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UN Security Council must act decisively to control the COVID-19 pandemic

THE HAGUE – The U.N. Security Council must take decisive action to address the causes and effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, said the World Federalist Movement – Institute for Global Policy (WFM-IGP) today.

Almost five months after the first reports of the novel coronavirus were reported in China's Wuhan Province and three weeks after the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared it a pandemic, the Security Council has so far failed to take appropriate remedial action.

"The argument advanced by some Security Council members that the COVID-19 pandemic is a public health emergency with little to no impact on international peace and security is preposterous," said Dr Tawanda Hondora, Executive Director of WFM-IGP.

The pandemic has adversely affected U.N. peacekeeping operations in Sudan, Central African Republic, Mali and other places where people's lives have been ravaged by genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Ongoing fighting in Yemen, Libya and Syria is affecting efforts to contain the spread of the pandemic.

"All members of the Security Council must support the call made by the U.N. Secretary General for a ceasefire in all ongoing conflicts and crucially pass a resolution authorizing the implementation of effective measures to enforce compliance," said Hondora.

It is also projected that hundreds of thousands of people are likely to die in developing countries where poor governance, weak economies, and sanctions have devastated public health systems.

"The current fragmented and uncoordinated responses to a pandemic that knows no territorial borders are an unacceptable consequence of self-serving policies promoted by some Security Council members," said Hondora.

The U.S. and China have traded accusations and counteraccusations regarding the origins of, and the country that should be liable for, the pandemic.

"This is an unacceptable and irresponsible sideshow by veto-wielding members of the Security Council, which undermines the spirit of cooperation and the multilateral efforts required to contain and prevent a recurrence of this pandemic," said Hondora.

An unprecedented number of countries have derogated from their obligations under important international human rights treaties and declared states of emergency – creating a complex geopolitical situation that heightens the risk of state abuses, violent conflict and inevitable global fragility.

"Members of the Security Council must spare humanity from further catastrophe by recognizing COVID-19 as a threat to international peace and security and adopting holistic and truly multilateral responses to the pandemic," said Hondora.

About WFM-IGP

WFM-IGP, founded in 1947, is a non-profit, non-partisan civil society organization that campaigns for the establishment and strengthening of multilateral frameworks that can effectively address the causes and effects of violent conflict, human rights violations and other grave transnational challenges. WFM-IGP uses a Coalition Operating Model and hosts the Secretariats of two hugely influential coalitions, i.e., the Coalition for the International Criminal Court (CICC), a global network of over 2,500 civil society organizations in 150 countries; and the International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect (ICRtoP), a global network of over 90 civil society organisations.

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