

The Christian Voice

Monday, 27 July, 2020

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COVID-19 WATCH	2704 cases	542 recoveries	36 deaths
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Parliament closed indefinitely



Parliament Building in Harare

The Parliament of Zimbabwe has closed indefinitely after two Members of Parliament were found positive.

“The members were part of a team that had been on field visits around the country. Our thoughts and prayers are with the affected and their families,” read the Parliament notice.

According to the notice issued by the Clerk of Parliament, Kennedy Chokuda two other people (a driver and a journalist) who were part of the team also tested positive.

“From the notice, all the members that were part of the team have gone under self-quarantine in line with the Ministry of Health and Child Care

guidelines. The public will be advised on the resumption of parliament in due course.

“This measure has been taken to safeguard the health of Members of Parliament, staff and the public who interact with the institution. Consequently, tomorrow’s sitting of the National Assembly will be done with very limited members for the purpose of adjourning to a future date,” read the notice.

The suspension of Parliamentary duties will necessitate the disinfection of the premises as well as enable contact tracing and testing.

“The Parliament of Zimbabwe will continue to monitor the situation. The temporary closure will allow for the deep cleaning and disinfection of the Parliament building and testing of those who

came into contact with the affected members of Parliament,” read the notice.

They advised that those who are intending on submitting any documentation or seeking information from Parliament to use their email addresses.

“Those seeking information from parliament are kindly requested to utilise the following emails addressed to clerk@parlzim.gov.zw/ chokudak@parlzim.gov.zw,”

Zimbabwe has recorded 2512 positive cases of Covid-19 including 518 recoveries and 34 deaths. Harare and Bulawayo have recorded 771 and 664 cases, respectively. Bulawayo has the greatest number of deaths with 16 people.



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Cities and Towns Updates

HWANGE: The one Zupco bus that has been servicing the town is down, leaving Hwange with no transport at all.

HURUNGWE: Soldiers with guns and police are milling around reminding people to wear face masks and they are also telling people to vacate the growth point by 3 pm. Pirate taxis are still operating as usual. In small townships people are selling chiOne e.g Kajere and Maumbe all in ward 23.

CHEGUTU: Chegutu police and army have been patrolling town to enforce compliance on lockdown restrictions at 3pm. They will be moving around shops making sure they are closed. Zupco buses are operating but cannot cope up with the large numbers of people especially during peak hours.

Church leaders in Plumtree deliver food and PSS

The church in Plumtree is playing a huge role in helping the vulnerable members in the community during this time when most people are going through an economic crisis due to the pandemic.

Plumtree church leaders have managed to provide psychosocial support to 150 individuals and 15 families.

ZCA Plumtree coordinator Apostle Jephias Ncube stated that their wish was to reach out to returnees who were in quarantine centres however this was derailed by the sudden shift of these centres.

“Our aim was to reach out to the returnees but at the moment all the returnees have been moved to their respective provinces and some have gone back to their homes. We are still working around how we can reach these people because even though they have left the quarantine centres they need to be counselled as they have seen and go through at these centres,” he said.

Apostle Ncube said the Will of God Apostles Church donated food parcels to 15 orphans at Fairview Primary School and three families.

“It is our duty as the church to identify and give back to the communities that we lead. On Saturday we went back to the community and donated food parcels to orphans and three vulnerable families who are struggling to make ends meet and put food on their table,” he said.

The food parcels that were donated included 25kgs of mealie-meal, 2 litres cooking oil, 10 kg soya chunks. Apostle Ncube revealed that these orphans are part of the school fees beneficiaries that the Church has been paying for since 2017.

“The church has been paying school fees for

the orphans since 2017. Part of the donations that they received with the food parcels are school shoes, socks and exercise books. Our aim is to assist the orphans access education and they do not feel the gap that has been left by their parents,” he said.

The headmaster of Fairview Primary School, Mr Alphos Mhlanga who accepted these donations on behalf of these orphans thanked the church for the love they showered upon these children.

“This act should not be done for these children only but we encourage not the church only but all members of the public to help in whatever way they can. No gift is too small, but it actually goes a long way for someone who is vulnerable,” he said.

Apostle Ncube thanked the church members who have supported this initiative. He also expressed appreciation on the pastors who are in the diaspora who have also contributed into the formation of the Bulilima and Mangwe relief fund,

“Many thanks to our Canadian family led by Pastor Rosemary and others who have formed Bulilima and Mangwe relief fund to support major church programmes,” he said.

Currently there are no permanent quarantine facilities in Plumtree. Returnees are put at a temporary place where they wait for transport to their respective provinces. He said they have identified facilities that can be used as quarantine centres.

“The returnees are going through a difficult time and some of them have to endure the pain of standing for a long time as there are no resting facilities. Plans are being done on the rehabilitation of some of the facilities that have been identified,” he said.

Imaginative Hwange youth advocate through Arts

Often, the arts industry has been viewed as a mundane sphere that is confined to amuse and entertain revellers. Poetry, dance, music and visual arts are well known forms of arts that entertained civilisations for centuries.

From the ancient Greek theatres to medieval

Shakespearean Globes right up to the flashy West End stages, arts have been a sense of amusement for communities alike.

Contemporary issues trending during a certain phase in time would be translated into theatrical forms for gullible public glee.

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Imaginative Hwange youth advocate through Arts

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Starting with Thomas Hardy's description of the Industrial Revolution in 'Oliver Twist' to Chinua Achebe's dramatization of tyrant African leadership in 'Things Fall Apart' the industry has been a mirror of the discourse happening in society. Thomas Mapfumo sang 'Munyika munho maita corruption' as an anecdote to the ills that were bedevilling Zimbabwe at that time. Equally describing the inequality in societies that they lived in, Paul McCartney and Stevie Wonder composed 'Ebony and Ivory' as an attempt to quell the racial fracas that were prevalent pre-2000.

Nonchalantly theatre productions in Zimbabwe like IYASA, Victory Siyanqoba, Mokoomba, KAISA and Siyaya Arts have over the year's penned productions that are mirroring the society that they lived in. Through performing spoofs to do with HIV/AIDS, corruption to drug abuse these groups have raised the consciousness of the citizenry.

Over the years, arts groups in Zimbabwe have fearless touched on subjects on accountability, corruption and human rights abuses. Though the subjects have been met with the vicious reactions, unfazed arts groups have sojourned on.

For a 3 member Cross Dete arts ensemble sketches on governance, accountability and human rights have been the hallmarks of their scripts. The group is composed of Piston Ngwenya, Mbongeni Ndlovu and Abednego Ncube. The group, despite being based in rural areas have become a darling for the community with their satires on governance and human rights. The group usually performs during community meetings, food distribution meetings and private functions.

"Our message is clear, we use the arts as a vehicle for relaying the message on governance and human rights abuses. We strongly feel that arts enables us to subtly bring out the message without perturbing the status quo. We want people to relate with what is going on in their communities through our arts (music). We collaborate music with dance so as to bring out the intended message. I vividly recall the sketch that we did for Basilwizi Trust/ Zimbabwe Christian Alliance when they were lobbying the Colliery Company on water pollution. The skit that we did was touching on the issue of water pollution", said Piston Ngwenya, the group's front man.

The group has also been instrumental in relaying the issue of accountability within their district

"We preach accountability through our music. Though our music is sometimes sung in Nambya/Tonga to those who hear the language, the message is clear. Last year during a World Vision



Budding talent: 5 year old Advanco from Songwa does advocacy through arts

food distribution exercise our parody on social accountability amused many people who were there. We acted on how corrupt officials are mismanaging resources that are supposed to benefit us the people of Hwange", said Mbongeni Ndlovu one of the group members.

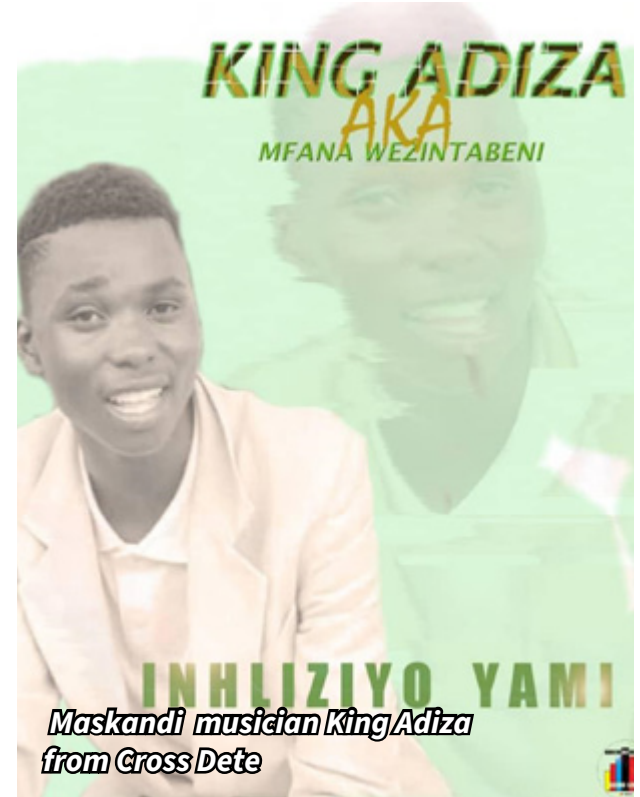
The group though they are yet to record their music, are now a darling to the community through their music.

"Their music is challenging us as authorities to be accountable to our communities. They bring out the message in a way that makes one do a self-introspection. I have seen them perform in so many places. I hope they won't derail from advocating for social justice through their arts", commended Cosmas Mwakiposa, the area councillor.

Equally unfazed by the enigmatic task at hand is a 5 year old Songwa village artist by the name Advando Mwembe. The youngster does poetry on issues that are affecting his community. Despite his young age and frame Advando belts out advocacy issues that resonate well with the community. He has performed at school prize giving days and other public meetings.

"This boy is going places. At his age you would expect him to mumble and mumble about trivial issues but alas he is an advocate of some sort. His message is about poverty, water issues, rampant animals and other ills within the community", said Councillor Mwakiposa.

The area seems to be flooded with a lot of artists who are raring to orate the message of accountability. 19 year old Admire Moyo better known as 'King Adiza' is another artist who hails



Maskandi musician King Adiza from Cross Dete

from the area who has caught the attention of the masses. The artists through his music has a song about xenophobia attacks in South Africa.

"I have an album that I released which speaks about xenophobia attacks in South Africa. I believe that the trek to South Africa is because of the lack of jobs in the country especially here in Hwange. Though we do have mines, we believe that locals should be prioritized hence my message about jobs and xenophobia", said King Adiza.

With the aptly motivated arts industry in Hwange, it is a complementary initiative for organisations that are doing advocacy in the area.

"Indeed arts play a critical role en masse in concertizing societies about issues affecting them. Arts industries through their creativities are able to manoeuvre the choking censorship processes that ordinarily would have prohibited organisations from addressing. In many cases the industry is underfunded but they find ways of sustainability. I am glad as a fellow arts person that young people in remote areas like Cross Dete are able to use music and dance to contextualise the problems bedevilling their communities", said Ndabezinhle Ndlovu, an arts student from Lupane State University.

"Lupote, Makwandala youth are very innovative. Maybe it's because of their exposure to tourists that come to their area. They are doing a stellar job to do advocacy through arts. We wish them the best as the clergy in Hwange", said Overseer Siyaphambili Moyo, ZCA hub coordinator for Hwange.

Unperturbed by the shrinking economic and political spaces, the arts industry in Hwange is on a roll.

New travel requirements for Citizens

The Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) over the weekend issued a statement advising the public on the documents required at checkpoints and roadblocks in line with Covid-19 lockdown measures announced by the President.

According to statutory instrument 174/2020, members of the public have been classified into 10 categories which indicate the necessary documents required to ensure hassle free passage through roadblocks and checkpoints.

The categories include health, food retailers, sole traders, private security services, medical resupplies, attendance of funerals, companies /organisations, Ministries /parastatals HQ and provincial levels, Commercial A1 and A2 farmers and Communal farmers.

Below are the detailed requirements of each category ;

Health

Uniform and health ID cards. Those in civilian attire must have a letter from the medical superintendent or CEO stating the place, date and times for reporting on and off duty. The contact details of the CEO must be contained in the letter.

Companies/Organisations

Letters from Company CEO or Manager stating place, days and times of reporting on and off duty. Contact details of the CEO/Manager must be indicated on the letter.

Ministries /Parastatals HQ and Provincial Levels

At national level, an exemption letter from Directors and above stating the duty, place, days and times of reporting.

At provincial level, an exemption letter from provincial heads stating the duty, place, days and times of reporting is required. The contact details of the responsible person must be included.

Commercial, A2 and A1 farmers

An offer letter/lease agreement and an exemption certificate from local officer in charge station.

Communal Farmers

Supporting letter from the headman/village head stating the business to be done , the date, the time, place and an exemption letter from the Officer in charge of the station. The details of the village or herdsman must be indicated.

Food Retailers

Certified photocopies of a shop license and an exemption letter from the local officer in charge station.



Zimbabwe Republic Police have intensified roadblocks and checkpoints

Sole traders

Shop license accompanied by an exemption letter from local officer in charge station.

Private Security Services

Uniform, company ID and letter from management stating dates and time of reporting on and off duty. Letter must indicate contact details of the chief executive officer or responsible person.

Medical Resupplies

Medical cards/prescription and contact details of doctor where possible.

Attendance of funerals

Concerned relatives produce copies of burial orders to local police stations. Officer in charge station, Officer Commanding Province to issue exemption letters showing destination and dates of movement to those who intend to bury relatives in other towns, rural areas etc.

The police reminded the public of the importance of conducting all activities within the permitted hours of 0600hours and 1800hours of each day.

The statement ended by noting that the observance of the national lockdown measures will promote the effective maintenance of law and order by police and other security services.

The new requirements were met with mixed reactions from the public, with some welcoming the move, whilst others were skeptical saying it was unnecessarily cumbersome.

“Our government has a knack for making simple things difficult. Chances are high that one may end up contracting Covid-19 while processing these onerous travel authorisation documents,” said Innocent Batsani on twitter engaging with

Secretary for Information, Nick Mangwana.

Some members of the public feared that the new regulations would increase cases of corruption, as too much power was being left at the mercy of Officers in Charge who are often extremely busy.

“We think there are too many references to Officers In Charge, these guys are extremely busy and hard to track down especially during these unusual times,” noted an account belong to Zimpricecheck.com

Another concern which was highlighted is the elitist nature of the new requirements, as it was particularly difficult for most people in rural areas to access basic services.

“When you come up with these measures do you really think about the geographical set up of our country? The locations of these Police post. Are you aware that some people in rural areas travel for miles to get to Police stations? So how would they do so?,” said Martin Makanza.

“The information at our disposal indicates that we need to minimize touching things as much as possible as it increases the risk of spreading the virus. I am not entirely comfortable with so much documentation exchanging hands each time I pass through a checkpoint or roadblock. The government needs to come up with a paperless system to minimize risk”, said Rejoice Hodzi, a Gweru youth.

However, on the other hand other Zimbabweans indicated that whilst the travel requirements seem cumbersome, they are a necessary evil given the high rate at which new infections were being recorded.

“When we talk of #NewNormal it speaks of a new way of life which we have to get accustomed to which is not easy.”