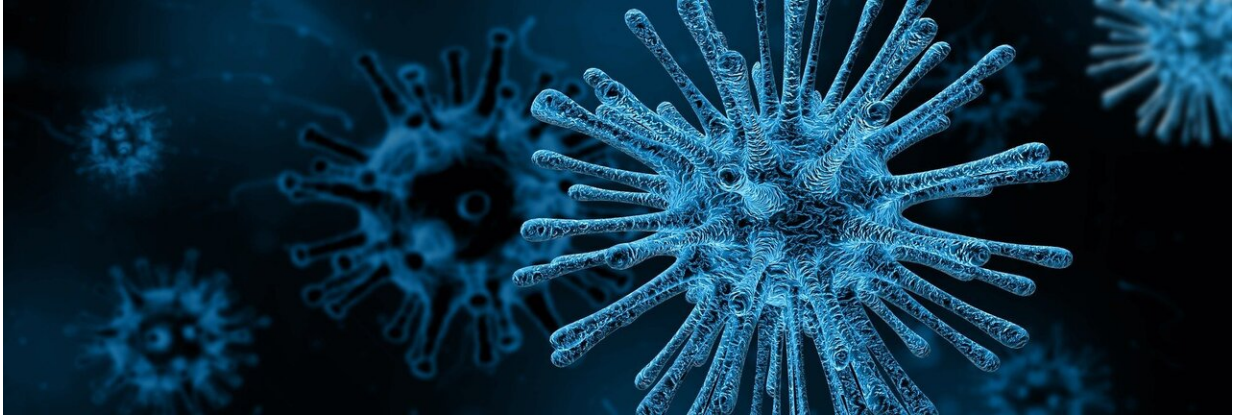


South Africa virus cases rise to nearly 4,000

April 23 2020



Credit: CC0 Public Domain

The number of coronavirus cases in South Africa rose to nearly 4,000 on Thursday, the biggest single-day jump recorded to date, health ministry figures showed.

A total of 318 new cases were confirmed on Thursday, bringing the overall total to 3,953, and the number of fatalities rose by 10 to 75.

The day before, a total 170 new cases had been reported.

"We are observing a steady increase in the number of positive cases," health minister Zweli Mkhize said in a statement.

"While this concerns us, we are also pleased that the intensified community screening and testing campaign is assisting in finding more COVID-19 positive patients," Mkhize added.

"This allows us to take the necessary actions such as isolation, quarantine or hospitalisation if required."

The World Health Organization (WHO) has praised South Africa—the continent's most advanced economy—for its response to the pandemic based on "primary prevention, lockdown and enhanced surveillance".

Some 28,000 community health workers have been deployed across the country to screen and test its 57 million inhabitants.

Despite the WHO's praise, Mkhize warned that "we still have a long way ahead of us and face a tough battle to fight".

Government plans to send more than 73,000 extra troops to enforce a five-week shutdown as authorities struggled to keep people indoors—particularly in overcrowded townships.

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