

*By Jeje Muhinde;*

The Rwandan government on Sunday announced a five-day extension of the current lockdown measures that prohibit unnecessary movements in the capital city Kigali and eight districts, to consolidate gains in reducing the number of COVID-19 cases and related deaths.

The measures which started from July 17 have been extended through July 27 to July 31, the Office of the Prime Minister said in a communique.

The eight districts concerned with the decision include Burera, Gicumbi, Kamonyi, Musanze, Nyagatare, Rubavu, Rwamagana and Rutsiro.

“In order to consolidate the gains in decreasing the number of COVID-19 cases and related deaths, the Rwandan government has extended the current preventive measures for five more days, starting 27th July through 21st July 2021,” reads the communiqué signed by Prime Minister, Dr. Edouard Ngirente.

Currently, the majority of cases and deaths in Rwanda are related to the Delta variant, first detected in India, he said, adding that the government is focusing on securing vaccines to vaccinate at least 30 percent of its population by the end of 2021.

Under the lockdown, the public are not permitted to leave home except for essential services. The government also bans public transport, except for the transportation of people who “carry out” essential services, while motorcycles and bicycles will not be allowed to carry passengers.

Schools and higher education institutions are also closed.

Public and private offices and businesses are required to close unless they provide essential services. Outdoor sports and recreational activities will be prohibited.

Movement and visits outside the home are not permitted except for essential services such as healthcare, food shopping, or banking and for personnel performing such services.

Public transports are prohibited; except transportation of personnel carrying out the above mentioned activities. Motos and bicycles are not permitted to carry passengers but may offer essential services.

Businesses are closed, except distribution and delivery services and those selling food (markets), medicine (pharmacies), Gas stations and other approved essential items however they will operate a 30% capacity. Businesses permitted to operate are supposed to close at 5 pm.