



SOUTH SUDAN DOCTORS' UNION

Excellence in Health Service Delivery

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Friday, May 8, 2020

STATEMENT ON THE PRESIDENCY DECISION TO RELAX RULES AND DIRECTIVES OF THE LOCKDOWN

In reference to the Statement of Fourth Meeting of the Presidency on 7th May 2020, the South Sudan Doctors Union (SSDU) does not see urgency in relaxing the rules and directives of the lockdown at the time our nation is experiencing exponential rise in COVID-19 cases and serious violations of control measures issued earlier by the High Level Taskforce (HLTF) headed by the President of the Republic. Majority of our people who do not have access to radios and TV are not much aware of the infection prevention and control measures and the threats posed by coronavirus. Our fragile health care system, and inadequate healthcare workforce, can easily be overwhelmed if we experience any COVID-19 surge in the country.

Most of the 90 COVID-19 cases confirmed in the last one month are from local transmission. The SSDU therefore, recommends that the lockdown remains in place and further reinforced for the next three weeks to ensure individuals with the virus are identified, tested, isolated and managed at designated health facilities. We call upon the Ministry of Health to ensure those COVID-19 cases that are currently under self-isolation in their houses are brought to facilities to receive the quality care they deserve. This will in turn address challenges faced by the health workers during follow up and will also reduce stigma and discrimination being faced by the COVID-19 patients within the community.

The SSDU believes that easing travel restrictions between Juba and states at this stage will encourage transmission of coronavirus to areas where health professionals are not trained and facilities not set up to quarantine and manage COVID-19 cases. On this note, we call on the Ministry of Health to diversify COVID-19 training by allowing technical/ medical bodies/ institutions and international health partners to conduct the COVID-19 Case Management and IPC training and orientation at the state and county levels. This will ensure timely set up of quarantine centers and deployment of trained surveillance, RRT, testing and case management teams at those levels.

The SSDU further urges the HLTF to re-strategize and review its COVID-19 response approach by contextualizing measures to local settings and co-opting on its membership, our experienced national epidemiologists, infectious disease physicians and credible institutions of health studies and research.

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