



The National Human Rights Commission, The Gambia

PRESS STATEMENT

Date: 16 February 2021

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Statement of the National Human Rights Commission on the surge of COVID-19 cases and the General Non-Compliance on Ministry of Health and WHO Guidelines

The Commission has noticed, with deep concern and fear, the public's total disregard and law enforcement agencies' non-enforcement of the Ministry of Health and WHO Guidelines for the prevention of Covid-19. Social distancing, wearing of facemasks, avoidance of public gatherings and events especially and other guidelines are disregarded with absolute apathy.

By all indication, the statistics show an exponential increase in our Covid-19 infection rate and already families have lost loved ones, some of whom are breadwinners and community pillars, to the pandemic. The recent detection of the UK variant of Covid-19 is even more worrisome as this variant is said to be more contagious and deadlier.

Unfortunately, mega-events continue to be organized and their organisers are music promoters, political leaders and political parties who the public look up to for guidance in these trying times. All are reminded that the protection of the public from Covid-19 should be placed above everything else.

The Government has the obligation to guarantee the fundamental human rights of the people, thus, it has a duty to protect all and sundry and to ensure enforcement and implementation of the safety guidelines including that of the WHO regarding Covid-19 prevention.

The National Human Rights Commission wishes to reiterate that we can only win the fight against COVID-19 when we all exercise personal responsibility in the observance of the WHO guidelines, and the political leaders leading by example. It is only through compliance with the law, respect for human rights and dignity and 'being each other's keeper', we will overcome this pandemic.

Signed: Emmanuel D. Joof
Chairperson