

***THE SIXTH PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS ON THE
CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AT STATE HOUSE, NAIROBI
SATURDAY, 16TH MAY, 2020***

On May 16, 2020 In Speeches & Statements



Fellow Kenyans,

Since we reported our first COVID-19 case, the country has recorded 830 confirmed infections and 50 deaths. It is disturbing to note that close to 30% of these recorded deaths occurred at home.

I send my heartfelt condolences to the families and friends of those we have lost. The life of every Kenyan is precious. I, together with millions of Kenyans mourn for the lost dreams cut short so suddenly by this disease.

We empathise with the tears and misery of those they have left behind. May our God take them into his embrace and comfort their loved ones.

On a more positive note, I am delighted to report that due to the dedication and commitment of our health care workers, we have discharged 301 individuals from our health facilities having registered full recovery since the onset of this pandemic. There are now 481 cases undergoing treatment.

I want to thank the dedicated and skilled Kenyans who are working around the clock to keep our infections relatively low so far. I also want to thank the tens of millions of Kenyans who are adhering to the health, hygiene, and social distancing measures.

If we had not taken tough steps, the Public Health Emergency Operation Centre calculates that there would be many thousands of infections, and indeed many more fatalities. It is however, clear we have not delivered a final blow to this enemy that has invaded our country and the world at large.

In the last one week, we have witnessed increased imported cases among individuals crossing into the country through our borders. These areas have become areas of grave concern.

Among the positive cases that have been registered in the country this week, a total of forty-three (43) cases have recently crossed the border from neighbouring Somalia and Tanzania. As of yesterday, the cases across the border were distributed as follows, Wajir 14, Isebania 10, Namanga 16, Lungalunga 2 and Loitoktok 1.

These 43 cases represent almost a quarter of the 166 confirmed infections this week.

Further to this, seventy-eight (78) truck drivers who are foreign nationals tested positive for the COVID-19 disease. They were denied entry into our territory at different border crossings. If we had not undertaken this intervention, the imported cases through our borders would have today accounted for more than 50 percent of the week's infections.

Within our borders, infections have now spread to 22 of our 47 Counties.

These numbers and the spread of infection clearly indicate that if no action is taken, ALL the gains already achieved in combating this pandemic will undoubtedly be lost.

I want to be very plain today. I want every single Kenyan to understand where we stand, and what is in our immediate future.

A brutal and unforgiving enemy is at our wall. He is trying to gain entrance using every door and every window. He is asking every Kenyan to sneak him in so that he can attack us all.

He multiplies his forces rapidly, with one infected person able to infect dozens of others if insufficient measures are in place. Or if all of us do not take heed of the dangers and behave accordingly a lot shall be lost.

Given enough opportunities, this enemy will lay waste to our families, our children, our parents, our neighbours and our friends. He will find the least aware among us, and use them to carry him to the most vulnerable.

Today, globally, he has claimed over 300,000 innocent lives as of this morning from 4.7 million infections.

In some instances, we have observed this disease go from a few hundred cases to hundreds of thousands in the space of a month. Causing tens of thousands of fatalities.

If we do not take additional precautionary measures and get even more serious in implementing existing guidelines, the number of people who will get sick and die is going to rise sharply.

I know that our economy has taken a big hit, and the sectors that are linked to foreign trade, travel and production are under intense stress.

Even though the measures we are putting in place are inconvenient to all of us, the far worse outcome is for this pandemic to grow out of control. The cities and countries where it has raged out of control have suffered near economic collapse due to the terror and paralysis it causes. Economies far larger than ours have been severely affected.

I know there is national and global pressure for easing measures against this disease and getting back to normal. Indeed, the National Emergency Response Committee on Corona Virus has taken a close look at reopening processes globally. However, the committee has established countries like Singapore, Germany and Ghana that did extremely well initially, eased the containment measures and then suffered dangerous spikes in new rates of infections.

I am as anxious as all of you, to get back to building this country. However, we will only be able to do this the sooner we sharply suppress the growth of infections.

We are therefore going to step up our defence by deploying stricter, localised prevention actions. We will also review some of the previous concessions and directives to ensure that they are better complied with.

Fellow Kenyans, Therefore, in accordance with the advice by the National Emergency Response Committee on Coronavirus, and the National Security Council, I am directing as follows:

1. That there shall be cessation of movement of persons and any passenger ferrying automobiles and vehicles into and out of the territory of Republic of

Kenya through the Kenya-Tanzania international border except for cargo vehicles, with effect from midnight today, Saturday 16th, May 2020.

2. That there shall be cessation of movement of persons and any passenger ferrying automobiles and vehicles into and out of the territory of the Republic of Kenya through the Kenya-Somalia international border except for cargo vehicles, with effect from midnight today, Saturday 16th, May 2020.
3. That all drivers of the cargo vehicles shall be subjected to mandatory COVID-19 disease testing and will only be granted entry into the territory of the Republic of Kenya if they test negative.
4. That the nationwide dusk-to-dawn curfew that is currently in force be extended for a further period of 21 days up to and until the 6th June, 2020.
5. That the cessation of movement into and out of the Nairobi Metropolitan Area and the Counties of Kilifi, Kwale, Mombasa and Mandera that is currently in force be extended up to and until the 6th June, 2020.

The Government will continue to take every measure to protect the lives of Kenyans from this pandemic, and to plan for the recovery of our economy.

The whole world is walking through the valley of the shadow of death. However, I know that the firmness of our resolve as a nation, the fidelity of each and every one in keeping the enemy at bay, and God's enduring Grace, will see us into the light.

We will emerge knowing that we have a mighty strength in our unity, our resilience as a people will see us through this pandemic.

Thank you.