

# GOVERNMENT OF THE KINGDOM OF ESWATINI



## ACTING PRIME MINISTER'S STATEMENT

Asivusele Bekunene.

Our collective resolve as a Nation is to never lose sight of the over-arching objective of uplifting the lives of all emaSwati and remains unmovable and unhindered.

Despite the events of the past week which were marked by violence, arson and looting in an unprecedented scale we stand united in our call for sustained peace and stability.

We were happy yesterday to receive the SADC Troika organ who were on a fact finding mission at our invitation. This SADC fact finding mission will continue in due course as we share the common regional objective of ensuring sustainable peace and stability in our region. I plead with

the Nation to stay calm and patient while the process is ongoing.

As citizens of this country and region, we all share the responsibility to never engage in any activity that negates the strides we have made to improve the lives of people, no matter how different our standpoint may be at any particular time.

The unacceptable damage to Government and private property perpetrated by looters is now well into billions of Emalangeni, causing a major setback to the country's socio-economic growth and stability. The current estimate reveals that the cost of damage stands at about E3 billion, with 5 000 jobs lost and counting. Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) were also not spared by these looters, as approximately 1 000 small businesses were affected.

This comes at a time when our country and the world is engaging broad strategies to ignite job creation and spur our economies on a path of sustainable growth.

The unprecedented violence also hit hard on our health sector as, among others, six health vehicles, including ambulances, were vandalised; some of which were brand new.

These include specialised COVID-19 vehicles for the contact tracing programme and transporting COVID-19 samples in the Shiselweni region. The Nhlangano Regional Health Offices were gutted. Another ambulance was attacked in the Lubombo region placing the lives of patients on board at risk. This is over and above over 10 Tinkhundla centres that were vandalised by these looters and rioters.

This unfortunate situation has affected our COVID-19 response in many ways, but we remain determined and unfazed in our quest to provide health services to all emaSwati. We are unyielding in our quest to be of efficient service to the Nation.

Government is happy to note that the situation on the ground has stabilised over the past few days, as our security forces have resolutely ensured the maintenance

of peace and order across the four regions of the country. Our security forces will continue to be vigilant in ensuring the safety of the public, businesses and other property.

We therefore encourage all emaSwati to continue driving our economy by returning to work and opening all businesses that were unaffected. This should, however, be done in full compliance of COVID-19 regulations. The curfew remains 6pm to 5am and offices should continue to close at 3:30pm to allow workers to arrive home safely in time for the curfew.

### **COVID-19 update**

At this point, I wish to remind emaSwati that we are still facing a frightening situation, that of COVID-19, which has continued unabated over the past few days. We continue to experience an increase in the number of new COVID-19 cases in the country from **96** cases between 13-19 June, **207** cases during the week of 20-26 June and **242** during the week 27 June to 3 July 2021.

The general trajectory of new cases shows a persistent upward trend with the testing positivity having increased from 3% to 9% as of yesterday. Three COVID-19 related deaths were reported during the past week after reporting one case during the previous week.

While bed occupancy rate in our isolation facilities is still at a low 9%, the rise in figures is a clear indication that the country is in the early stages of the third wave. The projections indicate that there will be a continued increase in new cases for the next 4 to 6 weeks before a peak is reached. We are aware that a rise in new cases leads to an increase in the number of deaths within a lag of two weeks.

Once again, I appeal to all emaSwati to remain vigilant and abide fully to the COVID-19 Regulations and health protocols. In the meantime, Government continues to source more COVID-19 vaccines for emaSwati to intensify our vaccination exercise.

Over the weekend, we received an additional 12 000 doses of the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine. These doses

will enable us to continue to give a second dose to our health workers as we move to the next stages of the vaccination exercise. The Ministry of Health will offer the necessary vaccine updates.

As we get more information on the spread of the Delta variant of the COVID-19 virus in neighbouring countries, may we alert the Nation of an increased chance that this virus is circulating in the country due to the movement of people from one country to another. In this regard, we request the Nation to continue adhering to the COVID-19 Regulations established by Government as a measure to mitigate the impact of the pandemic to the population.

1. Wear your face mask and cover your nose and mouth;
2. Wash your hands or sanitise frequently;
3. Avoid crowds and confined spaces with little ventilation or air circulation;

Let us keep ourselves safe from COVID-19 and also protect our health care workers.

Despite the major setback caused to our health system by the recent looting, we will not stop helping emaSwati win this war against the pandemic. We will do everything in our power to reach out to people.

### **Reopening of Home Affairs service centres**

On another note, we would like to assure the Nation that all Home Affairs Service Centres countrywide will be in operation from tomorrow, with the exception of Manzini, Hluthi, Hlatsi and Siphofaneni.

### **Company registration and vehicle licences renewal**

Government is also aware that the renewal of vehicle registration licences and company registrations were disrupted during the recent unrest. We therefore notify the Nation that the renewal of vehicle licences has been extended to 20 July 2021. Company registration renewals have been extended to 31 August 2021.

### **Conclusion**

Government would like to assure all emaSwati, the international community, diplomatic partners and residents

of Eswatini that we will do everything necessary to ensure public safety as life returns to normal.

May I discourage the public from panic buying and give the assurance that we are making all moves to ensure there is enough supply in our shops at all times.

We continue to rely on all emaSwati to do the right thing and fiercely guard against any foreign elements meant to destabilise our country and threaten our harmony.

We have one country and it is up to all of us to protect it and preserve what we have been known for over centuries – and that is our peace and stability.

Thank you.

**THEMBA N. MASUKU**

**Acting Prime Minister**

5 July 2021