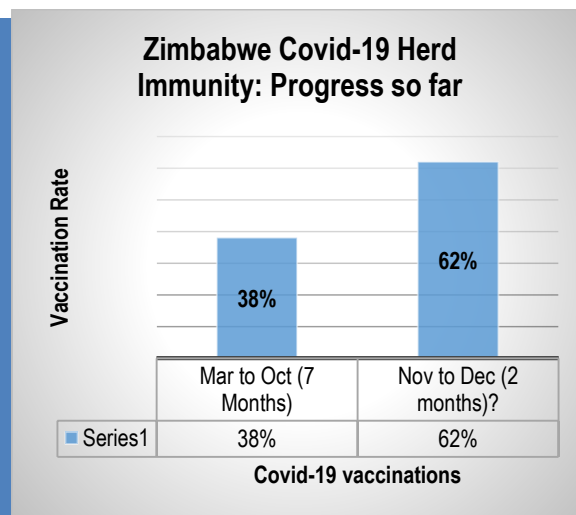


ZIMBABWE DEMOCRACY INSTITUTE (ZDI) ACCESS TO PUBLIC HEALTH MONITORING REPORT

NOVEMBER 2021

ZIMBABWE COVID-19 HERD IMMUNITY BY DECEMBER 2021: A FAR FETCHED DREAM



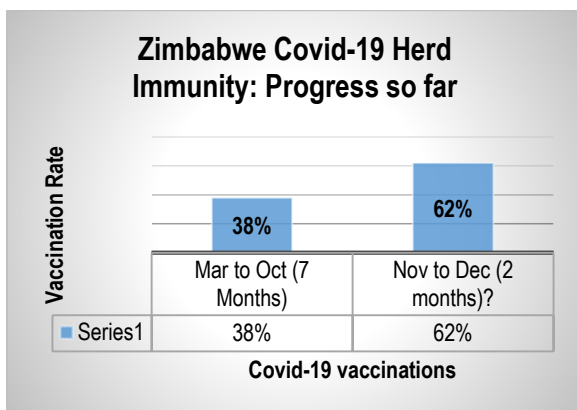
About the Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (ZDI)

The Zimbabwe Democracy Institute (ZDI) is a politically independent and not for profit public policy think-tank based in Zimbabwe. Founded and registered as a trust in terms of the laws of Zimbabwe in November 2012, ZDI serves to generate and disseminate innovative ideas, cutting-edge research and policy analysis to advance democracy, development, good governance and human rights in Zimbabwe. The institute also aims to promote open, informed and evidence-based debate by bringing together pro-democracy experts to platforms for debate. The idea is to offer new ideas to policy makers with the view to entrenching democratic practices in Zimbabwe. The ZDI researches, publishes and conducts national policy debates and conferences in democratization, good governance, public policy, human rights and transitional justice, media and democracy relations, electoral politics and international affairs.

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Introduction

The period under review was characterised by a steady growth in Covid-19 vaccination across the country. By 31 October 2021, the country had vaccinated over 3 million people against the pandemic.¹ However, the increase in vaccinations still fall short of the set target of 60% herd immunity by end of the year 2021. By its own admission, the government through the Ministry of Health and Child Care revealed that Covid-19 Vaccination Roll Out and Deployment program had, as at 31 October 2021, reached a national coverage of 38% of the targeted population. The period between 31 October and 31 December (2 months) is realistically not enough to vaccinate the remaining 62% given that the actual vaccination rate of 38% was attained over a period between March and October (7 months).



Source: ZDI 2021: Dataset: Ministry of Health and Child Care Covid-19 situation reports

As indicated above, the government of Zimbabwe took 7 months to vaccinate 38% of the targeted herd immunity population. It follows that the attainment of herd immunity now requires the government to vaccinate the remaining 68% in 2 months. It is apparent the government is faced with a huge mountain to climb considering the rate at which Covid-19 vaccination is moving with.

Amidst the above, the government still maintains that Covid-19 herd immunity will be achieved within the set timeframe.² On 2 November 2021, Information minister Monica Mutsvangwa said; *“The government of Zimbabwe, through the Ministry of Health and Child Care is determined that Zimbabwe achieves herd immunity by end of December 2021.”* However, the reality on the ground suggests otherwise. The attainment of Covid-19 herd immunity in Zimbabwe is a dream that is far-fetched. This is despite mandatory vaccination of civil servants that has so far managed to have 99% of public sector workers vaccinated against Covid-19.

¹ On 31 October 2021, the Ministry of Health and Child Care in its Covid-19 Situation Report indicated that 3 310 575 people have been vaccinated against Covid-19.

² The Ministry of Health and Child Care on 31 October maintained its position of aiming to achieve the targeted herd immunity by end of the year, 2021.



Minister of Information Monica Mutsvangwa addressing the media on Covid-19 herd immunity. Source: Ministry of Information Twitter timeline

Level 2 Covid-19 lockdown measures vis-à-vis enforcement

During a post cabinet briefing meeting on 16 November 2021, the minister of Information Monica Mutsvangwa alerted the nation that level 2 lockdown had been extended by an additional two weeks to “promote the heightened vaccination uptake in order to protect the nation against a possible 4th wave of the pandemic”. One of the measures of Level 2 lockdown measures include public gatherings of not more than 100 people. Of concern is non-adherence to this measure by

the government itself thereby risking the striking of another Covid-19 wave, the 4th wave.

During the period under review, the ruling ZANU-PF party continued to mobilise its supporters beyond the required or stipulated number of people at public gatherings under Covid-19 level 2 lockdown measures and regulations. For example, the party’s District Coordinating Committee (DCC) meetings have seen participants going above 100 people with no face masks and no social distance among them thereby violating Covid-19 rules and regulations.



Over 100 people and no social distancing at a ZANU PF party meeting: A potential Covid-19 super spreader event



ZANU PF PATRIOTS @z... · 2d
HARARE PROVINCE DCC 4
INTER-DISTRICTS MEETING HARARE
CENTRAL, WEST AND MT PLEASANT
CONSTITUENCIES

Agenda: Districts Verification Exercise

In Attendance

1. Woman's League National Executive Member Cde Kagoro
 2. Central Committee Member Cde Tavengwa
- 1/2



Conclusion

The attainment of Covid-19 herd immunity in Zimbabwe finds itself in a precarious situation given that the country is now less than a month away from the end of the year and only 3.7³ million people have been vaccinated against a target of 10 million.

Recommendations

Government of Zimbabwe

- ✓ Developing a clear plan on how it is going to utilise the remaining time between now and end of 2021 to vaccinate the population in order to reach herd immunity.

- ✓ Leading by example in religiously observing and following Covid-19 rules and regulations as stipulated under level 2 lockdown.
- ✓ Finding a long lasting solution to address the issue of health care personnel remuneration.

Civil Society

- ✓ Holding the government to account over its Covid-19 vaccination set targets (for example, 60% herd immunity by 2021).
- ✓ Boosting its advocacy role on the need to ensure access to health care services across rural areas in Zimbabwe.

Media

- ✓ Report on Covid-19 vaccination progress in relation to the set herd immunity target.
- ✓ Continuing to report on the country's state of public healthcare accessibility and availability in the rural areas.

³ On 29 November 2021, the Ministry of Health and Child Care in its Covid-19 Situation Report indicated that 3 781 186 people have been vaccinated against Covid-19