

Call to raise Covid lockdown level for Easter

**SUTHENTIRA GOVENDER
and IAVAN PIJOOS**

Epidemiologist Prof Salim Abdool Karim says government should move SA to alert level 2 before the upcoming Easter holidays as a precautionary measure.

Karim, who is also co-chair of the ministerial advisory committee (MAC), said on Wednesday that he was “deeply concerned” about gatherings across all religious groups.

A News24 report said the national command council (NCC) was advised last week in a MAC advisory to restrict gatherings to 50, impose a 10pm curfew and revert to selling alcohol only from Mondays to Thursdays, 10am to 6pm.

According to the report, the NCC was expected to meet on Thursday.

President Cyril Ramaphosa’s acting spokesperson, Tyrone Seale, said on Wednesday: “The national coronavirus command council and the cabinet are continuously monitoring developments in the pandemic and in the economy, and consult with different stakeholders in society as part of decision-making. Such decisions are communicated by government as and when they are taken.”

Under alert level 1, the hours of curfew have been reduced from midnight to 4am, and public gatherings — including social, political and religious ones — are permitted, but restricted to 100 people for indoor gatherings and 250 for outdoor events.

The sale of alcohol for both on and off-site consumption is permitted during normal pre-lockdown trading hours.

Asked if there was any indication of whether government would move to a higher alert level, Karim responded: “You will have to ask the government.



LEVEL 2: Preventing the third wave is better than the cure, says Prof Salim Abdool Karim.

“It’s my view that we should go to a higher alert level and we should institute a few restrictions that would reduce the risk of superspreading events through gatherings over the Easter weekend.

“I don’t know if we will have a third wave after Easter.

“But I don’t want to wait to find out. I would rather take the precautions and reduce our chances of a third wave.

“I think if we did those activities we would reduce the risk of superspreading events, like what happened with the second wave, which hit us badly because of such events.

“This time we want to avoid the risk of superspreading events,” said Karim.

“It’s about reducing risky human interaction, where people are sitting without masks, like in a pub or other entertainment spots, and reducing gathering size.

“I think we should do that pretty soon.” — *TimesLIVE*

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