

SOUTH AFRICA

Prof Salim Abdool Karim reiterates calls for mandatory Covid-19 vaccines

Unathi Nkanjeni Reporter

24 March 2022 - 12:00



Prof Salim Abdool Karim says it's time for mandatory jobs.

Image: Jackie Clausen

Epidemiologist Prof Salim Abdool Karim has reiterated his call for Covid-19 vaccines to be mandatory.

President Cyril Ramaphosa this week announced masks are no longer necessary in an outdoors setting.

Masks would still be required inside public transport, offices and malls, but “not when we are walking in streets or in an open space, exercising outdoors or jogging or attending an outdoor gathering”.

These changes come as government prepares to lift the national state of disaster.

[Speaking on eNCA](#), the former chairperson of the Covid-19 ministerial advisory committee said getting a job should no longer be a personal choice, given the seriousness of the virus.

Karim suggested that SA should follow in the footsteps of countries such as France and the US, where people are required to show their Covid-19 pass at indoor environments, including supermarkets and malls.

“That is how many countries reached the position where they were able to get high vaccination coverage but, importantly, they protected their indoor environments by restricting it to vaccinated people. It all comes down to individual choice,” he said.

Ramaphosa disappointed at low vaccination rate among the youth

President Cyril Ramaphosa has expressed concern at the low number of youths who have taken the Covid-19 vaccine.
NEWS
5 days ago

Karim criticised government's stance on mandatory vaccines, saying it is confusing.

“We have confusing signals from government about whether there should be vaccine mandates or not. Just recently, we saw new regulations from the department of employment and labour which took us one step forward but two steps back.

“There needs to be clarity, because if we are going to do this, it needs to be done properly to try to ensure that indoor environments are restricted to vaccinated people.”

Last week, employment and labour minister Thulas Nxesi [published new rules](#) for managing Covid-19 in the workplace to come into effect when the state of disaster is lifted.

These include reaffirming employers' rights to introduce vaccine mandates and tightening the grounds on which employees may refuse to get jabbed.

This is part of government's efforts to ensure there is a coherent legislative framework to help manage the pandemic when it ends the state of disaster.

The new rules state that an employee may refuse to get vaccinated if they can produce a medical certificate showing that doing so will cause them harm, but the employer may refer the employee for a confirmatory medical evaluation at the employer's expense.