



**PRIME MINISTER**  
**OFFICIAL STATEMENT**  
Thursday 26th March 2020

**PM REAFFIRMS CABINET APPOINTMENT OF DAVID MANNING AS  
CONTROLLER OF THE COVID-19 STATE OF EMERGENCY**

Prime Minister's Update  
Day 6 of State of Emergency  
Approved for Release

The Prime Minister, Hon. James Marape has reaffirmed Cabinet's earlier decision to appoint the Commissioner of Police, Mr David Manning as the Controller of the COVID-19 State of Emergency.

"Cabinet met this afternoon and also endorsed the functions and powers of the Controller of the COVID-19 State of Emergency," Mr Marape said.

The Prime Minister said the functions of the Controller are as follows:

- (a) Carry out any directions(s) given to him by the National Executive Council
- (b) Administer the emergency laws passed in respect of the national emergency; and
- (c) Subject to the direction(s) under Paragraph (a), do such things as he considers necessary and within his powers, including among others, actions to:
  - (i) Prevent the spread of COVID-19; and
  - (ii) Enable testing, diagnosis, and treatment of COVID-19; and
  - (iii) Control the outbreak of COVID-19; and
  - (iv) Eradicate the danger of the outbreak of COVID-19;
  - (v) Mitigate the impacts of the outbreak of COVID-19; and
  - (vi) Any other functions necessary to achieve these objectives.

Mr Marape said the Controller has the necessary powers to do any one or all of the following:

- (a) Issue emergency orders;

- (b) Restrict or issue directions for the movement of persons, and regulate business activities;
- (c) Give directions with respect to the occupation and operations of premises;
- (d) Enter and search any premises, and seize items;
- (e) Require a person to provide information or answer questions;
- (f) Require the destruction or disposal of items;
- (g) Direct any persons to be quarantined or remain quarantined for necessary periods;
- (h) Direct any person to undergo medical observation, medical examination, medical treatment, or be vaccinated;
- (i) Direct the evacuation of any premises or area;
- (j) Regulate all modes of transport; and
- (k) Issue relevant notices.

“The Controller will now also be solely responsible for the dissemination of information on all aspects of this national emergency,” Mr Marape said.

He also said that there are penalties for citizens violating any provision of the SoE and appealed to everyone to cooperate with the Controller.

The Prime Minister has dismissed the Opposition Leader’s media claims that the SoE declaration was illegal.

“The National Executive Council has acted within its rights to declare this national emergency.

“As is legally required, we are arranging to recall Parliament within 21 days to give further meaning to what this Government has done thus far to protect and reassure our citizens as we face this pandemic,” Mr Marape said.

### **Health status update**

Counting down day 6 of the SoE a total of 6,255 Persons of Interest (POI) have been recorded by the COVID-19 Joint Agency Task Force from all inbound passengers since 6-13 March of 2020.

Of the 6,255 POI's:

- 2,116 have completed 14 days quarantine;
- 4,139 are currently being followed up;
- 72 tested;
- 15 contacts of the first positive case all negative; and
- 32 persons under investigation.

Other incoming passengers from 13 March onwards are currently being followed up with text messages and phone calls through National Operation Centre with the respective provincial authorities.

“Once we establish the facts further announcement will be made. There is no need to panic. We are doing everything possible to ensure that we get back as soon as possible to the green stage where we would ideally want to be.

A total of 43 responsible government departments and agencies as well as the private sector are currently operating from the National Operations Centre to fight the spread of Coronavirus of COVID-19.

“I am humbled to see many of our citizens both in the public and private sector working hard to take on this threat facing PNG. While the government is doing its best to fight COVID-19, I am urging every citizen to act responsibly at these trying times.

“Essential services will continue. Goods and essential personnel such as medical officials and law enforcement officers will be allowed to travel during the lock down period. The Joint Agency Task Force under the Controller is doing everything possible to contain and fight the coronavirus whilst at the same time ensure our people are not further inconvenienced.

### **Economic stimulus package**

The Prime Minister has also directed the development of an economic Stimulus Package appropriate for our economy.

He said the broad framework for this package will entail low budget strategy aimed at buying enough time for a vaccine to be found with effective first, second and third line of defence. The package includes the following:

1. Fiscal stimulus to ensure sufficient cash flow to support immediate needs of our communities and villages through provinces and districts;
2. Possible support for tourism sector including hotels and tax paying operators;
3. Support for Airline through capital injection;
4. Exhortation of commercial banks to develop relief packages for mums and dads around mortgage repayments and corporate loan repayments;
5. Early draw down by employees from super contributions up to 10 per cent of total contributions for 2020;

6. Central Bank to develop appropriate monetary policy to stimulate economy;
7. Agricultural support to reduce cost of inputs to ramp up production for self-sufficiency; and
8. Manufacturing support to maintain local production.

The Treasurer will announce the final details of the stimulus package in the coming days.

### **Law & Order update**

There has not been any major incidence since the State of Emergency was declared.

“I appeal to our people to be calm. Do not panic. Do not spread false rumour and wild allegation. Be responsible. Help up us to defeat this pandemic.

“In conclusion I ask all our citizens for your cooperation. This pandemic can be defeated but it requires all our concerted efforts.

“Let me finally remind you again to:

“Wash your hands regularly;

“Cough into your elbow;

“Don't touch your face;

“Keep safe physical distance; and

“Stay at home at least for the next 8 days until the 14 day lock down is over.

“Thank you all. God bless you and God bless PNG.”

**HON. JAMES MARAPE, MP**  
**Prime Minister**