

## **President Magufuli: "The Coronavirus is a Devil." The Situation in Tanzania.**

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I still remember the time when the pandemic hit Europe and Germany in particular. My parents called me almost every day to find out if I was all right. During this time, I started to follow the news from my home country Tanzania closely.

The first case of COVID-19 was confirmed in March 2020. Only a few days afterwards, the Prime Minister announced a series of measures, including the closure of schools. In the course of time, the number of people infected increased rapidly. The detailed figure was published on 29<sup>th</sup> April: 480 cases and 21 deaths.

According to the President, sharing the data on COVID 19 cases would only trigger fear in people. Therefore, reporting should not be so frequent but rather at long intervals. It seems that the President had no confidence in those responsible for carrying out the COVID-19 tests, as he once sent biological samples of a papaya, a quail and a goat to the National Health Laboratory, all of which were tested positive.

Among others, the US embassy in Tanzania warned that hospitals were overcrowded. Even though the government did not take any action, people were encouraged to stay at home and wear a mask. Furthermore, the President - observing the increase in cases - encouraged people to go church or mosque as he believed that COVID-19 was a devil who could not survive in the presence of God.

Yet, many sectors such as tourism were largely affected since international flights were cancelled. Truck drivers transporting goods to neighbouring countries such as Kenya and Uganda were also refused entry because they were believed to have been infected with the virus. In June, the President declared that Tanzania was free of the coronavirus. As a result, schools were reopened and no cases have been reported up to now.

In my opinion, dealing with the coronavirus in Tanzania is more political than the situation itself. Politicians should stop worrying about their election and start thinking about people's lives and the country's economy.

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