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Aware of the grave danger that the COVID-19 pandemic poses, the Government of Eritrea has been issuing important and timely guidelines and taking necessary measures to fully curtail its spread in the country. Implementation of the guidelines and measures issued remain, however, vexingly inadequate. Furthermore, the number of infected individuals to-date has reached 18. And what is worrisome is that one of these cases is, unlike the others, a person who has contracted the disease here in the country without any history of foreign travel. The situation is therefore very grave; warranting the adoption of much more stringent measures.

In this respect, the GOE issues the following guidelines that will be effective from tomorrow, Thursday 2 April 2020, and that will remain in force for 21 days.

1. All citizens are compelled to stay at home. This directive will not apply to those engaged in indispensable developmental and security tasks.
2. Members of a household, not exceeding two at a time, are allowed to go out from their homes to buy essential food items during the day. This conditional permission also holds for emergency medical treatment.
3. All trading activities and transactions will be banned in this period. Similarly, weekly markets that occur in various parts of the country will remain closed. Food production, supply and processing enterprises as well as grocery stores, pharmacies and banks will however continue to provide services. These institutions will close at 8:00 pm every evening.
4. All Government Institutions will stop routine services and functions to focus on indispensable developmental and security tasks. Majority of public sector employees will thus stay at home.

5. With the exception of citizens employed in institutions that will continue their functions, all other individuals confined to their homes are not allowed to use their private cars during this period.
  
6. Major productive and service sectors (manufacturing, food processing, construction, Trucking etc.) will continue their functions.
  
7. Citizens in the rural areas engaged in farming and animal husbandry will continue to engage in their vital developmental tasks.
  
8. Rigorous implementation of the measures spelled out above will be secured, beyond the critical commitment of the citizens concerned, by the Police and Security authorities as well as by neighborhood committees. Punitive legal measures will be taken on any individual who violates current and previous Government guidelines.
  
9. All public and private institutions that will continue their operations will have to strictly observe social-distancing and all other guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health.
  
10. All personnel of the public and private bodies that will continue their operations will be issued with permits by their respective institutions.
  
11. This guideline supplements and supersedes, when necessary, all previous Government guidelines.
  
12. This guideline provides for continuation of key development projects and vital public services. Yet, it will entail considerable hardships on the daily lives of citizens. But considering the gravity of the threat that the nation and the people are facing from this pandemic, there is no option other than overcoming it through our characteristic fortitude, resilience and sense of compassion and solidarity. It is therefore incumbent on all of us to implement the current and previous Government guidelines with keen awareness and earnest commitment.

High Level Task Force on COVID-19

Asmara

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