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DEPARTMENT: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND DIPLOMACY

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ASSIGNMENT: Write a report, of not more than two pages, on the Corona virus pandemic and the effects of the lockdown and restriction of movement on Nigerians.

 Coronaviruses are a group of related viruses that cause diseases in mammals and birds. In humans, coronaviruses cause respiratory tract infections that can range from mild to lethal. The name "coronavirus" is derived from Latin corona, meaning "crown" or "wreath”. The name was first used in 1968 by an informal group of virologists in the journal Nature to designate the new family of viruses. Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2).

 The disease was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan, the capital of China's Hubei province, and has since spread globally, resulting in the ongoing 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic. Common symptoms include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Other symptoms may include fatigue, muscle pain, diarrhea, sore throat, loss of smell, and abdominal pain. The time from exposure to onset of symptoms is typically around five days but may range from two to fourteen days. While the majority of cases result in mild symptoms, some progress to viral pneumonia and multi-organ failure. As of 20 April 2020, more than 2.45 million cases have been reported across 185 countries and territories resulting in more than 168,000 deaths. More than 643,000 people have recovered. There are yet to be vaccines or antiviral drugs to prevent or treat human coronavirus infections. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the 2019–20 coronavirus outbreak a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC)] on 30 January 2020 and a pandemic on 11 March 2020. Local transmission of the disease has been recorded in most countries across all six WHO regions.

 On 28 January 2020, the Federal government of Nigeria assured citizens of the country of its readiness to strengthen surveillance at five international airports in the country to prevent the spread of coronavirus. The government announced the airports as Enugu, Lagos, Rivers, Kano and the FCT. The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control also announced same day that they had already set up coronavirus group and was ready to activate its incident system if any case emerged in Nigeria. On 26 February 2020, a Chinese citizen presented himself to the Lagos State government on suspicion of being infected with coronavirus. He was admitted at Reddington Hospital and was released the following day after testing negative. On 31 January 2020, following the developments of COVID-19 pandemic in mainland China and other countries worldwide, the federal government of Nigeria set up a Coronavirus Preparedness Group to mitigate the impact of the virus if it eventually spreads to the country. On the same day, the World Health Organization listed Nigeria among other 13 African countries identified as high-risk for the spread of the virus. Consequent to the rise in the number of affected cases of coronavirus in Nigeria, the president of Nigeria, Muhammadu Buhari has ordered a lockdown in Abuja, Lagos and Ogun – the three most affected states in Nigeria. The total as of today, 20th of April, the cases in Nigeria are 627 with 170 recovered and 21 deaths.

 Below are some of the effects of the lockdown and restriction on the lives of Nigerians in the affected state.

Although many businesses have been shuttered or left operating a low capacity mode in the past few weeks, especially in Lagos, the new restriction order has made many more businesses shut down with the exception of hospitals, medical and healthcare-related establishments; food processing, distribution and retail companies; petroleum distribution and retail entities; power generation, transmission and distribution companies; private security companies and the press. These businesses will, however, be monitored.

 The three most affected states are some of the most populated states in Nigeria hence demand for food has been high. The president assured Nigerians that food processing, distribution and retail companies would be exempted from the lockdown. Buhari also promised that relief materials will be provided for residents of satellite and commuter towns and communities around the affected states but that hasn’t been fulfilled as people cry on social media every day that there’s nothing to eat and the government didn’t provide anything. Households have been running out of money and foodstuffs.

 The lockdown has spiked security concerns as security agents would be tasked with the double duty of enforcing the restrictions while protecting lives and properties. A few security challenges have been reported in other African countries that have imposed similar restrictions. For example, there have been robberies and killing of people. The popular thieves in Lagos which go by the name “the one million gang” has been causing terror and fear in the mind of the citizens as they go to people homes, shops and rob them in the night time and even in the broad daylight.

 Schools has also been shut down as a result of the lockdown and restriction. This could cause a delay or setback in student’s education. Students had to leave school.

 Indeed, all lives matter, but it is safe to say that priority will be given to coronavirus cases. The healthcare sector will be overwhelmed as doctors, nurses and other healthcare practitioners fight to save the lives of coronavirus patients as well as those with other health issues. All in all, the COVID-19 has affected everyone in one way or the other.