

# Heal Zimbabwe

lockdown update (28-29 April – 2020)

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# 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 basic commodities such as mealie-meal and cooking oil, people's access to savings, 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 provide and verify information in this update.

## Presentation of Updates

### Manicaland Province Updates

#### Mutasa

Community members in Mutasa North Ward 31 Hauna Growth Point and Ward 5 stayed in their homes. Community members were getting medical help from Hauna district hospital in Ward 31 and Hauna Clinic. No serious cases of malaria were recorded in the ward. COVID 19 test kits were not available and no referral centres of COVID-19 have been established. Hauna district hospital was proposed to be the COVID-19 future referral centre in Mutasa Ward 31.

Community members from Ward 5 were complaining with the distance they travel to their nearest clinic, Hauna Clinic which is 10km away. A group of police force were seen around 08:30hours enforcing the lockdown in the two wards. Supermarkets at Hauna Business centre in Ward 31 were open, however they were no change in prices for basic commodities and community members highlighted that the price for mealie meal was still high ranging between ZWL\$150.00, 10KG mealie meal at ZWL\$200, cooking ZWL\$120 and salt ZWL\$130. Community members from this ward get information on Covid 19 from their mobile phones and televisions. Ecocash agents are charging 30% of interest for cash withdrawals.

#### Buhera

Community members in Buhera Ward 5 and Ward 6 stayed in their homes. Buhera district hospital was open for emergency cases only. Medical personnel at the hospital continue to complain over shortage of drugs for malaria and flue. There has not been any serious case of Malaria recorded at the hospital yet. The hospital does not have any COVID-19 test kits. Most shops in the two Wards were open. However, community members continue to complain over the price for basic commodities. Mealie meal prices at the local shopping centre costs ZWL\$150.00 whilst a 2l of cooking oil is being sold at ZWL\$130.00. Community members highlighted that subsidized mealie meal is only found at Murambinda Growth Point, which is 20km away. A group of police officers were seen around 09:00hours to help enforce the National Lockdown. Community members highlighted that they were not aware of any referral centre in the district. Community members are paying as high as 40% interest on the cash withdrawals from Ecocash Agents.

#### Chipinge

Today, the 29th of April, community members from Ward 27 were going about their normal daily businesses as usual. Vheneka clinic in Ward 27, Mutema Clinic in Ward 3 and Bangwe Clinic in Ward 1 were open for critical cases only. The three wards have not recorded any serious cases of malaria yet. These clinics do not have COVID-19 test kits yet. The Department of Social Welfare was distributing food aid for the elderly people in Ward 27. A group of police officers were seen around in Ward 27 and Ward 1 peacefully enforcing the lockdown. The officers also implored community members to observe social distance during the food aid distribution in Ward 27. Most shops in Ward 27, Ward 16, Ward 3 and Ward 1 were open although business operators were complaining over low customer turnout. Community members in these areas continue to complain over the price of mealie meal which costs between ZWL\$150.00 and ZWL\$200.00. Community members rely on information from radios and mobile phones for COVID-19 updates and information. Local Ecocash agents are still charging 35% for all cash withdrawals.

#### Chimanimani

Community members in Chimanimani Ward 8, Ward 5 and Ward 20 stayed in their homes. Nyanyadzi Clinic in Ward 8 and Gudyanga Clinics in Ward 20 were open. Nurses at the hospitals continue to complain over shortage of drugs and protective clothing for them to safely perform their duties. The three Wards have not recorded any serious cases of malaria. Most shops in the three wards opened from 0900 hours to 1500 hours. Whilst most business people in these areas complain over poor customer turn-up, community members are also complaining over prices set for basic commodities especially mealie-meal which ranges between ZWL\$200.00 and ZWL\$250.00 for a 10kg. Community members highlighted that they were not aware of any COVID-19 referral centres in their district. A group of police officers were seen at Wengezi, Nyanyadzi and Tonhorai business Centres peacefully enforcing the lockdown. Community members from this district access information about COVID-19 from their radios and televisions. Community members also indicated that they were paying as high

as 40% for every cash withdrawal they make from local Ecocash agents.

## Makoni

Community members in Makoni Ward 16 stayed in their homes. Tandi clinic Ward 12 – Headlands, Chinyadza Clinic in Ward 16, St Theresa Hospital and Dohwa Clinic in Ward 13 were open for urgent cases only. Nurses at most government clinics were complaining over shortage of drugs and protective equipment. A group of police officers were seen in Ward 12 assisting communities to abide by the lockdown terms. Community members get Covid 19 information through radios and mobile phones. Community members highlighted that they were not aware of any Covid-19 referral centre in their district. Most shops in the three Wards were open and had all basic commodities. However community members continue complaining over prices set for basic commodities especially mealie-meal which ranges from ZWL\$140.00 to ZWL\$200.00. Community members are paying as high as 40% to local Ecocash Agents for all cash withdrawals.

## Nyanga North

Community members in Avila continue to stay in their homes. A group of police officers were monitoring and enforcing the lockdown at Avila Business Centre by encouraging people to buy and quickly go back to their homes. Shops at Avila Business Centre are opening from 0900 hours to 1500 hours. Community members reported that they were witnessing a rise in cases of malaria and most of the patients are being assisted by Village Health Workers. Village Health Workers then refer serious cases to Avila Mission Hospital.

## Harare Metropolitan Province

### Borrowdale

Today, the 29th of April, it was business as usual for residents in Pomona Supermarkets at Village Walk Pick n Pay were open, maintaining social distance and sanitizing customers at the entrance. All basic commodities were available, and there was no subsidized mealie- meal. A 10kg of mealie- meal was costing ZWL\$200.00 whilst cooking oil was pegged at ZWL\$150.00. A group of police officers were seen around 1300hours to encouraging everyone to stay at home. All banks were closed.

### Chitungwiza

#### Unit 0

Community members are staying at their homes. However since there is no tap water, most people are spending hours queuing at community borehole areas, especially at Tasimukira Primary School and close to Velvet service station along Wedza road. There is no social distancing or sanitizers at most boreholes. Makoni Business Centre shops were open today and community members were queuing at OK shop, Gains shop and Metro Peach to purchase subsidized mealie meal. Police officers were controlling the queues and ensuring that people observe social distancing.

## Masvingo Province

### Masvingo

Yesterday the 28th of April, police roadblocks and soldiers were seen on all major roads and in locations. Riot Police was also moving around Ward 5 and 4. Most people in these Wards are afraid to go for shopping at Mbudzi shopping centre since there are soldiers and riot police are stationed there. Masvingo city town council started a process of renovating Takawira vendor market in Mucheke. Yesterday, the council demolished vendors markets next to OK Mart in the CBD, destroying some of the wares that the vendors had stocked. Today, the 29th of April Masvingo Town Council was disinfecting the town to help protect

residents. People were instructed to stay out of town to pave way for the exercise. Community members also highlighted that sugar was beginning to be scarce in most shops in Masvingo, resulting in long queues at main supermarkets in the CBD.

## Gutu

Community members in Gutu district continue to stay in their homes and Police officers also continue to peacefully enforce the lock down. Most shops from wards 6, 5, 31, 41 and 7 were open from 0900 to 1500 hours. However, community members highlighted that basic commodities such as sugar and cooking oil are now scarce at the local shops. Local shops had long not been selling mealie-meal for a long time, forcing people continue to buy maize from fellow community members who had surplus from the previous farming season. The five wards have not recorded any cases of malaria. All local clinics in the ward remain accessible to community members.

## Zaka

Community members continue to stay in their homes and Police officers are also staying and moving around at shops ensuring that people observe the lockdown rules and making sure people are maintaining social distancing whilst they are going about their essential businesses. In ward 13, 3 cases of malaria were reported on the 23rd of April. Community members from Zaka continue to pay high rates of interest for Ecocash withdrawals. Clinics in the district are very accessible as the district has several clinics.

## Bikita

Today the 29th of April, community members from Ward 9, Ward 22, Ward 12 and Ward 32 were still staying in their homes although they are a few cases of people who are still gathering for beer drinking. Police officers continue to peacefully enforce the lockdown especially at Nyika Growth Point by ensuring that shops open from 0900hrs and close at 1500hrs. Wards 32, 9, 22 and 12 all have clinics that are easily accessible and community members can walk to the clinics in cases of emergency. However, most of the hospitals still lack essential drugs and protective equipment for medical personnel to safely conduct their job. Community members from around Mungezi Clinic highlighted that they recorded a case of malaria on the 26th of April.

## Mwenezi

Community members at Neshuro Growth Point are still staying in their homes. Police is also moving around Neshuro Growth Point to ensure that all shops are open from 0900 hours to 1500 hours. The police officers are also peacefully ensuring that people who are moving for essential goods and services do not end up gathering. Neshuro hospital continues to assist people from outside the gate and taking only critical cases inside. No cases of malaria have been recorded as yet from around Neshuro Growth Point. Basic commodities in shops continue to be sold in South African Rands and mealie-meal is now ZAR500.00 for a 50kg and ZAR120.00 for a 10kg. Community members continue to complain that only business operators are accessing subsidized mealie-meal from Gain Cash and Carry wholesale and later overcharge local community members when they resale from their shops.

## Mashava

Community members from Mashava are staying in their homes. Police are peacefully maintaining order and encouraging people to observe social distancing during opening and closing hours of shops. Yesterday the 28th of April, community members peacefully queued for subsidized mealie-meal and they were observing social distancing. Community members also highlighted that the shop operators fairly sold the mealie-meal. Community members also highlighted that they had not heard of any malaria outbreak in the area. Gathsmine mine hospital and Bere Council clinic are attending to emergence cases only.

## Midlands Province

### Chiundura

Community members in ward 11 continue to stay in their homes. A group of police officers and soldiers start patrolling after 3pm in to ensure that by the time shops close, there will not be people roaming around at shopping centres. Local community clinics are only attending to serious cases only, and they are providing a letter for community members to be able to travel to Gweru town to buy medication. In most cases, people rely on information they get from radios and Whatsapp groups on COVID-19 updates and information. Community members are now alerting each other when there is a radio show on COVID-19, as a way of ensuring that everyone gets authentic information. Community members highlighted that they are no longer accessing their bank savings.

### Gweru

Community members in Gweru continue to stay in their homes. A group of police officers and soldiers were spotted in different suburbs enforcing the lockdown t from 9am till late. Today the 29th of April, community members spent hours queuing for subsidized mealie-meal at Mkoba shopping centre. However, the shop was only accepting US dollars, charging US\$5.00 per 10kg of mealie-meal. Gweru community now has an isolation centre for Covid-19 cases in Ascot. People in Gweru highlighted that they are getting awareness on Covid-19 through social media.

### Gokwe Sesame

Community members in ward 13 and Ward 9 are staying in their homes. A group of police officers are enforcing the lockdown all day round. There is no subsidized mealie meal in most shops in Ward 13 and Ward 9. Community clinics in these Wards are operating although they do not have drugs for most diseases. Community members who had their savings on Ecocash are finding it difficult to access cash since there are no Ecocash agents currently operating in the two wards. Community members from Ward 12 expressed disapproval of the distribution of food aid which was conducted sometime last week, stating that the process was done in a partisan manner despite the fact that the aid was coming from the Department of Social Welfare.

### Zvishavane

Illegal gold panners in Zvishavane are no longer staying in their homes and this has resulted in clashes with the police and soldiers. Community members from Ward 11 received food aid (cooking oil, wheat and beans) from ADRA Zimbabwe. On the 28th of April, a group of soldiers assaulted community members in Kwayoko area who were gathered around the shopping centre at around 1800 hours. It is alleged that one of the guards at Tees Supermarket was left severely injured from violence.

## Mashonaland West Province

### Hurungwe

Community members in Ward 15 are not staying at home. It is business as usual as shops such as Chiedza, Mutore and Chembizi Business Centres were open throughout the day. There are no police officers or soldiers enforcing the lockdown. Over 200 community members from

Rengwe area spent the whole day at a funeral, without observing social distancing. However individuals were not shaking hands as a way of paying condolence. On the 25th of April, at a distribution of COVID-19 aid at Magororo Business Centre, Hurungwe West MP Mary Mliswa distributed the aid only to ZANU PF members per each branch while others did not receive anything. Chiroti clinic in Ward 24 is open and has malaria treatment. Community members from this ward highlighted that they were witnessing a rise in cases of malaria and local Village Health Workers are referring patients to the local clinic for treatment.

## Mashonaland East

### Murehwa

It is still business as usual for community members in Murehwa. Community members are still gathering for drinking traditional beer. Most shop owners are trying to make sure that customers wash their hands before entering the shop and also maintain social distancing. Members of the uniformed forces, police officers in particular, are patrolling around the community shops as a way of reinforcing the lockdown. Basic commodities are available in shops though charged at a higher price. Community members are counting on their small harvests and vegetable farming for subsistence. Other community members get assistance from the Department of Social Welfare and CARITAS.

## Matabeleland North

### Lupane

Today, the 29th of April, Lupane Local board disinfected Lupane shopping centre and other public places. Most shops were asked to close their business to allow the disinfection process and people were asked to go back to their homes except for those queuing for mealie meal. Police were also peacefully enforcing social distancing at a mealie meal queue at Lupane Centre. The task force even distributed subsidized mealie meal to St Lukes and Jotsholo as a way of decongesting Lupane shopping Centre. However, it was business as usual at St Luke business centre, Menyezwa, Jotsholo and St Paul's business centre where most shops were open and a lot of people were gathered in anticipation of government's subsidized mealie-meal.