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Kenya confirms first coronavirus case - VIDEO

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3-4 minutes

Kenya has confirmed its first coronavirus case.

Health Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe on Friday said the patient is a 27 year-old Kenyan who travelled from the US via London.

He said that although the patient, a Kenyan, is stable and eating, she will not be released from hospital until she is confirmed negative.

The woman is at Kenyatta National Hospital's Infectious Disease Unit.

CONTACTS

The government said it has traced all contacts the patient made since her arrival.

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"We have done all the contact tracing and have all the names including the people who sat next to her on the flights she took," CS Kagwe said.

Consequently, Kenya has suspended all travel outside the country unless necessary as well as public gatherings.

The CS said every level 4 and 5 hospitals across the country will have isolation wards funded by the Ministry of Health and the World Bank.

County governments were urged to regularly sensitise the public on the Covid-19 disease.

CALM

CS Kagwe urged Kenyans to remain calm, noting that there's no need for panic or worry provided people abide by the measures put in place.

"This is not a time to assign blame but one to join hands to ensure this pandemic does not tear through our country. This is not the time to make abnormal prices," he warned pharmacies and business people.

Leaders sounded off on the announcement by Mr Kagwe, with ODM's Raila Odinga lauding the country's preparedness.

"We are pleased with the government approach to handling the threat and protecting the health of Kenyans. As a country, we are in this together and we urge our citizens not to panic," he said on his official social media page.

The Coronavirus disease (Covid-19), whose epicentre was in Wuhan, China, had killed nearly 5,000 people and infected more than 130,000 worldwide as at Friday.

It has spread to more than 120 countries across the globe.

PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Transport Cabinet Secretary James Macharia, who was present at the press conference, said all public transport operators were

summoned on March 10 for a special stakeholders' meeting.

He said the government will be conducting training at bus stops from 10 am to 4 pm daily, that will involve all bus drivers, matatu drivers and conductors.

"Public transport carries the vast majority of our people...more than 90 per cent. That is why we are giving it special focus."

HEALTH ACT RULES

CS Kagwe invoked the Public Health Act which requires Kenyans to:

1. Maintain a distance of atleast one metre from persons who are coughing.
2. Stay at home if coughing and with a fever and difficulty breathing.

He also invoked the law in banning the following:

1. All public gatherings and events that have large gatherings, including rallies to promote the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI)
2. Inter-school events drama and music festivals and sports meets, but schools will remain open
3. All prison visits for the next 30 days
4. Travel to affected countries unless absolutely necessary

The ministry also gave the following instructions:

1. Public transport operators will regularly clean their vehicles and provide sanitisers for passengers
2. Members of the public will avoid spreading false information about the virus and the state in Kenya
3. Churches will continue to operate as usual as long as they provide

hand sanitisers for their congregants.