

■ NATION

Level 1 on cards, but prevention a key concern

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WITH PRESIDENT Ramaphosa expected to announce the country's move to alert level 1 in the coming days, the continued use of prevention measures is cited as key in preventing community transmission of Covid-19.

Professor Salim Abdool Karim, the Covid-19 ministerial advisory committee chairperson, said while South Africa had made significant gains in Covid-19 prevention measures, with a notable decrease in the number of reported positive cases, the nation's behavioural choices would decide what happened next.

"When we ease the restrictions, our behavioural choices will impact on all South Africans. Our continued use of prevention measures will be key in preventing community transmission," Abdool Karim said.

"The declining number of cases is not a time for complacency as we enter a new normal. We also need to make informed choices to avoid placing ourselves in risky situations such as mass gatherings that could become super-spreading events. To reduce our risk of a second surge we must continue to wear our masks, practice social distancing and regular hand washing," he said.

The number of detected cases countrywide continues to decline, and since August 22 there have been just under 3 000 reported cases a day.

At the height of the pandemic in July, anything between 10 000 and 15 000 cases a day were recorded.

Yesterday, President Cyril Ramaphosa held virtual meetings with members of the President's Co-ordinating Council (PCC) and National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac) where easing of lockdown regulations was said to be top of the agenda.

The national Health Department meanwhile said consistency across the indicators "reassures us that indeed we are in the midst of a trough in the pandemic".

At the start of the week, South Africa had a cumulative total of 650 749 Covid-19 cases. The Western Cape by yesterday had 2 763 active cases of Covid-19, with a total of 107 886 confirmed cases and 101 044 recoveries.

The province recorded an additional 14 deaths, bringing the total number of Covid-19-related deaths to 4 079.