

Mahikeng Mail

Comment

PRESIDENT RAMAPHOSA MUST NOT BE MOVED BY COVID-19 DOOMSAYERS

President Cyril Ramaphosa this week got yet another chance to show his mettle against the ever hard-to-please South Africans who on Tuesday again proved that they will do everything in their power to destruct the hard-trying leader of the people.

Ramaphosa has been widely criticised by those who have been and continue to label him as a “weakling” who is indecisive in his decisions as specially when it came to issues of national interest.

Since he announced the national lockdown last month with binding rules and regulations, President Ramaphosa had come under attack from hard-to-please South Africans who complained about this and that including economic issues and urged him to reverse the lockdown.

The most recent demand by the Gauteng Liquor Forum for Ramaphosa to lift the ban on the sale of liquor did not come as a surprise and these people are now taking the matter to

court trying to force government to reverse its decision. We are pleased that millions of South Africans who include leaders of political parties, church groups, community organisations and civic associations have come out in support of the President’s stance on the matter.

The Gauteng Liquor Forum had given the President until Tuesday to effect the withdrawal and allow bottle stores to operate for limited hours of face court action. Ramaphosa has asked to be given time until tomorrow (Friday) to respond.

However, we call on him not to give in to these demands despite their so called “economic effects” on taxes and profits for these outlets. Ramaphosa must stand firm in his resolve to keep the lockdown in place and therefore protect the lives of millions of South Africans against the effects of the COVID-19 which could be dire for the country if the lockdown is reversed or tempered with.

ARE SOUTH AFRICANS STEERING DEATH IN THE EYES?

If South Africans have not yet realised the seriousness of the dreaded Coronavirus and were not shaken by the very scary and worrisome presentation delivered by Professors Salim Abdool Karim on Monday evening, it is very clear that nothing will ever drive home the importance of observing the regulations of the COVID-19 pandemic within local population circles.

Following Prof Karim’s presentation who was accompanied by national health minister, Zweli Mkhize and several other health experts during the live television broadcast, viewers must have realised that effectively millions of South Africans could be facing possible death if Prof Karim’s observations were to become a reality.

In his honest and transparent presentation, Prof Karim told viewers in no uncertain terms that if the South African government was forced to abruptly end the currently ongoing national lockdown and call off all restrictions barring citizens from living their normal lives, the Coronavirus could destructively sweep across the country which action might negatively affect the lives of the majority of its over 55 million population just like it had done in foreign countries like China, Italy, France, America and the United Kingdom, Japan, Germany and many states killing millions of citizens in those countries.

He warned that if South Africans continued to ignore calls by President Cyril Ramaphosa to observe the Covid-19 regulations and - as many are currently doing - refuse to stay at home, practice safe distancing, wash their hands and force the government to open business like liquor stores and relax other

lockdown regulations, they must know that they would be unable to flatten the COVID-19 curve which would destroy all lockdown gains.

Prof Karim, an epidemiologist and advisor to Dr Mkhize also warned South Africans against rushing to lift the lockdown which he said would later be disastrous as an additional number of people would be vulnerable to the COVID-19 virus.

This, Prof Karim who is also chairperson of the of the ministerial advisory group told South Africans that the COVID-19 could have the same effects the virus had on foreign countries and that there was no way the country could escape the total onslaught of the Corona virus “unless South Africa had a special protective factor or “mojo” not present anywhere else in the world”.

“It will be pretty difficult. It will be bad when the virus is at its peak and people will need medical care and thousands of them. Our people will be at high risk after the lockdown. But if it could be shown that the reproduction rate of the virus could be below one (less than 90 cases a day) meaning it is not spreading out of control rate, the lockdown could be eased”, he said but also added, “the difficult truth remained that a spread of the virus was unavoidable”.

“Our population is at high risk because none of us have immunity against this virus. So as soon as we end the lockdown, we will have that high risk.” Prof Karim said calling on the population to follow the regulations of the lockdown and to stop making it even more difficult for government to protect them against the wrath of the dangerous COVID-19.

Comment by Bobby Saul of 13 Martin Street, Galleria Arcade, Mafikeng.