



Containment will fail; COVID-19 is now in 4th stage, widespread infections. What should the government be doing now?

The numbers of COVID-19 in the country is 1326 with three (3) documented deaths. It is important to alert citizens that the testing and officials numbers are appreciably delayed by at least three (3) weeks. This means that the actual numbers of those infected is probably in the range of 3000 with many soon to be diagnosed and unfortunately will succumb to the virus. The reason for the delay is the fact that the virus incubation period is up to about two (2) weeks and when a suspected case manifests symptoms, the test takes another four (4) days before the case is confirmed. Therefore one needs to multiply the contacts that are being traced and their contacts to try and get to a possible number of current infections. The next phase in the COVID-19 will require more than just camouflage and crowd control.

Aggressive testing Drive.

The next phase has to be up scaling of the testing abilities. More test kits need to be made available to the current clinics, CHC and hospitals both in state and private sector. Government must roll out mobile testing kiosks for the locations and densely populated areas. Government must purchase and make available rapid tests that give results in at least 24 hours as opposed to the 48 hours currently.

Gowns and protective clothing.

Government needs to purchase and provide all the necessary gowns, N95 masks and other protective gear for health workers. The health worker is most exposed to new and undiagnosed cases in the health facilities. If health workers are not adequately protected, we shall have large infection rates and lose valuable front line workforce.

Ventilators and ICU facilities.

Government needs to purchase 5000 ventilators. It is a known fact that ventilators and ICU beds have always been limited resources in the country, but since the "converted" cabinet that is so eager to save lives has been rudely awakened by COVID-19, we must demand these minimum measures to minimize loss of life. Government needs to build ICU facilities for these ventilators and provide all the necessary respiratory equipment.

The most comprehensive plan is to build a hospital in each of the most affected province, starting with Gauteng, Western Cape and Kwa-Zulu Natal. The need will be evident in a few weeks and by then we could have started even if it means transforming existing buildings into makeshift hospitals.

The current hospitals will be overwhelmed in two weeks and people will begin to die from their homes. It must be remembered that for a typical public hospital like Edendale hospital, very sick patients are having to wait for an admission bed in the casualty for up to three (3) days because of the shortage without the burden of COVID-19.

Staff.

Medical and nursing staff posts that have been till now frozen, must be opened and filled. The health teams are already overworked and the health department has been forcing staff to work under terrible conditions with staff shortages and turning a blind eye to the negative outcomes that resulted. The time for complacency is over those posts must be filled immediately.

Retired medical and nursing staff must be invited and rehired with special incentives. This should be done proactively now because study of other health systems, countries ahead of us in the pandemic shows that it will be necessary.

Lockdown.

We plead with citizens to abide with the lockdown. If citizens comply now, they will reduce their own suffering for tomorrow. In fact if the measures are effective, the lockdown might not need to be extended. With the current long queues, panic shopping and large groups of people in close proximity, the infection numbers are certain to rise. Shopping from local spaza shops would have prevented the crowds in the large supermarkets and ensure local economy is boosted. We appeal to citizens to avoid large groups and support your local spaza shops both for your health and local economy.

State brutality is unacceptable and must cease immediately.

The members of the SAPS, Traffic department and defence force must exercise restraint. The call to this mission is for protection of citizens, it is not to punish and brutalize the people. The reported cases shall be prosecuted and PAC will seek justice for all cases where unnecessary force has been used.

The Pan Africanist Congress of Azania will not tolerate such brutality towards Africans. We have not tolerated such treatment from a racist white regime and we shall not tolerate it from this pseudo black regime either.

Flu vaccine.

The flu vaccine must be made available for all citizens above 60 years, all children younger than five (5) years and everyone with a

chronic medical condition. This is known to protect this vulnerable population from severe illness each flu season. It is not protective of COVID-19 but will greatly reduce the serious illness arising from the common influenza.

Sanitizer and running water.

Government must provide all public facilities with sanitiser. The scientific world has emphasized this point enough.

We wish to remind all municipalities that waste loads and its removal that was hampered by the municipal council's corruption will not disappear with the alcohol based sanitizer. Those issues will require prosecutions and those monies must be recouped. The effort of providing water via jojo tanks is commendable. We looked on as the ministers rolled out the tankers for the most vulnerable areas. We are grateful for these measures. The cries of many in the country have been enhanced by the COVID 19 virus and the citizens will have water at last.

Government greed and African misery. The Government, health officials must be commended for their decisive action and regular community engagements and updates. Indeed there are so many positive actions taken in the past three weeks. Funds have been raised within instant, water tankers purchased and delivered, long meetings and deadlines met. Ministers gathered for emergencies meetings, strategies made and plans implemented in record time.

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The most disappointing fact is that the government had these abilities all this time. The dear government has only acted now on many matters that should have been addressed years ago. There has been countless loss of life, morbidity for our people, government has been uncaring, silent on matters about water shortage and a dysfunctional public health system to mention a few. Millions have been squandered in the state capture, more for Commissioner Zondo to chuckle and pretend to be "shocked" and yet fails to prosecute. Indeed the Governments haphazard actions are like a desperate group of criminals in the identity parade, praying that victims do not identify them correctly as the ones responsible for so much suffering and loss.

Universal Health Coverage.

Pan Africanist Congress of Azania proposes a Universal health coverage, want this dual health system to be eradicated, a quality and equal health system that would provide world class healthcare for all our citizens not only those that can afford. The opponents of a universal health system are small, greedy largely white companies that seek to benefit from the unregulated and exorbitant prices hungry for maximum gain from African suffering. This self-serving health system and its masters are grossly ill prepared to manage the current impasse and had our government been as proactive five ten years ago, our citizens would have had a much better fighting chance at this pandemic.