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PRESS RELEASE

Consider our front liners: PM appeals to citizens

PRIME Minister Manasseh Sogavare has appealed to citizens that feel their rights deprived as a result of the lockdown to think of the front liners that have sacrificed to protect our nation.

Delivering his national pre-lockdown speech this morning, the Prime Minister said citizens must think of the need for our front liners to equip and sharpen their skills to be able to protect their own lives, the lives of their loved ones and to protect all of us from the COVID-19.

“The lockdown will enable them to test their Standard Operation Procedures and capabilities to ensure they work, not only to you who feel deprived of your rights, but all of us, our country, themselves as individual workers and their families,” he said.

The Prime Minister acknowledged that many citizens have questioned whether we need to do a lockdown in order to be better prepared to tackle COVID-19 in the unlikely event we have a single case.

He said the lockdown would enable our front liners to also sharpen their testing capabilities, so that while they protect us, they too must ensure they practice how not to get infected by COVID-19.

Prime Minister Sogavare said some people have suggested that the Government can just do a desktop mock exercise to test and sharpen our standard operation procedures.

“My government has asked itself the same questions, and we come to the conclusion that with a disease as infectious, serious and dangerous as COVID-19, we cannot gamble with our people’s lives and pretend that a simple desktop exercise will give us all we need to know,” he said.

He said protecting our citizens is key and a desktop mock exercise will not highlight all the deficiencies and shortcomings of our untried SOPs in the event we have a real case of COVID-19 in our country.

Therefore, he said we must test our capabilities through this lockdown.

“I humbly ask you all for your support and cooperation to make this lockdown period successful. I am encouraging our citizens and all residents living in the Honiara

Emergency Zone to observe the 36-hour lockdown of our Capital city seriously,” he said.

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