

South Africa to impose 21-day lockdown to curb coronavirus

March 23 2020

South African President Cyril Ramaphosa on Monday announced a three-week national lockdown to contain the spread of the deadly new coronavirus which has affected more than 400 people and ordered the military to enforce the ban.

He said government "has decided to enforce a nationwide lockdown for 21 days with effect from midnight on Thursday the 26th of March" to "avoid a human catastrophe".

The number of confirmed in cases in South Africa has climbed six-fold in just eight days from 61 to 402.

"This number will continue to rise," warned Ramaphosa, adding "the next few days are crucial".

He said that without decisive action the numbers will continue to climb and "a rapid rise in infections will stretch our [health services](#) beyond what we can manage and many people will not be able to access the care they need".

This would be "extremely dangerous for a population like ours, with a large number of people with suppressed immunity because of HIV and TB, and high levels of poverty and malnutrition," he added.

To ensure the stay-at-home ban is strictly adhered to, Ramaphosa announced that the military will patrol the streets.

"I have accordingly directed the South African National Defence Force be deployed to support the South African Police Service in ensuring that the measures we are announcing are implemented" he said.

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