

COVID-19 Rwanda response updates March 14 – April 25, 2020

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Received: March 28, 2020

Accepted: April 15, 2020

Published: April 30, 2020

Cite this article as: Hartnett et al.
Covid-19 Rwanda response updates
March 14 – April 15, 2020. *Rw.
Public Health Bul.* 2020; 2(1):
11-12.

INTRODUCTION

As of March 2020, WHO declared the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) as a global pandemic [1], and on March 14 2020, Rwanda reported its first COVID-19 confirmed case [2]. In response and to effectively contain COVID-19, the government of Rwanda activated the national joint task force- a multidisciplinary team to lead all activities pertaining to COVID-19 in the epiCentre as well as at district levels [3].

Rwanda has maintained and implemented the following measures [3,4]:

- » To encourage the population to regularly wash hands using clean water and soap or alcohol based hand sanitizers.
- » To avoid touching eyes, nose, mouth and handshakes.
- » Wear masks in public areas.
- » Avoid contact with others and stay home if experiencing fever, cough, sneezing shortness of breath.
- » Clean and disinfect surfaces around your home and work,
- » To cover mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing.
- » To limit unnecessary travel to within and across cities.
- » To recognize COVID-19 key symptoms : fever, dry cough and sore throat and use a set hotline (114) to seek help or report any suspect cases.
- » Rwanda has suspended international travels for an initial one month period from March 2020.
- » The country has been organizing cluster based screening as an active case finding strategy.
- » The country has declared a national lockdown from March 21- April 30, 2020.

In addition to prevention measures, the Government is quarantining and isolating asymptomatic cases in pre-set and prepared sites; the majority of people in these sites are recent travelers quarantined upon arrival at Kigali International Airport [3,4,7].

RWANDA COVID-19 CURRENT KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- » Total cumulative number of cases: 183 (As of 25 April 2020)
- » About 75% of all confirmed cases were recent travellers, majority of which were quarantined immediately upon arrival.
- » Total Recoveries/ Discharged: 88
- » No death.

SURVEILLANCE

The Rwanda Biomedical Centre established health screening points at 31 entry points (Kigali International Airport and 30 land and water border entries) using surveillance screening documents pre-prepared and distributed early this year [8].

LABORATORY

The national Reference Laboratory (NRL) has

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- [2] Ministry of Health, “Rwanda standard operating procedures for covid-19 outbreak preparedness,” pp. 1–84.
- [3] Prime Ministry Rwanda, “Public Notice from the Office of the Prime Minister on Coronavirus Disease 2019.pdf.”
- [4] “Statement on New Measures to Prevent COVID-19 Coronavirus Transmission,” no. 114, p. 2020, 2020.

been upgraded to test for COVID-19 since early February, 2020 in partnership with Robert Koch Institute (RKI), Germany; The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization [5].

RISK COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

National awareness campaigns continue to be widely implemented using different communication channels available such as radio, TV, meetings, social media channels and drones [2,5].

COVID-19 awareness and prevention messages are also being sent through SMS [6].

LOGISTICS

Hospital capacities for holding, quarantine sites and case isolation are constantly being upgraded [2].

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