

Heal Zimbabwe

21 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

Bikita

Local taxis have resumed their operations around Bikita and passengers are not practicing social distancing inside the cars. Police officers continue to enforce the lockdown at Nyika growth point while neglecting other shopping areas. Over 100 community members were gathered at Makotore Primary School where there were soccer games, despite the law against gatherings of more than 50 people. Police officers were also not seen at this event to disperse people.

Gutu

At Mupandawana, vendors have resumed their operations. Police officers were also raiding vendors and arresting them for defying lockdown measures. These vendors were highlighting that they are frustrated by staying at home when they do not have anything to eat. Gutu has one ZUPCO bus which is supposed to service all the 41 wards in the district. The bus does not reach other areas and people will have to resort to small taxis as their transport. However in the bus no social distancing is being practiced, the bus carries passengers to its fullest capacity and its operators are not checking temperature of their passengers at the door, nor sanitizing them at entrance. In Ward 31 some people continue to gather for traditional beer, in ward 5 some community members have also resorted to door to door exercises selling buns. Police officers also continue to arrest those without masks and detain them at police camps.

Zaka

Jerera Growth Point had a few people compared to other days. After hearing that Masvingo has recorded its first COVID-19 case, people have now come to realize that COVID-19 is real and is not only in Harare. Most community members are now hesitant to go to Masvingo town. Community members highlighted that authorities must disclose people who came into contact with the first COVID-19 patient. Community members continue to wear their home-made masks as they go about their businesses.

Mwenezi

At Neshuro Growth Point it was business as usual and people continue to move around the shopping centre and vacate at 1630 hours. Illegal transport operators continue to operate around the district. These transport operators avoid police officers by using roads where police officers do not operate. Only a few people in Mwenezi wear masks.

Chiredzi

In Chiredzi people continue to move around especially into town, wearing their masks. Activity in town has also increased although some shops and industries are still not open. ZUPCO commuter omnibuses are operating and operators are making sure that social distancing is observed. However these commuter omnibuses are not enough to sustain a huge number of people in Chiredzi. Those who operate commuter omnibuses are now taking advantage of the transport crisis to ferry people illegally, usually to their fullest capacity. Community members stated that surprisingly, these illegal operators pass through police roadblocks. Some community members highlighted that restrictions should continue to be in place as Chiredzi is close to the boarder. Sugar is becoming a crisis in Chiredzi, despite the fact that this is the sugar producing city in Zimbabwe. Subsidized mealie meal has not been supplied for the past 3 weeks and in shops mealie-meal is now being sold at US\$4.00 per 10kg which is a lot for people who have not been generating any income for the past two months.

Masvingo

Residents in Masvingo highlighted that there is a serious shortage of mealie meal and sugar in the City, forcing people to resort to black market operators. When these commodities are available in shops, there are usually long queues and people do not observe social distancing.

Harare Metropolitan Province

Chitungwiza

People are no longer staying in their homes despite the extension of the lockdown. Most of the community members are back to their day to day businesses. At the entrance of each shop there are sanitizers and temperature kits. Police officers continue to enforce the lockdown, especially at Velvet service station in Unit O where farmers and vendors sell vegetables.

Mabvuku

Community members from Old and New Mabvuku are no longer staying in their homes. People are operating their businesses as usual, without observing any social distancing and most shops are no longer sanitizing and checking temperature for their clients. At Kamunhu Business Centre in Ward 19 shops and beer halls are open throughout the day. Police officers are not available to monitor all these activities. They are only spotted patrolling in their truck at night, arresting people who will be moving around shopping centres. There is no running water and people queue at community boreholes, where there are no sanitizers to disinfect borehole users.

Mashonaland East Province

Hurungwe

Ward 15 Community members are no longer staying at home. There were no police officers to enforce the lockdown in the ward. Chiedza Business centre was open; community members were buying and drinking beer from local bars without exercising social distancing. Most basic food commodities like sugar and mealie meal were not available at Chiedza business centre.

Manicaland Province

Mutasa

Community members in Ward 31 were roaming around wearing home-made masks. A group of police officers were turning away those who did not have masks. There was a group of people drinking beer behind beer halls and it is alleged that police officers were accepting bribes from the beer hall operators. Shops in Ward 31 had most of the basic commodities.

Buhera

Community members in Ward 9 were moving around without masks. A group of police officers were seen around 13:00hours enforcing the lockdown. Shops in Ward 9 had most of the basic commodities, with a 10Kg of mealie meal costing ZW\$270, cooking oil ZW\$130, and sugar ZW\$150. Community members in Ward 5 stayed at home. A group of police officers were seen around 12:00hours turning away those who did not have masks.

Chipinge

Community members in Ward 16 were roaming around and a majority of them were covering themselves with homemade masks and head wraps. A group of police officers were seen around 12:00hours enforcing the lockdown.

Chimanimani

Community members in Ward 8 were roaming around without masks. A group of police officers were seen around 09:00hours enforcing the lockdown. Most community members were performing their daily activities including vending and farming activities stating that they were no longer sure if the lockdown is ever going to end.

Makoni

Community members in Ward 15 were roaming around without masks. A group of police officers were seen today around 15:00hours turning away those who did not have masks. Shops in Ward 15 had all basic commodities with a 10KG of mealie meal costing ZW\$270, cooking oil ZW\$200, and salt ZW\$30.

Matabeleland North Province

Lupane

People are growingly disregarding avoiding public places and wearing of face masks in Lupane. It was business as usual at Lupane shopping Centre with people flooding the Centre. Vendors are slowly starting to come back at their vending sites and there was no visible police deployment. There were reports that one returnee with mental illness escaped from the quarantine Centre on the 19th of May and was arrested at his family homestead. Community members are now concerned that the quarantine centers are now exceeding their recommended holding capacities. Backyard industries have also resumed their operations especially around new stands residential areas. Many people were gathered at Zapalala supermarket where they were anticipating buying sugar .However; they got disappointed to learn that the supermarket did not receive any sugar delivery.