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April 2020

THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC AND THE EFFECTS OF THE LOCKDOWN AND RESTRICTION OF MOVEMENT ON NIGERIANS

The **2019–20 coronavirus pandemic** is an ongoing pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The outbreak was identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019.

The first confirmed case of the disease in Nigeria was announced on 27 February 2020, when an Italian citizen in Lagos tested positive for the virus, caused by SARS-CoV-2. On 9 March 2020, a second case of the virus was reported in Ewekoro, Ogun State, a Nigerian citizen who had contact with the Italian citizen. As of Sunday 19 April 2020, there have been 627 cases, 27 deaths in Nigeria. 170 out of the 627 have recovered from the virus. The first lockdown order was on Lagos, Ogun and Abuja March 30 2020 and was later extended.

While Lagos' deserted highways and business districts mean lower vehicular and industrial emissions, research shows the increased use of generators likely means an increase in air and noise pollution during the lockdown. As a measure of the scale of the use of generators, researchers at the department of engineering and public policy at Carnegie Mellon University found backup power generation in Nigeria produces carbon dioxide emissions equivalent to 60% of its annual electricity sector emissions. Nigeria is home to 23 million small gasoline generators which have a capacity that's eight times larger than the national power grid, according to conservative estimates by Access to Energy Institute (A2EI), a German-based non-profit. The increased usage of generators during the lockdown is also a cyclical effect of attempts to keep the economy afloat as, in a major shift in Nigerian work culture, businesses are asking employees to work from home. Aware of the country's electricity situation, some companies are providing stipends to cover extra generator costs.

The estimated growth rate for 2020 has, however, now been shattered by the ongoing meltdown in the world economy which is presently in recession, a development accelerated by the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. The first casualty of Covid-19 was the Chinese economy, where the pandemic first broke out; it instantly applied the brakes to production in most factories in China, which led to the disruption of the supply chain of both finished and semi-finished products for direct consumption and raw materials for other factories elsewhere in the world. Expectedly, when the world's second largest economy, China, stopped production, a sharp reduction in the demand for crude oil also occurred. This sharp reduction in demand from China and others, the pandemic panic-related crude oil supply war between two major crude oil producers in the world, Russia and Saudi Arabia (leading to a supply glut), and speculators' activities all led to a sharp drop in the price of crude oil from above \$60 per barrel to less than \$20 per barrel in the last days of March 2020 before it started rising again. Nigeria which is a mono product economy is greatly affected by its sole export oil reduction in value.

The Lockdown in Lagos State affects many essential workers who go about their daily activities amidst pains and sufferings. PREMIUM TIMES' (newspaper) interviewed several essential workers revealing the hardship they encounter during the lockdown, coupled with little or no care from their employers. Teslim Salami, a worker at a franchise of the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation

(NNPC), Ketu branch said the difficulties that come with going to work is stifling. "Transport fare has increased, prices of food stuff have increased too," he said. While giving a breakdown, Mr Salami said he spends between N800 – N1, 000 from Ikorodu to work and back home every day, this is against the average of N300 before the lockdown. "Buses or cars now carry Ikorodu to Ketu N500, when I'm going back home, I will spend another N500," he lamented. Mr Salami works five days in a week and earns N18,000 monthly. This means that he spends more on transportation in a month than his monthly salary. Such is the same experienced by other essential workers of various occupations. Due to the spike in fare prices.

Furthermore, trade with Nigeria's neighbours of Niger and Chad is crucial for a state such as Kano. Its popular Kantin Kwari textile market and the grains market in the suburb of Dawanau attract buyers and sellers from across the borders. A buyer Sani Moussa, from Maradi in Niger, visits Kano every week to buy textiles and shoes for himself and many traders. "The stay-at-home order will no doubt affect us greatly. We rely on Kano for our products," he told the BBC. The pause of sales due to the lockdown affects national and international trade of all forms of commodities.

Nigeria's police who have been deployed to the current coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown imposed to contain the virus have added to the number of deaths. The report came from a Nigeria's National Human Right Commission. Out of the various complaints of incidents of human rights violations "there were eight documented incidents of extrajudicial killings leading to 18 deaths", it said. Al Jazeera's Ahmed Idris, reporting from Abuja, said "eight of those killed were by correctional officers in the northwest Kaduna state. The police were accused of killing seven and the army were allegedly responsible for two deaths. A local committee enforcing the lockdown in the southeast was responsible for killing one individual. "The commission noted the tally of killings was higher than the recorded toll from COVID-19, which included 12 deaths as at 16th of April 2020. The Nigerian police authorities say they are doing their best in bringing erring officers to justice. During the current lockdown, the police in Lagos arrested an officer who was seen in a video extorting about \$110 (approximately ₦43000) from a motorist.

In conclusion, the coronavirus pandemic and the lockdown would have very adverse effects on Nigeria's economy and population in the end. Whilst it would affect the living standards and environment of Nigerians due to pollution and inflation of basic commodities.

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