

**NATIONWIDE BROADCAST**

**OF**

**HIS EXCELLENCY DR. GEORGE MANNEH WEAH**

**PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF LIBERIA**

**ON THE**

**CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

**THE EXECUTIVE MANSION**  
**MONROVIA, LIBERIA**

**16 MARCH 2020**

## **MY FELLOW CITIZENS AND FOREIGN RESIDENTS:**

I would like to speak directly to you today concerning the Coronavirus Pandemic, which is rapidly spreading around the world.

The spread of this virus represents the greatest threat to the health and well-being of the people of Liberia since the Ebola epidemic suffered by our country from 2014 to 2016.

Let me assure you that Government is taking every precaution and action to protect our borders and ports of entry. However, in spite of these arrangements, I regret to inform you that Liberia has recorded a confirmed case of the COVID-19 virus.

The infected person is Mr. Nathaniel Blama, Executive Director of the Environmental Protection Agency, who arrived in Liberia on Brussels Airlines on Friday night, the 13<sup>th</sup> of March. Along with several other officials of Government traveling on the same flight, Mr. Blama chose not to be quarantined, in keeping with the health protocols that were in place at the airport.

An intensive tracing exercise is underway to identify and test all persons with whom he came into contact. Meanwhile, all other persons who traveled on that flight and by-passed the mandatory screening protocols, are being made to report to the health authorities immediately and without any further delay, for testing.

Any other persons who attempt to by-pass screening at any port of entry will be arrested and taken into compulsory quarantine.

I want to assure the Liberian people that the situation is under professional management by the health authorities, who have adequately prepared themselves well in advance for this eventuality. There is no need to panic. I ask that all of you should remain calm, and report any suspicious medical behavior to the authorities for our own safety.

It is very important that we all follow the guidelines set out by the health authorities, and adapt our behavior accordingly.

## **MY FELLOW CITIZENS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:**

In view of the above, it is necessary to take certain immediate actions in response to this threat.

1. There must be a strong focus on hygiene from every individual and organization.
2. Everyone should wash their hands often, several times a day, with soap and running water, and use hand sanitizers, wherever available and affordable.
3. All offices, businesses schools, churches, and places of public gatherings should provide hand-washing facilities at their entrances.
4. There should be NO HANDSHAKING whatsoever. Use a nod of your head for greeting each other.
5. My impending national county tour is hereby postponed due to this new development on the coronavirus situation.

6. All travels to and from all countries with over 200 or more Corona Virus cases are hereby banned
7. All citizens and residents are urged to avoid public gatherings and large crowds, and try to keep a minimum social distance of at least 6 feet from people with fever, cough, sneezing, and difficulty in breathing.
8. Non-essential travel by all officials of government is hereby banned
9. All non-essential employees of the government are hereby granted a paid leave until further notice. The Civil Service Agency will announce the roster of employees in this category
10. Minimize your travel within Liberia, and to and from abroad, to that which is absolutely necessary. This refers specifically to cross-border traders and travelers coming to Liberia from infected countries, and applies particularly to all Government officials.

As President, I will remain focused at the highest level of leadership and concern, until this threat has been neutralized. However, as Liberia has now moved from the precautionary stage, to a containment stage, we will need your fullest support and cooperation as you change your behavior to follow the simple guidelines and measures that have been recommended above.

We will also be relying on the cooperation and support of our international partners as we work together to eliminate this deadly virus from our country.

Please take note, and govern yourselves accordingly.

God bless you all.

I thank you.