

GST 122

NAME- TENEBE ANTHONY OBA

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CORONAVIRUS AND THE EFFECT THE LOCKDOWN AND RESTRICTION OF MOVEMENTS HAS ON NIGERIANS

Initial 14-day lockdowns in the three areas began on March 30.

There are currently 323 confirmed cases of the virus in Nigeria, with 71 percent of them registered in Lagos and the capital territory of Abuja. Ten people have died so far.

"It is a matter of life and death," Buhari said of the nation's response. "The repercussions of any premature end to the lockdown action are unimaginable."

Concerning economical hardship- Nigeria, with 200 million people, is Africa's most populous nation. Some 20 million reside in the megacity of Lagos.

Health experts have raised alarms over the impact of a major coronavirus outbreak, warning that the country's unprepared and underfunded healthcare system could quickly become overwhelmed.

The extension of the lockdown is expected to add to the hardship of millions of Nigerians living hand-to-mouth, often on less than one dollar a day.

Buhari said he was "fully aware of the great difficulties experienced especially by those who earn a daily wage".

"But despite these realities, we must not change the restrictions," he added.

The government has pledged a series of support measures to ease the financial pain for the most vulnerable, but there have been widespread complaints that not enough is being done for those facing hunger.

"The vast majority of Nigerians depend on daily wages, they have to go out to get money and buy food to put it on the table for their families," Al Jazeera's Ahmed Idris, reporting from the capital, Abuja, said.

"For the next two weeks, they are going to stay at home with no work and no chance of getting money."

Meanwhile, police said on Monday that they were bolstering forces in Lagos and Ogun after almost 200 suspects were arrested amid fears of a spike in crime during the lockdown.

Buhari said compliance with the stay-at-home order and other restrictions introduced by state governors across the country had been "generally good".

But he cautioned that "a large proportion of new infections are now occurring in our communities".