Nov 3rd, 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM

Ubuntu, Anti-corruption Principle, and the Protection of the Right to Health in South Africa during the COVID-19: The Case Study of the Solidarity Fund (SF)

Marianne Séverin
marianne.severin@gmail.com

Ubuntu, anti-corruption principle and the protection of the Right to Health in South Africa during the Covid-19. The case study of the Solidarity Fund (SF)

Dr. Marianne Séverin[*]

In the COVID-19 context, all States had to protect the right to health of their people by implementing emergency measures to mitigate the negative effects of this global pandemic. South Africa declared COVID-19 a National Disaster (March 15, 2020) under the Disaster Management Act, 2002, N°57. The government has full authority to adopt emergency measures, including the creation of a Solidarity Fund (March 23, 2020) to respond to the coronavirus' "health, humanitarian and social consequences". In a context of corruption that is familiar to South Africa (the country scored 44 out of 100 points [Transparency International, 2020]), the Presidency has strengthened anti-corruption agencies to investigate any suspicion of abuse of these donations and the arrest of anyone responsible for these criminal acts. Despite these measures, a wave of scandals, affecting the right to health for all, has struck South Africa. From 2020, over 4,780 corruption cases, involving government officials, senior civil servants, and the private sector, were reported. Diversion of food donations, embezzlement of social grants, as well as abuse of the Temporary Employer/Employee Relief Scheme (TERS) and Unemployment Insurance Fund by businesses or/and public servants, were among these scandals. In 2022, was disclosed that of the 5,467 contracts regarding COVID-19 Personal Protective Equipment awarded to 3,066 suppliers (for a total of R14.3 billion), 2,803 were irregular. All these frauds show the urgent need to reclaim African principles in combating corruption at the highest levels of society. In making its case the paper explores several biggest Covid-19-related scandals of corruption. Then it proceeds to examine, how this wrongdoing threatened the right to health and the importance of South African Ubuntu as an anti-corruption principle. It concludes by demonstrating how Ubuntu shall prevent another scandal of corruption in a pandemic context.

Keywords: South Africa, Corruption, Covid-19, Right to Health, Ubuntu.

---

[*] Researcher at « Les Afriques dans le Monde » (LAM)/Sciences Po Bordeaux (France). Email: marianne.severin@gmail.com