

REPUBLIQUE DU CAMEROUN

Paix-Travail-Patrie

SERVICES DU PREMIER MINISTRE

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

REPUBLIC OF CAMEROON

Peace-Work-Fatherland

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

SECRETARIAT GENERAL

PRESS RELEASE

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SECRETARIAT GÉNÉRAL
DIRECTION DES AFFAIRES ADMINISTRATIVES
ET DES REQUÊTES

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The **Prime Minister, Head of Government, H.E. Joseph DION NGUTE**, this Thursday, 23 April 2020, by videoconference, presided over the weekly meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Committee in charge of evaluating and monitoring the implementation of Government's response strategy against the COVID-19 pandemic in Cameroon.

Discussions during this meeting focused on the following issues:

- an update on the evolution of COVID-19 in Cameroon;
- a review of measures taken to limit the spread of coronavirus in prisons;
- the repatriation of Cameroonians in distress abroad, following the closure of national borders;
- arrangements for the deployment of pupils and students in classrooms and amphitheatres, as from the indicative date for the resumption of classes on 1 June 2020.

At the end of the reports presented on these points by the competent Ministers, the following observations were made:

1. **Regarding the evolution of the coronavirus in Cameroon, 1,334 cases** have already been recorded in 8 Regions of our country. To date, **668** people have been healed and 43 deaths have been recorded. The response strategy at work ensures a progressive control of this pandemic in Cameroon, despite its geographical spread.
2. **With regard to the measures taken to limit the spread of COVID-19 in prisons**, the Minister of State, Minister of Justice, and Keeper of the Seals, indicated that the application of the provisions of the presidential decree of 15 April 2020 on the commutation and remission of sentences to certain prisoners will help to decongest the country's prisons and, consequently,

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reduce the risk of the spread of the coronavirus in prisons. Moreover, the measures already taken to protect prisoners against this virus include the suspension of outside chores; the establishment of observation cells for suspicious cases; the launch of prison disinfection operations and the application of barrier gestures.

3. **With regard to the situation of Cameroonians in distress abroad, the President of the Republic, His Excellency Paul BIYA**, has instructed the Government to repatriate them, with expenses covered by the State. To date, a first contingent of **675** Cameroonians have already been repatriated since the closure of national borders on 18 March 2020, while **668** others are still stranded abroad. Negotiations are underway, at the behest of the Minister of External Relations, for the organization of special flights, with the support of the countries and diplomatic representations of Cameroon concerned, with a view to repatriating the second contingent in the days ahead.

In the same vein, the Government is facilitating the repatriation of foreigners wishing to return to their respective countries.

4. **As for the modalities of deployment of pupils and students in classrooms and amphitheatres, as from the indicative date for the resumption of classes on 1 June 2020**, specific measures are under consideration, as far as nursery school, classes one and two pupils are concerned, in view of the difficulties in enforcing the barrier gestures to this category of learners.

Furthermore, in order to respect social distancing measures in the school environment, a part-time and rotation system is envisaged in the other primary classes and in secondary schools.

In higher education, emphasis could be laid on the segmentation of various departments, sequencing of courses and the multiplication of tutorials.

At the end of the discussions, the Head of Government gave the following instructions:

- To the **Minister of State, Minister of Justice, and Keeper of the Seals**, to continue to work closely with the Ministry of Public Health to limit the spread of the coronavirus in prisons;
- To the **Minister of External Relations**, in collaboration with all other competent administrations, to expedite the repatriation

procedures of Cameroonians in distress abroad, in accordance with the directives of the **Head of State**.

- To the **Minister of Public Health**, in conjunction with the Governor of the Centre Region, to finalize measures related to the organization of the confinement of compatriots who will be repatriated, and to pay particular attention to the establishment of specialized treatment centres for COVID-19 patients;
- To the **Minister of Decentralization**, to closely monitor the distribution of medical products and equipment offered by the Head of State to Councils, as part of the fight against COVID-19;
- To the **Minister of Territorial Administration**, in conjunction with the Minister of Public Health, to ensure that persons who died as a result of the coronavirus are buried in their places of death;
- To the **Ministers in charge of the education sector**, to give further thought to the ways in which pupils and students can be deployed in schools and universities as soon as classes resume.

To conclude, the Prime Minister invited everyone to remain mobilized and committed to the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic and to ensure that the population respects the barrier gestures, in particular the systematic wearing of protective masks in areas open to the public.-

Yaounde, the 23 AVR 2020

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