

## **MEDIA STATEMENT BY THE PREMIER OF THE NORTHERN CAPE, DR ZAMANI SAUL ON PROGRESS BY THE PROVINCIAL COVID19 COMMAND COUNCIL**

**Date: 27 April 2020**

The Provincial Command Council met this past weekend to take stock and evaluate the impact of the measures undertaken by Provincial Government to contain the spread of the Coronavirus. Although COVID-19 is essentially a health pandemic, it has a significant social and economic impact that goes beyond the public health system. The Council also noted the latest announcements made by the President as the country prepares to enter a level four lockdown of fighting the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Covid-19 response plan of the Province is based on providing a Complete Health Response, ensuring Food Security, putting in place Enforcement and Compliance Measures and Mobilising Sectors so as to have a Social Solidarity Partnership as well as providing water, soap and sanitisers to hotspot areas.

The Province awaits plans from the National Command Council in order for the Provincial Command Council to adopt the Provincial Economic Response Plan. The detail thereof will be discussed in the next Provincial Command Council. To this end, specific strategies are being implemented in each of these response areas.

### **Health**

In response to Government's call for mass screening, testing of those that show signs and symptoms of Covid-19, and tracing contacts of any positive patients, the province has to date screened over 388 076 people for Covid-19.

This screening took the form of screening of people at health facilities and roadblocks during the first few weeks and has now progressed to a mass screening programme in the community, in all districts.

The province has sent over 895 swab samples for laboratory testing by the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS). These laboratory tests have currently resulted in a total of 17 Covid-19 positive cases being identified in the Northern Cape.

### **Food security Response**

Since the lockdown, we have worked with various social partners to provide food relief to 25 555 households, reaching about 125 000 people. On average, we distribute food packages to approximately 1500 households per day. The distribution of food parcels will continue this week in all 5 Districts.

The following is the criteria for food relief:

Zero income households, who are verified and confirmed by social workers;

1. The homeless;
2. The sickly;
3. Child headed households
4. Service users of Soup Kitchens and Nutrition Centres, and

The Department of Social Development identified users informed by municipal indigent list. Various donors have so far generously given food and other essential

goods to ensure that we continue providing relief to the poor and vulnerable. We continue providing homeless people with temporary shelter, food and sanitizers.

We would like to thank all business people, NPO's and NGO's who are working with us to provide more food relief to needy families. We are calling for more donations to meet the growing food security needs of our communities.

### **Enforcement of compliance measures**

The Northern Cape Provincial Government welcomes the arrest of over 6 000 people in the Province since the lockdown for contravening the National Disaster Management Act regulations. Non-compliance with the regulations ranged from failure to confine to places of residence, operating businesses without a permit, selling of cigarettes, liquor or transportation of liquor during the lockdown period to non-compliance by taxis in terms of operating hours.

We therefore wish to thank our law abiding citizens for providing invaluable information to law enforcers about defaulters of the regulations. We also wish to thank members of the SAPS, SANDF and Traffic officers for their commitment in ensuring that there is compliance with the regulations. Our law enforcement and security agencies continue to enforce regulations and undertake anti-crime operations.

We also applaud the SAPS for ensuring zero tolerance to all crimes during this time and commend them for the successful arrest of a suspect for the alleged rape of an 82-year-old woman from Noupoort earlier this month. The suspect has already appeared in court.

### **Water and Sanitation**

To date as Government, we have delivered 668 and installed 379 storage tanks. There is a daily increase in the delivery numbers in terms of storage tanks as well as hygiene products such as soap and sanitisers. On the 26th anniversary of our freedom, we want to call on our people to work together in the fight against COVID-19, just as we stood together in the fight against Apartheid and Colonial subjugation.

We wish to thank all workers engaged in essential services, who continue to give their all since we started our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We wish to reiterate the call to all Northern Cape residents to play their part in the national efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

We urge everyone to abide by the golden rules:

- Wear a cloth face mask when in public places, especially crowded places.
- Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a flexed elbow or a tissue, then throw the tissue in the bin immediately
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Create a hygienic home, travel and work environment by cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces.

Released by the Provincial COVID19 Command Council

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**ENDS**