

# *Concern for Africa*

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At first, Africa was among the least affected regions by the COVID-19 pandemic, but a sudden increase of cases in recent days raises concern, due to the conditions of extreme poverty and total abandonment of many countries on the continent.

In Africa -- the cradle of civilization -- 740,026 infections and 15,465 dead were reported the other day, but more than 15,000 contagions and 255 deaths occurred in just 24 hours.

Still, these figures are considered to be misleading, since there are many places in very difficult conditions to conduct an accurate investigation. The absence of an adequate health care infrastructure leaves many to simply die in their homes, without confirmation that they suffered from COVID-19.

This indicates that the circulation of the virus is very far from being controlled and in the coming weeks or months, a significant increase of cases may take place in one of the most vulnerable regions of the planet. This according to Michael Ryan, executive director of the World Health Organization's Health Emergencies Program, from Geneva, Switzerland, who called for international solidarity to avoid a human tragedy of epic proportions.

According to the WHO official, what happens in South Africa could be a preview of what is going to happen in the rest of the continent. In Nelson Mandela's homeland, there are almost 374,000 confirmed cases and the numbers are growing an average of over 9,000 each day.

Nigeria, Egypt, Kenya, Ethiopia, Madagascar, Zambia and Namibia are also being affected by the pandemic, despite the fact that its epicenter at the moment is on the American continent, but it could easily cross the Atlantic Ocean.

This situation has caused a major concern in several countries of Sub-Saharan Africa, subjected to internal conflicts, military occupation, poor development and precarious public services.

Hunger, poverty and the low quality of life of people crowded into makeshift camps, are already taking a heavy toll on these communities and there is a risk that the COVID-19 will join those conditions.

It is no longer just a matter of local authorities taking the adequate health measures, but the fact that they lack the necessary resources to implement them. It would then be an appropriate time for some countries, which were colonial powers in Africa, to pay their debt to a continent that has been a victim of extreme exploitation and today bears the brunt of its history.

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