

## **Address by the President of the Republic, Mr Nicos Anastasiades**

Compatriots, Friends,

Just a week ago I addressed all of you and explained the reasons for taking new restrictive measures, expressing at the same time the hope of avoiding stricter restrictive measures that have been imposed by European countries, one after another.

Unfortunately, despite the measures taken, despite the anxious effort to avoid stricter restrictive measures, it has not been possible to curb the outbreak of the pandemic, which now threatens the health, the life, the health system and the economy of our country.

Observing the epidemiological indicators, I would like to mention that for the period from October 28 until today, 2644 new cases have been recorded, while in the same period 8 deaths have been attributed to the deadly virus.

In analyzing the above data, it appears that from the new cases, 1798 come from the Districts of Lemesos and Pafos, ie 68%, while 7 out of the 8 deaths concern people with permanent residence in either Lemesos or Pafos.

At the same time, out of the 68 people who are currently hospitalised, 49 come from these Districts, a percentage of 72%.

From what I have cited above, it is clear that the main sources of infection and transmission of the virus are, unfortunately, the Districts of Lemesos and Pafos.

Without ignoring the high number of cases in the rest of the Districts and after meeting with the epidemiological group and in view of the visible dangers of an uncontrollable outbreak of the pandemic, the Council of Ministers decided to take further measures – stricter for Lemesos and Pafos Districts, as well as new measures concerning the other Districts.

I would like, as one of you, to confess that during the last few days, it is with great anxiousness that I observe the dangers recorded through the epidemiological picture.

At the same time, the feeling of responsibility would not allow the Government, or myself personally, to remain indifferent to the dangers of losing human lives and destroying families.

Fellow citizens of Lemesos and Pafos: I want to assure you that I fully understand the reactions and unpleasant feelings the restrictive measures might cause to you.

It was not and it is not the Government's intention to victimize citizens of specific districts.

Today's government decisions may cause discomfort, however, the preventive/protective measures we are taking will allow everyone to feel safer, and most importantly, enable us to enjoy our children and parents on the next day of the crisis, as well.

Friends,

You are watching, every day, the tragic events taking place in other countries. I am certain that none of you would like us to experience similar conditions.

I will not get tired of repeating that this is the time for personal and social responsibility from each and every one of us.

I would like to assure you that with the same feeling of responsibility, we are going to deal with the economic consequences that will arise as a result of the measures we are taking.

Apart from the measures, which the Minister of Health will announce directly afterwards, tomorrow the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance will announce a new package of support measures for employees, small and medium-sized enterprises and other businesses.

Friends,

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that times are critical. And they will become more critical if we do not show the same sense of responsibility and solidarity that we have shown during the successful handling of the first wave of the pandemic.

Any progress, any lifting of the restrictive measures, or a new setback, depend entirely upon the individual and collective responsibility to rigorously adhere to the protocols and health safety regulations that our scientists advise.

I ask for your understanding and your patience, and that is why I appeal to everyone to respect what we have achieved so far, through sacrifices, persistence and determination, in the efforts to combat the pandemic.

The element of ambiguity in the virus' aggressive behaviour does not allow for any delusions or complacency.

In saying the above, I am mainly addressing a small group of our compatriots, who show a lack of respect toward our fellow human beings, by behaving in a disorderly and complacent manner.

At the same time, I would like to underline that we will not tolerate conducts by businesses which prioritize economic profit over human lives while ignoring the safety protocols.

Friends,

I have no doubt that with social sensitivity, which we have repeatedly shown as people, we will manage to tackle this ordeal as well.

I trust you, I trust your sense of humanity and the embedded feeling of solidarity that characterizes our society.

Thank you. Together we will succeed again.

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