

# Covid-19: Eastern Cape taking strain, but Mabuyane says another hard lockdown is 'not an option'

**news24**

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The Eastern Cape has the highest Covid-19 death toll.  
by John Moore/Getty Images

- **Premier Oscar Mabuyane says the government cannot destroy the economy again by going back to Level 5.**
- **The Eastern Cape currently has the most deaths linked to Covid-19 after it reached 5 116 on Wednesday.**
- **Health Minister Zweli Mkhize has announced that the country is in a second wave of Covid-19.**

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The Eastern Cape has the highest number of Covid-19 fatalities in the country, but placing it under a hard lockdown is not an option.

Such a lockdown would destroy the economy again, according to Eastern Cape Premier Oscar Mabuyane, who was responding on Twitter to a call for the Eastern Cape to be placed on Level 5 lockdown.

Mabuyane was responding to ANC regional leader and football analyst Ace Ncobo's tweet.

On Thursday, Ncobo tweeted: "Premier Lubabalo Oscar Mabuyane, maybe it's time we take a decision as a province to request the NCCC [National Coronavirus Command Council] to place EC on Level 5 until 5 January."

Mabuyane responded: "No, that can't work, we can't destroy the economy again *umntu makaqande agade family yakhe* [each person must control and guard their own family]."

Asked to elaborate more on the statement, Mabuyane's spokesperson Mvusiwekhaya Sicwetsha told News24: "This is very clear. We each have the responsibility to stop the spread of infection by doing the right thing - wearing masks, keeping physical distance, washing or sanitising hands, and not to go to overcrowded places. That's what he [premier] is talking about."

## **Second wave**

Health Minister Zweli Mkhize has announced that the country is officially in a second wave of Covid-19 and declared the Eastern Cape as one of four provinces driving the resurgence.

Mkhize said the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng were the other key drivers of the new wave.

The Eastern Cape currently leads the country with fatalities linked to Covid-19 after it reached 5 116 on Wednesday. It has overtaken Gauteng - and it has raised concern in the province.

"Even more concerning is that, on Monday, 7 December, the Eastern Cape epidemiological report indicated that, in the previous 24 hours, no Covid-19 deaths had been reported," said DA MPL Jane Cowley.

"On Tuesday, however, the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) stated that the Eastern Cape had suffered a further 82 Covid-19 related deaths. How is it possible

that, in one 24-hour period, nobody is reported as having died, and then the next 24 hours, 82 people had succumbed?

"This highlights the ongoing concern that statistics released by the province are neither accurate nor consistent."

One of the people, who died due to Covid-19 in the Eastern Cape, was [Buffalo City Metro deputy mayor and former council speaker Zoliswa Matana](#), aged 60.

She became the fourth councillor to die of Covid-19 in the metro since June.

The others are council speaker Alfred Mtsi, ward 43 councillor Zukiswa Mankayi and ward 45 councillor Gideon Norexe.