relaxed restrictions on mining companies, agricultural and food producers, among others as a way of ensuring constant supply of revenue to the government and food. The government also rolled out social assistance programs for vulnerable households including the elderly, vendors and People with Disabilities as a way of reinforcing the lockdown extension. The government's Task Force on COVID-19 also intensified its outreach activities to establish district and provincial isolation centres for cases of COVID-19 across the country.

Issues covered in this Update

In this report, Heal Zimbabwe's Early Warning and Early Response Situation Room provides an update on: how communities are responding to the extended lockdown, availability and cost of face masks, the conduct of lockdown enforcement officers, the availability and quality of health care services for COVID-19 and other diseases, and the availability of information on COVID-19 in local communities.

Methodology

A total of 4 000 trained Early Warning and Early Response Committee members and at least 5 000 community members who participate in HZT's outreach activities, CBOs operating in areas where Heal Zimbabwe operates and Heal Zimbabwe's Peace Clubs provides and verify information in this update.

Presentation of Updates

Masvingo Province

Masvingo

On the 28th of May, returnees quarantined at Masvingo Teacher's College protested against the Ministry of Health and Child Care officials, by blocking their vehicle from leaving the premises. They were protesting against continued detention, saying they must be released immediately as their 21 days are up. They were highlighting that their continued detention exposes them to greater risk of contracting corona virus. They were also highlighting that they believe most of those who recently tested positive at the centre were negative when they were quarantined

and contracted the virus during their quarantine period. The returnees also expressed bitterness over the fact that almost 300 returnees go to the dining hall at the same time and up to 15 returnees share the same bucket in the bathroom.

Bikita

On the 28th of May, community members from ward 10, ward 12, ward 32 and ward 20 were still staying in their homes. Enforcement officers were only visible at Nyika growth point. Community members who visited public places were mostly clad in face masks. Community members were relieved that the government established a quarantine centre at a local training center. However, community members highlighted that they were receiving information that some of the quarantined returnees were already escaping from the facility.

Gutu

Community members in Ward 5, Ward 6, Ward 7 and Ward 41 reported that a lot of people are now frequenting local business centres and Mupandawana growth point. Vendors have also resumed with their business at local business centres. Police enforcement was reportedly low such that public transport operators have resumed their operations on Chivhu-Gutu road. Community members also observed that passengers were not observing any form of social distancing aboard public transport.

Mwenezi

Community members from Neshuro Growth Point have resumed their normal daily lives. This has been worsened by the fact that the police have also relaxed in terms of their enforcement. Local transport continues to operate and community members believe that police officers are now taking bribes and letting these operators to continue with their business. Community members also observed that passengers are not observing social distancing and the police are also not ensuring that transport operators at least reduces the risk of infection amongst their passengers.

Chivi

Community members from Ward 25 and Ward 26 have now resumed normal businesses. Sugar is now very scarce and being sold at ZW\$180.00 and cooking ZAR100.00. Community members also highlighted that they can no longer afford staying at home with the increase in prices of basic commodities and absence of social assistance programs.

Mashava

Community members in Mashava are still following the lockdown measures of staying at home. Police are still enforcing the lockdown at the local shops, peacefully. Community members also wear their masks whenever they move around public places. However community members were lamenting over the possibility of starving since they are no longer productive due to the lockdown.

Matabeleland North Province

Lupane

Community members from around Lupane centre continue to turn up at the centre hoping to get basic commodities. 95% of shops were open and vegetable markets are now operating at full scale. People no longer observe social distancing and wearing masks. The police have also relaxed enforcing the lockdown. Community members highlighted that they are now at the risk of starvation and hunger.

There is a growing number of youths involved in selling fuel at black market and in communities, some youths have resumed their soccer tournaments. At Jotsholo Centre there was a big crowd of ARDA workers doing their shopping. Most of them received their salaries on the 29th of May. At St Luke's hospital it was business as usual with people coming from different directions seeking essential goods and services.

Manicaland Province

Mutasa

Community members in Ward 31 were roaming around wearing homemade masks. A group of police officers were turning away those who did not have masks from Hauna Business Centre. Shops in Ward 31 had most of the basic commodities. In Ward 21, community members were roaming around without masks. There were no police officers to enforce the lockdown terms. Shops in Ward 21 had most of the basic commodities.

Buhera

Community members in Ward 33 and Ward 31 were roaming around without masks. A group of police officers were turning away those without masks from Birchenough Bridge shopping centre. Shops in Ward 33 had most of the basic commodities.

Chipinge

Community members in Ward 1 and Ward 16 were roaming around without masks. A group of police officers were seen enforcing the lockdown at around 09:00hours turning away those who did not have masks from local shopping centres.

Chimanimani

Community members in Ward 15 and Ward 8 were roaming around without masks. A group of police officers were seen at around 10:00hours enforcing the lockdown. Shops in Ward 15 and Ward 8 had most of the basic commodities.

Makoni

Community members in Ward 16 and Ward 15 stayed at home, whilst in Ward 12, most of the community members were roaming around. A group of police officers were seen at around 09:00 hours turning away those who did not have masks. Shops in all the wards had most of the basic commodities. ZANU PF members from across Ward 15 received rice at Chiwetu Rest Camp. Community members were not sure if this rice was donated by government or by ZANU PF.

Mashonaland West Province

Hurungwe

Community members in ward 24 are still abiding by the lockdown measures of staying at home. However community members from this ward are still shaking hands and not exercising social distancing at funerals. This was observed in Chagwedera and Kache villages, where hundreds of community members attended funerals. Local shops are now selling sugar at ZW\$180.00, and cooking oil at ZW\$350.00 for 2litres. Community members are now relying on barter trade with maize in order for them to get other basic commodities like soap and cooking oil.

Norton

Community members in Katanga business centre are no longer staying at home. This is despite the fact that the police officers are enforcing the lockdown especially at Katanga business centre. People who are caught moving around without wearing face masks are being arrested. The police have also erected roadblocks and are turning travellers without a pass.

Chinhoyi

Community members in Chinhoyi have increased their movements. Most shops and saloons are now open. Police officers were spotted in Hunyani, arresting people who were moving around without wearing masks. Shops are hiking prices of basic goods and community members highlighted that most basic commodities were now beyond their reach.

Mashonaland Central Province

Mt Darwin

Community members in ward 12 are staying in their homes. Police officers are no longer enforcing the lockdown in Ward 12. Community members from this ward expressed concern over an increase in the number of households brewing traditional beer in the Ward and most men spend time gathering these houses drinking beer in groups. Most community members are now relying on barter trade to get basic commodities such as sugar is which is now being sold at ZW\$170.00, and cooking oil which costs ZW\$350.00.

Summary of the Update

Below is a table summarizing key developments highlighted in this update.

Key Development	Changes Observed
Compliance with lockdown terms	Only 6 out of 16 districts covered in this update are still complying with the orders to stay at home and wearing masks whenever in public places.
Police enforcing the lockdown	Police officers are only visible at busy Growth Points such as Neshuro, Nyika, Mupandawana, Hauna and others, although they have relaxed the way they enforce the lockdown. Chances are very high that they are taking bribes from public transport operators as more taxi (Mishikashika) have resumed their operations, with the police's knowledge
Price of basic commodities	Prices of cooking oil and sugar have hiked across all the 16 districts. The same was also observed on other basic commodities. This has rendered more households vulnerable given that they are no longer economically active due to the lockdown
Availability of basic commodities	Whereas basic commodities are largely available in shops, most community members highlighted that they prices have rendered them unavailable to many. In Hurungwe and Mt Darwin, community members have resorted to barter trading since they can no longer afford them in cash.
Availability of social assistance programs	Only ZANU PF supporters from Makoni Ward 15 received rice on the 29th of May.