

Zimbabwe reports first coronavirus death, shuts borders

23 March 2020

Zimbabwe's second coronavirus patient, a 30-year-old man, has died in the capital Harare, the government said Monday, as borders were closed to curb the spread of infection.

Health Minister Obadiah Moyo "has confirmed the death of Zororo Makamba, who was the second person to test positive for COVID-19 in Zimbabwe," his office said.

Makamba, a broadcaster and son of a business tycoon and politician, was confirmed positive with the virus on Saturday.

He had travelled to New York late last month and returned home on March 9, transiting through Johannesburg in neighbouring South Africa.

The [government](#) said he began showing mild flu-like symptoms on March 12 that progressively worsened. He consulted a doctor and was instructed to self-quarantine.

On Friday the country reported its first [coronavirus](#) case, a 38-year-old man who returned from Britain to his home in the tourist resort town of Victoria Falls.

President Emmerson Mnangagwa announced the closure of borders to human traffic on Monday as part of a new raft of measures to step up the country's response to a pandemic that has hit more than 190 countries worldwide.

"We have decided to ban all non-essential traffic and travel, both inbound and outbound, except for the movement of cargo," Mnangagwa said in a televised address to the nation.

He added that public gatherings of more than 50 people would be prohibited and encouraged residents to avoid in-country travel.

"Government has put a blanket ban on gatherings

around nightclubs, bars, beer halls, swimming pools, gymnasiums and sporting activities until further notice," Mnangagwa said.

Zimbabwe's government previously ordered schools closed and cancelled public and sporting events.

It has also prohibited government officials from travelling outside the country, although Mnangagwa flew to Windhoek at the weekend to attend the inauguration of his Namibian counterpart Hage Geingob.

Zimbabwe's [public health system](#) has been suffering for years from a lack of equipment and drugs and there are fears it will struggle to cope with the outbreak.

"The system... is overstretched and inadequate to deal with a coronavirus epidemic," Norman Matara, secretary general of the Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights, said at the weekend.

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