



PM Marape urges Papua New Guineans to cooperate with COVID-19 National Security Emergency Response Task Force

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The Prime Minister Hon. James Marape, MP, is urging all Papua New Guineans to cooperate with the COVID-19 National Security Emergency Response Task force to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the country.

The Prime Minister made his appeal on Facebook last week.

He asked all people to appreciate each other and give each other a helping hand in times like this.

Prime Minister Marape said since January 28, 2020, 29, 166 inbound passengers were successfully screen and out of those, 6,336 were identified as persons of interest.

He said persons of interest are people (Papua New Guineans and expatriates) who have travelled into the country, through or from countries that have confirmed, reported cases of COVID-19.

“As of 3pm on the 28th of March, the National Department of Health and the Rapid Response Team have cleared over 55% of the persons of interest,” the Prime Minister said.

“This includes the 15 who were in close contact with the person who tested positive for COVID-19 at their work place in Hidden Valley, Wau/Bulolo, Morobe Province.

“I would like to thank Harmony Gold, a joint venture partner of the Hidden Valley Mining Project, for working with the government and quickly isolating those 15 people.”

Prime Minister Marape revealed that samples that were collected from the 15 and sent to the Papua New Guinea Institute of Medical Research (PNGIMR) for testing came back with a negative result for COVID-19.

He further thanked ExxonMobil for bringing in 2 of their sick employees at Angore/ Hides for testing where both tests came back negative.

The Prime Minister also revealed test results for a Defence Force Officer, who presented flu like symptoms upon return from Australia after a Defence Program, that came back negative.

He added that to make sure there is no local transmissions, the Government instituted the State of Emergency (SoE) for 14 days, the incubation period of COVID-19, to monitor any reports of possible COVID-19 infections, isolate the person or persons of interest so COVID-19 is not spread to others, do testing and treat if there are positives cases.

“Our SoE induced isolation strategy (lockdown of provincial borders) will allow us to map further whether the virus is in country, where it is if it is in country, isolate the area or province affected and eliminate it.

“Therefore, I ask that you, Papua New Guineans and residents, to bear with us for the next 10 days.

“We are now mobilizing enough medicines and medical personnel protective gears to ensure they are safe whilst serving the sick in our country.

“All our 21 provinces and the Autonomous Region of Bougainville government will be asked to update their health requirements so the National Government will finance them to serve our people better.”

Prime Minister Marape said the Government will reprioritize expenditures and cutaway activities that can be deferred or terminated and focus on health, economy and education for the balance of 2020.

He also took the time to extend his heartfelt thank you to the health workers, police, defence and religious personnel, public servants, members of the private sector, volunteers and politicians who are helping the fight against COVID-19 in PNG.

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