

SOMETHING IS TERRIBLY WRONG

Although the government's decision to reopen everything has been welcomed by most people who desperately need to get back to their pre-COVID-19 lives, some see it as too hasty. The World Health Organization was surprised at this move and says that it was not consulted. I am certain that it wasn't easy for the government to give permission to open restaurants, mosques, and other public places, but I suppose that public pressure has taken its toll, not to mention the fact that many countries in the world are also gradually opening up. Some, such as Brazil, were never under lockdown at all! Nevertheless, the government has proven beyond any doubt that its top priority has been protect people from getting infected by the virus.

That's it for niceties!

I personally do not understand how all the pre-COVID-19 rules and regulations, particularly the administrative ones, can be restored when whole sectors are not even able to go back to work. Take the tourism sector, for example; the whole industry is still paralyzed, yet more likely than others, businesses working in the hospitality industry are now liable to lawsuits. Their post-dated checks from pre-COVID-19 are supposed to be honored, otherwise the businesses will be penalized with bank charges for starters. When a handful of their checks bounce,

the Palestine Monetary Authority (PMA), in compliance with the reinstated laws, will blacklist those "errant" businesses and deny them the possibility to receive new checkbooks. It takes months for businesses to settle such issues with the PMA. Something is terribly wrong here, in my opinion.

We're not France, which has just announced an €8 billion recovery plan for the car industry to absorb the shock caused by COVID-19. Neither are we the United States, with a government spending literally trillions of dollars on bailouts. After years of an economic dry spell caused by halting aid to Palestine, are the Palestinian businesses expected to single-handedly face the brunt of an economic tsunami? No Palestinian businesses could ever dream of any bailout, but they should at least expect a grace period of a few months until the economic wheels start rolling again and they're able to absorb the blow.

I'm not normally the sort of person who criticizes the government; in fact, I have so far been extremely supportive. But enough is enough! This is not fair. Whoever took the decision to reinstate the business-as-usual administrative rules and regulations was clearly ill-advised by "the experts" who live in ivory towers.

Long live Palestine!

Sani Meo
Publisher

