

## An update from Helen on the situation in South Africa:



- Africa as a continent had a swift response to the pandemic and closed borders quickly (this was starting while I was visiting a translation in Angola, so the return journey was quite different to the first).
- SA went into lock down on 27 March, where you could only go outside for essential travel, wearing a mask. Houses aren't open along the street like in the UK; most houses and apartments are in estates and complexes with security entrances. All visitor entrances were closed, and people weren't allowed to move around within their estates or complexes because of social distancing. I was in an apartment in a complex with lots of apartments close together, so basically only went out the front door 4-5 times in 2 months (most of those to take trash out and be able to put my feet on some grass).
- The country has many townships and unofficial settlements, which are packed close together. Due to lock down, all little businesses had to stop and people living in poor conditions had no income. The money the government could provide was minimal so charities and churches set up poles with water and soap distributed between the houses and LOTs of food parcels have gone out. The government sent food parcels too, but a lot of their trucks were hijacked by large crowds who grabbed what they could.
- Restrictions have been gradually eased recently and we've been told that soon they will lift restrictions even more.
- There was an epidemic of gender-based violence in the country before the pandemic, which the government were targeting. It's got worse as lock down lifts so they are trying to make a way for women to go back to work, get income and be more supported and independent.
- The Wycliffe offices have opened, but you can only have up to 1/3 of the staff in, and each one needs a permit. So, we have 2 staff back in the office right now. I hope to start going back in July or August.
- The amount of cases has been low compared to the rest of the world, but it's increasing as restrictions lift - we haven't reached our peak yet. The Western Cape has been worst hit (where Cape Town is). I'm up in Gauteng (where Johannesburg and Pretoria are) which is another hot-spot, but we've had a lot fewer deaths compared to cases than other provinces.
- Overall, we're at 83 890 cases, and 1 737 deaths, and rising. Please pray that the preparations in hospitals for the rising cases will be enough, for safety in work places and schools as things reopen, for support for those struggling in poor conditions, and for the women and children of the country!