

'Sensitise the masses to sanitise': Bobi Wine uses song to fight coronavirus across Africa

Monday 30 March 2020, by [AFP](#), [Reuters](#), [The Guardian](#) (Date first published: 26 March 2020).

Ugandan opposition leader and Senegalese progressive rappers among those taking to the airwaves with a message on how to avoid spreading Covid-19

Bobi Wine, a Ugandan musician and rising political force, has joined the likes of footballer-turned-president George Weah in resorting to song to help stem the spread of coronavirus in [Africa](#).

Wine, whose real name is Robert Kyagulanyi, worked with fellow artist Nubian Li to release a song on Wednesday laced with east Africa's signature rhumba melodies about the importance of personal hygiene.

"The bad news is that everyone is a potential victim," Wine sings. "But the good news is that everyone is a potential solution."

The pair exhort people to regularly wash hands, keep a distance and look out for symptoms such as a fever and cough.

[Uganda](#) on Wednesday confirmed five more cases of Covid-19, bringing its tally to 14, four days after it recorded its first patient. President Yoweri Museveni's government has already taken a raft of measures including sealing off borders, closing bars, and banning public gatherings to contain the outbreak.

Liberian president Weah also released a six-minute song on Wednesday, called Let's Stand Together and Fight Coronavirus, in which he explains how the virus is spread and urges hand washing to a backing of harmonised female vocals and upbeat guitar music from a group called The Rabbis.

"From Europe to America, from America to Africa, take precautions, and be safe," the former football icon sings.

Weah's spokesman Solo Kelgbeh said the president produced a similar song during the Ebola crisis, and that he started working on the new single before coronavirus even reached [Liberia](#).

The song serves a practical purpose, Kelgbeh said. "Liberia is a country where a majority of the people don't have access to internet and Facebook, but everyone listens to radio," he said. "This song will be played on various radio stations in the country ... to have the message spread sufficiently."

The country of 4.8 million people, which has banned travel to and from virus-hit countries, has recorded three coronavirus cases to date. As with other poverty-stricken states in the region, there are fears about Liberia's capacity to respond to an outbreak.

The country was the worst affected by the 2014-16 West African Ebola outbreak, when more than

4,800 people died.

In [Senegal](#), activist hip-hop group Y'en a Marre have recorded a rap about washing hands, disposing of used tissues and avoiding crowds in their latest release, called Shield against Coronavirus.

Uganda has a history of using music to tackle other outbreaks.

Songs about HIV/Aids by another Ugandan crooner Philly Bongoley Lutaaya helped spread awareness in the 1980s and 90s and bring down sky-high infection rates. He later died of the disease.

Joel Ssenyonyi, Bobi Wine's spokesman, told Reuters the singer had distributed press releases on Covid-19 and handed out jerry cans and soap to improve hand washing in communities.

"One other creative way of communicating is through music," Ssenyonyi said. "Most people love to listen to music so what better way to put across a message than through music."

Reuters and AFP contributed to this report

All about Coronavirus on this website

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Public health issues are mostly in country-specific epidemic/pandemic folders ([European Union](#), [Great Britain](#), [France](#), [Pakistan](#), [India](#), [Philippines](#) etc.)

We have also selected a few articles with a global [political](#) analysis, as well as a few articles tracking the emergence of global progressive [movements](#) related to the pandemic.

ESSF is raising funds for the [Labour Relief Campaign in Pakistan](#) which supports workers and families impacted by the pandemic. We will announce other solidarity initiatives in the coming days and weeks.

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The Guardian

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