

The Christian Voice

Tuesday, 16 June, 2020

**COURT PROCEEDINGS ON
COWDRAY PARK WOMEN
STALLED**

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**ZCA COMMEMORATES
DAY OF THE AFRICAN
CHILD**

>pg3

**Covid-19
WATCH**

391
cases

62
recoveries

4
deaths

Byo shut down!



Commuters from Bulawayo's western areas are turned away from the CBD by the police and army.

Bulawayo was shut down yesterday after police and army returned residents home except for those in the security and health sectors.

This was despite the fact some of the residents had exemption letters to allow them to travel during lockdown.

Only uniformed on duty police officers, soldiers and nurses were allowed to proceed to the central business district with the majority of residents being turned back.

The Christian Voice had the opportunity to scan the environment in the central business district

and noted that there was limited movement of people, shops closed and all those in town being asked to return home.

In an interview, one security guard who declined to be named said police officers were warning them to leave town as early as 5am with the number of soldiers in town beginning to increase by 7am. He said some people who were already in town to join bank queues were also asked to go back home.

"As early as 5am, police officers were telling us to go back. At that time there will be queues at banks and shops hoping to buy groceries early

and go back home. All this was in vain because they had to return home without buying groceries or even withdrawing their money," he said.

The public has received this move with shock and anger as no explanation has been given to them on why they were returned home after the President eased the lockdown directive. Some of them said this was very unfair to them as they could not access some of the essential services that they needed today.

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Byo shut down!

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“The nature of today’s situation is likened to that of a state of emergency more than a Covid-19 lockdown. We are now being involved in issues that have nothing to do with us. I woke up in the morning to collect money for my medication at MoneyGram, but I could not because of this clamp down,” said a lady who was at a MoneyGram queue.

By midday the central business centre was empty without any movement. In the high-density areas movements were normal as most returned home in the midst of the confusion. A number of drivers had left their cars in fuel queues as the garages had also been forced to shut down.

“The whole thing is a fiasco and it has left us in a state of confusion and panic. We are not aware of what will happen tomorrow. Some people left their cars at service stations because they had run out of fuel whilst others had to drive back

home without buying the precious liquid,” said Servious Mtombeni.

Some of the people were seen walking back home from the roadblocks. Only Zupco buses and Khombis were allowed to get in and outside the CBD whilst private cars were not allowed to pass by the roadblocks.

The responsible authorities have not explained yet why the lockdown is being tightened all of a sudden at the country’s major cities. Yesterday there were reports that people were being told to return home in Harare. Banks and institutions such as Standard Chartered Bank and Econet have already notified their clients that branches will be closed today due to situations “beyond their control”.

However the road blocks seemed to be more intense on the High density area highways (Luveve Road, Khami Road, Old Sizinda Road and Nketa Drive).

Court proceedings on Cowdray Park women stalled

The case of six Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP) officers who were supposed to appear in court today for assaulting two women from Cowdray Park, Bulawayo during the national lockdown has been postponed again.

According to media reports, the lawyers of the accused persons said they could not get to court due to today’s operation where state security authorities were prohibiting the movement of people. Meanwhile the court case has been scheduled for 24 June 2020.

The court case has been failing to occur for the past month with some of the reasons being that the investigations had not been thoroughly done. However, the lawyer of the two women, Nqobani Sithole of Ncube Attorneys noted that the case was now ready to be heard in court as he is satisfied with the investigations that were done after their first hearing.

Commenting on this case on Twitter, Dumizulu Mvududu said the two women deserved to get justice after the torture and the pain that they went through. He said the continuous

postponement of the hearing is now more like a tactic of stalling the justice that these women deserve.

“These lawyers are trying hard to make the Cowdray ladies give up on the case because of the continued postponing of the case. We will continue to support them and make sure that their case is attended to and those police officers are brought to book,” he said.

The assault of these ladies saw a number of institutions in the country demanding the persecution of the police officers as they are the ones expected to be the custodians of the law.

“We call for the institution of an urgent independent investigation into the circumstances around the attack of the two sisters and recommend that findings be made public with appropriate and swift disciplinary action be instituted against the perpetrators,” read the Zimbabwe Head of Church Denominations (ZHOCDD) press statement.

Zimbabwe Christian Alliance also condoned the behaviour of the police officers and pointed out that citizens were now living in fear especially with the indefinite extension of the lockdown.

ZCA commemorates Day of the African Child

Zimbabwe Christian Alliance today observed the Day of the African Child (DAC), which is a day set to commemorate the 16th June 1976 student uprising in Soweto, South Africa, where students who marched in protest against apartheid-inspired education, were brutally murdered.

This year's theme ran under the banner 'Access to a Child-Friendly Justice System in Africa' as adopted by the African Union (AU).

To celebrate the children of Africa and calls for serious introspection and commitment towards addressing the numerous challenges they face in Africa, ZCA has noted with concern a myriad of issues that the Government of Zimbabwe has to fix in order to enhance the wellbeing of Zimbabwean youths.

Notable priority areas that the organisation envisages the Government to tackle include enabling a conducive education system that affords children to access affordable education from elementary education up to university level. At the moment, with the Covid-19 induced disruption of schools, ZCA has noted with grave concern that children from poor backgrounds are not able to access education due to the unavailability of affordable online learning material.

ZCA also challenges the Government to avail adequate health care for children. With the rise in prices of goods and services the call is that public hospitals should avail free medications for children under 18 years.

In line with enhancing the participation of youths in socio-economic as well as political spheres the organisation is challenging the Government to come up with sound policies that will greatly benefit youths. Traditionally most youth centred policies in Zimbabwe have been marred by allegations of patronage which

beneficiaries shortlisted upon production of a certain party card.

Meanwhile several youths took time to commemorate the day with some taking time to write on several social media platforms expressing their views upon this day.

"and how is that relevant to the struggles we are cowering from. Let South Africa celebrate because they stood up for themselves. Our education system is in rags right now and we are busy caught up in celebrating. Before we think about fixing AFRICA. Let's fix ZIMBABWE. It's the day of the South African child. Politicians wanting to share in the success of others and brush off their failures were quick to accept it. It's a South African holiday. Let's win our struggles and we can create all the memorabilia we want", wrote one Nhlanhla Moyo on his Facebook account.

He further went on to say that 'We are celebrating winning against oppression but just today you couldn't get into town and no warning or explanation was given. Let's be serious when we copy and paste some things on social media.'

Saymore Masaisai the Director for Young Professional Educators in Zimbabwe (YPEZ) noted that youth progress was largely hindered by corruption that is rife in the country.

"Endemic corruption is an enemy of progress. A nation that allows corrupt practices to thrive soon reaps the dividend of socioeconomic turmoil. Let's have honest conversations about the future that we want to create and bring corruption to an end. Let's give ourselves a valid reason to celebrate. Happy Day of the South African Child. Work for your own in your country", he said.

Masaisai further implored authorities to deliberate on ways on how to deal with deviant children without resorting to stringent processes.

"Children in conflict with the law are generally perceived as law breakers and a threat to the

society but these children are often victims of violence and social injustices. How do societies in Africa deal with deviant children? How is the criminal justice system in Zimbabwe handling the juvenile offenders", he wrote on his Facebook account.

However due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in many countries, this year's celebrations were not done in public with most commemorations being done on various online platforms including Zoom.

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Cities and Towns updates

TSHOLOTSHO: It was business as usual, people were buying sugar and mealie-meal from the shops. Fuel is mostly sold in forex. There are no vegetables in some parts of Tsholotsho hence people from Nyamandlovu come to sell their vegetables in forex.

PLUMTREE: Shops are open and a few of them

have infra-red thermometers. Fuel was available at Sakunda and Total garages. Subsidised mealie-meal and sugar was not available.

BULAWAYO: People were being returned home by soldiers and some had to walk back home. Only nurses, police officers and soldiers were allowed to go into town. Shops were closed

and those queueing for fuel at service stations were advised to go back home.

HWANGE: Fuel was received yesterday and Zuva garage was selling at ZWL\$30 per litre. People slept at the garage queueing for fuel and by the time of closure 16:30 today, there were still many cars.