

Press Release

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South African Institute of Race Relations
The power of ideas

Media contact: Hermann Pretorius, IRR Campaigns Manager – 079 875 4290; hermann@irr.org.za

Media enquiries: Michael Morris Tel: 066 302 1968 Email: michael@irr.org.za;

Kelebogile Leepile Tel: 011 482 7221 ext: 2018 Email: kelebogile@irr.org.za

IRR to publish comprehensive Covid-19 policy response

The Institute of Race Relations (IRR) will tomorrow publish a comprehensive policy response framework on how South Africa should deal with the socio-economic challenges arising from the Covid-19 outbreak and its far-reaching consequences.

In light of the imminent lockdown and other measures announced yesterday by President Cyril Ramaphosa, the focus must now urgently turn to practical and realistic policy solutions to save lives and livelihoods. Drawing on its unequalled and considerable research and policy expertise built up over more than 90 years, the IRR has been devoting its attention to crafting executable policy proposals in five key areas:

1. Healthcare;
2. Income security;
3. Social stability;
4. Economic and financial stability; and
5. Civil liberties.

In these areas, as the IRR report to be published tomorrow emphasizes, the greatest care must be taken in treading the fine line between centralized control to deal with the pandemic and its spread, and effective collaboration and decentralized crisis management to deal with its socio-economic fallout.

Said IRR Campaigns Manager Hermann Pretorius: “While the government has taken some laudable decisions to save lives and livelihoods, the reality is that we are heading into this crisis in a position of unnecessary weakness. This is the result of wrong-headed ideology and failed policies that have essentially left South Africa with dangerously limited options in dealing with the massive socio-economic fallout to result from Covid-19.

“No-one should make the mistake of thinking that the current policy environment that now sends our nation ill-equipped and impoverished into these troubled times is capable of delivering the solutions that South Africa desperately needs if it is to withstand the social and economic stresses amidst and after the crisis.”

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