



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

PRESS RELEASE

IMPLEMENTATION OF MANDATORY QUARANTINE IN THE COVID-19 RESPONSE IN KENYA

Nairobi, Kenya – 7th April 2020: We, the undersigned, individuals, organisations and associations, are representatives of health and human rights, civil society and non-governmental organisations, community-based organisations and representatives, professional bodies, informal sector actors, economic, and governance experts. We refer to our previous advisory dated 28th March 2020 [“Advisory Note on Ensuring a Rights-Based Response to Curb the Spread of COVID-19: People - not Messaging - Bring Change”](#) whose raised issues and concerns remain unaddressed.

Our previous [advisory](#) had, among other concerns, noted that the implementation of the government’s directive of mandatory quarantine and isolation of people affected by COVID-19 was uncoordinated, unplanned and not guided by any policy or guidelines.

We issue this statement following a formal request for information on the mandatory quarantine that we have sent to responsible agencies. This follows direct communication from individuals in quarantine, [open letters](#)<sup>1</sup> and personal [videos](#) posted by those affected that demonstrated clear cases of [recklessness in their handling](#), exorbitant costs they have been forced to incur to pay for the quarantine facilities, [deplorable living conditions in most quarantine centers](#), lack of information on any quarantine protocols, and [a general lack of any regard to their health, safety and well-being](#).<sup>2</sup> For the general public, it is not clear how many

<sup>1</sup> Open letter by people quarantined at Pride Inn Azure Hotel dated 5<sup>th</sup> April 2020, REF: Directive to extend quarantine period beyond 14 days.

<sup>2</sup> See Angela Okech, et. al “COVID-19: Kenyans reveal poor state of isolation centres,”; John Allan-Namu “Inside the Quarantine: Fears of Further Spreading the Virus Haunt the Confined.”

people are in mandatory quarantine, whether they have all been tested and if yes, how many have tested negative or positive and whether the results have been communicated to them.

Our attention has also been drawn to a circular by the Acting Director General for Health ([Ref: MOH/ADM/1/3/Vol.1](#)) communicating a decision to extend the quarantine period beyond 14 days for occupants of all facilities in which positive cases are identified. The circular raises further concerns including the risk of co-infection for those who are negative; lack of information to the people under quarantine of the extension and poor quarantine facilities; psychosocial effects of prolonged isolation; the implications of the directive on individuals that have adhered to quarantine conditions, including social distancing, and have tested negative and turnaround times for testing to ensure results are availed within a reasonable time.

From the foregoing, we have demanded that the Ministry of Health, and the National Emergency Response Committee on Coronavirus, urgently makes the following information public in compliance with Article 35 of the Constitution of Kenya and the Right to Access Information Act:

1. Provide an explanation as to why the Ministry of Health is not adhering to its own guidelines relating to managing the designated mandatory quarantine facilities. For instance, why are people who have first tested negative test not being released into self-quarantine as per the self-quarantine protocols?
2. Does the circular extending the quarantine period apply to all quarantine facilities? Why? At whose cost?
3. The total number of designated quarantine facilities as at 6<sup>th</sup> April 2020 and the number of occupants in each? The number of health care workers and their cadres that have been deployed to these quarantine facilities? How many people currently in quarantine who have been tested and received their results?
4. What measures are being taken to safeguard the health of people in quarantine facilities who have pre-existing medical conditions?
5. What is the time period taken when one tests positive in a quarantine facility before they are transferred to medical facility for isolation?
6. Have the healthcare workers and hotel attendants who have come into contact with the persons who have tested positive been tested and provided with PPE?

Please find more details on the request in the letter: <https://www.kelinkkenya.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/OPEN-LETTER-ON-IMPLEMENTATION-OF-MANDATORY-QUARANTINE-IN-THE-COVID-19-1.pdf>.

As per Section 27 of the Public Health Act, the government has the responsibility of isolating persons who have been exposed to infectious diseases. In the public health emergency

occasioned by COVID-19 pandemic, we urge the government to diligently undertake this obligation by, among others, providing safe, clean and hygienic quarantine facilities; meeting the costs of such facilities; and above all monitoring the health including the mental health of those in quarantine and promptly discharging those who test negative.

#### *Note to the Editors*

This statement was sent to: The Cabinet Secretary for Health & Chairperson, National Emergency Response Committee on Coronavirus; and copied to the Chairperson, Council of Governors, UN Resident Coordinator in Kenya, Secretary/CEO of the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights; Chairperson, National Gender and Equality Commission and Chairperson, Commission on Administrative Justice.

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24. Melanie Ligale
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26. Naiya Anil Haria
27. Nicholas Mwenda
28. Nickitah Mckena
29. Patricia Asero
30. Peter Owiti
31. Rahul Ponda
32. Rashmi Shah
33. Reggie Ann
34. Sarah Mburu
35. Sajan Thakar
36. Sarah Mwangi
37. Samson Onditi
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39. Sheila Masinde
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41. Sophia Muchiri
42. Soukhya Ankala
43. Tanika Dodhia
44. Twinkle Pethad
45. Vaishali Sirju Patel
46. Vivian Washiko
47. William Mburu

Organisations:

1. Amnesty International
2. CADAMIC
3. COFAS
4. Community Initiative Action Group – Kenya
5. EMAC Kenya
6. FIDA Kenya
7. GALCK
8. Happy Life for Development CBO
9. HENNET
10. HERAF
11. International Community of Women Living with HIV – Kenya Chapter
12. ICJ – Kenyan Section
13. Katiba Institute
14. Kenya Legal & Ethical Issues Network on HIV & AIDS (KELIN)
15. KANCO
16. Lean on Me Foundation
17. Next Generation of Kenya Lawyers Project
18. Nelson Mandela TB-HIV Resource Centre Nyalenda
19. People’s Health Movement – Kenya
20. PEMA Kenya
21. Rising to Greatness
22. SWOP Ambassadors
23. The Network on Food and Nutrition Security
24. TICAHA
25. TISA
26. Transparency International Kenya
27. Wote Youth Development Projects