Benin, a country in West Africa has an estimated population of 12,123,200 people in 2020. The country presently grapples with several infectious diseases like Lassa fever, Malaria, Cholera, Tuberculosis and some others. The surge of the coronavirus has negatively impacted economic activities and the healthcare system of the country, and has left the liberal private sector to provide a large part of the delivery of health care to the country. This has presently worsened the health outcome of the people, with an initial average life expectancy of 61.07 years (CIA, 2014).


Recording her first COVID-19 case on the 16th of March, 2020, several guidelines were stipulated and measures enacted by the government to curb the spread of the virus. However, the state of the health care system, readiness of the citizens to comply with guidelines are indicators that measured the success or failure of the government to manage the pandemic.

This fact sheet explores how Benin Republic has managed the pandemic, it also highlights actions that the government have taken and the response from the citizens. The fact sheet is driven by the country’s COVID-19 data sets and a proper analysis of the data will help to identify the government efforts
in managing the pandemic by reducing lives lost and improving the citizens wellbeing. In human rights parlance, protection of citizens is affording them their rights to life and rights to health care as enshrine in the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Cultural and Social Rights and the Africa Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights. These are accountable human rights treaties and the management of the pandemic for every country have a responsibility for the protection of human rights of their citizen.

Success Indicators:
At the heart of the COVID-19 Pandemic is the people and it is their human rights that is at risk. HURIDAC published a report on the Human Rights Perspective of Covid-19, the report identified three major success indicators, a rights based tool for state to use in managing the pandemic from human rights perspective.

A. Efficient Management of COVID-19

The government of the republic created a “sanitary cordon” around 12 affected cities/town. This was initiated against a total lockdown of the country which would have affected the economic growth of the country. The citizens were not allowed to move out of the affected areas but were free to move within. This measure alongside regular handwashing, social distancing and isolation of infected cases were followed. Covid-19 sensitization programmes were carried out in several communities by health workers in these communities. The government also enforced compulsory wearing of face masks in public and mandatory tests (rapid and PCR) upon arrival and departure from the international airport in Cotonou. Mitigation measures like; handwashing and hygiene by installing handwashing equipment on the streets, along with social distancing were introduced by the government as total lockdown wasn’t an option for government due to economic impact. Despite the raptness of the government of the country, plunging into quick action to curb the virus by providing a range of digital platforms, to aid quick dissemination of information and reduction of misinformation, the digital platform is still a challenge as large percentage of the population do not have access to the internet and as such little is achieved using this medium to manage the pandemic. Progressively, the country is tackling the spread by increasing the number of surveillance unit in order to ensure an increase in the number of tests per day.
B. Quality of Public Health System

The health care system in Benin republic as well as other West Africa countries is still a challenge. The total health care expenditure is still 4.6% of the GDP, which is still a big gap in complying with the 15% Abuja declaration. The country faces several health challenges such as limited access to beds, ventilators, intensive care units, laboratories, and short on trained healthcare professionals. Additionally, help from organizations like ECOWAS (Economic Community of West Africa States), WAHO (West Africa Health Organisation) and other implementing partners, financial supports were made for the purchase of essential supplies and equipment to help mitigate the pandemic. More healthcare workers were deployed to the community with more cases. Moreover, the government of Benin prioritise the protection of health care worker and its citizen by activating a prepared plan of over $600,000 with several strategic objectives.

In addition to available equipment, the Ministry of Health did advertise with an open tender for medical equipment, stretchers, hospital beds and wheelchairs. Inadequate equipment, health workers and funds is found to be typical to most West African countries. ECOWAS (Economic Community of West Africa States), UNICEF (United Nations International Children’s Emergncy Fund), WHO (World Health Organisation) also responded in several ways by supporting the government in providing vehicles, social protection & cash-based assistance, distribution of handwashing stations to school and several others.

The Government of Benin, like some other west African countries, organized stimulus package to support craftsmen, businesses, informal and small-scale entrepreneur and the vulnerable.

C. Citizens Compliance

Citizens compliance to the government directives is key to the success factors of managing COVID-19 pandemic, it also the determinant of the level of human rights violations by government security forces. There is a clear correlation that a high compliance level with reduce the level of human rights violations and vice versa. Benin republic have a higher level of citizen's compliance in comparison to many West Africa Countries. One factor that may have aided the compliance of citizens is the government policy not to embarked on total lockdown that cripple most economy.
The lack of instability of the economy, especially with the informal sector, where most citizens operate helped. In this case the lack of restriction of freedom of movement and associations has also contributed to this success. This shows that little adjustment is needed by the citizens.

Goal of the analysis

The goal of this analysis is to advocate the rights of the citizens to live, to have access to affordable healthcare and human rights.

Situation Overview

a. Confirmed Cases

Number of positive cases continued to increase from 1 to 2145, giving a total of 2,145 cases as of August 31st. Number of deaths increased from 0 to 40 during the reporting period. The fatality rate is 1.8% whilst the survival rate increase to 54.2% in August.

Figure 1.a: Number of confirmed cases from 16th March till 16th August 2020
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This chart also shows that the confirmed cases have continued to increase due to community transmission, from the drastic increase in May of 232 cases to the increasing spike of 1199 in June to 2145 till the end of August.

b. Confirmed deaths

Figure 2: Number of confirmed deaths from 16th March till end of August 2020

Benin Republic spike from May also reflects on the confirmed deaths figures, with just 3 deaths in May, increases by 700% by June and kept increasing till around 40 deaths in August.
c. Confirmed deaths and Recovery Ratio

![Benin: Deaths vs Recovery](chart)

**Figure 3: Number of confirmed deaths and recovery from 16th March till 31st**

The recovery rate is very important and it shows the people can recover from contracting COVID-19. Government should ensure high recovery rate. The May spike also shows high recovery rate from 143 to 1776 in August.

d. Survival Ratio:

![Survival Rate](chart)

**Figure 3: Survival Rate of cases per month**

The survival ratio reveals the different between the confirmed cases and deaths. It shows the chances of survival of COVID-19 within the country data sets, this is not factoring cases with underlaying health conditions. In April Benin was losing 1 death to every 64 cases, in May it increases to 77 persons to 1 death. However, the situation worsens in June, July and August, reducing survival rate to 57, 51 and 54 respectively.
Covid-19 Benin Republic Dashboard:

Figure 4: Covid-19 Benin Republic dashboard and raw data can be access at http://huridac.org/benin.html#

Covid-19 Benin Republic Animation Video:

The Two minutes video on the fact Sheet can be access at: http://huridac.org/benin.html#
Citizens should comply with set rules and guidelines, by cooperating with the government and health authorities.

Measures should be adopted to reduce the impact of the pandemic on children who have been out of school especially the disabled.

A strong Surveillance system should be established with the support and will of all political establishment.

Increase and improvement of isolation centres, health facilities and diagnostic facilities with necessary equipment and manpower and focus on geriatric care.

The Government of Benin Republic should take all necessary measure to ensure that healthcare is available to all, especially the marginalized without discrimination. Focus shouldn't only be on the affected areas only, but every part of the country to reduce spread and death.

Some civil societies alluded that the legislative elections in April may have been the cause of the spike in number of confirmed cases in May, causing an imbalance in democratization and public safety. The government should ensure that public safety becomes paramount in both public and private events. All events should be subject to the approval of both health and safety institutions.

Citizens should comply with set rules and guidelines, by cooperating with the government and health authorities.

Healthcare workers should be given adequate and appropriate protective equipment to shield them from being victims of the virus.

Measures should be adopted to reduce the impact of the pandemic on children who have been out of school especially the disabled.

Sensitization programs should be adopted to help citizens understand and comply with set guidelines and informed knowledge of their human rights.

Guidelines on conservation of wildlife and biodiversity should be followed, as this will help limit the transmission of zooanthropozoonoses, anthropozoonoses and amphixenoses infections.

The Government should continue to seek support and technical assistance from World Health Organization, Economic Community of West African States and West African Health Organization.

Recommandations:
• All stakeholders should be involved in the design and management of ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

• Governments to strengthen civic education interventions through formal and informal institutions that will quickly adapt and make information accessible and readily available to every corner of the states.

• The Government, Human Rights Organizations, Civil Society Organizations, and other relevant stakeholders must ensure the rights of citizens are upheld during this period.

• Deliberate investment is needed towards safeguarding the dignity and bodily integrity of women and children. Gender indicators that measure the deliverables that directly impact the lives of women and girls and all children is a prerequisite to inclusive development.

• Citizens must ensure compliance and cooperate with the Government as they enforce preventive measures against the Coronavirus, citizens should learn to adapt to the new lifestyle brought about by the virus and avoid spreading fake news as this can kill faster than the virus itself.

ABOUT HURIDAC

The Human Rights Advancement and Development Centre (HURIDAC) is an African-based regional Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), registered in Nigeria. Its mandate are to: (1) To promote, protect and ensure respect for human rights, democracy and development; (2) To build the capacity and knowledge base of civil society, government institutions, oversight bodies and other agencies and communities on human rights, development, democracy and conflict prevention; and (3) To use the process of the rule of law to hold governments and their agents accountable. The regional office of HURIDAC is located in Lagos (Nigeria) while its Nigeria and Gambia offices are located in Abuja (Nigeria) and Banjul Respectively. Kindly check our website (www.huridac.org).

Note: This fact sheet can be downloaded at: http://huridac.org/benin.html#