



## OFFICIAL STATEMENT

### FROM THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

Approved for Release: Sunday, 22 March 2020

Today based on advice from the COVID-19 National Operation Centre (NOC 19) and National Security Council (NSC) recommendations, the National Executive Council (NEC) in an emergency meeting has decided on the following measures in light of first positive case of COVID-19 in our country.

This is a national security issue now and not just a health issue but a cross cutting issue including effect on economy, law and order and education of our children amongst other effects. Hence, the relevance of the following measures.

So far, we have done trace of the person that came into our country and he remains to date our only positive person who is in isolation and recovering but to clearly demarcate our country from spread and for Government to take stock from this bio security breach, we are taking the following measures.

1. Confirm this first case and its impact to ensure we contain its impact including treating, curing and sending the victim back to Australia.
2. Taking stock of all entry into PNG after 7th of March to ensure all are checked, tested and status of health affirmed. All who have come in or those that have come in contact with those who came into PNG since 7th of March are to report to the hotline below.
3. Declare a State of Emergency for 14 days starting on Tuesday the 24th of March in which the Commissioner of Police will assume control assisted by a call out placed on military to ensure lawful order, control and response to SOE control measures.
4. Following on our stop of incoming international flights, we now stopping all domestic flights for the next 14 days starting on Tuesday this week.
5. We direct that as of Tuesday 24th March 2020, no Public transportation of people and no movement from one province to another for a 14 day period. Only approved cargo and medicine and police /military personal will be moving. It is a 14 day lockdown in our country where ever you are.
6. The Provincial Governors and their Provincial Administrators with Provincial Police Commanders with the respective Provincial Health Authorities will be control points in all provinces.
7. All heads of departments and private companies are to embrace safe work place practise and non-essential staff are asked to stay at home for the next 14 days.
8. Education and Higher Education departments are asked to advance first term holiday as of tomorrow 23rd of March and the next 14 days are to be school holidays.



9. All who have come into the country as from the 7th of March 2020 or those who made contact with those who came into the country from that date please report, call or text to the hotline below.
10. No border crossing by foot or canoe and police /army presence in border areas will be stepped up.
11. Banks and financial institutions and super funds will be mobilised to work with Government on economic rescue packages for business in this down time.
12. The SOE controller through the office of Prime Minister will be the only official point of releasing statements to public.
13. The SOE controller will issue on details on how citizens and our country respond and behave in this time and breach of those will be punished as offence in times of emergency.
14. ICCC will ensure prices of all goods are within lawful range.
15. We setting multi sector agency task forces to report to the National Security Coordination centre to be at work 24 hours for 7 days until further notice.
16. All foreign friends of PNG in our country, your embassies and missions are available including our Foreign Affairs Department, to assist.
17. All this will be reviewed after the 14 days in which we would have mapped the presence of COVID-19 virus in our country.
18. PNG is a Christian country, we declare that Wednesday 25th of March 2020 becomes a national day of fasting and pray and for the next 21 days.

We have now dividing the country into zones to isolate this virus from spreading.

The mid PNG zone from Morobe and Madang provinces into the entire Highlands, the Central Papua (including NCD, Central and Gulf), the New Guinea Islands Zone, the Sepik Zone, the Western Border Zone, Eastern Papua Zone and the Bougainville Zone.

The SOE controller will delicate the PPCs to police the zones to ensure lawful abiding to this control measures.

We will get through this phase, we ask from corporation from all citizens, residents and businesses houses.

Hotline toll free number is **1800 200** and B mobile **019, DIGICEL 71960813**.

God bless PNG.

  
**HON. JAMES MARAPE MP**  
Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea