

● We need to take precautions and reduce chances of third Covid-19 wave — Prof Karim

# More restrictions vital over Easter, expert says

**Suthentira Govender and Ivan Pijoo**

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

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

A News24 report said the national coronavirus command council (NCCC) was advised last week in a ministerial 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 coronavirus command council was expected to meet today.

President Cyril Rama-

phosa's acting spokesperson, Tyrone Seale, said yesterday: "The NCCC 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 the curfew have been reduced to midnight to 4am, and public gatherings — including social, political and religious — are permitted, but restricted to 100 people for indoor gatherings and 250 for outdoor events.

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

Asked if there was any indication of whether the government would move to a

higher alert level, Karim responded: "You will have to ask government.

"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. —

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**ACT NOW:**  
Professor Salim Abdool Karim says we need to avoid the risk of superspreading events  
Picture: TREVOR SAMSON