

<https://www.businesslive.co.za/bd/companies/property/2020-04-05-africrest-properties-launches-initiative-to-provide-masks-to-hospitals/>

## **Africrest Properties launches initiative to provide masks to hospitals**

Company launches Shout4Masks initiative to provide hospitals with surgical masks at cost price

BL PREMIUM

05 APRIL 2020 - 20:11

by ALISTAIR ANDERSON

Developer and landlord Africrest Properties has launched an initiative to provide hospitals with surgical masks at cost price. Hospitals are in dire need of equipment as they fight the Covid-19 pandemic. More than 1,500 South Africans have been infected with the highly infectious coronavirus and nine have died.

The country is halfway through a 21-day lockdown, which has forced people to stay at home and allows only essential services to operate.

Africrest, which converts offices into residential properties, is one of a number of property development companies trying to provide affordable and middle-income housing in Johannesburg's inner city. The company manages more than 1,000 apartments.

Africrest director Greg Blend said his girlfriend, who is a doctor at a public hospital, had found that there were only 50 masks for the entire hospital. This prompted Africrest to find a way to get masks into SA and to medical staff and patients as cheaply as possible.

Africrest director Justin Blend said the company had launched the Shout4Masks initiative last Friday. The initiative includes the non-profit organisation Shout, headed by singers Danny K and Kabelo as well as SMD Technologies.

SMD is a personal and commercial electronics brand developer. It was already importing products directly from China.

"There is absolutely no mark-up or middle men involved," Justin Blend said. A number of people have opened fly-by-night businesses where they import masks and sell them on at enormous markups to the public and hospitals, which does not help SA, Justin Blend said.

“With the dire shortage of masks in our hospitals, doctors and patients are at risk. If our doctors get sick, they can’t take care of the sick and may even infect them. Patients in turn also need protection from each other. When a patient walks in without a mask they risk themselves and others. This could lead to the collapse of the medical system,” Blend said.

The Shout4Masks initiative put out an “emergency shout out to all South Africans and corporate SA” to help raise money to buy masks directly from factories to avoid profiteering middlemen.

[andersona@businesslive.co.za](mailto:andersona@businesslive.co.za)