



EFF STATEMENT ON THE RELAXATION OF LOCKDOWN REGULATIONS.

Monday, 1 February 2021

The EFF notes the announcements of Mr. Cyril Ramaphosa in relation to efforts to contain the rapid spread of the Coronavirus. We welcome the gratitude extended to the Cuban Medical Brigade, the Henry Reeve International Contingent of Doctors Specialised in Disaster Situations and Serious Epidemics and support their nomination for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize. Cuba's role in fighting the pandemic should be acknowledged and accompanied by lifting of all trade and economic barriers and blockage imposed by the USA. Cuba has demonstrated beyond reasonable doubt that it can and will play an important role in the global healthcare system, particularly in this age of a devastating and fatal pandemic.

The EFF is however concerned about the secrecy associated with the vaccine distribution strategy and plan. A life saving world wide vaccination should not be constrained by insensible Non-Disclosure Agreements and Intellectual Property barriers that disallow manufacturers from developing and reproducing the vaccine in the manner that will save humanity. The capitalist profit motive should not override the long overdue need to save lives.

Vaccines should be available to all people who need it irrespective of citizenship and South Africa should be part of the voices that condemn and reject the inhuman vaccine nationalism and hoarding happening in many parts of the developed world. South Africa should relentlessly play an important and central role in ensuring that all people in the African continent who need vaccines should gain access to vaccination. Anyone who suggests that the vaccines must be administered to South African citizens only and to the exclusion of our African brothers and sisters should be dismissed with contempt and characterized as irreparably foolish.

We are concerned about the vaccine distribution strategy which involves Provincial plans and systems. Gauging by how Provincial governments misappropriated funds meant for PPEs and expansion of the healthcare system, it is a foregone conclusion that vaccines under the control of provincial governments will not serve the intended purpose. Under provincial governments, vaccines will be misallocated and distributed to friends and relatives of politicians at the expense of healthcare workers who need the vaccine the most. Mr. Ramaphosa has not announced any measure to contain the massive corruption that defines his entire administration and without clear prohibitive mechanisms, the vaccination phase of fighting the Coronavirus will be defined by massive corruption and nepotism.

Whilst we welcome the relaxation of some regulations and extension of the curfew, we are opposed to the reopening of alcohol sale for offsite and onsite consumption. The arrival of vaccines does not mean that the Coronavirus has ended. The virus is still amongst us and South Africa should not overrule a possibility of a third and even fourth wave of the virus. It is empirically proven that alcohol availability in different spaces lead to the rapid spread of the virus and always burdens the healthcare system. Relaxation of regulations governing the distribution and consumption of alcohol is therefore self-defeatist and will certainly lead to the resurgence of the virus. The South African reality is that the livelihood benefits of alcohol trade are far outweighed by the negative healthcare and lives consequences it brings.

The reopening of alcohol distribution and sale is reckless and Ramaphosa is doing so to please the alcohol manufacturing capitalist establishment, which has been threatening our country with disinvestment due to the correct decision to curtail the free flow of alcohol. Ramaphosa opens the sale of alcohol on the day a meagre 1 million doses of vaccine arrive in South Africa as if that is enough to insulate more than 58 million people living in South Africa. 1 million doses of vaccine are not even a drop in an ocean of 58 million people, particularly with the unreliability and undependability of Ramaphosa's administration to fulfil its commitments.

The EFF calls on all political parties to agree on a legislated and constitutional postponement of the 2021 Local Government Elections because mass political

gatherings are still forbidden. Under the current environment, political parties are deprived of the democratic right to freely and fairly canvass for votes. If elections proceed under the current circumstances, they will not represent the true will of the people.

We call on our people to exercise extreme caution in their daily lives and should always avoid crowded spaces, must wear masks, keep social distancing and recurrently wash and sanitize their hands. The journey towards defeating the Corona virus will be a long one and we shall overcome and restore the many activities that we have correctly foregone to contain the virus.

ISSUED BY THE ECONOMIC FREEDOM FIGHTERS

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