

## Covid-19: Eleventh Day of Lockdown

*(First published on website and fb page on 31-Mar-2020)*

So, yesterday was Day Eleven of Lockdown. And tonight it will be one week of total curfew with all the supermarkets, shops and bakeries closed. The Supermarkets and shops, but not retail bakeries, will be re-opened from the day after tomorrow, it has just been announced, from 9 am to 5 pm, Monday to Saturday. Everyone will need ID documents so that so we will be organized to shop, one-third of us at a time, by first letter of the alphabet for surname, as follows:

A – F: Mondays and Thursdays

G – N: Tuesdays and Fridays

O – Z: Wednesdays and Saturdays

There are conditions – all are reasonable:

You have to wear a mask, or something to cover your mouth and nose. (Bosses in the textile-usually-for-export-sector are making masks by the thousands, we are told.)

You have to bring your own bag, which you put in your trolley.

The trolley will be sanitized by staff of the supermarket in front of you.

You have to stand in line, with spacer-marks on the ground.

You can't reverse, or wander around, once inside the supermarket, but follow a line.

You have 30 minutes limit

You come alone (unless disabled)

There are limits on basic items: rice, flour, oil, toilet paper.

Fresh produce will all be packaged.

You are asked, reasonably, not touch what you are not taking.

If you have signs of illness or if you are found to have a temperature, the supermarket staff will take you to a quiet place, and an ambulance will take you to the nearest hospital for a test.

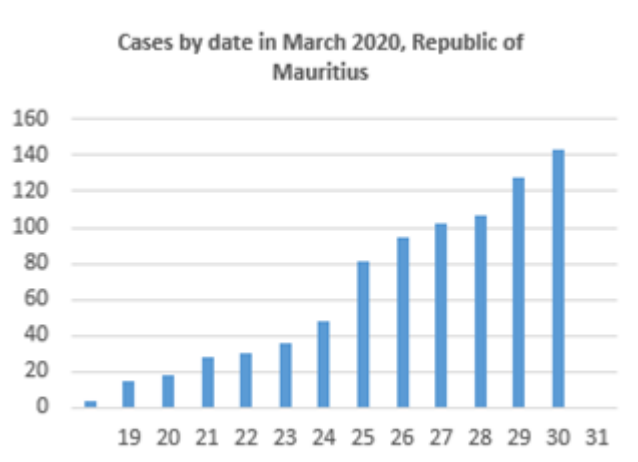
### Informal Sector

The Government has come up with a proposal for all those in the informal sector. Each person will need to either register on line with the Mauritius Revenue Authority (MRA) or phone a hotline 207 6000. Then people will get half the minimum wage or Rs 5,100 for the month.

### The Spread

Meanwhile, the spread is still increasing in Mauritius, as you will see in our table and chart below.

Date: 19 <sup>th</sup> to 31 <sup>st</sup> Mars	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31
Republic of Mauritius: Positive cases day by day	3	14	18	28	30	36	48	81	94	102	107	128	143



### Best practices

Mauritius is able to follow much better than many other countries the “trace-and-test” best practices that the WHO advises so strongly. This is because of the training by the Biro Saniter first eradicating and then tracing-and-testing for 70 years to prevent any new endemic malaria.

This means that, on the condition that we are all reassured of not running out of food, cooking gas or medicines and so can respect the lockdown very loyally, we in the Republic of Mauritius, have more chance of getting the epidemic to slow down and hopefully stop. Thus the document “Towards a Working Class Program during the Lockdown for Epidemic Control” (see our post under this title, and also posted below) which sets the conditions for people being able to respect the lockdown, and is signed by seven organizations: The Confederation des Travailleurs du Secteur Prive (Reeaz Chuttoo), Mauritius Labour Congress/All Workers Federation (Haniff Peerun), LALIT (Alain Ah Vee), Government Services Employees Association (Radakrishna Sadien), The Federation of Para-Statal Bodies and Other unions (Deepak Benydin), The All Civil Service and Other unions Federation (Vinod Seegum) and the Muvman Liberasyon Fam (Ragini Kistnasamy).

### Fishermen

The only fisher folk allowed to go fishing are the semi-industrial fishing vessels. (In an earlier post we announced erroneously that “fishermen” were to be given permits, but it is only semi-industrial fishermen on vessels on the high seas.) Lagoon and other traditional fishermen are not allowed to go out fishing. This measure is, so as in particular, to prevent gatherings as fishermen come ashore. Registered fishermen are all getting their “bad weather allowance” in the lockdown, but as some fishermen do not have ordinary bank accounts but get paid into the DBM and thus need to go to Port Louis and there is no transport so we understand some fishermen are thus not getting their allowances yet. This will need to be seen to by the State.

### At home

This morning, after the heavy rain last night, when we went on top of our house in Bambous to check on leaves blocking drains, we could chat to neighbours who were also on their houses doing the same thing. Yesterday we ate “green-banana-skin curry” that I had not eaten before, after a friend here made “polimas banann” the traditional recipe for green bananas – boiled, peeled (keep peel), grated and then spiced up in oil. Both were delicious.

Friends whose Mom has Alzheimer's are being challenged. Here is a rough description of how brilliantly they have to cope, even normally. Usually she has a home carer, usually she goes to a day-care centre five week days, usually while staying with her daughter, the other two siblings take two days each to accompany her, one by bus, one by car, to and from the day care centre. Now, hearing about both an illness she does not quite understand, and seeing everyone not going to work anymore, their Mom became – understandably – quite agitated. But her daughter has introduced her to WhatsApp and she has begun to chats to other members of the family and to enjoy kids' comics. This has soothed her a bit. Hats off to you three and your Mom!

So, staying home is not as easy for some of us as for others. We might spare a warming thought for others. For example, from where our house is, yesterday there were two domestic fights at high volume coming from two different points in the middle distance. Imagine the terror of being locked down into a domestic violence situation – even if just verbal violence, which these seemed to be. I don't know if the hotlines are working. Perhaps.

Another friend lives across the road from a large family in a tin house with no running water. Again, it is not easy to imagine everyone staying indoors, keeping "social distance" and washing hands regularly.

And then there are people living with dependency on various substances. At least methadone substitution treatment is going ahead. But others are clearly very agitated and in suffering.

### **Conclusion**

To conclude, we can say that the lockdown shows us a lot of areas where we need social change, that's for sure.

Lindsey Collen,

for LALIT, on a personal note.