

Heal Zimbabwe

lockdown update (1-2 May 2020)

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

Given the increase in government efforts to contain the virus, Heal Zimbabwe's Early Warning and Early Response Situation Room increased the number of the indicators it was tracking in relation to the fight against COVID-19 in the country. 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

Mashonaland West Province

Hurungwe

Community members in Karuru Ward 8 are now proceeding with their daily businesses as usual. By the 1st of May, three out of the five shops at Karuru business centre had closed after they ran out of their stocks. Community members were complaining over the price of basic commodities

such as sugar which is being charged ZWL\$150.00 if one is using cash and ZWL\$180.00 for Ecocash. There are no Ecocash agents at Karuru business centre, making it difficult for community members to access cash. Local tobacco farmers were expressing anger over the fact that the government announced that farmers will not be allowed to accompany their tobacco to Harare auction floors. Rather, they will have to send their tobacco and they will only receive payments for their tobacco without even knowing how the tobacco has been graded. Community members also highlighted that there are a lot of malaria cases in Karuru area and most serious cases are being referred by Karuru clinic to Karoi Hospital. Due to police roadblocks, community members are resorting to hiring local transport travel to Karoi at night to avoid police roadblocks along the way.

Magunje

At 1400 hours, police armed with button sticks dispersed community members from Ward 10 Magunje who had gathered at MDT from 1000 hours to receive food aid from a local well-wisher, Panganai Chakanyuka. The police were led by Councilor Budwell Chasara who highlighted that Chakanyuka was not a well-wisher, rather he was a politician who wanted to take advantage of the lockdown to mobilize supporters. Chakanyuka wanted to distribute food packs including mealie-meal, sugar and cooking oil to 50 Persons with Disabilities and impoverished households. The police then arrested Chakanyuka and detained him Magunje Police Station. Community members expressed concern over the scarcity and prices set for mealie-meal in the ward which ranges from ZWL\$180.00 to ZWL\$200.00. Magunje hospital was serving critically sick patients only including persons with malaria. Community members also highlighted that there was a rise in Malaria cases in the ward and yet the hospital does not have drugs.

Karoi

Community members from around Karoi flocked in town searching for government's subsidized mealie-meal. On the 30th of April, Police officers violently dispersed community members who were queued at Mega wholesale where there was subsidized mealie-meal. People were not maintaining social distance. This is taking place everyday happens at the same shop given that it sells cheaper commodities as compared to Pick n Pay and Ok. Local Ecocash agents are charging 30% for cashouts.

Chinhoyi

At around 1100am, police were enforcing the laws in Chikonohono, Hunyani and other high density suburbs. They were encouraging community members to avoid unnecessary loitering and warning them that they will be fined for loitering. Local council clinics are attending patients with regular checkups at the entrance gate and they refer any suspected case of COVID- 19 to the Provincial hospital for specialized services.

Norton

Small businesses operators in Katanga expressed anger over the short notices that they were served with by the Norton Town Council to remove their stock and other removable assets from their tuckshops. The notices only gave 24 hours for operators to vacate or lose their valuables. Today, all tuck shops and other structures that were deemed illegal at Katanga business centre were demolished. However, most of the operators who lost their stock and other building material such as asbestos and windows highlighted that they have been paying levies to the council.

Mashonaland Central Province

Mbire

Community members from Mahuhwe ward are still staying in their homes. However, they usually start loitering from around 1500 hours to 1600 hours looking for vegetables from local community members who are selling them from their homes. Shops at Mahuhwe are opening from 0800 hours

to 1200 hours and Mahuhwe Police Station always ensures that people do not end up gathering at the shopping centre. Mahuhwe clinic is only serving emergence cases to the extent that only one nurse is manning the whole clinic. Although there is a rise in cases of malaria in the district, local Village Health Workers are testing and dispatching malaria treatment to patients in their villages. Community members from around the ward also highlighted that prices of basic commodities have risen and most shops are now charging in US dollars. Ecocash agents are charging community members up to 40% for cash withdrawals. This has made life difficult for community members since prices of basic commodities increase with almost 50% when one is paying using Ecocash. All shops at Mahuhwe do not have mealie-meal. A 2litre bottle of cooking oil ranges between US\$3.50 and US\$4.00.

Mazowe

Community members from Ward 13, Ward 11 and Ward 9 are still loitering around their wards, in most of the cases searching for basic commodities. There has not been mealie-meal in most of the shops, and people rely on their harvests for food. Community members were also complaining that the price of cooking oil was ridiculously high, ranging between US\$3.50 and US\$5.00. Howard hospital is offering its services to all community members. However, the personnel take patient's temperature at the gate, before one enters the hospital premises. Patients maintain social distancing at the hospital and there are hand sanitizers to help patients disinfect themselves.

Mashonaland East Province

Mutoko

Community members from around Ward 20 were queued all day long at Gains Wholesale and Chiwaramakanda, Mutoko centre for subsidized mealie-meal. Community members did not observe any social distancing at the queues. Soldiers were present, and would try to ensure that people maintain social distancing. The mealie-meal was being sold at ZWL\$140.00 for 20kgs. Bars such as Shaarz continue to sell beer from backdoors and people are gathering around to drink beer together. Mutoko Rural District Council Clinic is open and assisting emergence cases only. However, the clinic does not have drugs. Community members were lamenting that they are paying between 35 and 40% for cash withdrawals from Ecocash agents.

Uzumba Maramba Pfungwe

Community members from Ward 6 and Ward 16 are staying in their homes. Most community members highlighted that they were no longer able to purchase mealie meal which was being sold in US dollars only at the Growth Point, attracting US\$6.00 per 10kg. However, community members from the two wards received food aid from World Food Programme on the 27th of April at Mutawatawa Growth Point. Community members also highlighted that there is an increase in the number people who are falling sick from malaria and they are being treated by Villager Health Workers. Other patients with advanced symptoms are being referred to Borera Clinic in Ward 16 and Maramba Clinic in Ward 3.

Wedza

Caritas is now distributing food to Orphans and Vulnerable Children in all the wards across Wedza. The organization started by conducting wide consultations with diverse stakeholders in the district. This helped the organization to prioritize children who were not benefitting from the Department of Social Welfare.

Murehwa

It is still business as usual in Ward 27, people were going to their gardens and the young people were playing soccer. The local shops were open with relatively expensive commodities. Some of the shops at Murehwa centre were visibly running out of stock of most basic goods. Local police officers passed by the centre ensuring that people do not end up gathering. However, as soon as they left, crowds started to form.

Manicaland

Chipinge

Community members from Ward 25, Mariya area were shocked with the news that a local resident who had just returned from Mozambique, allegedly coughing and had flu-like symptoms, committed suicide. It is alleged that the man decided to hang himself to death after he was neglected by his family members and the community. He was not tested or taken to an isolation centre since his return from Mozambique. Community members from around Mt Selinda, Muzite, Zamchiya, Mabee, and Makoho are complaining over the increase in the number of people crossing from Mozambique into Zimbabwe. The people, who comprise mostly of locals, are secretly running away from neighbouring South Africa and Mozambique where they were residing as illegal cross borders. Community members are worried about this issue as it can trigger Covid 19 infections. Private cars commuting between Chipinge town to Chiredzi via Checheche have resumed their business, putting passengers lives at risk of infection given that most of them will be packed with people. Community members around Tanganda Chiredzi highway feel that the police are now receiving bribes from these transport operators. They also highlighted that sometimes, passengers and drivers are conniving to use discreet roads that avoid police roadblock.

Nyanga North

Community members continue to stay in their homes. A group of police officers were stationed at Avila business centre ensuring that people observe social distancing. On 30 April at Avila High school, Nyanga North MP Chido Sanyatwe held a meeting with 21 village heads and their respective Village Development Committee (VIDCO) members discussing about mining claims at Nyazingwe and Chisero mining areas. The meeting was done in a classroom and no social distancing was exercised. There were no sanitizers and participants were seen greeting each other using handshakes.

Mabvuku

Residents from Chizhanje area are not staying in their homes. Police has not been monitoring this area to see if people are complying with the lockdown terms. In Ward 19 and Ward 20 there are Clean City water bowlers that have been distributing clean water to community members. However, at the water queues, people are not observing any social distancing. Mabvuku Poly clinic is opening and assisting patients from Ward 19, Ward 20 and Ward 21 with emergency cases. The clinic has been receiving and testing cases of malaria.

Mutasa

Community members in Mutasa Ward 21 Penhalonga and Ward 31, Hauna were seen roaming around. Tsvingwe clinic in Ward 21 was open for emergency cases only. However, nurses continued to complain over shortage of drugs and protective clothing for them to perform their duties safely. Most shops in Ward 21 and supermarkets at Hauna were open and all basic commodities were available. Hauna District Hospital and clinic were open sanitizing and recording temperature for all patients at the entrance. There has not been any referral centre established yet in the district.

Buhera

Community members in Ward 5, Ward 31, Ward 33 and Ward 6 stayed at home. A group of police officers were seen around 09:00 hours enforcing the lockdown in Ward 5 and Ward 33. Murambinda hospital was open for emergency cases only. Community members highlighted that they have not yet heard of any COVID-19 referral centre in Buhera district.

Makoni

Community members in Ward 12, Ward 15, Ward 16 and 13 stayed in their homes. Most clinics in Makoni district were open and attending to emergency cases only. Community members are still not aware of anywhere they can go in the district for COVID-19 specialized services. Most shops across the district were open.

Masvingo Province Chiredzi

People in Tshovani and Zaba suburbs continue to stay in their homes with a few still finding their way to town selling vegetables and topping up their basic commodities. Police continue to move around the CBD and high density suburbs enforcing the lock down. With the added 2 weeks people were highlighting that their savings have depleted and the extended lockdown will make their lives harder. The supply of non-subsidized mealie-meal is stabilizing in most shops and other basic commodities. However, residents highlighted that this was due to the fact that people no longer have any savings left for them to purchase the subsidized mealie meal.

Chivi

Community members from Ward 25 and Ward 26 are staying in their homes but they are lamenting over starvation due to the extension of the lockdown. They are highlighting that they cannot resume their daily income generating activities at Ngundu due to the lockdown terms. Bread is now going for ZWL\$40.00, whilst a 10kg of mealie meal is now being charged at ZAR90.00. There has not been any subsidized mealie-meal in the two wards. With no transport to Ngundu community members have to walk close to 12km to access the clinics and shops which have cheaper prices for basic commodities.

Mwenezi

Community members continue to stay in their homes and Police officers are making sure that the movements by people are meant for essential services only. However community members fear that boarder jumpers from South Africa will end up bringing the virus in their community. These people are not undergoing through any testing or mandatory quarantine procedure despite coming from Africa's COVID-19 hotspot.

Gutu

Community members from Ward 31, Ward 41, Ward 5 and Ward 6 continue to stay in their homes. They however indicated that they were now running out of their savings and basic commodities. Most people highlighted that they are no longer in a position to purchase groceries from local shops since they have been economically inactive since March 30. Communities further highlighted that the unavailability of public transport is worsening their vulnerability since they cannot access their banks in Masvingo or Mupandawana.

Zaka

Community members from Ward 19, Ward 18, Ward 24 and Ward 13 are still staying in their homes and the police officers continue to peacefully enforce the lock down at Jerera Growth Point and Chinorumba shopping centre. Community members highlighted that they are now looking forward to food aid. Their own food stocks have run dry. People are now becoming impatient given that their names are being compiled more than ever before, yet they have not received any aid since the start of the lockdown on the 30th of March. In Ward 18, community members are now worried that although the local MP promised that they will access subsidized mealie-meal from local point persons, they have not seen the mealie-meal ever since the announcement.

Bikita

Community members from Ward 12, Ward 10, Ward 34 and Ward 20 continue to stay in their homes and police officers continue enforcing the lockdown. Community members who stay a distance from Nyika growth point where basic commodities such as cooking oil and mealie-meal are comparably cheaper lament over the provision that public transport will continue banned throughout the next 14 days.

Harare Metropolitan Province

Highfield

Community members in Ward 24 stayed in their homes. Highfields Poly Clinic in Ward 24 was open for emergency cases only. However the clinic is facing a shortage of drugs for most diseases such as malaria and flue. Police officers are ensuring that community members adhere to the lockdown terms especially at shopping centres.

Chitungwiza

Community members in Chitungwiza Unit G Makoni stayed in their homes. Most supermarkets at Makoni shopping centre including Pick n Pay were open and had most of the basic commodities. Makoni 24 hour hospital was open and attending to emergency cases only. Nurses from the hospital continue to complain over lack of protective clothing to help perform their duties safely. Community members were still not aware of any referral centres for COVID-19 in Chitungwiza. Police officers from Makoni Police Station continue to enforce the lockdown around Makoni high density suburbs.

Domboshava

Today, community members from Ward 4 were roaming around business centres. Makumbe hospital in Ward 4 was open for emergency cases only, despite shortages in most drugs. Community members from Domboshava highlighted that the only COVID 19 referral centres they knew about were in Harare. Almost all shops at Mandawa in Ward 4 were open. Ecocash Agents in the area are charging up to 50% as commission for all cash withdrawals.

Matabeleland North

Lupane

On 2 May 2020, police officers who were manning Lupane centre were fewer than those who were manning the centre yesterday. The Lupane local board staff continued disinfecting frequented public places. At Jotsholo, people were in their homes. The traditional leadership is enforcing the banning of sports and church activities, whilst in Dandanda, St Luke and Sibombo, it was business as usual at the shopping Centre with all shops open to the public including bottle stores. In Dingamuzi Ward, water remains scarce and citizens rely on open water sources where they compete with animals for both drinking water and cooking.