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Govt must prioritize vulnerable citizens on Covid -19 vaccination

Crisis in Zimbabwe Coalition (CiZC) is disturbed by the apparent attempt by the government to sideline vulnerable citizens from the Covid-19 vaccination programme while reserving the vaccines for the political elite.

The move to sideline ordinary Zimbabweans who cannot access medical care in light of the economic rot in the country amounts to a silent genocide.

On January 25, 2021, the Head of Monitoring and Evaluation in the Ministry of Health and Child Care, Robert Mudyiradima announced that government was failing to procure enough Covid-19 vaccines adding that of the 3 Million doses set to be acquired under the COVAX scheme, the government would prioritize frontline health care workers, Ministers, Members of Parliament, the security sector and senior government officials.

While we applaud the move to prioritize vaccination for Frontline Health workers (who have largely been exposed to the pandemic due to lack of protective personal equipment at public hospitals) we bemoan the fact that the government has deliberately left vulnerable groups out of the vaccination programme.

The Covid-19 pandemic, which has so far claimed more than 1 000 lives, has largely affected ordinary Zimbabweans; most of whom are living far below the Poverty Datum Line and cannot afford medical care.

It is a known fact that over the years, Zimbabwe's health sector has been in the intensive care unit and ordinary Zimbabweans have had to bear the brunt of a failed health care system.

The Covid-19 pandemic has further exposed the rot within the health sector and it is highly irresponsible for the government to prioritize political elites while sidelining vulnerable citizens.

Over the years, we have witnessed cases of patients dying at public hospitals while top government officials, who are largely responsible for the rot in the health sector were seeking medical treatment abroad.

For the government to prioritize the same people behind this rot is just but a confirmation of the fact that the welfare of ordinary citizens is secondary to our current crop of 'leaders'.

The Crisis Coalition would like to remind the government of its obligation to provide health care services to citizens as set out under Section 76 of the Zimbabwean constitution.


Moreover, Section 82 of the constitution states that citizens over the age of 70 have the right to receive health care and medical assistance from the state while Section 83 implores the state to provide medical care to persons with disabilities and it is a serious abrogation of duty for the government to sideline these vulnerable populations in the Covid-19 vaccination programme.


We further implore the government to prioritize vaccination for citizens with terminal illnesses as well as those living with health conditions that make them more vulnerable to Covid-19.


The Covid-19 vaccine should never be a preserve for the elite and we implore the government to ensure that ordinary Zimbabweans who continue to bear the brunt of a failing economy have access to the Covid-19 vaccine.

ISSUED BY THE CRISIS IN ZIMBABWE COALITION

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