

AFRICA : 31 MARS 2020 : [Génocide 1972 au Burundi : La CVR - 750 restes de corps excavés à GITEGA | L'OMS confirme qu'il n'y a pas de pandémie COVID-19 au Burundi | How global economic recession will affect Rwanda | Zimbabwe's white farmers angered by 'racist' edict | African Union finance directorate undergoes an audit | Sudanese PM to visit Egypt, Ethiopia to resume GERD talks | Burkina Faso bomb kills 3 soldiers | EU pledges \$280m to Tunisia's battle against coronavirus]

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IMAGES : middle.east.eye.net | cgtncm | egyptindependent.com | theafricareport.com | OMS | newtimes.co.rw | theeastafrican.co.ke/REUTERS

BURUNDI :

GENOCIDE 1972 : 750 restes de corps excavés à NYABUNYOVU, GIHETA, GITEGA / BURUNDI

<http://burundi-agnews.org/genocide/genocide-1972-750-restes-de-corps-excaves-a-nyabunyovu-giheta-gitega-burundi/>

HISTOIRE, JUSTICE, GENOCIDE 1972 – GITEGA (Commune GIHETA), Mercredi 25 mars 2020 – L'illustrissime M. NDAYICARIYE Pierre-Claver, Président de la Commission Vérité et Réconciliation (CVR) et Très Grand Patriote parmi les BURUNDI, a organisé un point de presse. Ce dernier annonçait publiquement que 750 restes de corps humains venaient d'être excavés en colline MUREMERA, en zone NYABUNYOVU. Il s'agissait des victimes Burundi jetées dans les fosses communes, pendant le GENOCIDE REGICIDE DE 1972.

Ces restes sortaient principalement de la Fosse Commune 1 de NYABUNYOVU. Cette Fosse était spéciale car elle dispose de 6 niveaux de mottes de terre superposées. D'où plusieurs ossements humains. Vers 11 heures de ce même mercredi, 11 crânes avaient encore déjà été déterrés dans cette même Fosse Commune 1. Ainsi les travaux se poursuivent.

M. NDAYICARIYE Pierre-Claver a expliqué : “ La recherche de la vérité sur le passé douloureux du pays est un travail de patience. Une mission d'écoute. Un devoir de la mémoire. Toutes les tragédies doivent être revisitées dans l'intérêt du – plus jamais ça -... La connaissance de la vérité soulage les bourreaux et les victimes qui n'ont d'ailleurs pas eu le droit ni de pleurer, ni de faire le deuil. ” .

La CVR à GIHETA ont pu démarré grâce à des personnes qui étaient présents lors du GENOCIDE REGICIDE. Souvent ces personnes ont montré ou accompagné jusqu'aux lieux précisément où le crime avait été commis. Ces témoins [*] ont expliqué que les victimes avaient été tuées à coups de marteaux et de barres métalliques. Cela explique que, dans les fosses communes, les crânes ne sont pas visibles. Les crânes avaient été fracassés !

Burundi : L'OMS vient de publier les ravages du COVID-19 en Afrique

<http://burundi-agnews.org/afrique/burundi-loms-vient-de-publier-les-ravages-du-covid-19-en-afrique/>

GLOBALISATION, DEFENSE, SECURITE, SANTE – BUJUMBURA, Dimanche 29 Mars 2020 – L'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé (OMS) vient de publier les ravages du COVID-19 en Afrique.

Cette publication confirme qu',au Burundi, la pandémie COVID-19 n'y est pas encore présente. Le pourquoi est certainement lié à l'enclavement naturelle de ce pays [

<http://burundi-agnews.org/globalisation-mondialisation/burundi-le-chuk-se-munit-dun-appareil-de-detection-covid-19/>].

Le gouvernement chinois avait présenté le patient 0 du COVID-19. Un militaire américain qui était venu au VIIe Jeux mondiaux militaires de WUHAN en Chine du 18 au 27 octobre 2019.

Le Virus SRAS-CoV-2 est une combinaison de 2 virus créés en 2015 dans un laboratoire occidental P4 [<https://www.burundi-forum.org/la-une/breves/societe-breves/diaspora-covid-19-dr-guindja-djaguet-kouran-pierre-medecin-biologiste-ce-sont-les-maladies-initiales-qui-tuent-pas-le-virus-a-partir-de-20-celsius-et-au-dela-le-virus-m/>].

Comme on l'a vu précédemment il se pourrait que le Monde rentre dans une nouvelle ère [<http://burundi-agnews.org/afrique/burundi-covid-19-la-guerre-biologique-remede-au-probleme-quest-la-chine/>]

La POLITIQUE DE DEFENSE DES BURUNDI doit impérativement prendre cela en compte et S'ADAPTER.

En 2015 (Contexte géopolitique), la POLITIQUE DE DEFENSE DES BURUNDI a vu qu'elle a été submergée par le procédé américain de REVOLUTION DE COULEUR. Le RESEAU SOROS avait infiltré toute la SOCIETE CIVILE BURUNDAISE, dont les MEDIA privés. L'attaque de l'EXTERIEUR DU BURUNDI était réalisé en concert par tous les grands MEDIA OCCIDENTAUX. Ainsi, au mois de MAI 2015 on aurait cru de l'EXTERIEUR que le BURUNDI était en GUERRE TOTALE. Alors qu'il ne s'agissait que d'une ILLUSION MEDIATIQUE. Heureusement le COUP D'ETAT MILITAIRE du mercredi 15 mai 2015 a échoué. La leçon était qu'il fallait se prémunir face à la GUERRE MEDIATIQUE dans un monde globalisé.

En 2020, il y a cette PANDEMIE MONDIALE COVID-19

4 scenario sont possibles sur son origine :

- (1) La cause serait de camoufler aux populations occidentales la bulle financière (Banques, Finances) ou l'effondrement des marchés boursiers ;
- (2) La guerre géopolitique pour le leadership mondiale où les USA n'acceptent pas son éviction par la Chine.
- (3) Une Guerre Terroriste, dans le cadre de la Globalisation, où des complotistes mondiaux défenseurs de la politique malthusienne souhaiteraient diminuer la population mondiale.
- (4) Un accident survenu en Chine.

Pour la POLITIQUE DE DEFENSE DES BURUNDI, les 4 scenario sont à prendre en compte :

Le 1er touche un peu moins le Burundi car depuis 2015 il est sous embargo occidentale.

Le 2ème est plus probant. Car les familles d'anciens Colons et Esclavagistes occidentaux mènent une GUERRE GEOPOLITIQUE contre la CHINE dans la région des Grands lacs Africains. On sait que la Colonisation et l'Esclavage, des crimes contre l'Humanité, ont fait plus de 300 Millions de victimes Amérindiennes et Africaines. Aucune de ces Familles occidentales responsables de ces crimes n'ont jamais été sanctionnées par un quelconque tribunal internationale.

Le 3ème cas, l'Afrique y est confronté déjà depuis quelques années avec certaines campagnes de vaccinations assassines [<https://www.burundi-forum.org/la-une/politique/diaspora-covid-19-dr-mujakazi-jean-marie-medecin-surveiller-les-personnes-a-risques-et-attention-aux-campagnes-de-vaccination-burundi/>] .

Le 4ème cas, la Chine et le Burundi entretiennent des relations bilatérales fraternelles.

Ainsi par précaution, la POLITIQUE DE DEFENSE DES BURUNDI devrait en vue des Scenario 2 et 3 se prépare au pire. En envisageant peut-être que cette pandémie COVID19 est une GUERRE BACTERIOLOGIQUE de nature criminelle Géopolitique, ou Terroriste.

Les années à venir ne seront certainement pas de tout repos. Mais en attendant les élections démocratiques de mai 2020, il serait adéquat d'ouvrir 2 fois les yeux. L'idée d'une réquisition de l'industrie textile burundaise pour CONSTRUIRE DES MASQUES SOLIDES pour protéger nos 10 Millions d'Habitants devient un devoir [<https://www.burundi-forum.org/la-une/societe/diaspora-covid-19-nzeyimana-lazare-pharmacien-la-production-de-masque-en-tissu-reutilisable-a-grande->

echelle-burundi/]. Cela est une des actions préventives de la POLITIQUE DE DEFENSE DES BARUNDI pour répondre à la GUERRE BACTERIOLOGIQUE. Mais aussi mettre en place une CELLULE DE SPECIALISTES BARUNDI permanent sur cette question d'ordre POLITIQUE, SECURITAIRE ET SANITAIRE.

DAM, NY, AGNEWS, <http://burundi-agnews.org>, Lundi 30 Mars 2020

L'OMS confirme qu'il n'y a pas de pandémie COVID-19 au Burundi

<https://www.burundi-forum.org/la-une/globalisation/loms-confirme-quil-ny-a-pas-de-pandemie-covid-19-au-burundi/>

BUJUMBURA, 29/03/2020 – L'Organisation Mondiale de la Santé (OMS) vient de publier les ravages du COVID-19 en Afrique.

Cette publication confirme qu', au Burundi, la pandémie COVID-19 n'y est pas encore présente. Le pourquoi est certainement lié à l'enclavement naturelle de ce pays .

Le gouvernement chinois avait présenté le patient 0 du COVID-19. Un militaire américain qui était venu au VIIe Jeux mondiaux militaires de WUHAN en Chine du 18 au 27 octobre 2019...

Toutefois vue le précédent de 2015, avec la REVOLUTION DE COULEUR AU BURUNDI, la POLITIQUE DE DEFENSE DES BARUNDI doit impérativement prendre cela en compte et S'ADAPTER.

Par précaution, la POLITIQUE DE DEFENSE DES BARUNDI devrait se préparer au pire. En envisageant peut-être que cette pandémie COVID19 est une GUERRE BACTÉRIOLOGIQUE de nature criminelle Géopolitique, ou Terroriste.

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SOURCES : BURUNDI-AGNEWS.ORG, NAHIMANA P.

Burundi slams "liars" who say country has no equipment to detect COVID-19

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-03/26/c_138919629.htm

Source: Xinhua| 2020-03-26 16:34:46|Editor: huaxia

BUJUMBURA, March 26 (Xinhua) -- Burundi has denounced as "liars" online users who claim the country does not have equipment to detect the novel coronavirus.

In a statement issued on Wednesday evening, Burundian Government Spokesman Prosper Ntahorwamiye said the east African country has adequate and sufficient equipment to test COVID-19.

"The Burundian government reassures that the country has adequate and sufficient equipment to detect the novel coronavirus. The evidence is that the suspicious coronavirus case of a teacher at the French School was screened, but results showed that she was negative," said Ntahorwamiye.

He gave the examples of the French and the Belgian schools in the commercial capital Bujumbura that have already suspended classes after the global COVID-19 outbreak.

The Burundian government has warned against manipulating the facts and distorting decisions made by the government.

Ntahorwamiye said the Burundian government "has the right to take appropriate measures" against those who make unjustified claims.

The Burundian government thanked China for supplying logistical equipment to combat a potential outbreak of the coronavirus in the country.

So far, no novel coronavirus case has been reported in Burundi. Several measures have been taken to prevent COVID-19 from entering the east African nation, including suspending international commercial flights departing or landing at Melchior Ndadaye International Airport in Bujumbura, and suspending the delivery of visas and overseas business travel.

TANZANIA :

Tanzania registers first coronavirus death

<https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/ea/Tanzania-registers-first-coronavirus-death/4552908-5509594-14y1jo/index.html>

Tuesday March 31 2020

By BEATRICE MATERU

More by this Author

Tanzania has registered its first coronavirus-related death, the health ministry announced on Tuesday.

In a statement, Health Minister Ummu Mwalimu said the patient was a 49-year-old Tanzanian man who had an underlying health condition.

A family spokesperson said that the patient will be buried later Tuesday in presence of close family members.

"Due to circumstance and cause of his death, the government will conduct the burial today afternoon and only few people will attend. As family we will not hold any funeral to avoid further spread of the disease," said the spokesperson.

On Monday, Tanzania recorded five new Covid-19 cases, bringing the national tally to 19.

"As of Monday, March 30, the total number of patients with Covid-19 reached 19 cases, for which two more are in Zanzibar and the rest are in Tanzania mainland," Ms Mwalimu told journalists.

Tanzania records first Covid-19 death

<https://www.thecitizen.co.tz/news/Tanzania-records-first-Covid-19-death/1840340-5509582-e6v2lk/index.html> Tuesday March 31 2020

RWANDA :

How global economic recession will affect Rwanda

<https://www.newtimes.co.rw/news/how-global-economic-recession-will-affect-rwanda>
By Julius Bizimungu Published : March 31, 2020 | Updated : March 31, 2020

The rapidly spreading coronavirus global epidemic has threatened many activities across different industries, sending the world economy into recession as declared by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Friday.

The outbreak of the deadly viral pneumonia has already shuttered businesses, halted tourism and hospitality activities, stifled travel, led cancelled conferences and events, and sent stock markets into free fall.

This has seen industrial output go down in many countries, unemployment rise, decline in capital flows, decline in trade activities while consumption rates have dropped, and causing economic shock globally.

“It is now clear that we have entered a recession – as bad as or worse than in 2009,” IMF’s Managing Director, Kristalina Georgieva said on Friday last week.

Germany, the economic engine of Europe, and the U.K. were both on the precipice of a downturn even before the virus struck, with 0 per cent growth in the fourth quarter of 2019.

China, the world’s second-largest economy, is likely to have contracted in the first quarter for the first time in decades amid production halts and quarantine measures, ultimately weighing on the global economy.

Industrial output plunged 13.5 per cent in January and February from a year earlier, retail sales fell 20.5 per cent, and fixed-asset investment dropped 24.5 per cent, according to Fortune.

The unemployment rate jumped to a record 6.2 per cent in February, when the outbreak worsened and much of the economy was shutdown.

Similarly, the economies of Japan, France and Italy were already shrinking or stalled before the virus outbreak.

Africa’s big economies like South Africa, Nigeria, Morocco and Egypt have already been hit harder.

This prompted Moody’s to downgrade South Africa’s credit ratings to junk status. The government bonds will now be removed from world bond index, triggering billions of dollars of capital outflows.

A recent report from the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa estimates that the continent could lose up to 1.4 percentage points of GDP growth as a result of the pandemic

Effect on Rwanda

While John Rwangombwa, the Governor of the National Bank of Rwanda, said that it was too early to start asking questions related to the impact of COVID-19 on the Rwanda economy, economists have predicated a worse impact than the one witnessed in 2009 during the global economic crisis.

Economists say Rwanda is not spared from the recession, especially as supply chains are disrupted.

Seth Kwizera, an economist at the Economic Policy Research Network Rwanda (EPRN), says all economic sectors in Rwanda will be affected by the ongoing crisis, especially in the first quarter of 2019.

“Factories right now are not operating at their normal capacities since workers are not able to go to work because of the lockdown and most traders have also closed shop,” he says.

That, he adds, will weigh heavily on the economic growth especially in the first quarter when the numbers are publicly released.

The economist highlights that huge amounts of money is now being invested to fight Covid-19, something that was not planned before.

“It’s like we had (development) plans, but we didn’t have coronavirus in those plans. This will affect Africa and our country,” he says.

The report from UNECA estimates that Rwanda will particularly be affected through tourism, which is expected to contract 6 per cent this year as a result of the global pandemic, and this could lead to fiscal imbalance.

Rwanda suspended commercial flights from entering the country, and introduced other measures that made the movement of people.

This has hurt almost every sector, especially tourism and hospitality which depended on aviation.

Hotels were, for instance, counting losses this month when the government announced a two-week lockdown, while workers linked to the conference tourism lost their jobs as events were cancelled.

Looking back

The world had last experienced recession between 2008 and 2009, when countries like the United States and those in Europe experienced a rise in unemployment, company profits fell, financial markets tumbled, and the housing sector collapsed.

Following the decline in GDP growth worldwide, the global demand for goods and services in Rwanda from to the global market declined and the prices were affected.

For example, in minerals the prices of tin came down dramatically by approximately 40 to 50 per cent, while coffee prices followed the same negative trend.

Private transfers in different forms taken together declined as well.

The average monthly volume of transfers that were coming in through banks reached \$95 million in 2009 down from \$110 million the previous year.

Francois Kanimba, the former Governor of the National Bank of Rwanda, expects the impact of this global recession to be way too huge compared to the 2009 crisis.

“Learning from the negative impact of the coronavirus, this is going to be a very deep shock,” he says.

He believes there is no country that will be saved from the crisis since “every country is really integrated in the global economy.”

Kanimba says Rwanda’s economic growth for the past years has been driven, among others, by tourism and global conferences, which has created a whole industry.

“Now this industry is totally down. This is going to significantly affect the Rwandan economy,” he notes.

The trend of foreign direct investment in Rwanda has been growing, reaching \$463.0 million as of last year from \$409 million in 2012, according to the National Bank of Rwanda survey.

“This growth is going to be affected by the incapacity of investors to go around the world, including Rwanda, to look for opportunities,” Kanimba noted.

Amina Rwakunda, the Chief Economist at the Finance Ministry, said the ministry was preparing a brief economic analysis of the impact of the global economic recession on Rwanda, which will be presented to Cabinet for review sometime this week.

Rwanda begins 14-day complete lockdown

<https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/ea/Rwanda-begins-14-day-complete-lockdown/4552908-5506784-lqvynk/index.html>

Saturday March 28 2020

By IVAN R. MUGISHA / More by this Author

Rwanda has deployed policemen and soldiers across the country to enforce a lockdown that went into effect last weekend and has warned that anyone found violating the lockdown will be arrested or fined.

The country’s airspace has also been closed to all commercial flights since March 19 for 30 days, as a measure to stop the importation of the SARs-Cov-2 virus that causes the Covid-19 disease into the country.

At the time, only one coronavirus case had been confirmed in the country. A week later, the cases had increased to 41 and the country is now under complete lockdown with 54 cases.

There are roadblocks on Kigali roads and on the highways leading to other major towns. The country’s borders have also been closed.

Scores of people in different parts of the country were arrested in the course of the week for violating the lockdown protocols.

As the rest of world was also shutting down, foreign embassies were rushing to get their citizens and diplomats on special flights out of the country, as all regular commercial flights had been halted.

RDC CONGO :

Covid-19 en RDC : 81 cas confirmés dont 8 décès

<https://www.digitalcongo.net/article/5e81d7fa644c990004a5bd92/>

Kinshasa 30-03-2020 Sante - En République démocratique du Congo, l'épidémie à Coronavirus continue de se propager depuis la détection du premier cas le 10 mars dernier.

En effet, dans un communiqué rendu public par le Comité multisectoriel de la riposte (CMR) à la pandémie de Covid-19, 81 cas ont été confirmés par l'INRB. A ce jour, le total de décès est de 8 à la date du 29 mars.

Le CMR annonce que 16 nouveaux cas confirmés ont été répertoriés, parmi lesquels 10 importés, 2 de Bukavu et 6 à Kinshasa. Le call-center pour la maladie à coronavirus est opérationnel depuis le dimanche 29 mars sur toute l'étendue du pays. Il suffit de former le numéro 101 à partir des réseaux téléphoniques Vodacom et Orange pour alerter le CMR où avoir des orientations en rapport avec le Covid-19. Ce numéro fonctionne de 8 heures à 18 heures.

St Théodore Ngangu Ilenda (TN/Yes)

« Pas de cas de coronavirus au Nord-Kivu », précise Carly Nzanzu Kasivita

<https://www.digitalcongo.net/article/5e81c71f644c990004a5bd8f/>

Kinshasa 30-03-2020 Politique - Le gouverneur Carly Nzanzu déclare que le cas confirmé positif au Covid 19 concerne la province de l'Ituri.

Le gouverneur du Nord Kivu, Carly Nzanzu Kasivita, a démenti l'existence du coronavirus dans sa province tel qu'annoncé sur les réseaux sociaux.

Alors que le chef du comité de riposte de cette pandémie en RDC, le docteur Muyembe, avait annoncé des investigations en cours dans cette région, en vue de connaître l'origine du cas déclaré positif, le premier citoyen du Nord-Kivu a déclaré que sa province n'a été atteinte.

Par contre, il pointe du doigt la province de l'Ituri où un exploitant minier congolais, âgé de 35 ans a été confirmé positif au Covid-19.

« Ce cas positif en l'Ituri a été isolé depuis sa suspicion et l'INRB à Kinshasa a confirmé l'échantillon qui a été prélevé en date du 26 mars. Au total 23 personnes ont été pré-listées comme contacts autour de ce cas, dont 8 collègues de service, 7 co-malades, 7 prestataires des soins et un taximan », déclaration faite par le docteur Muyembe.

Par ailleurs, Carly Nzanzu justifie la rigueur des mesures de prévention prises du fait que sa province avoisine celle de l'Ituri.

Cathy Ibandula

****** L'AFRIQUE DU SUD ******

SOUTH AFRICA :

Most effective way to contain Covid-19 is isolation, says Ramaphosa

<https://www.iol.co.za/news/politics/most-effective-way-to-contain-covid-19-is-isolation-says-ramaphosa-45752826>

By ANA Reporter Time of article published Mar 30, 2020

Johannesburg - The most effective way for countries like South Africa to contain the spread of the Covid-19 is for the population to remain at home and physically isolated from each other for several weeks, President Cyril Ramaphosa said on Monday.

Ramaphosa made the comments in a weekly newsletter on the fourth day of a 21-day lockdown he has called to try and curb the spread of the coronavirus, which has infected 1 280 people in South Africa, with two losing their lives.

"It is important that this lockdown and all other emergency measures are both strictly adhered to and consistently enforced," Ramaphosa said, noting this had been effective in the Chinese city of Wuhan, where Covid-19 was first detected last December.

"Wuhan, a city of 11 million people ... had more than 50 000 infections. Now, after more than two months after stringent lockdown measures were put in place, the province has had fewer than 20 new cases in the past two weeks," the president said.

Other countries that had taken similar measures were having greater success in managing the spread of the disease than those that had been slower to respond, he added.

"As the total number of confirmed Covid-19 cases worldwide grows to over 700 000 and the number of deaths exceeds 33 000, we can draw lessons from these countries," Ramaphosa said.

African News Agency/ANA

* For the latest on the Covid-19 outbreak visit IOL's #Coronavirus trend page.

** If you think you have been exposed to the Covid-19 virus, please call the 24-hour hotline on 0800 029 999

BOTSWANA :

Botswana announces first 3 confirmed COVID-19 cases

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-03/31/c_138932394.htm

Source: Xinhua| 2020-03-31 03:16:50|Editor: Mu Xuequan

GABORONE, March 30 (Xinhua) -- Botswana's Minister of Health and Wellness Lemogang Kwape on Monday evening announced the southern African country's first three cases of the novel coronavirus, also known as COVID-19.

Kwape made the announcement when addressing the nation through Botswana Television, the state television.

"We found it fitting tonight (Monday evening) to come to you and announce that we have three Batswana (citizens of Botswana) who have tested positive for COVID-19 or Coronavirus," said Kwape.

The three Batswana are two males and one female, said Kwape.

According to Kwape, the patients had traveled to Britain and Thailand although he could not give more details as to what they were doing in those countries, nor when they came back.

Kwape said the three were kept in isolation at Sir Ketumile Masire Teaching Hospital in Gaborone, and they were "in good health."

"We have now moved from prevention to containment because in the past we have been preaching prevention. Now that we have cases, we are going to preach prevention and containment at the same time," said Kwape.

Kwape called on citizens to follow all the precautionary measures already put in place by Botswana's health authorities such as washing hands with soap, sanitizing hands and maintaining social distance at all cost.

Botswana's president has not tested positive for coronavirus

<https://www.thestandard.co.zw/2020/03/29/botswanas-president-not-tested-positive-coronavirus/>
March 29, 2020

An article claiming that Botswana President Mokgweetsi Masisi had tested positive for Covid-19 went viral last week on social media networks, including in Zimbabwe.

The report was carried by the little-known website News NT. According to the report: "Botswana's President Mokgweetsi Masisi has tested positive for Covid-19, the presidency has said in a statement on Tuesday afternoon."

This is false. No such statement was issued by the Botswana government, on Tuesday, or on any other day.

It had been announced on March 22, 2020, that Masisi had gone into self-isolation after returning from Namibia, which at the time had reported three cases of coronavirus.

Ad by Valueimpression

On Wednesday, the Botswana government responded through its verified platforms to the fake news. Masisi was yet to take a test, the government said.

"The public is alerted to misinformation posts on social media and reminded that as announced in the Press release of 22nd March 2020, His Excellency the President Dr Mokgweetsi Masisi will only be tested for SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) prior to being cleared at the expiry of the 14-day self-isolation. His Excellency the President is in good health and continues to work from his official residence but quarantined away from his family. The Office of the President is the only source of official information on this issue and any other media masquerading as having information on the health of His Excellency the President must be ignored."

Reports that Botswana's President Masisi had tested positive for coronavirus are false. He has not been tested. He will only be tested at the end of his 14-day period of self-isolation, according to the Botswana government.

ZIMBABWE :

Zimbabwe's white farmers angered by 'racist' edict

<https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/news/africa/Zimbabwe-white-farmers-angered-by-racist-edict/4552902-5507020-8t734rz/index.html>

Tuesday March 31 2020

By KITSEPILE NYATHI More by this Author

A fortnight ago, President Emmerson Mnangagwa's government said it was offering about 800 commercial farms as compensation to farmers who had lost their land during the violent land seizures that began in 2000 under then President Robert Mugabe.

The offer sparked heated debate in parliament, with legislators demanding that for it to be viable, the country's constitution had to be changed to reverse the land reform programme. The Sadc Tribunal Rights Watch, a group that had successfully challenged Mugabe's land seizure in international courts, however, now says the new regulations to apparently restore farms to their owners "are misleading and provide false hope to dispossessed farmers, many of whom are now destitute.

The group, representing nearly 4,500 dispossessed commercial farmers, said the new regulations only affect "indigenous" farmers and foreigners protected by Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreements (BIPPAs) and Bilateral Investment Treaties (BITs).

Misleading

The farmers are demanding nearly \$7 billion in compensation for their properties.

Covid-19: Red flag over lockdown

<https://www.thestandard.co.zw/2020/03/29/covid-19-red-flag-lockdown/>

The government yesterday moved to exempt certain sectors from the lockdown that begins tomorrow after industry warned that forcing all companies to shut down will ground the fragile economy.

BY MOSES MATENGA

President Emmerson Mnangagwa ordered the lockdown on Friday in an effort to curb the spread of the deadly coronavirus outbreak in Zimbabwe.

Yesterday there were long queues of people buying basic goods in most major retail shops across the country, as panicky shoppers stocked up ahead of the 21-day-long lockout.

Last night, government said operators in the electricity sector, provision of water, gas, and fuel and information communication technology would be exempted.

Ad by Valueimpression

Information minister Monica Mutsvangwa said the social welfare department had been instructed to cater for vulnerable groups, while tourists intending to travel to Zimbabwe had been told to cancel visits into the country.

Health minister Obadiah Moyo said Zimbabwe had recorded only one death, that of journalist Zororo Makamba, who died last week, with seven people having tested positive for the disease.

The Confederation of Zimbabwe Industries (CZI), however, said a total shutdown of industry would be catastrophic to the already comatose economy, which is plagued by currency volatility, hyperinflation and shortage of commodities.

CZI asked government to allow some business with the capacity to adequately offer preventive measures to be allowed to work during the lockdown.

"They [some companies] have done quite a lot," CZI CEO Sekai Kuvarika told The Standard last night.

"Our economy is struggling so if we shut down, this will affect a lot of things and that is one of our recommendations to say, those with a certain level of preparedness and prevention, there is need to allow them to continue."

Kuvakira said the economic environment was not conducive for a complete shutdown.

“There are companies that have put very stringent measures and such places are highly hygienic areas and if companies that are well prepared can be allowed maybe to produce at a limited level, maybe to cut by 50% from current production, so we are compiling to try and see then make necessary recommendations,” the CZI boss added.

“There are companies that made measures that are quite expensive in a bid to combat the spread of Covid-19.

“Their workers are not getting into public transport for example; they are picked from their homes straight into company vehicles maintaining social distance and so on.

“They are being given sanitisers to use even in their homes; they get vitamin C tablets to boost their immune system at their homes.”

Industry also proposed a number of measures to ensure that basic needs of Zimbabweans including food, water and other key essentials are catered for during the 21-day lockdown.

“Public and private organisations, their staff and service providers essential to the generation, transmission and distribution of electricity will need to continue to operate,” read the CZI recommendations submitted to government after Mnangagwa’s decree.

“This includes municipalities and the suppliers of logistics, feed stock and maintenance will be required to continue to operate and provide security of electricity supply.

“Public and private organisations, their staff and service providers essential to the security of supply of bulk and potable water and sanitation must continue to operate and provide vital water and sanitation services.

“This includes municipalities and those involved in the supply of materials, chemicals and related equipment.

“Notwithstanding the fact that non-essential businesses will be closed, there are certain critical activities that will need to be conducted from time to time within these businesses to avoid major losses.

“These include payments of statutory obligations, payments of creditors, receipt of international consignments already ordered and en route, and other critical business survival activities as may arise.”

Analysts also weighed in, saying Zimbabwe’s economy was too fragile and “street-based” to allow for a complete lockdown.

Zimbabwe joined many countries that have imposed a lockdown as a precautionary measure to reduce the number of infections.

Analysts said Zimbabwe’s largely informal economy would make it difficult for the lockdown to be effective without stepping on the toes of its impoverished population.

MDC national youth assembly chairman Obey Sithole said the lockdown was welcome, but in the absence of measure to cushion the masses with adequate basic commodities, millions that were living from hand-to-mouth would suffer.

“While the lockdown appears to be noble, in our Zimbabwean context, it becomes a heavy blow to the same human life that ought to be saved if no further measures to cushion livelihoods are put in place,” Sithole said.

“It is an open secret that our joblessness reality reached alarming levels a long time ago and this has seen a greater chunk of young people resorting to informal trading as a way of survival, every dollar that comes in the pocket is a result of their hands on hustling.”

A leaked circular by the Grain Millers Association chairman Tafadzwa Musarara to millers claimed the “command element” had given a directive to companies to advise them to negotiate pay cuts.

“Rentals payments accruing during the period under lockdown will be suspended. This moratorium will apply to both residential and business,” part of the later dated March 27, stamped “trade secret”, read. The letter did not explain if government would assume the rental debt.

But Information permanent secretary Nick Mangwana yesterday said the government would not intervene on the rentals issue.

Harare-based commentator Rashweat Mukundu said it would be impossible to enforce a voluntary lockdown.

“It is virtually impossible to put Zimbabwe into a lockdown because this is a very informal economy and the Zimbabwean economy is managed from the streets. So if you lock down Zimbabwe, it necessitates that the government intervenes in terms of providing social welfare,” Mukundu said.

“The majority of people, especially in urban areas and our government are broke, they don’t have any money.”

He said a total shutdown would result in an economic and humanitarian disaster, which Mnangagwa’s government had no means to reverse.

Political analyst Alexander Rusero said the lockdown might result in unintended consequences.

“But there is more coronavirus inside homes than the real one outside, so without safety nets that cushion the majority, the difference is the same,” he said.

Hardlife Mudzingwa of the Community Water Trust said it was difficult to implement a total lockdown in Zimbabwe due to the water crisis as it would also lead to deadly waterborne diseases that would result in another catastrophe like the 2008 cholera scourge.

Another analyst Wellington Gadzikwa said a humanitarian disaster could be imminent if there was no strategy to deal with the Covid-19 epidemic.

“Because of the nature of the economy and all these challenges, there is fear government will run out of revenue, people will run out of food and other basic commodities,” he said

ZAMBIA :

Unite, don’t politicise fight against coronavirus

<http://www.daily-mail.co.zm/unite-dont-politicise-fight-against-coronavirus/>

March 31, 2020

Dear editor,

ZAMBIA never ceases to amaze me. At a critical time such as the one the country is experiencing of rising cases of the coronavirus infections, politicians still want to earn marks.

I listened to an advertised message on one of the radio stations yesterday by United Party for National Development (UPND) president Hakainde Hichilema. Mr Hichilema shares his thoughts about how the coronavirus should be handled. That, in itself, is okay but to seek political mileage out of it is very sad.

Why am I talking about political mileage?

It's because his views have been clearly advertised either by himself or his handlers. They want the message, some of which is at variance with Government, heard by citizens. And, naturally, his message is appealing to Zambians who may not fully understand the intricacies of certain Government decisions.

Mr Hichilema should stop playing to the gallery. If he indeed has the interest of Zambians at heart, he should channel his message through the right offices.

Has Mr Hichilema seen what Julius Malema of the Economic Freedom Fighters and South African President Cyril Ramaphosa did two weeks ago?

They shared the platform to demonstrate unity in the fight against the disease.

The entire world is united against the disease. Why can't we, for once, take a leaf?

If we cannot see Mr Hichilema and President Edgar Lungu embrace (not literally) now, when will we?

DENNIS KAPOTWE

Kabwe

Zambia reflects on economic impact of Covid-19

<http://www.daily-mail.co.zm/zambia-reflects-on-economic-impact-of-covid-19/>

March 27, 2020 NANCY SIAME, Lusaka

MINISTER of Finance Bwalya Ng'andu says the full impact of coronavirus on Zambia's economy will only be known after the pandemic has been eradicated.

Dr Ng'andu said it is difficult to tell the impact of Covid-19 now because the disease is still spreading.

"I don't know what the full impact of the pandemic will be, I will only know after it has run its full course

MALAWI :

Nundwe hands over sword of command to Namathanga at ...

<https://www.nyasatimes.com/nundwe-hands-over-sword-of-command-to-namathanga-at-malawi-army/>

Former Malawi Defence Force (MDF) commander Vincent Nundwe on Monday official handed over the sword of command to newly appointed

JB claims Malawi hiding statistics on coronavirus

<https://malawi24.com/2020/03/30/jb-claims-malawi-hiding-statistics-on-coronavirus/>

Former President Joyce Banda says the global community cannot assist Malawi on the coronavirus when the country is hiding statistics and its challenges to fight the coronavirus pandemic.

In a post on her Facebook page, Banda said she has been following the information being provided by other Governments to their people and she feels very sad.

The former Malawi leader suggested that the government – which has always insisted that Malawi is yet to record a case of the coronavirus – is hiding figures on the coronavirus. Banda did not specify on the type of statistics.

“The global community cannot assist us when we are hiding our statistics and our challenges to fight the pandemic.

“When there is apparent politicization of this fight and apparent lack of political will to confront this pandemic as a united front regardless of our political and religious affiliations,” said Banda.

She added that she is saddened to see that Malawi is missing from the list of countries that will benefit from a US\$100 million which will be provided to at risk countries to support humanitarian needs resulting from the coronavirus outbreak.

She then asked government to be proactive and stop politicizing the pandemic.

According to Banda, there is an apparent lack of preparedness or lack of access to accurate information about preparedness from government.

“Other countries in the region provide frequent briefings so that the nation knows what is happening in their countries. As for Kenya, the Minister of Health briefs the nation on daily basis. The written briefs we see each day are not good enough as more than half of our people have no access to this information,” said Banda.

Malawi is yet to record a case of the coronavirus which has hit at least 177 countries, causing over 34,000 deaths out of 735,000 cases recorded.

Malawi’s neighbor Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania have all recorded cases.

To prevent the coronavirus, the Malawi Government has imposed travel ban on foreigners, banned mass gathering and continues to advise people to practice sanitation measures such as washing hands.

The government has also banned Cross-border travel and international flights effective Wednesday this week.

NAMIBIA :

Namibia puts SA truck drivers in quarantine, records 11th Covid-19 case

<https://www.iol.co.za/news/africa/namibia-puts-sa-truck-drivers-in-quarantine-records-11th-covid-19-case-45756093>

By ANA Reporter Time of article published Mar 30, 2020

Rustenburg - At least 26 truck drivers transporting goods from South Africa will be placed under quarantine for 14 days in Namibia, the state owned New Era daily national newspaper reported.

The truckers, some whose vehicles were transporting medical and food supplies, were held for several days in Botswana.

Traffic officers escorted the trucks to a parking area near the Wernhil Park Mall in Namibia's capital Windhoek, with the drivers being placed under quarantine while the supplies were being delivered.

The Namibian Broadcasting Corporation reported that the country's Covid-19 cases had increased to 11, with the latest three, like the first eight, also being linked to travel.

The public broadcaster said the ninth case was a 35-year-old Namibian female who resides in South Africa and came home on March 20.

On March 24, she was attended to by a private practitioner and advised to go for testing. The result came back positive on March 27. The woman's condition is said to be stable and arrangements were made for her to be admitted into an isolation facility.

The 10th case is a 33-year-old Namibian female who travelled to Dubai, Ethiopia and Johannesburg, South Africa during March while the 11th is a 69-year-old Namibian male, who travelled to Johannesburg, South Africa and returned home on March 12.

Namibia's Khomas and Erongo regions have gone into a lockdown from March 27 to April 16 to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

African News Agency/ANA

Dausab has big plans for new job

News - National | 2020-03-31

<https://www.namibian.com.na/89788/read/Dausab-has-big-plans-for-new-job>

by Okeri Ngutjinazo

NEWLY appointed justice minister Yvonne Dausab says she wants to continue reviewing, repealing and amending outdated laws in the country.

Dausab, who was sworn in last week Monday, is part of president Hage Geingob's list of eight non-voting members announced on 22 March.

Dausab replaces Sacky Shanghala, who was arrested last year for alleged corruption over kickbacks in Namibia's biggest fishing sector scandal. Frans Kapofi was acting justice minister prior to Dausab's appointment.

Dausab told The Namibian she wants to continue the review, repeal and amendment of outdated laws through the Law Reform and Development Commission (LRDC).

In addition, she wants to see through amendments to the rape and domestic violence laws, child justice bill, and the Administration of Estates (succession) and Divorce Act.

“As chairperson of the LRDC, I established very good networks with key stakeholders in the private sector, the legal profession, academia, the ministries, traditional authorities and various regional offices and I will continue to draw from their support and working relationship without compromising my responsibility and accountability as a Cabinet member,” she said.

Some of the issues that the minister identified included reducing legislative drafting turnaround times, investigating the establishment of the small claims courts and increasing legal aid provision to the wider society in the country.

She further noted that she wanted to improve institutional capacity and the profile of justice in the country. That, in other words, means to change the way people see and understand justice.

“I certainly intend to make use of my experience as a teacher of the law and law reformer to enhance my work as a minister,” she said.

The minister is also setting her eyes on operationalising the whistleblower and witness protection legislation, and ensuring support to the Office of the Attorney General.

Dausab said she will continue some of the work she did at the law reform commission in the areas of the New Equitable Economic Empowerment Framework, customary marriages and those conducted north of the redline, among others.

“Remember the LRDC actually falls within my mandate as the minister so their work is just an extension of our ministry’s work,” she added.

She noted that she also intends to seek guidance from her senior Cabinet members if needed and plans to ensure a good working relationship with them.

“I take my responsibilities under articles 40 and 41 of the Namibian Constitution very seriously and intend to take all actions and decisions more generally within the letter and spirit of those provisions,” she said.

Dausab holds a bachelor of arts in law, an LLB from the University of the Western Cape where she graduated in 1997 and she graduated with an LLM (democratisation in Africa and human rights) from the University of Pretoria in 2001.

She is an admitted legal practitioner of the High Court of Namibia since 2000, notary public since 2015 and holds a certificate in human rights and disability inclusive development from the National University of Ireland, Galway.

She is a member of Swapo, was a student activist with the Namibia National Students Organisation from 1988 until 1997, and a student activist with South African Students Congress UWC from 1993 to 1997.

UGANDA :

Museveni bans use of private cars, imposes 14-day curfew

<https://www.nation.co.ke/news/africa/Uganda-placed-under-curfew-over-Covid-19/1066-5509546-y6jh2d/index.html>

Tuesday March 31 2020

By DAILY MONITOR

More by this Author

Uganda's President Yoweri Museveni has spelt out a raft of measures meant to curb the further spread of the coronavirus in the country.

Speaking Monday during a live update, Mr Museveni put restrictions on the use of private vehicles and imposed a two-week curfew.

“Measure number one is to prohibit all people-to-people movement by everybody including those using their private vehicles, boda bodas, tuk tuks etc,”he said.

The President noted that although restrictions had earlier been made by having private cars carrying only three people, some people had resorted to using their vehicles to transport others, increasing the risk of spreading the virus.

CURFEW HOURS

In addition to the banning of private vehicles on the roads for 14 days, President Museveni also imposed a curfew for the whole country to start from March 31, 2020 at 7pm. But he said the curfew however will not affect cargo planes, lorries, pickups and trains.

Ugandans in China praise restrictive measures

https://www.newvision.co.ug/new_vision/news/1517269/ugandans-china-praise-restrictive-measures

By Mubarak Mugabo / Added 30th March 2020 06:19 PM

Joshua Kusingura, a master's student at the South East University in Nanjing province of China has been in the lockdown for months.

KAMPALA - When Coronavirus hit China, many Ugandans doing business and those attending school were caught up in the lockdown declared by the authorities as part of the move to control the epidemic.

Over 20,000 people died and over 450,000 cases are still being reported across the world.

However, recently, China started opening up places and companies after the reduction in new infections. And Ugandans there believe that it is the restrictive measures, including a total shutdown, that helped to defeat coronavirus.

Uganda has also resorted to restrictive measures leading to a partial shutdown caused by the ban on public transport, government offices and markets, for 14 days.

Joshua Kusingura, a master's student at the South East University in Nanjing province of China has been in the lockdown for months.

“I have stayed indoors for the better part of two months, just like everyone around me here in Nanjing and I can say it has been worth it. About two weeks ago, there was no new infection in Nanjing and life is slowly returning to normal,” Kusingura said.

Sharon Kakayi, from Wuhan University, where the virus epicentre was recently, gives an account of what they used to stay safer.

“We were advised to take little warm water, especially during the morning, to clear our throats and always wear masks while going out,” Kakayi said.

According to her, their adherence to the measures set by the Chinese government made it possible for all of them to survive within the epicentre.

Alfred Komakech, a master’s student in China University of Geosciences, also says the best way forward is to follow government guidelines.

“We were asking government to evacuate us away from Wuhan, yet the best way was to just follow all guidelines given by government. But also, saving can help in a lockdown. That is where Chinese won the war because all Chinese have culture of saving,” Komakech said.

“Because of any movement and interaction with anyone will keep the virus in circulation, they should be strong in these trying times,” Esther Katwere, a Ugandan student in Huazhong University of science and technology in China, said.

Wilson Tibamuzingu Abaho, the legal advisor of Ugandan Students in China (USAC), said staying home seems to be one of the most effective measures in dealing with the virus.

“Today, Wuhan has reported zero cases of new infections for the 11th day, this has been possible because the public stayed home, washed hands, drank water and reported any suspicious cases to health authorities,” Tibamuzigu said.

“For the safety of the over 40 million people back home, I believed and still believe that evacuation was not a prudent option,” Tibamuzigu added.

The Government, in a special way, extended \$61,800 (about sh220m) assistance to the stranded students in Wuhan to further deal with the escalating cost of household items, leaving the rest out of Wuhan city dealing with it using the available means at their disposal.

Business community

Whereas the Uganda-China business community has been most affected during the lockdown and the closure of the airports in China and Uganda, there is still a message of hope from them to Ugandans on how to better deal with the situation.

Joseph Kalema, a kindergarten teacher and trader in Beijing, said the virus is manageable if the masses listen to the experts.

“We have fought the virus simply because we have been following what the Chinese Government is telling us. We are now seeing business resuming after a two-month lockdown,” Kalema said.

KENYA :

Ministry: Kenya coronavirus cases rise to 59

<https://www.standardmedia.co.ke/> By Mireri Junior - 31 Mar, 2020

Kenya has reported nine new coronavirus cases bringing the total number of people with the virus to 59, Health CAS Mercy Mwangangi has announced.

Mwangangi said the nine were from 234 samples tested in the last 24 hours.

She said 1,160 people who have come into contact with the positive cases are being monitored.

Mwangangi also said the government will use boarding schools as isolation for testing and treating coronavirus patients should the situation get worse.

She also said the national government in consultation with the county government will hire 1000 medics to bolster the current number.

“We are consulting with counties to hire more health workers to help address the situation,” she said.

She lauded health workers for doing a good job so far and said the ministry will ensure they are provided with proper gear for handling coronavirus patients.

SOUTH SUDAN :

South Sudan halts defense force training due to COVID-19 spread

Source: Xinhua| 2020-03-31

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-03/31/c_138935699.htm

NAIROBI, March 31 (Xinhua) -- South Sudan on Tuesday said it has suspended training of about 29,000 troops as preventive measures to contain the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

Lul Ruai Koang, spokesman for South Sudan People's Defense Forces told Xinhua in Juba that the decision to suspend training of the troops, part of the estimated 83,000 unified force, follows last week's directive by President Salva Kiir banning all public gatherings in a bid to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

"We have responded to the presidential decree by suspending the training of unified force because it says people should not be overcrowded. Based on that we have suspended the training," said Koang in Juba.

The suspension presents a huge blow to efforts by the recently formed transitional unity government to expedite the formation of the unified force under the 2018 peace deal signed by the government and opposition to end over six years of conflict.

"You know soldiers we train them as a group, so based on this directive we have suspended all training activities," he added.

South Sudan has not yet reported any case of COVID-19, but Juba is stepping up preventive measures after neighboring countries like Kenya, Sudan, Uganda, Ethiopia and the Democratic Republic of Congo have reported cases of the deadly infectious COVID-19.

President Kiir has ordered the closure of all border crossing points and shut down commercial flights, including imposing stringent measures of public transport and trade.

The youngest nation has already imposed night curfew, with the exception of emergency cases that require health services.

South Sudan is struggling to emerge from six years of conflict since outbreak in December 2013, as it seeks to form unified armed forces to take charge of security during the three-year transitional period.

The spread of COVID-19 in the region has further halted the return of millions of displaced people both internally and externally to their homes.

The situation also poses a serious threat to humanitarian response to thousands in need of food aid amid worsening food insecurity this year due to flooding and poor harvests.

US Gives South Sudan Government \$8M to Fight COVID-19

By Dimo Silva Aurelio, Michael Atit

March 30, 2020 09:19 PM

<https://www.voanews.com/science-health/coronavirus-outbreak/us-gives-south-sudan-government-8m-fight-covid-19>

JUBA, KHARTOUM - The U.S. government has donated \$8 million to South Sudan to help prevent the coronavirus pandemic from reaching the central African country.

As of Monday, there were no confirmed cases there.

U.S. Embassy spokesperson Jonathan Cebra said the United States is leading the world's humanitarian response to the COVID-19 pandemic, including in South Sudan.

"The State Department and USAID are providing an initial investment of nearly \$274 million in emergency health and humanitarian assistance to help countries in need, on top of the funding we already provided to multilateral organizations such as the World Health Organization and UNICEF," Cebra told VOA's South Sudan in Focus on Monday.

The U.S. Embassy reduced its staff by 50% in Juba to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

"We retain sufficient staff to perform our core task — bilateral engagement, development and humanitarian assistance, and support for U.S. citizens in South Sudan," Cebra said.

Americans and other foreign nationals were given the chance Saturday to leave South Sudan after the U.S. Embassy asked the government's COVID-19 task force to make an exception to its ban on all incoming and outgoing flights, so a jet could land in the South Sudanese capital to evacuate foreign nationals.

"The flight on Saturday was commercially operated by Ethiopian Airlines, and the majority of passengers were not American citizens," Cebra said.

Cases in Sudan

On Sunday, neighboring Sudan announced its second death from COVID-19, a little more than two weeks after a Sudanese man died from the disease shortly after returning home from the United Arab Emirates.

Sudanese authorities lengthened the country's curfew by two hours from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. to encourage social distancing.

Health Minister Akram Ali Altom confirmed six new COVID-19 cases Sunday in Sudan.

"All six cases are coming from abroad. Five of them are coming from the United Arab Emirates, and one case coming from France. Five of the cases are Sudanese nationals, and one foreigner," Altom added.

Within hours of Altom's announcement, one of the six COVID-19 patients died. Sudanese businessman Rabee Dahab had traveled to the United Arab Emirates and arrived home March 13. Dahab was screened at the airport but did not have a fever. He stayed with family members upon his return to Khartoum.

Eighty-six individuals in Sudan suspected of being infected with the coronavirus, or who were in contact with others who were infected, including Dahab's family members, are in mandatory quarantine, Altom said.

ANGOLA :

Angolan government postpones Soyo refinery tender announcement

31 March 2020 | Angola

<https://macauhub.com.mo/2020/03/31/pt-governo-de-angola-adia-anuncio-do-vencedor-do-concurso-para-refinaria-do-soyo/>

The selected proposal in the international public tender for the construction of an oil refinery in Soyo, Zaire province, will be published as soon as Covid-19 outbreaks are under control in Angola, said the Ministry of Mineral Resources and Oil.

Angola's Finance Minister defines gaming areas in the country

31 March 2020 | Angola

<https://macauhub.com.mo/2020/03/31/pt-ministra-das-financas-de-angola-define-zonas-de-jogo-no-pais/>

The provinces of Cabinda and Luanda, Malanje, Benguela, Huila and Namibe in Angola have been defined as areas for gaming and gambling under Executive Decree No. 101/20 of 6 March, signed by the Angolan Minister of Finance, Vera Daves de Sousa, according to an official statement.

MOZAMBIQUE

Covid-19 reduces Macau's imports in February 2020

31 March 2020 | Macau

<https://macauhub.com.mo/2020/03/31/pt-covid-19-reduz-importacoes-de-macau-em-fevereiro-de-2020/>

The Covid-19 pandemic caused by a new type of coronavirus led to the value of the imports in February in Macau falling to its lowest level since March 2011, to 3.87 billion patacas, a contraction of 30.3% year-on-year, said the region's Statistics and Census Bureau.

Pandemic causes an abrupt fall in the occupancy rate of Macau hotels

31 March 2020 | Macau

<https://macauhub.com.mo/2020/03/31/pt-pandemia-causa-queda-abrupta-na-taxa-de-ocupacao-dos-hoteis-de-macau/>

The average occupancy rate of the 115 hotels and bed and breakfasts operating in Macau in February 2020 offering 37,000 rooms reached just 15.0%, a decline of 76.9 percentage points year-on-year, the region's Statistics and Census Bureau said.

****** AFRIQUE DU NORD ******

EGYPTE :

COVID-19 Cases Reach 656 in Egypt, Partial Lock-down Measures Extended

Egyptian Streets March 31, 2020

<https://egyptianstreets.com/2020/03/31/covid-19-cases-reach-656-partial-lock-down-measures-extended/>

The number of individuals affected by the coronavirus has reached 656 as per Egypt's Ministry of Health, with 41 deaths and 150 recoveries.

Worldwide, the COVID-19 pandemic has reached over 170 countries, with 775, 306 cases as per a real-time tracking map by the Center for Systems Science and Engineering (CSSE) at John Hopkins University.

The death toll is around 37,000 to date, with Italy, Spain, China and France taking the lead for most victims.

New Governmental Measures

As the Egyptian government grapples with the slowly increasing number of cases in the nation, the partial 7 P.M. to 6 A.M. is effective still and is projected to remain, tentatively, until April 15.

The private sector, and much of the public, have implemented the governmental instructions for employees and citizens to stay at home. As such, much of the work has become remote and dependent on technology. However, 'essential workforce' employees – those working in the sectors of agriculture, food, telecommunications, law enforcement, public health and transportation – are still required to carry out normal operations.

Moreover, many of Egypt's daily-wage workers and laborers have also opted to continue working normally, prompting initiatives of support such as the 'Supporting Day Labor: A Social Responsibility' by the Egyptian Food Bank as incentive for low-income nationals to stay at home.

Schools and universities remain suspended, as per the orders of President Abdel Fattah Al Sisi.

Prime Minister Mostafa Madbouly also confirmed that the suspension of international air traffic in nationwide airports remains the same date, two weeks after the initial set date of March 31.

Recently, Minister of Local Development General Mahmoud Shaarawy ordered the closure of all beaches nationwide to prevent gatherings as photos and videos shared on social media revealed massive gatherings at beaches in Ain El Sokhna and Alexandria.

Due to common overcrowding in bank branches, with the prospective of the outbreak's end still far from sight, the Central Bank of Egypt (CBE) placed a cap on cash deposits and withdrawals up to 10,000 EGP (US\$ 633) for individuals and EGP 50,000 (US\$ 3,168) for companies and businesses.

ALGERIE :

Coronavirus : Le bilan grimpe à 715 cas confirmés et 44 décès

Par Khelifa Litamine - 31 mars 2020

<https://www.algerie-eco.com/2020/03/31/coronavirus-le-bilan-grimpe-a-715-cas-confirmes-et-44-deces/>

Le nombre de personnes atteintes de coronavirus (covid-19) en Algérie a grimpé à 715 cas et 44 décès.

Dans un point de presse animé aujourd'hui, Djamel Fourar, porte parole de la commission chargée de suivi de l'évolution du coronavirus en Algérie a indiqué que le ministère de la santé a enregistré 131 nouveaux cas et 9 nouveaux décès.

Coronavirus : Le ministère de la justice prolonge ses mesures de prévention jusqu'au 15 avril

Par Rédaction AE - 31 mars 2020

<https://www.algerie-eco.com/2020/03/31/coronavirus-le-ministere-de-la-justice-prolonge-ses-mesures-de-prevention-jusquau-15-avril/>

Dans le cadre de la lutte contre la propagation du Coronavirus, le ministère de la justice a décidé de prolonger les mesures de limitation des activités dans le secteur jusqu'au 15 avril prochain, selon une note interne adressée par le ministre Belkacem Zeghmati aux différents établissements de son département.

« Le ministère de la justice prolonge l'arrêt de tous les procès et tout travail au niveau des tribunaux sauf les procès en appel ou procès des détenus, jusqu'au 15 avril prochain », rapporte le comité national pour la libération des détenus (CNLD).

« Ces décisions rentrent dans les mesures de prévention contre la propagation du virus Corona », précise la même source.

Le CNLD souligne que « toutes les personnes qui ont des procès alors qu'ils sont en liberté sont informées que leurs procès sont renvoyés à une date ultérieure, sauf les personnes en détention provisoire. »

MAROC :

Morocco reports 534 coronavirus cases, 33 deaths

http://www.china.org.cn/world/Off_the_Wire/2020-03/31/content_75879021.htm

Xinhua, March 31, 2020

RABAT, March 30 (Xinhua) -- The deaths from the novel coronavirus on Monday reached 33 in Morocco among the 534 confirmed cases, the Ministry of Health said.

A total of 14 patients have recovered from COVID-19, said the ministry's spokesman in a briefing.

The most affected regions are Casablanca with 159 cases, Fes Meknes with 91, Rabat with 88, and Marrakech-Safi with 93.

On Friday, Morocco decided to allocate additional funding of 200 million U.S. dollars to its health system to cope with the outbreak.

On March 22, the North African country declared a one-month state of medical emergency until April 20.

Since after the detection of the first COVID-19 case in Morocco on March 2, Morocco has closed all its land and sea borders, and suspended all international passenger flights. Enditem

Morocco's BCP Group Announces Measures for Companies Affected by COVID-19

<https://www.moroccoworldnews.com/2020/03/298118/moroccos-bcp-group-announces-measures-for-companies-affected-by-covid-19/>

Rabat – Banking institutions have been launching measures in line with the nationwide campaign to reduce economic pressure on citizens and companies affected by the COVID-19 crisis.

Morocco's Banque Populaire (BCP) joined the list of banks that launched "exceptional" measures in favor of companies affected by the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Bank Populaire implemented measures to enable its customers and companies to deal with their cash flow problems, the institution said in a press release.

The measures include the postponement of fixed maturities without penalty clauses due to late delivery until June 30, and an additional cash line in the form of a fine credit maturing on December 31, 2020.

The measure is "intended to cover up to at 3 months of current expenses (payment of salaries, payment of suppliers, payment of rent, etc.)," the statement said.

The new guarantee program, "Damane Oxygene," launched by the Ministry of Economy and Finance, will cover the loan.

Companies unable to repay this credit by the due date will be able to benefit from a five-year repayment period.

The Damane Oxygene initiative seeks to protect businesses from bankruptcy amid the novel coronavirus crisis.

Banque Populaire said that customers and companies seeking to benefit from the measures should contact the bank's Business Center or their Banque Populaire branch by e-mail or telephone.

The Bank also provides its business customers with digital channels and services to enable them to continue their activities.

The statement said that the digital services include remote banking solutions, making it possible for customers "to manage, in a secure manner, consultative or transactional banking operations, channels and systems of exchange of flows."

The services also allow clients to exchange instructions with the bank, and reporting services, “providing visibility for steering activities.”

Banque Populaire was among several Moroccan institutions to contribute to Morocco’s Special Fund for the Management and Response to COVID-19.

The bank donated MAD 1 billion (\$103 million).

On March 15, King Mohammed VI ordered the creation of the special fund, initially comprising over \$1 billion.

Since the fund’s creation, several Moroccan institutions have stepped with contributions, including OCP group, Afriquia Gas, and Bank of Africa. The fund has nearly tripled in size since its creation.

TUNISIE :

Tunisia reports 50 new cases of COVID-19, 362 in total

<https://africa.cgtn.com/2020/03/31/tunisia-reports-50-new-cases-of-covid-19-362-in-total/>

By CGTN Africa

Tunisian Health Ministry has reported 50 new cases of COVID-19, bringing the total number of confirmed cases in the country to 362.

According to a ministry statement late Monday, the provinces of Tunis, Ariana and Ben Arous are most affected areas with 92, 50 and 33 cases respectively.

Nine deaths from the coronavirus were reported in the provinces of Ariana, Sousse, Mahdia, Sfax, El Kef, Tataouine and Bizerte, the statement said.

EU pledges \$280m to Tunisia's battle against coronavirus

Tunisia has so far declared five deaths from Covid-19, among 227 people confirmed to have been infected by virus

The EU said on Saturday that it would grant 250m euros (\$280m) to Tunisia to help fight the deadly new coronavirus and the adverse socioeconomic effects of a lockdown.

The bloc's Enlargement Commissioner Oliver Varhelyi pledged the aid in a telephone call with Tunisia's Foreign Minister Nouredine Erray, according to a joint statement issued by the EU delegation in Tunis and the ministry, Reuters reported.

Coronavirus: Tunisia announces lockdown, people urged to stay indoors
Read More »

Tunisia has so far declared five deaths from the Covid-19 respiratory disease, among 227 people confirmed to have been infected by the virus.

Tunisia has closed schools, universities, cafes and bars, shut its land and maritime borders and suspended international flights to try and slow the spread of the disease. It also banned travel between cities while imposing a nighttime curfew and a national lockdown.

Last week, Tunisia allocated \$850m to combat the economic and social effects of the crisis.

Tunisia expects the virus to damage its tourism sector, which accounts for about 10 percent of gross domestic product.

The country also anticipates an economic recession, prompting the government to reduce its growth forecast this year to 1 percent from 2.7 percent.

LYBIA :

Libya confirms 8 coronavirus cases: UN

Ongoing clashes and security situation restricting medical aid, UN says

Peter Kenny | 31.03.2020

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/libya-confirms-8-coronavirus-cases-un/1786537>

GENEVA Libya is at a high risk for the spread of coronavirus after eight cases were confirmed in the conflict-hit nation, the UN said Tuesday.

Jens Laerke, a spokesman for the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), said at a news briefing that the war-stricken country also has 112 suspected cases of the novel coronavirus.

"Ongoing clashes, but also COVID-19 restriction measures, are hampering humanitarian access and the free movement of medical and other humanitarian personnel and impacting humanitarian assistance across the country," said Laerke.

Earlier, the UN Refugee Agency, detailed a series of measures it is taking in its field operations to help respond to the COVID-19 public health emergency and prevent its further spread.

"I am deeply concerned at this unprecedented pandemic and its impact on refugees and their host communities. The COVID-19 crisis has already had significant consequences for our operations, forcing us to adjust the way we work rapidly," said Filippo Grandi, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees, in a statement.

Since the ouster of late ruler Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, two seats of power have emerged in Libya: warlord Haftar in eastern Libya supported mainly by Egypt and the United Arab Emirates, and the Government of National Accord (GNA) in Tripoli, which enjoys the UN and international recognition.

Libya's legitimate government has been under attack by Haftar's forces since last April and more than 1,000 people have been killed in the violence.

Lærke said that constraints on deliveries related to the pandemic are not only due to curfews and limitations on movement imposed by the Libyan authorities, but also precautionary measures taken by humanitarian agencies to avoid transmission.

The OCHA spokesman said that, for example, UN agencies have reported being unable to dispatch trucks to deliver assistance over long distances due to the curfews.

Negotiations are ongoing with the relevant authorities to issue exemptions for humanitarian movements and activities so that assistance is delivered during this critical time, said Lærke.

Libyan army forces launch full-scale attack on Haftar's militias

<https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/libyan-army-forces-launch-full-scale-attack-haftars-militias>
March 29, 2020

The Libyan Air Force has conducted several airstrikes in the Al-Wishka axis east of Misurata, one of which targeted a major operations room for Haftar militias, Libyan army spokesman, Brigadier Mohamed Gunounu confirmed yesterday.

Gunounu added that one of Haftar's senior commanders, identified to be, Salem Drayaq and his assistant, Gaddafi Al-Sadai were killed along with the other 8 fighters in the airstrike.

In a press briefing on Saturday evening, Gunounu disclosed another operation against Haftar's militias. "Our forces carried out a precision strike targeting a gathering of African mercenaries, three armed vehicles, and an ammunition truck," Libyan army spokesman added.

The army forces also hit a building in Qasr Bin Ghashir area south of Tripoli reported to being occupied by Russian mercenaries.

The Russians were responsible for the recent attacks on several neighbourhoods in Tripoli, according to Gunounu.

The Ramla axis near Tripoli airport also witnessed intense clashes yesterday, after the army forces launched an attack on Haftar's militias near Qasr Bin Ghashir Bridge, inflicting heavy casualties on the aggressors and forcing them to retreat.

EU launches Operation IRINI to enforce Libya arms embargo

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2020/03/31/eu-launches-operation-irini-to-enforce-libya-arms-embargo/>

IRINI: New EU mission to monitor Libya's UN arms embargo

The European Union is stepping up its efforts to enforce the UN arms embargo on Libya, thereby contributing to the peace process in the country, through the launch of a new CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy) military operation in the Mediterranean.

The Council today adopted a decision launching Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI.

Only political solutions and the full respect of the UN arms embargo will bring a solution to the Libyan crisis. But diplomacy cannot succeed unless it is backed by action. This operation will be essential and a clear contribution to promoting peace in our immediate neighbourhood through a permanent ceasefire.

Josep Borrell, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and President of the Council

IRINI, (Greek for "peace"), will have as its core task the implementation of the UN arms embargo through the use of aerial, satellite and maritime assets. In particular the mission will be able to carry out inspections of vessels on the high seas off the coast of Libya suspected to be carrying arms or related material to and from Libya in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2292 (2016).

As secondary tasks, EUNAVFOR MED IRINI will also:

- monitor and gather information on illicit exports from Libya of petroleum, crude oil and refined petroleum products

- contribute to the capacity building and training of the Libyan Coast Guard and Navy in law enforcement tasks at sea

- contribute to the disruption of the business model of human smuggling and trafficking networks through information gathering and patrolling by planes

IRINI will be led by Rear Admiral Fabio Agostini as EU Operation Commander, and its headquarters will be located in Rome, Italy.

The mandate of Operation IRINI will initially last until 31 March 2021, and will be under the close scrutiny of EU Member States, that will exercise political control and strategic direction through the Political and Security Committee (PSC), under the responsibility of the Council and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy.

In parallel with the launch of Operation IRINI, the existing EUNAVFOR MED operation in the Mediterranean, SOPHIA, will permanently cease its activities.

Background

Participants at the Berlin Conference on Libya on 19 January 2020 committed in particular to fully respect and implement the arms embargo established by the United Nations Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR) 1970 (2011), 2292 (2016) and 2473 (2019).

Against this background, the Council reached a political agreement to launch a new operation in the Mediterranean, aimed at implementing the UN arms embargo on Libya by using aerial, satellite and maritime assets on 17 February 2020.

EUNAVFOR MED operation SOPHIA was launched on 22 June 2015 as part of the EU's comprehensive approach to migration, and will cease permanently on 31 March.

****** AFRIQUE DE L'OUEST ******

CÔTE D'IVOIRE :

Côte d'Ivoire-AIP-Interview/Coronavirus: «Il y a un suivi régulier en matière d'approvisionnement des produits pétroliers et énergies» (Ministre)

<https://aip.ci/cote-divoire-aip-interview-coronavirus-il-y-a-un-suivi-regulier-en-matiere-dapprovisionnement-des-produits-petroliers-et-energies-ministre/>

A la une 31/03/2020

Abidjan, 30 mars (AIP)-Le ministre du Pétrole, de l'Energie et des Energies Renouvelables Abdourahmane Cissé explique dans cet entretien accordé à l'AIP, les mesures prises par son département pour assurer la continuité du service dans cette période de crise sanitaire du Coronavirus, COVID 19. AIP: Monsieur le ministre, dans le contexte de crise sanitaire avec le COVID 19, les consommateurs peuvent-ils espérer de la Compagnie ivoirienne de l'électricité (CIE) par exemple qu'elle proroge les délais de paiement des factures d'électricité ? Abdourahmane Cissé : Vous savez, nous sommes tous clients de la CIE. Le président de la République a indiqué dans son adresse à la nation, avoir instruit le Premier ministre, chef du gouvernement, à l'effet d'analyser...

SENEGAL :

Senegal reports 20 new COVID-19 cases, total now at 162

By CGTN Africa - March 30, 2020

<https://africa.cgtn.com/2020/03/30/senegal-reports-20-new-covid-19-cases-total-now-at-162/>

Senegal on Monday reported 20 new cases of COVID-19, bringing the country's total confirmed cases to 162.

The 20 new cases included five imported ones and 14 close contacts of earlier confirmed patients, Alyose Waly Diouf, spokesman of the Ministry of Health and Social Action, told a press briefing on COVID-19.

The other one was a community transmission case, he said.

For the first time since the outbreak of COVID-19, the health ministry reported two patients who are in critical condition, with one of them on ventilator support.

Among the 162 confirmed cases, 73 are imported ones. Twenty-eight patients have been declared cured by local health authorities.

Last Monday, President Macky Sall declared a state of emergency across Senegal, along with a dusk-to-dawn curfew.

Sall banned public or private meetings of any kind, and ordered temporary closure of public places and meeting places.

Senegal has suspended all international passenger flights till April 17.

BURKINA FASO :

Burkina Faso's 6th minister tests positive for COVID-19

<https://www.macaubusiness.com/burkina-fasos-6th-minister-tests-positive-for-covid-19/>
Xinhua News Agency

Burkina Faso's Minister of Transport, Urban Mobility and Road Safety, Vincent Dabilgou, has tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday.

"I would like to inform that after observing some symptoms during my confinement, I had received COVID-19 tests and the results were positive," said Dabilgou in a statement released by the Ministry on Sunday.

Dabilgou has been the sixth ministers declared infected by coronavirus since the report of first COVID-19 case in Burkina Faso on March 9. The education minister, territorial administration minister, foreign minister, mining minister and trade minister also tested positive. The U.S. ambassador to Burkina Faso tested positive on March 22.

As of March 27, Burkina Faso has registered 207 cases positive for COVID-19, with 21 cured cases, and 11 death cases.

Burkina Faso bomb kills 3 soldiers

By Dinah Matengo - March 30, 2020

<https://africa.cgtn.com/2020/03/30/burkina-faso-bomb-kills-3-soldiers/>

A homemade bomb killed three paramilitary gendarmes and wounded three more Sunday in northwest Burkina Faso, security sources said.

The attack on the patrol happened at Gomboro, in the Boucle du Mouhoun region, a security source told AFP.

The injured had been evacuated for treatment and the area was being searched, the source added.

Another security source, confirming the attack, said two gendarmes had been killed outright, and one of four others wounded had subsequently died of his wounds.

Improvised explosive devices (IEDs) have been the weapon of choice for rebels in the region, and since 2018 they have killed 150 people, according to an AFP tally. Such attacks are often followed by ambushes.

Four Burkinabe soldiers were killed and eight wounded early in March by two IEDs that exploded as their vehicles passed them. The attack took place in the north of the country.

Burkina Faso's northwest border is with Mali, and to northeast is Niger, and all three countries are fighting a long-running jihadist insurgency.

According to UN figures, jihadist attacks in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger left nearly 4,000 people dead last year.

US envoy to Burkina Faso tests positive for COVID-19

Contacted embassy staff quarantined, says ambassador

James Tasamba | 23.03.2020

<https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/us-envoy-to-burkina-faso-tests-positive-for-covid-19/1775346>
KIGALI, Rwanda

The U.S. ambassador to Burkina Faso said Sunday he had tested positive for COVID-19.

On Twitter, Andrew Young said the U.S. Embassy in Burkina Faso had taken measures to quarantine contacted embassy staff.

“I received a positive test for COVID-19,” Andrew Young said.

So far, Burkina Faso has reported 75 cases and five deaths from coronavirus since March 9.

At least 11 new cases and two new deaths from virus were reported on Sunday, according to a statement by Martial Ouedraogo, National coordinator of the response to the coronavirus pandemic.

It said five patients have been cured.

Four ministers of Burkina Faso, including the education minister, territorial administration minister, foreign minister and mine minister, were reported to have tested positive for COVID-19 on March 20.

Some 604 people have been traced and isolated.

The government on Friday declared a countrywide curfew effective as of midnight March 21 from 7 p.m .local time (1900GMT) to 5 a.m., and closure of its land borders.

BENIN :

Coronavirus au Bénin: le préfet Joachim Apithy intransigeant sur le cordon sanitaire

Par Angèle M. ADANLE le 31 Mar 2020 à 14:24

<https://beninwebtv.com/2020/03/coronavirus-au-benin-le-prefet-joachim-apithy-intransigeant-sur-le-cordon-sanitaire/>

Le Bénin est touché depuis le 16 mars 2020 par l'épidémie du Coronavirus (Covid-19). Pour limiter la propagation du mal, un cordon sanitaire a été mis en place par le gouvernement. Une disposition que le préfet de l'Ouémé, Joachim Apithy, entend rigoureusement respecter.

Durant toute la période que durera le cordon sanitaire, élaboré pour lutter contre la pandémie de coronavirus, le préfet de l'Ouémé, Joachim Apithy, ne délivrera pas de dérogation à ceux qui voudront quitter le cordon sanitaire. Selon le préfet de l'Ouémé, lors d'une conférence de presse, relayée par leadereinfobénin, plusieurs personnes lui ont demandé des dérogations spéciales pour la période du 30 mars au 13 avril 2020.

Pour le préfet, ces derniers auraient dû prendre leurs dispositions et quitter plus tôt le cordon sanitaire avant le démarrage de la mise en oeuvre de la procédure préventive. A l'en croire, les éléments de la police républicaine seront dans les quatre communes de l'Ouémé (Sèmè Podji, Adjara, Akpro Missérété, Porto-Novo) pour veiller au strict respect du cordon sanitaire établi par le gouvernement.

NIGERIA :

Senators donate 50% of salaries for COVID-19 fight

By Azimazi Momoh Jimoh, Segun Olaniyi (Abuja) and Eniola Daniel (Lagos)

<https://guardian.ng/news/senators-donate-50-of-salaries-for-covid-19-fight/>

The Senate has disclosed that senators will contribute 50 per cent of their salaries to efforts geared towards responding to the spread and treatment of Coronavirus cases in the country.

Acting Spokesman of the Senate, Godiya Akwashiki, announced the decision in a statement made available to newsmen in Abuja yesterday.

A senator earns N750, 000 as basic salary and half of that amount translates to N375, 000.

“After due consultations following a keen review of national efforts to contain the Coronavirus pandemic in Nigeria, the Senate wishes to announce that from March 2020, senators will be donating 50 per cent of their salaries to efforts to stop the spread of COVID-19.

“This monthly contribution from the Upper Legislative Chamber will be sustained until the country is declared free from the deadly virus.

“The Senate commends efforts of President Muhammadu Buhari and the administration towards securing our nation against this plague. The Senate is willing and ready to do whatever is required for the effectiveness of the measures in place now or that may be required in future to win the fight against this menace.

“The Senate commends all agencies at the Federal and state levels for working together to protect public health in the country. It also acknowledges the patriotic response of public-spirited individuals and organisations, who have contributed in one way or the other to support this fight,” the statement reads.

It appealed to Nigerians to comply with the directives on social distancing and observance of basic hygiene explained by public health officials, “as the most effective way to protect ourselves, families and country against COVID-19.”

Besides, the Civil Society Legislative Advocacy Centre (CISLAC) has demanded accountability of the use and distribution of funds donated by individuals and groups towards combating the Covid-19 pandemic.

It applauded the recent constitution of a Presidential Task Force on COVID-19 to coordinate donations for efficient and impactful spending, adding, however, that the committee did not take cognizance of representatives from the media and other credible governmental and non-governmental organisations working on anti-corruption, transparency and accountability in governance and public financial management.

In a statement issued in Abuja by its Executive Director, Auwal Ibrahim Musa Rafsanjani, it decried government’s inadequate preparedness to mitigate the impact of the pandemic and another national emergency with existing poor national storage capacity for food and other basic needs to respond adequately to the scourge.

“In times of global public emergency, proactive measures to ensure judicious use and distribution of funds are needed more than ever. Inclusion of the media and other accountability entities in the committee would compel transparency and accountability in the use and distribution of funds.

“At this juncture, Nigeria cannot afford mismanagement and misappropriation of public and donated funds. We do not hesitate to state that diversion or misappropriation of the funds would be tantamount to betrayal, unpatriotism and selfishness in the management of the nation’s treasury, which is punishable under relevant laws,” the statement reads.

Nigeria Government to distribute food to families in Lagos, Ogun, Abuja

By Dennis Ezezi 31 March 2020

<https://guardian.ng/news/nigeria-government-to-distribute-food-to-families-in-lagos-ogun-abuja/>

The Nigerian Government on Tuesday said it will be distributing food items to vulnerable households in the country during the coronavirus stay-at-home period.

“We will distribute food rations to Households, with particular emphasis to vulnerable households in the front line states including Lagos, FCT, and Ogun,” Nigeria’s humanitarian affairs, disaster management and social development minister Sadiya Umar Farouq said in a statement.

“To this end, we would be expanding our safety net programmes to include more vulnerable people whose conditions may be exacerbated as a result of the unintended consequences of the lockdown.”

Nigeria President Muhammadu Buhari on Sunday ordered the restriction of movements in Nigeria’s capital city Abuja and Lagos, which are the hardest hit by a coronavirus in the country.

These measures, Buhari said, are the best and most efficient way to avoid getting infected is through regular hygienic and sanitary practices as well as social distancing.

Buhari noted that business closures in the nation’s capital city, Lagos and Ogun State will cause many citizens inconveniences but urged them to see it as a sacrifice for the good of the country.

Farouq, however, said she has briefed the FCT Minister and the governors of Lagos and Ogun state on the social interventions provided with the compliance of the presidential directive.

“We will continue with the Cash transfers to households, using data mined from the National Social Register, while we rapidly expand the National Social Register to immediately capture more households to benefit from the cash transfer programme,” Farouq said.

The minister said the ministry will help Nigerians reduce the hardship caused by the outbreak of coronavirus which necessitated a stay-at-home order by the government.

GHANA :

Coronavirus: 31 persons recover in Ghana

<https://www.ghanaweb.com/GhanaHomePage/NewsArchive/Coronavirus-31-persons-recover-in-Ghana-909856>

The Health Minister, Kwaku Agyemang Manu has disclosed that 31 persons out of Ghana's 145 active cases of coronavirus infections have tested negative after going through periods of management in isolation.

Speaking in an interview the minister disclosed that the 31 persons will be monitored closely in their respective homes by the ministry and the Ghana Health Service to check progress of their full recovery.

"We have conducted some tests and 31 persons out of the total active cases have tested negative." He said.

Underscoring that Ghanaians should remain calm as government manages the spread of the virus, the minister said some five persons who have so far lost their lives to the virus in Ghana had pre-existing medical conditions or were aged, which contributed to their demise.

"I keep on emphasising that the fatality rate in Ghana is very low so Ghanaians should not be scared. The five persons who have already lost their lives had underlying medical conditions." He added.

Ever since recording its first two cases of coronavirus, Ghana has gone on to record 152 cases with five deaths and two recoveries. The minister's announcement means that Ghana now has 33 recoveries and five deaths out of 152 confirmed infections of

GAMBIE:

Justice Minister says covid-19 pandemic to affect referendum, voter registration

<http://thepoint.gm/africa/gambia/article/justice-minister-says-covid-19-pandemic-to-affect-referendum-voter-registration>

africa » gambia » Show Map

uesday, March 31, 2020

Abubacarr Tambadou, the attorney general and minister of Justice has hinted that the deadly coronavirus pandemic which has currently affected more than six hundred thousand people worldwide will likely affect the country's referendum to adopt the new draft constitution.

"The coronavirus pandemic and the measures adopted under the state of public emergency will inevitably have a significant impact on our ability to follow timeliness and meet deadlines," he said yesterday at State House as members of the CRC submitted the final draft constitution to President Adama Barrow.

This, he stated, will have serious ramifications on other related activities anticipated in the course of the year such as the new voter registration exercise or the referendum for the adoption of the new constitution.

Tambadou added: “We are here for the submission of a new draft constitution that will usher in a 3rd Republic and introduce a new governance architecture with all the promises of a brighter future, a more stable and democratic society with adequate checks and balances among the three organs of State, and a conducive environment for the liberty and prosperity of the individual.”

According to him, there are no immediate answers to the conundrum at the moment. “However, we will have to find ways around these unexpected turn of events in order to meet the expectations of our countrymen and women. More information will be shared with the general public as we consider possible alternatives.”

“Three years ago, your government embarked upon the most ambitious and comprehensive governance reform agenda of any administration in the history of our country. The submission of this draft constitution today follows several other significant milestones in this endeavour.”

He added: “We currently have a number of bills tabled before the National Assembly for the enactment of laws that will radically transform the legal landscape of our country particularly with respect to our criminal justice system. Moreover, under your administration, we have witnessed the most far reaching improvements on the conditions of service in the judicial and legal services of our country.”

The Justice Minister added: “It is now up to us, the Gambian people, to uphold our part of the bargain.”

“Like all constitution building processes, not everyone can or will be satisfied with everything in the new draft constitution. But we are faced with a clear choice: we either embrace this new draft which is being presented here today in whole and lay the foundations for a better future for our children, or get stuck in the past with the current 1997 constitution and all its retrogressive provisions that will frustrate our democratic march into a better future.”

“I am certain that the Gambian peoples’ thirst for change remains unquenched and I am confident that they will embrace this new draft constitution after sober reflection.”

Minister Tambadou thanked the chairperson of the CRC, Justice Cherno Sulayman Jallow, and his fellow commissioners for their outstanding professionalism, commitment and dedication to national duty.

“We have keenly followed the progress of your commission right from the beginning, partly because we funded it, and we have been impressed by all your efforts to ensure that the credibility of the entire process, from beginning to end, remains sacrosanct.”

He said: “Never in the history of our nation has our constitution been written in such a manner. You have done your compatriots proud and proved to the world beyond that our country has what it takes to take care of its own business.”

Author: Momodou Jawo

ETHIOPIE :

Sudanese PM to visit Egypt, Ethiopia to resume GERD talks

Egypt Independent March 30, 2020

<https://www.egyptindependent.com/sudanese-pm-to-visit-egypt-ethiopia-to-resume-gerd-talks/>

Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok said on Monday that he would visit Egypt and Ethiopia soon to resume negotiations over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD).

Hamdok made the announcement during a phone call with US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, during which he extended his condolences to Mnuchin over the rising cases of coronavirus in the United States.

A statement from the Sudanese Prime Minister's office said that Hamdok conveyed to the American side his intention to visit Cairo and Addis Ababa soon to urge the two sides to resume negotiations over the GERD and reach an agreement on the remaining points of contention between the two countries.

Hamdok agreed with the American side that the negotiation process in Washington had made great progress, and the two sides agreed on the need to continue negotiating after the world overcomes the coronavirus pandemic, which has infected at least 730,000 worldwide and killed another 34,000.

Meanwhile, the Ethiopian Minister of Foreign Affairs Gedu Andargachew reportedly commented this month that his country is preparing a solution to its dispute with Egypt over the GERD and will submit it to Egypt and Sudan as soon as possible.

He said that Ethiopia is committed to resolving the GERD dispute and demanded that discussions must be "fair" and "serious" in order for Ethiopia to return to the negotiating table under the auspices of the United States.

Earlier in March, Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi met in Cairo with the Deputy Head of Sudan's Transitional Military Council Mohammad Hamdan Dagalo.

During the meeting, they reviewed the latest developments related to the contentious dam, in light of an agreement reached in Washington earlier this year and signed only by Egypt.

Egypt took part in the latest GERD meeting in Washington on February 27 and 28, which produced a final agreement regarding filling and operating the GERD.

Representatives from Addis Ababa were noticeably absent from the meeting, and only Egypt has signed the agreement so far. Sudan has also abstained from signing the agreement to fill and operate the GERD.

Ethiopia has also warned that it would begin filling the dam in July without signing an agreement. Construction is not due to be finished until 2023.

Egypt's Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Water Resources has rejected Ethiopia's plan to fill the reservoir of the GERD before construction work is finished and regardless of whether an agreement has been reached with downstream countries.

Egypt relies considerably on fresh water from the Nile and has voiced concerns that the GERD would negatively impact the country's water supply, especially in light of overpopulation fears, and has thus insisted throughout negotiations that measures be put in place to protect downstream countries in case of drought during the filling process at the dam.

Ethiopia does not need Egypt's permission to start filling GERD

March 30, 2020 by Mahemud Tekuya

<https://www.ethiopia-insight.com/2020/03/30/ethiopia-does-not-need-egypts-permission-to-start-filling-gerd/>

The Blue Nile hydropower dam has been constructed in accordance with international legal principles and Ethiopia has the right to make it operational.

In an apparent fit of pique at Ethiopia's refusal to sign on to its terms, on 28 February the U.S. Treasury Department warned Ethiopia not to start filling and testing the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam without an agreement with Sudan and Egypt

In addition to expressing concerns about dam safety, it said: "Consistent with the principles set out in the DOP, and in particular the principles of not causing significant harm to downstream countries, final testing and filling should not take place without an agreement."

But does international law, including the 2015 Declaration of Principles (DoP), require an agreement for filling dams like the GERD? It does not seem so.
Principles

Considering the first filling and testing of the GERD as parts of the construction, Ethiopia has said that it will start filling the dam with or without an agreement. Egypt rejects this, stating that "Ethiopia violates the article No. 5 of ...[DoP], which stipulates that all three countries shall reach an agreement on the rules of filling and operating the dam before starting the process of filling the reservoir with water."

This is a stretch and contravenes the DoP, which does not say that the parties "shall reach on an agreement before" Ethiopia starts filling the dam. Instead, it states that "The three countries, in the spirit of cooperation, will utilize the final outcomes of the joint studies...to agree on guidelines and rules on the first filling of GERD which shall cover all different scenarios, in parallel with the construction of GERD."

One may dispute Ethiopia's position and argue that first filling and testing is not part of the construction as striking a deal on the first filling is impossible after filling has begun. But, even assuming for the sake of argument that is valid, Ethiopia can still legally fill the dam without an agreement.

The DoP states only that the three countries will use studies to agree on the first filling and annual operation of the dam. That is why they have been negotiating since 2015. But what if they fail to agree on the studies? The DoP is silent and did not address this scenario. In other words, nothing in

the DoP prohibits Ethiopia from filling and testing the GERD, even if the DoP commitment was to agree on “first filling.”

After the Permanent Court of International Justice (PCIJ) landmark decision on the lotus case in 1927, it has been a longstanding principle of international law that “that which is not prohibited is allowed.”

Indeed, as advocated by proponents of natural law theory, this presumption is reputable if a given action or inaction, regardless of its source (state consent or other norms), is prohibited by international law. As demonstrated below, there is no international law prohibiting Ethiopia from filling the GERD without an agreement.

Precedent

True, under international law, states are required to take all appropriate measures to prevent and mitigate significant transboundary harm to other states. But the nature of the obligation is due diligence which requires states to take only reasonable actions. Due diligence means there is an obligation of conduct, rather than an obligation to take action that guarantees non-harm will result, for instance, by signing a preliminary agreement. This is shown by legal precedents.

In the Lake Lanoux arbitration case between France and Spain, in ruling against Spain’s claim that “the exclusion of the French project required the preliminary agreement of the two Governments and that in the absence of such agreement [France] could not have freedom of action to undertake the works,” the tribunal concluded: “The rule that states may use the hydraulic power of international waterways only if a preliminary agreement between states concerned has been concluded cannot be established as a customary rule or, still less, as a general principle of law.”

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) also confirmed the tribunal’s decision in its 2010 judgment in the Pulp Mills Case between Uruguay and Argentina. In deciding whether Uruguay was entitled to proceed with the construction and commencement of the manufacturing operations on the River Uruguay after having failed to reach an agreement with Argentina, “the court concluded that there was nothing that prevents Uruguay from doing so.” The court explained that there was nothing that alters the rights and obligations of Uruguay, including the right to implement the project as its sole responsibility, since the period for negotiation has expired.

In both cases, the justification behind ruling against the need for preliminary agreement is that a ruling otherwise would hinder the state’s “right to act alone as a consequence of unconditional and discretionary opposition of another state. This is to admit a right of consent or a veto right, which at the discretion of state paralyzes another state’s exercise of territorial competence.”

Therefore, under international law, including the DoP, an agreement is not a precondition and Ethiopia can start filling and testing the GERD as planned without a deal.

Process

But unilateralism does not mean acting irresponsible, let alone illegally. Since the beginning of the GERD project in 2010, Ethiopia has taken various measures to prevent significant harm to the downstream countries, thus meeting its international obligations and showing concern for its neighbors.

Ethiopia conducted transboundary impact studies; initiated a tripartite committee consisting of experts from the three countries, and established an International Panel of Experts (IPoE) comprising ten members, six from the three countries (two from each) and four international experts. Ethiopia also submitted all 153 design and study documents of the GERD to the IPoE.

In June 2013, after a rigorous review of the documents and several site visits, the IPoE release its final report. The report, reaffirming the benefits of the GERD to the three countries, confirmed and “appreciated” that the design and construction process of the dam is in line with “a number of international standards, Codes and Guidelines...” The IPoE also recommended the three countries conduct two studies: one on hydrological modeling and the other on the impact of GERD on Sudan and Egypt.

While international law allows Ethiopia to conduct transboundary impact studies by itself and report the finding to Sudan and Egypt, Ethiopia agreed to joint studies and established a Tripartite National Committee (TNC) as a mechanism to conduct the two studies.

Later, the TNC decided international consultants would carry out the studies, and hired two French firms, BRLi Group and Artelia to carry out the studies. However, when the studies started, Egypt apparently insisted that the baseline data to determine the impact should be its current uses of the Nile waters and even reportedly suggested the exclusion of Sudan from the GERD negotiations.
Practice

After the TNC process ran aground, Ethiopia agreed to establish a new National Independent Scientific Research Group (NISRG) to develop scenarios on the filling and annual operation of GERD. However, instead of refining and agreeing on the work of NISRG, Egypt submitted unacceptable proposals in August 2019 and later internationalized the GERD issue, with the U.S. and World Bank involved in the negotiation as observers.

Many Ethiopian think that Egypt, using the U.S. and the World Bank, wanted to impose unjust colonial treaties on Ethiopia. No doubt that coming to the U.S. was historic wrong on Ethiopia’s part, but the fact that it agreed to the process shows the extent to which Addis Ababa is going to perform its due diligence obligation of preventing significant harm on Egypt and Sudan.

Although a way forward is absent thus far because of Egypt’s insistence to maintain its claimed “historical rights”, Ethiopia is likely to continue to undertake all necessary measures in good faith to prevent significant harm on Egypt and Sudan.

The concern about dam safety can also be addressed under the due diligence obligation detailed above. As noted, under international law, Ethiopia is required to undertake a transboundary impact study and notify the outcome to Sudan and Egypt. But Ethiopia went beyond this and established the IPoE, NTC, and NISRG. The three countries have already recognized and appreciated these measures in the DoP. Since ensuring dam safety is a continuous process, Ethiopia should in good faith continue to take all related measures throughout the lifespan of the GERD.

Ethiopia’s confirmed COVID-19 cases rise to 21

By CGTN Africa - March 30, 2020

<https://africa.cgtn.com/2020/03/30/ethiopias-confirmed-covid-19-cases-rise-to-21/>

The Ethiopia Ministry of Health on late Sunday reported two more confirmed cases of COVID-19, bringing the total cases in the East African country to 21.

Ethiopian Health Minister Dr Lia Tadesse./Photo courtesy of social media

“The Ethiopian Public Health Institute conducted additional laboratory tests and two additional COVID-19 cases have been confirmed, making the total cases 21,” the Ethiopian Minister of Health, Lia Tadesse, disclosed in a statement issued on Sunday.

The two latest cases are said to be a 38-year-old male and 35-year-old female Ethiopians residing in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa.

The two individuals were reported to have a history of travel to Dubai, the United Arab Emirates at different dates.

On early Sunday, the Ethiopian Ministry of Health had also disclosed three COVID-19 cases, in which the first of the three latest cases is said to be a 28-years-old female Ethiopian with travel history to Brussels, Belgium and Cameroon on March 17 and 19, respectively.

The other two cases were said to be a 14-years-old and a 48-years-old female who are members of a family who resides in Adama town, some 100-km from the capital Addis Ababa.

The two patients, who were under medical follow up since the confirmation of the close contact, had “history of close contact with a previously confirmed case,” it was noted.

Currently, there are 17 active COVID-19 cases in isolation and treatment center in the East African country with one of the patients receiving intensive care, in addition to the two cases that have been transferred to their country as well as one case that has recently recovered and kept in isolation as a precautionary measure.

****** AFRIQUE CENTRAL ******

CAMEROUN :

Cameroun - COVID-19: Le Cameroun passe à 193 cas avec 59 malades supplémentaires à Yaoundé

<http://www.cameroon-info.net/article/cameroun-covid-19-le-cameroun-passe-a-193-cas-avec-59-malades-supplementaires-a-yaounde-367545.html>

Par Fred BIHINA | Cameroon-Info.Net / YAOUNDE - 31-Mar-2020 - 08h20

Il s'agit toujours de voyageurs en provenance des pays à risque.

Le ministre de la Santé Publique achève son tweet publié dans la matinée du 31 mars 2020 par sa traditionnelle recommandation: Restez chez vous.

Malachie Manaouda informe que notre pays enregistre 51 cas supplémentaires de contamination.

Des malades répertoriés dans la seule ville de Yaoundé où des tests ont été réalisés sur 94 voyageurs. Parmi eux, 24 sont négatifs et 19 douteux qui seront à reprendre, indique le MINSANTE.

UNION AFRICAINE :

AU Commission Creates Continental Anti-COVID-19 Fund

<https://www.modernghana.com/news/992501/au-commission-creates-continental-anti-covid-19.html>

The African Union (AU) Commission has agreed to establish a continental Anti-COVID-19 Fund with seed funding of \$12.5 million to provide a continental coordinated response to the virus.

The decision was arrived at following a teleconference held by the Bureau of the AU Heads of State and governments on the COVID-19 on March 26, 2020 to develop a coordinated African response to curb and reverse the spread of the virus in Africa.

A communique issued and signed by the President of the AU, President Cyril Ramaphosa, a copy of which has been made available to the Daily Graphic, said a continental coordinated response was more important now than ever before in order to arrest the rapid spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It said the spread of the COVID-19 had stretched public health systems beyond limits and caused an enormous global economic, social and humanitarian meltdown.

Coordinating efforts The AU Centre of Disease Control (CDC) had recommended the setting up of the Anti-COVID-19 Fund following what it described as an anticipated shortage of medicines and vaccines as factories were closing down in many countries on the continent and others were retaining supplies for their own consumption.

The CDC, headed by Dr John Nkengasong, the communique said, had told the Bureau of Heads of State that the rapid spread of the COVID-19 was an unprecedented public health disaster.

The bureau, thus, underscored the vital importance of coordinating efforts to increase global production and improve the availability of medical products and equipment.

Teleconference The teleconference meeting had the Malian President, Mr Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President Uhuru Muigai Kenyatta of Kenya, President Félix Tshisekedi of the Democratic Republic of Congo and President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt participating.

The Chairperson of the AU Commission, Mr Moussa Faki Mahamat, and Dr Nkengasong, also participated in the meeting.

President Ramaphosa, in the communique, underscored the fact that poverty, poor sanitation, an existing disease burden, overstretched health systems and extreme urban population density on the continent meant that the pandemic could explode in an even more catastrophic way than had been seen thus far in Africa, hence the need for urgent action in order to stem the tide.

“The AU, Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and all health institutions should direct their efforts at stopping the spread of the virus,” President Ramaphosa stressed.

Mobilisation The CDC, the communique noted, was severely under-funded, and thus called on African Union member states, the international community and philanthropic entities to contribute to the fund.

“In this regard, member states of the bureau agreed to contribute an amount of \$4.5 million towards boosting the capacity of the CDC,” the communique highlighted.

It emphasised that given the limited health infrastructure in Africa and the reality that most of the pharmaceuticals and medical supplies consumed on the continent were imported, the bureau called on the international community to encourage open trade corridors, especially for pharmaceuticals and other health supplies.

Debt waivers The bureau urged the G20 to immediately provide African countries with medical equipment, test kits and protective gear to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, the bureau, the communique pointed out, was urging the G20 countries to provide an effective economic stimulus package that included relief and deferred payments.

The bureau has also called for the waiver of all interest payments on bilateral and multilateral debt, and the possible extension of the waiver to the medium term in order to provide immediate fiscal space and liquidity to governments.

It also urged the World Bank, International Monetary Fund (IMF), African Development Bank (AfDB) and other regional institutions to use all the instruments available in their arsenal to help mitigate against the scourge and provide relief to vital sectors of African economies and communities.

While commending the efforts of the Committee of African Health Ministers in rallying support to curb further spread, the bureau paid tribute to the courageous efforts of all medical and healthcare officials on the continent engaged in combating the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The bureau urges all citizens of Africa to abide by national measures implemented to curb the spread of the COVID-19 virus,” the communique emphasised.

African Union finance directorate undergoes an audit

<https://www.theafricareport.com/25053/african-union-finance-directorate-undergoes-an-audit/>

By Jeune Afrique

Posted on Friday, 27 March 2020 18:27

Moussa Faki Mahamat, chairperson of the African Union commission, has ordered an external audit of key AU directorates for the 2012-2018 period. Such an audit would be the first for the pan-African organisation.

In January, the head of financial management of the African Union (AU), Malawian national Madalitso Lowole, was suspected by Nigerian-born Biodun Adeyemo, Acting Director of the Programming, Budget, Finance and Accounting (PBFA) directorate, of misappropriating funds regarding several wire transfers to “inappropriate bank accounts.”

However, according to our sources, the AU’s entire finance directorate, in which Lowole and Adeyemo fulfil key roles, is under suspicion for repeated violations.

CHINE :

Chinese, Algerian PMs talk by phone on COVID-19 cooperation

Source: Xinhua| 2020-03-31 22:10:30|Editor: huaxia
http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-03/31/c_138935694.htm

BEIJING, March 31 (Xinhua) -- Chinese Premier Li Keqiang on Tuesday afternoon talked with Algerian Prime Minister Abdelaziz Djerad by phone on cooperation in fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

The traditional China-Algeria friendship is profound, Li said, noting that Algeria donated urgently needed medical supplies to China at the early time of its fight against the disease, which highlighted a commitment to going together through thick and thin.

The COVID-19 epidemic spreading in the Middle East region poses a huge challenge for Algeria, Li said, adding that China feels keenly for it and stands firmly with Algeria, and that China is willing to provide support within its capacity and share its anti-virus experience.

Meanwhile, the Chinese premier expressed the hope for the Algerian side to provide guarantee for the safety and living convenience of the Chinese nationals in Algeria.

China is willing to work with Algeria to continue advancing the implementation of their key cooperation projects, he said, expressing belief that bilateral cooperation in various fields will be lifted to a new level after the epidemic is defeated.

In the phone conversation, Djerad said it is necessary for countries to help each other and strengthen multilateral collaboration amid the global spread of COVID-19, adding that Algeria appreciates the anti-virus efforts China has made, and that it is grateful for China's sincere help.

The Algerian prime minister voiced the hope for continued support from China in medical supplies, equipment and treatment to its fight against the coronavirus.

Algeria is satisfied with the bilateral comprehensive strategic partnership and is willing to work with China to push forward major bilateral cooperation projects, he said.

The Impact Of COVID-19 On China's Belt And Road Initiatives In Africa

By News Desk

<https://www.modernghana.com/news/992523/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-chinas-belt-and-road.html>

A new report by Economist Corporate Network, supported by Baker McKenzie and Silk Road Associates, BRI Beyond 2020 (report), shows that the ripple effects of COVID-19 are affecting the nature, pace and scope of China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) activity in Africa, mostly for the short term.

The report also explains how the virus has led to an increased interest in digital programmes in BRI countries, as well as a heightened focus on sustainability, including workforce health. The BRI is China's multi-billion-dollar plan to link Asia, Europe, and Africa.

"The COVID-19 epidemic definitely has a dampening effect on BRI activities as Chinese companies focus their resources and efforts on dealing with the various types of the impact caused by such an epidemic. However, this effect will likely be relatively short term and we are already seeing the resumption of BRI activities by our Chinese clients. It is also heartening to see foreign sellers and partners adjusting their deal timetables to make allowances for the impact caused by this epidemic," says Bee Chun Boo M&A Partner at Baker McKenzie in Beijing.

Ben Simpfendorfer, CEO of Silk Road Associates, explains in the report that the BRI will remain a priority for China, but that it will affect the Chinese government's short-term and long-term response to COVID-19, because shortfalls in China's health sector, and the economic fallout for the country's financially challenged SME sector, will divert official attention and resources away from BRI over the next 12 months and potentially longer.

"This may mean reduced investments into BRI's smaller, less critical markets where the opportunities to connect such investments to the global supply are limited. Central Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Eastern Europe will accordingly see a short-term dip in BRI related activity, relative to Southeast Asia. The exception to this view is where China seeks to share its valuable experience of battling COVID-19 with other BRI countries," he says.

Healthcare Mike van Rensburg, Partner and Head of the Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals Sector at Baker McKenzie in Johannesburg notes, "Any largescale outbreak of COVID-19 in Africa will put pressure on already strained public health systems in the continent and as such African nations are being vigilant in order to contain the spread of COVID-19. Detection of the virus in African has been challenging due to lack of laboratory capacity and medical supplies, but World Health Organisation (WHO) has said it is equipping countries with virus testing kits, and that it has helped to train and provide personal protective equipment to health workers. Further, most African countries are identifying quarantine centres and stocking up on medication."

The outlook is far from bleak however. The report highlights that one key area of potential for the BRI is in projects focused on strengthening the health systems of low-income countries, even if focused on soft processes rather than hard infrastructure.

It points to Chinese tech companies such as Alibaba's DingTalk, Tencent's WeChat Work and Huawei's WeLink potentially bidding for market share outside of China, especially in the BRI region. China's MedTech sector may similarly find opportunities abroad. Online doctor consultation platforms have seen consultations soar in the past few months (Alibaba Health, Ping An Good Doctor) and similar technologies may work abroad if staffed by locals, given health sector shortfalls in many BRI countries.

Simpfendorfer notes that China's success in using AI and other technologies to identify and monitor virus carriers may also have application across the BRI, including in Africa.

Infrastructure The report further outlines how, in the years before COVID-19 struck, China had increasingly become an important stakeholder in Africa's infrastructure development. In recent years, there has been a notable shift in the pattern of China's overseas direct investment in the region, with a repositioning of its focus from the mining sector to Africa's construction, manufacturing and financial services sectors. These investments have been supporting Africa's efforts to diversify its economy and reduce its over-reliance on natural resources for growth.

Political and policy commitments between China and Africa have strengthened and expanded in their scope since the BRI was launched, the report shows. During the 2018 Forum on China Africa Cooperation (FOCAC), an official forum between China and all states in Africa, Mr Xi proposed eight major areas for nations to collaborate on: industrial promotion, facility connectivity, trade facilitation, green development, capacity building, health and hygiene, humanities exchanges, and peace and security. Since then, there have been further announcements signalling continued interest to deepen this bilateral relationship, including a desire from African nations to leverage on the BRI.

In August 2019, the Southern African Development Community (SADC) affirmed its plan to link the BRI with its industrialisation strategy, especially on the construction of infrastructure. These developments build on the foundations that were established over the past decade.

Further, the report shows how Chinese companies have supported the construction of three major economic zones in sub-Saharan Africa, including Zambia-China Economic and Trade Cooperation Zone, Eastern Industrial Zone in Ethiopia and China-Nigeria free trade zone. Such investments have been helping to create jobs and develop local industry.

Trade Trade between China and Africa has also been thriving. In 2018, China's trade with Africa increased by 19.7%, a pace of growth that is considerably higher than China's average trade growth with the world (12.6%), the report indicates.

The report shows how these strengthening trade links are in part a result of favourable financial incentives offered to Africa by China. Thirty-three of the poorest countries in Africa export 97% of their exports to China with no tariffs and no customs duties. Bilateral trade is still heavily centred on China's import of Africa's natural resources. Nevertheless, in recent years China has modestly increased its import of manufacturing products from more diversified economies such as South Africa.

Virusha Subban, Partner specialising in Customs and Trade at Baker McKenzie in Johannesburg, points out, however, that "as one of Africa's biggest trading partners, the effects of COVID-19 in China have already been felt in the continent. With China having shut down its manufacturing centre and closed its ports, there has been resultant decrease in demand for African commodities. Importers in China cancelled orders due to port closures and as a result of reduction in consumption in China. Sellers of commodities in Africa were forced to offload products elsewhere at a discounted rate.

"Over three quarters of African exports to the rest of the world are still heavily focused on natural resources and any reduction in demand impacts the economies of most of the continent. Countries such as the DRC, Zambia, Nigeria and Ghana are significantly exposed to risk in terms of industrial commodity exports, such as such as oil, iron ore and copper, to China," she notes.

Subban explains that the impact of COVID-19 will also be felt in the manufacturing sectors. Because China is part of the global supply chain, factory closures raised the risk of supply chain disruptions for multinational companies with delays, raw material shortages, increased costs and reduced orders affecting manufacturing plants around the world, including in Africa. As production

lines and factories begin to reopen in affected regions, imports and exports will be further delayed by the resultant congestion and backlog.

“External imports from outside of Africa account for more than half the total volume of imports to African countries, with the most important suppliers being Europe (35%) China (16%) and the rest of Asia including India (14%). The manufacturing and industrial sectors in Africa have been impacted by a decreased supply of key components from China (and other relevant countries affected by COVID-19).

Although Africa’s untapped manufacturing and consumer markets represent significant potential opportunity, the short term impact on China’s investments in Africa after COVID-19 will be further constrained by the challenges inherent in the region’s business environment. The report lists poor governance, currency risks, complex regulatory systems and high levels of corruption as issues that will continue to pose hurdles to investment. To navigate the market opportunities, companies—from China and elsewhere—will need to be fully prepared and equipped to deal with potential legal and regulatory disputes in Africa.

African nations are also hoping that once the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) is implemented (due to take place in July this year but now postponed due to COVID-19) intraregional trade in Africa will decrease the continent’s reliance on foreign investment.

Wildu du Plessis, Partner and Head of Africa at Baker McKenzie in Johannesburg, says that according to research from Baker McKenzie and Oxford Economics - AfCFTA's US\$ 3 trillion Opportunity – there is a vast infrastructure gap in Africa, including transport and utilities infrastructure, which must be urgently addressed so as not to restrict increased trade integration.

“AfCFTA is expected to act as an impetus for African governments to address their infrastructure needs as well as to overhaul regulation relating to tariffs, bilateral trade, cross-border initiatives and capital flows. Both domestic and foreign trade, including with China, will benefit from reforms to regulation, political climate and trade policies that enhance competitiveness and improve the ease of doing business, but effective solutions will take time.”

Sustainability If the BRI is to remain a major force in global infrastructure development after COVID-19, sustainability will have at the heart of its projects. According to the report, the definition of BRI sustainability is also by necessity growing to encompass a focus on protecting the health of those involved in BRI projects, including both workers and the wider local populations where projects are underway.

And as Africa reduces its over-dependence on natural resources for boosting economic growth, it also needs to ensure it develops other industries in a sustainable way. To this end, the report outlines how China and Africa have agreed to work together on improving Africa’s capacity for green, low-carbon and sustainable development, and to roll-out more than 50 projects during 2019-2021 on clean energy, wildlife protection, environment-friendly agriculture and low-carbon development.

Du Plessis adds, “While the impact of COVID-19 on African economies will be detrimental, there is light at the end of the tunnel in that the project delays are expected to be mostly short term; and future initiatives will now have a heightened focus on sustainability – improving not only their long-term outlook, but also the sustained health of the environment and, most importantly, Africa’s people.

Chinese capital investments in Africa are smaller but more influential than UK or France

March 26, 2020 Simon Manda, PhD

<https://qz.com/africa/1825914/chinas-investment-in-africa-more-influential-than-uk-france/>

The rise of China in Africa has triggered an ongoing debate about whether Chinese capital is a barrier that entraps African governments in practices that hinder poverty reduction.

The most recent contribution to these debates is a book by a professor of sociology at the University of California, Los Angeles, Ching Kwan Lee. The book is based on Lee's ethnographic study in the copper and construction industries in Zambia. It interrogates Chinese state capital in relation to global private capital.

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Nevertheless, Lee's book is important because it departs from generalization to interrogate actual practices of Chinese capital.

Rather than attempts to find strategies to regulate and manage the influence of China on the continent, probably the focus should be on how China's presence can be made to respond more to national and regional development aspirations than is the case currently – a feature for national policy and development actors.

While the battle for political and economic influence between the West and East is playing out across the continent of Africa, the behavior of capital will greatly influence current and future narratives.

Lee shows that China seems to hit the right note in many countries and in crucial economic sectors. But perils remain in areas such as those related to labour relations.

She also shows that characterizations of Chinese capital in Africa should not rely on a set of implications and generalizations about the ways in which Chinese capital works, and the ways in which national states change as a result of Chinese engagements. Rather it should depend on actual practices and realities and what they mean for national development.

Currently, however controversial, China appears to have been set apart as a partner of choice. And Lee shows the reasons why.

Simon Manda, PhD, Lecturer of Agriculture, value chains and Environmental Sustainability, University of Zambia

USA :

Future of USAFRICOM: Economics over security

<https://globalriskinsights.com/2020/03/future-of-usafricom-economics-over-security/>
US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo finally made his first visit to the African continent – some 18 months after taking up his position as head of the State Department. Considering the Trump administration’s obsession with tackling radical Islamist terrorism, the delay in visiting key African partners should raise questions about the US commitment to fighting the various ongoing insurgencies in the sub-Saharan Africa region.

The Future of USAFRICOM

The start of 2020 saw US tensions with long-term foe Iran escalate to a near-critical level after American airstrikes targeted Baghdad International Airport killing the leader of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard, Gen. Qassim Soleimani. As a result of this action and the consequent Iranian air strikes against US bases in Iraq, it is highly likely that the US Department of Defense and the State Department will begin to divert resources away from regions such as sub-Saharan Africa and back towards containing Iranian activities in the Middle East.

What makes this even more likely is the impending US presidential election in which Trump is likely to play up military action against Iran as a rallying cry to his core supporters whilst also providing a distraction to the world’s media who would assess his achievements in office.

Therefore, US-Iran tensions will undermine the fight against terrorism because cuts to the US Africa Command (USAFRICOM), which will be seen as vital to Iranian containment, will be made at a time when numerous Islamist insurgencies are gaining momentum across sub-Saharan Africa.

According to USAFRICOM’s Commander, Gen. Thomas Walthausser, the organisation has been instructed to cut 600 troops in two phases. The first phase is due to be completed by June 2020 with the second wave of cuts being finalised by January 2022.

Speaking at the Munich Security Conference Walthausser told journalists that:

“We all realise, you know, Africa, with regards to the prioritisation of our national interests... there’s no doubt about the fact that that it’s, you know, it’s not number one on the list.”

The Rising Tide of Terror

According to the Institute of Economics and Peace’s Global Terrorism Index 2019, several African nations saw significant increases in their exposure to terrorist violence. This included Burkina Faso (+10), Mali (+9) and Mozambique (+15) demonstrating a failure of national governments to effectively implement a counterinsurgency (COIN) strategy.

Consequently, the decision to withdraw AFRICOM resources including training and support of African armed forces will have a negative effect on the ability of African governments to tackle the threat posed by violent non-state actors.

Alongside rising terrorism in the above states, Nigeria continues to face Boko Haram across the north-east, Cameroon faces anglophone separatists, Somalia remains torn apart from Al-Shabab and rebel groups in Kivu province of the DRC continue to target communities affected by an Ebola epidemic. The very fact that Secretary Pompeo avoided these states suggests that the motive behind his first visit was not to reaffirm the US commitment to stabilising the plethora of security crises facing the continent but was intended to improve economic cooperation.

Economics over Security

In visiting Angola, Ethiopia and Senegal, Pompeo's trip implies that the Trump administration's priorities for Africa are to secure economic cooperation with the intention of countering the growing influence of both China and Russia in the region.

During his trip, Pompeo met with Senegal's President Macky Sall to discuss trade and investment opportunities. Following their meeting, the Secretary of State said:

'We did have a lot of conversation about security issues here, about America's role in those. We've made it clear that the Department of Defense is looking at West Africa to make sure we have our force levels right.'

However, the comments made by Walthausen suggest that the reality about the US continuing to provide the current level of support to tackling terrorism in West Africa is likely to be reduced as AFRICOM is downsized.

After Senegal, Pompeo visited the oil-rich nation of Angola where he praised President Joao Lourenco's efforts to tackle corruption in the Angolan economy. The emphasis of the anti-corruption driving during his visit is likely to signal to US investors that Angola is an increasingly attractive place for American companies to expand and invest in.

Finally, after meeting with Ethiopia's Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed and President Zewde Sahle-Work, Pompeo publicly warned African states about his perceived danger in relying on Chinese investment for large infrastructure projects and questioned their long-term sustainability. These warnings are likely to become strong in the coming months as Trump criticises China's international influence in the lead up to the 2020 presidential elections and we could see the US threaten African states for continued economic cooperation with China.

In Conclusion

The African Growth and Opportunity Act which allows numerous states to export products to the US without trade barriers such as tariffs and quotas is set to expire in 2025. The recent announcement that Kenya will sign a new Free Trade Agreement (FTA) with the US government further implies that the act will not be renewed as it previously was by President Barack Obama in 2015. Should African nations continue to allow large Chinese-led investments in their economies, Trump's likely second term in office could see a significant change in the US economic strategy across the continent.

Having not visited Africa for a year and a half after taking office, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has signalled that Africa is not a top priority for the Trump administration – a claim highlighted by Gen. Walthausen earlier this month. Planned cuts to AFRICOM are going to leave a significant gap in training and support available to African militaries that will open up new opportunities for China and Russia to fill the void left behind. Should this be the case, US economic cooperation with states receiving Chinese and Russian military assistance will cease.

US conducts another air strike in Somalia

<https://www.defenceweb.co.za/security/civil-security/us-conducts-another-air-strike-in-somalia/>

The US military's Africa Command has carried out another air strike in Somalia targeting al Shabaab.

The Command said in coordination with the Federal Government of Somalia, US Africa Command conducted an airstrike targeting al-Shabaab terrorists in the vicinity of Buulo Fuulay, Somalia, on 27 March.

“This latest airstrike supported our partners in pushing back against al-Shabaab and enhancing security in Somalia,” said US Army Brig Gen Miguel Castellanos, deputy director of operations, US Africa Command. “Our partners know they can rely on us and the unique support we offer.”

The command's initial assessment concluded this airstrike killed two terrorists.

The air strike came after Africa Command carried out five air strikes against al Shabaab near Janaale, Somalia, between 16 and 17 March.

“These precision airstrikes targeted members of the al-Qaida-aligned terrorist network as they massed and maneuvered in the vicinity of an ongoing Somali-led ground operation,” Africa Command said.

Somali security forces continue to lead operations alongside AMISOM forces to increase security and seize ground from al-Shabaab.

US forces were in the area when these airstrikes occurred in order to advise and assist Somali and partner forces.

ONU / UN :

UN official applauds move by Central African Republic to prevent child recruitment

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1059782>

19 March 2020 / Peace and Security

The National Assembly in CAR recently adopted the Child Protection Code, which criminalizes the recruitment and use of children, among other crimes.

“This Code is a strong step for the protection of children and the prevention of grave violations. It also brings hope to the victims and I encourage the authorities to continue to pursue accountability for perpetrators of crimes against children and bring them to justice,” said the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, Virginia Gamba.

The Code stresses that children associated with armed groups should be considered primarily as victims and addresses other grave violations, including sexual violence. Its adoption follows an extensive period of consultations and advocacy from the UN, according to a press release issued by the Special Representative’s office.

While the Government of CAR has taken a series of commitments over the past year to better protect children, the country continues to endure “dramatic” levels of grave violations.

The Special Representative urged the Government to, among other steps, adopt the draft protocol for the handover of children associated with armed groups to civilian child protection actors, so they can benefit from appropriate reintegration support, and called on the international community to support long-term reintegration programmes.

UN in Nigeria strengthens COVID-19 containment and care, mobilizes \$2 million for key support to Government

<https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/03/1060182>

24 March 2020

Health

The funds – to be used to procure essential medical supplies – was announced today by Edward Kallon, the UN Resident Coordinator and Humanitarian Coordinator in Nigeria, at a national conference in Abuja on the COVID-19 crisis.

“The United Nations system in Nigeria will support rapid procurement of disease commodity packages for surveillance, prevention and control, and clinical management,” he said.

He added that the UN will support the Government's efforts to immediately set up a national response fund that will serve as a single national platform and financing framework, coordinating partnerships and mobilizing resources that can make an effective impact on the ground.

The gesture is part of a wider United Nations strategy to amplify efforts by Governments around the world to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, Mr. Kallon said. It also underscores the urgent need for collaboration, given the multifaceted nature of the virus and its impact on Nigeria's economy and society.

Nigeria's Minister for Health, Osagie Ehanire, thanked the United Nations system for its support. He said the Government will ensure that resources are deployed where they are needed most, and that his Ministry is prepared for both worst-case and best-case scenarios.

The World Health Organization (WHO) office in Abuja has reported a total of 44 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Nigeria as of today, including one death.

DAM, NY, AGNEWS, <http://burundi-agnews.org>, Mardi 31 Mars 2020