

**REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA**



**MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES**

**STATEMENT BY HONORABLE DR. KALUMBI SHANGULA, MINISTER OF  
HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES ON OCCASION OF THE 34<sup>th</sup> COVID-19  
PUBLIC BRIEFING**

14 September 2021

**STATE HOUSE, WINDHOEK**

*\*Check Against Delivery*

Your Excellency, Dr. Hage G. Geingob, President of the Republic of Namibia  
Your Excellency, Dr. Nangolo Mbumba, Vice President  
Rt. Hon Prime Minister, Dr. Saara Kuugongelwa-Amadhila  
Hon Ministers and Deputy Ministers  
Senior Officials  
Members of the Media  
Ladies and Gentlemen

1. Thank you, Comrade President for giving me the floor to share with the nation additional information on our national COVID-19 preparedness and response.
2. The COVID-19 pandemic remains a public health threat of international concern and of wide national economic, social and cultural ramifications. Its effects have been, and are being felt around the globe, albeit at varying degrees. It is however a source of relief and encouragement that we are starting to understand more and more about the pandemic. This is helping us to adjust our response strategies in confronting the pandemic in a more effective manner, allowing us to protect lives, while also preserving livelihoods.
3. I draw the attention of the nation to the latest global COVID-19 statistics and also the situation here in our country. I believe that such information will help our nation to appreciate more the challenges that we face as a country, an appreciation that we hope will help to engender the kind of social and behavioral changes that is required to turn the tide of this pandemic and its impact on our country.
4. As at 13 September 2021, the global statistics for COVID-19 were as follows:

*Table 1: Global Covid-19 situation as at 13 September 2021*

<b>Description</b>	<b>Global</b>	<b>Namibia</b>
Number of positive cases	225 550 017	126 430
Recoveries	202 158 427	121 647
Deaths	4 645 629 (2.1%)	3 437 (2.7%)

5. His Excellency addressed the concerns around vaccination in his Statement. I wish to add that of concern is the fact that the number of people being vaccinated with the first dose in Namibia are less than those of persons who are coming for the second dose. It is important to note that persons who have received the first dose have built up immunity against COVID-19 and are therefore, afforded a level of protection. Those who are not vaccinated are the most at risk of severe illness and death. We are seeing this in our daily statistics, as the great majority of persons who are currently hospitalized are those that have not been vaccinated. Similarly, the COVID-19 deaths recorded in the country in the past three weeks are almost exclusively of persons who have not been vaccinated. Let us do what is right and get vaccinated. There have been allegations in

social media that people who are dying are those who have been vaccinated. There is no shred of evidence that supports this narrative. On the contrary, statistics confirm that those who have died are not vaccinated. We inform the public about this in our daily reports.

6. Namibia continues to increase the availability of and accessibility to vaccines to its population to boost our vaccination campaign. During the past month, Namibia received the following vaccine doses:

*6.1. Vaccines donated:*

- 75 000 doses of AstraZeneca were received from The Netherlands on 8 August 2021.
- 20 000 doses of SinoPharm were received from the Republic of Zimbabwe on 31 August 2021.
- 15 000 doses of Sputnik V (Component 1) were received from the Government of the Republic of Serbia on 2 September 2021. The delivery of Component II of Sputnik V vaccine from Serbia is awaited.

We also expect to receive the following donations of vaccines:

- 318 720 doses of AstraZeneca from the Federal Republic of Germany.
- 100 620 doses of Pfizer from the United States of America.
- 30 000 Hyatt Vax from the United Arab Emirates.

*6.2. Vaccines bought by Government:*

- 40 800 doses of AstraZeneca vaccines procured through the COVAX Facility, were received on 10 September 2021. These are the remainder of the 108 400 doses which government bought earlier.
- 108 000 doses of Johnson & Johnson vaccine from the African Vaccine Acquisition Task Team (AVATT) will arrive today, the 14 September 2021 at 13:20.
- 350 000 doses of SinoPharm vaccine procured from the manufacturer, date of delivery to be communicated.

7. At present, Namibia has sufficient doses of the vaccines for the vaccination campaign. We therefore, urge our people to get vaccinated. There is false information being circulated alleging that Namibia has received expired vaccines. I want to debunk these lies and state categorically here that there is absolutely no truth in such allegations. The nation must remain assured that all the vaccines delivered to Namibia, whether through donations or those that we have procured with Government recourses are within their shelf life and are safe for use. Members of the public should stand warned that spreading false information about COVID-19 is an offence. As such, anyone who spreads false information about COVID-19 will face the full wrath of the law.

8. We are continuing to strengthen our capacity to monitor the epidemiology of COVID-19 pandemic on regular basis. In this regard, we have expanded the COVID-19 testing capacity nationally, comprising state-owned and private sector laboratories. Currently, Namibia has the third highest COVID-19 testing capacity per 100 000 population on the African continent, behind South Africa and Gabon, in the first place. We now have two (2) laboratories with the capacity to conduct genome sequencing, namely the University of Namibia and the Namibia Institute of Pathology. Genome sequencing is an important tool in our national Covid-19 response and preparedness as it allows us to identify the COVID-19 variants circulating in the country so that we may target our responses appropriately.
9. On previous briefings, I have informed the public of the projects that were completed earlier. In order to further increase the number of isolation beds to cater for COVID-19 patients, new projects, comprising prefabricated isolation units, were completed between June 2020 and September 2021. The capacities of these facilities that were recently completed range between 4 and **12** beds. They were constructed at places such Windhoek Central Hospital (24 beds), Walvis Bay Hospital (24 beds), Opuwo Hospital (4 beds), Oshakati Hospital (4 beds), Eenhana Hospital (12 beds), Okongo Hospital (8 beds), Rundu Hospital (8 beds), Katima Mulilo Hospital (12 beds), Gobabis Hospital (8 beds), Mariental Hospital (12 beds) and Keetmanshoop Hospital (12 beds). Similar projects are currently underway at Okahao (12 beds), Andara (12 beds), Otjiwarongo (12 beds), Okahandja (12 beds) and Karasburg (8 beds). They are expected to be completed and commissioned soon. The former Katutura Hospital TB Ward is also being extended to cater for an additional 96 COVID-19 beds. Evaluation of the bids is ongoing to recommend a contractor for the project.
10. Furthermore, the Government has funded the repurposing of a unit within Keetmanshoop hospital to create a **15** bed Intensive Care Unit. The facility is due for commissioning soon. Similarly, a unit within Katima Mulilo State Hospital will be converted to serve as a **14** bed Intensive Care Unit. The procurement process for the repurposing of the said facility is underway.
11. Other District Hospitals around the country also have limited capacity to provide for Intensive Care. We have taken a conscious decision to capacitate District Hospitals to be able to provide for the appropriate ICU services. The identified hospitals to be provided with ICU capacity are: Outapi in Omusati, Otjiwarongo in Otjozundjupa, Rundu in Kavango East, Gobabis in Omaheke, Mariental in Hardap, Engela in Ohangwena Ohangwena, Opuwo in Kunene Kunene and Nankudu in Kavango West. The ICU capacity at these hospitals will range from 10 to 15 beds per hospital. It should be noted that pre-COVID situation, the number of ICU beds countrywide was severely limited. The creation of additional ICU capacity will go a long way towards the realization of our objectives of further strengthening services in the areas of Surgery, Obstetrics and Anaesthesia.

12. I reiterate that Namibians and indeed all persons within our border should take personal responsibility to combat the spread of COVID-19. The disease does not spread by itself. It is spread by persons as we move around and when we do not comply with the public health regulations. Let us therefore, continue to do what we know to be right. Let us conduct ourselves and behave in such a manner that we will not experience another devastating wave. The current respite teaches us that it is possible to bring the numbers of new infections down. Let us now hold hands and work together to prevent new infections.

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