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## **Coronavirus Pandemic And The Effects Of The Lockdown And Restriction Of Movement On Nigerians**

The novel Coronavirus, also known as COVID-19 is described by the World Health Organisation as “an infectious disease caused by a newly discovered coronavirus”. It spreads primarily through droplets of saliva or discharge from the nose when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Presently, no specific treatments or vaccines exist for the virus.

The outbreak was identified in Wuhan, China. As at the time of this writing there are over two million cases of the virus spread across 185 countries and territories resulting in more than one hundred and fifty thousand deaths allowing it be officially declared as a pandemic

The first case in Nigeria was announced in February and in just over two months, the virus has reached a staggering six hundred plus cases with Lagos state being the commercial capital, holding the highest number of cases in the country.

With Nigeria being at high risk of a potential outbreak, special measures have been carried out to prevent this such as strict social distancing measures, a nationwide lockdown and restrictions on movement in and between states on Nigerian citizens.

Every action has a consequence, there is without a doubt a great effect that the lockdown has had on the Nigerian economy which in turn has repercussions on the country and its citizens.

The International Monetary Fund forecasts that the Nigerian economy will shrink by 3.4 percent this year. With a large majority of the citizens not being allowed out of their homes, the work force of the country is greatly reduced further crippling the already low employment rate.

Oil prices have dropped severely. Companies and firms are shutting down, some even filing for bankruptcy since they are not gaining any income. All of these factors have negative effects on the gross domestic product of the country.

Moreover, as the issue of insecurity continues to threaten the lives and property of Nigerians, the pandemic only seems to worsen the situation. There is currently a surge in crime rates around the country with major incidents in Lagos and Ogun state. Homes are being robbed and people are left defenseless, sadly the Nigerian police force does little to nothing to prevent them from being at risk of home invasions and burglaries.

With the recent extension of the lockdown order, families have to do with what they have, many of their members are losing their jobs and have no source of income. Poverty is at an all time high in Nigeria and will only continue to increase. A high percentage of the population lives on less than a dollar a day and with a global pandemic added into the mix, the situation is only going to become more dire than it already is.

The fact that no specific vaccine has been produced for the coronavirus presents an unprecedented level of uncertainty of the country and its future.

The epicentre of the world, The United States has the highest number of coronavirus cases and deaths and are struggling to battle the current crisis. One can only imagine how Nigeria, an underdeveloped country with corrupt leaders will tackle this virus as it continues to spread at an alarming rate.

The fact is that we can only hope for the best, the country is not prepared for a full scale outbreak. For social distancing and other preventive measures against the pandemic to be effective, citizens should abide by the regulations that the government has set down. This is the only way we can obviate our situation from worsening.

#### REFERENCES

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