

Tanzania's Experience in Leveraging Private Health Sector to Address COVID-19

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COVID STATUS IN TANZANIA | 509 confirmed cases and 21 deaths due to COVID

First COVID-19 Case – March 16th, 2020

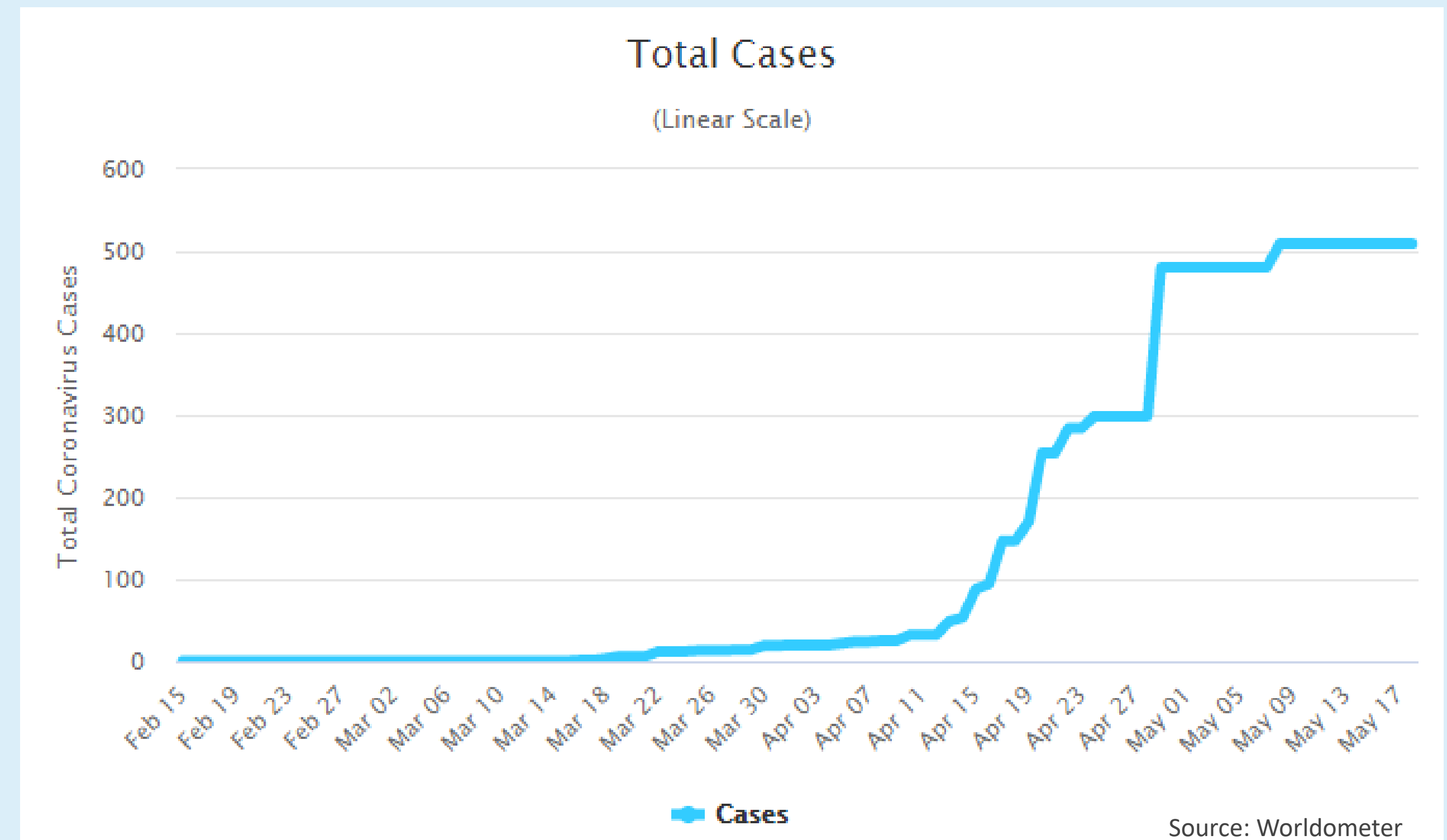
Status as of 19 May 2020

Confirmed Cases: 509

Deaths: 21

Areas of Concern:

1. Health system of Tanzania is not well positioned to deal with a full-blown epidemic as the nation has very **few intensive care beds** and even fewer **ventilators** (about 100 functioning as of May 2020)
2. Vulnerable populations like the **Burundian refugees** at the Nduta camp are of particular concern as self-isolation and physical distancing is simply not possible in these settings



MEASURES BY TANZANIAN GOVERNMENT | Authorities face criticism for lagged response to the pandemic

In the early weeks of May, government authorities of Tanzania faced several criticisms for their lagged response to the pandemic.

No lockdown - While neighbouring countries like Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya introduced lockdown measures and witnessed a drop in new cases, the Tanzanian government rejected the need to restrict movement of citizens.

Gatherings allowed - Though educational institutions have been closed, spiritual gatherings remain open and are encouraged.

Borders open - The borders stay open increasing the possibility of viral transmission by truck drivers who cross country borders. In response, Zambia and Kenya have closed their borders with Tanzania.

Mysterious burials - The US embassy in Tanzania has issued a warning regarding mysterious deaths and burials of unreported COVID patients.

Herbal remedies - A herbal drink that has been touted by the president of Madagascar has also been promoted by the Tanzanian president as a remedy for COVID.

Tanzanian hospitals overwhelmed by dramatic rise in secret COVID-19 cases, U.S. says

Tanzania's president shrugs off Covid-19 risk after sending fruit for 'tests'

Is Tanzania covering up the real number of coronavirus deaths?

Tanzania under fire from WHO for lackluster response to COVID-19 pandemic

TANZANIA RECEIVES MADAGASCAR'S ANTI-VIRUS POTION

Tanzania: How long can its COVID-19 strategy hold?

'Economy comes before virus,' says Tanzanian president

Despite raising several eyebrows in the handling of the pandemic, the Tanzanian Government has also taken some noteworthy measures in the last two months, to curb the spread of the virus. A significant role has been the partnership with private sector to fill the gaps in the health system.

APHFTA COLLABORATION | The Association of Private Health Facilities in Tanzania (APHFTA) has been actively working with the government to support the national response to COVID-19

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Dissemination of the ‘Standard Operating Procedure for Case Management and IPC for COVID-19 patients’ to all private health facilities

APHFTA advised all its members to adhere to the SOP that was formulated by the government and to abide by the national protocols for notification, sample collection and follow up measures of COVID-19.

The private providers were instructed to:

- **Take all details** of all COVID-19 suspect patients as per the ministry's directives.
- **Notify** District Medical Officer (DMO) office immediately for sample collection.
- **Counsel** the suspected patients and their relatives regarding preventive measures such as social distancing, wearing mask for all family members and temperature monitoring.
- **Link** the suspected patient to DMO/Municipal surveillance officer for follow up and assessment of place/home for self-isolation and advise the suspected patient to self isolate at home until the results are released.
- **Avoid** keeping suspected patients in an isolation room and clearly instruct them to report any change in their condition to an identified nearest health facility for further management.
- **Initiate** necessary management in patients who need immediate attention or are unstable instead of waiting for the lab results.
- **Engage** patient's relatives under supervision of trained government medical team to arrange for burial services of patients who die in the facility.
- **Inform** relevant DMO office for necessary support and action and the DMO office in turn will take over the process of burial or cremation of the deceased.

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2

Training of Private Providers

APHFTA has organized multiple training sessions for nearly 1,200 medical personnel from 300 private health facilities in the most affected regions.

No. of participants trained: 720 personnel trained so far

- **Mode of delivery:** Practical intensive 2 days training, with a participant limit of 20 people.
- **Purpose:** Ensure clinicians, nurses, and laboratory teams are fully equipped with the knowledge to manage COVID-19 patients who seek care at the private health facilities.
- **Trainers:** Government approved trainers
- **Training syllabus:** WHO and National treatment guidelines.
- **Support:** The trainings have been supported by APHFTA, DANIDA (Danish International Development Agency) and Comic Relief of the UK. The owners of participating private hospitals also contribute by taking care of their staff needs during the training.

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3

Distribution of essential supplies

APHFTA has been involved in the procurement and distribution of personal protective equipment and other essential items to strengthen private facilities.

- **100,000 masks, PPE suits, face hood,** etc. distributed to private hospitals
- **Infra red thermometers** procured in bulk and distributed

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COVID 19 treatment centre

A new center to treat moderate and severely ill COVID patients has been established and will open for patients on May 21, 2020.

- **12-bed** center with **4 ICU** beds established in a **PPP** arrangement
- Plans are ongoing for establishment of another **62-bed** facility

OTHER COLLABORATIONS | Private actors from non-healthcare sector have also been engaged in the COVID-19 response in Tanzania

- Barrick Gold, a private mining company, has contributed 1.7 million USD to the Tanzanian government, for critical equipment and expertise
- Private manufacturers have increased surgical masks production from 25,000/day to 125,000/day
- Some private hotels have been converted to quarantine centers

COVID-19 has paved way for collaborative efforts between the public and the private sector. The Tanzanian government acknowledges the contribution of the private sector and appreciates their participation in COVID-19 response. The government and the development partners have set up several response committees and the private sector is actively engaged in these committees.