

USEFUL COVID-19 RESOURCES FOR LEGAL EMPOWERMENT GROUPS

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PROTECTING VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

The repercussions of lockdowns and other containment measures are felt most acutely by the world's most vulnerable populations - the very communities we support through our legal empowerment efforts. Limited mobility can interfere with access to health care, assistance with unemployment, and the provision of basic needs. Abuses can be committed during arrests and detentions of persons accused of violating curfews. Migrants can be stranded as a result of border closures.

To learn more of the human rights implications of containment measures generally, see:

- [Coronavirus: Human rights need to be front and centre in response, says Bachelet](#) (OHCHR)
- [World's most vulnerable in 'third wave' for Covid-19 support, experts warn](#) (Guardian)
- ["We are in an unprecedented situation & normal rules no longer apply"](#) (UN Secretary-General António Guterres)
- [CIVICUS: States should put human rights at the centre of all responses to COVID-19](#) (CIVICUS)
- [COVID-19: How human rights can help protect us](#) (AMNESTY)
- [Responding to COVID 19](#) (Canadian Lawyers for International Human Rights)
- [Governance, accountability and transparency in the time of COVID-19 and projections for the near future](#). (NFC Report)

- [A Guide to Open Government and the Coronavirus: Justice](#) : OGP
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To learn more about the affected human rights of specific populations:

- PRISONERS & PRETRIAL DETAINEES
 - [Coronavirus: Healthcare and Human Rights of People in Prison](#) (Penal Reform International)
 - [Guidance for Legal Aid Providers to Protect Health & Human Rights of Detainees](#) (ILF)
 - [COVID-19 and Prisons: Ensuring an Effective Response](#) (CHRI)
 - [COVID-19: A Statement from ILF](#)
 - [Coronavirus, prisoners, and public defenders](#) (ILF)
 - [Protecting the rights of prisoners during the Covid-19 lockdown](#) (Mail & Guardian- Africa's best read)
 - [Pakistan: Prisoners at Risk of COVID-19](#) (HRW)
 - [Statement by African Commission on Human and People's Rights](#)
 - Fair Trials International - [Public Health Need to Keep People out of Detention](#)
 - WHO Europe, [Preparedness, prevention and control of COVID-19 in prisons and other places of detention](#)
 - UNODC, [Covid Preparedness and Response in Prisons](#)
 - NALSA & CHRI [Handbook of Formats](#)
 - [The Right to Health Care in Prison during the COVID19 Pandemic](#) _ OSJ
- MIGRANTS
 - [We Demand That ICE Immediately Release Any Detainees Who Are Considered High Risk for COVID-19](#) (Florence Project)
 - [Florence Project Condemns the Administration's Plan to Turn Back Asylum Seekers at the Southern Border](#) (Florence Project)
 - <https://phr.org/our-work/resources/covid-19-shows-us-why-we-should-keep-ice-out-of-hospitals/> (Physicians For Human Rights)
 - [Responding to the COVID-19 Crisis While Protecting Asylum Seekers](#) (Statement by PHR, Refugees International, Human Rights First, Women's Refugee Commission, Medecins Sans Frontiere)
- DOMESTIC VIOLENCE SURVIVORS
 - [As Cities Around the World Go on Lockdown, Victims of Domestic Violence Look for a Way Out](#) (TIME)
 - [Safeguarding women's rights during the Covid-19 shutdown](#) (Mail & Guardian- Africa's best read)

- [Domestic Violence Cases Surge During COVID-19 Epidemic](#) (SIXTH TONE- Fresh voice from today's China)
- [The COVID-19 Outbreak and Gender: Key Advocacy Points from Asia and the Pacific](#) (Key advocacy points from Asia and the Pacific) - Gender in Humanitarian Action
- [Gender Implications of COVID 19 in Development and Humanitarian Settings](#) (CARE)
- [The Impact of COVID-19 on Women](#) (UN Women)
- [COVID -19 and ending violence against women and girls](#) (UN Women)
- [Pandemics and Violence against Women and Children](#) (Centre for Global Development)
- RESIDENTS OF INFORMAL SETTLEMENTS
 - [“Housing, the front line defence against the COVID-19 outbreak.” says UN expert.](#) UN Special Rapporteur on adequate housing
 - [Toolkit campaña regional](#) "Para quedarse en casa hay que tener una"
 - [Water access critical to beating back COVID-19 spread in slum areas](#) (UN News)
- LGBTQI Community
 - [COVID-19 and The Human Rights of LGBTQI People](#) (OHCR)
- Women's Rights
 - [Justice for Women Amidst COVID19](#) (IDLO)
 - [Security Strategies for Women Rights Defenders](#) (Nazdeek)
 - [Gender Based Violence and COVID19: Emerging solutions in justice programming](#) (IDLO)

ADAPTING OUR WORK: TRANSITIONING FROM FRONTLINE TO REMOTE, LEVERAGING TECHNOLOGY

We must be responsible, careful, and creative in our role as justice advocates. Stemming the spread of COVID-19 requires that we take seriously the call to distance ourselves physically from each other. This may be counterintuitive to many of us; working closely with communities is a vital part of legal empowerment work. But right now, keeping our distance protects the health of our communities as a whole. Social distancing prevents the rapid spread of COVID-19 into the population. The faster the disease spreads, the faster the most vulnerable people are more likely to get it, which puts their lives at risk, puts the health system under duress, and further taxes health providers.

Ideas for transitioning grassroots justice defenders to remote work:

- Excerpt from [COVID guidance for legal empowerment organizations](#) (Namati)
 - “Some teams are exploring how paralegal workplans can be modified to keep in contact with clients via phone/remotely where possible. Paralegals might also work on updating case files/data quality or reading updates on the laws while at home. In addition to staying in touch w/ communities, paralegals may be able to continue advocacy with authorities through virtual means, an approach Namati is trying in Myanmar (we recognize that many government functions will also likely be disrupted with time, but are trying to think creatively.) Now is also a great time for paralegals to step back and analyze trends and patterns across cases.”

Example from other movements:

- [Young climate activists change tactics as virus spreads](#) (Bloomberg)
- [The social support networks stepping up in coronavirus-stricken China](#) (OpenDemocracy)
- [Coronavirus is a historic trigger event — and it needs a movement to respond](#) (Waging Nonviolence)
- [HOLY SH*T! 7 things to do instead of hoarding toilet paper](#) (Waging Nonviolence)

Tips on language and communication:

- [Talking About Coronavirus: Centering Language around Inclusion, Empowerment, and Justice](#) (The Opportunity Agenda)

Tips on working remotely, generally

- [Building trust while working remotely](#) (The Engine Room)

Remote Legal Support

- [Remote Legal Support Guide: A Best Practices Manual for Nonprofit and Pro Bono Innovation](#) (Pro Bono Net)
- [Here's how Africans are using tech to combat the coronavirus pandemic](#) (World Economic Forum)
- [Legal Empowerment, Covid-19 & Expanding Access to Justice w/Technology](#) (Recording of Presentation, Skoll Forum)
- Protection Ideas for Human Rights Defenders
 - [Physical, emotional and digital protection while using home as office in times of COVID-19: Ideas & tips for human rights defenders](#) (FRONT LINE DEFENDERS)

UPHOLDING DEMOCRATIC IDEALS DURING THE PANDEMIC RESPONSE

Examples of exploitation of the pandemic to reduce access to information:

- “Here in Brazil the president enacted a “medida provisória” (kind of an executive decree, but with the status of a law enacted by congress) changed our freedom of information

law. Now, government officials are not obliged to answer any freedom of information request for this whole year (during the outbreak of Covid-19) if the server is in home office and must be at the office to access the piece of information requested or (which is more critical) if it is working fighting Covid-19.” ---Manoel Galdino, www.transparencia.org.br

- [China: Expulsion of US journalists further stifles access to information amid COVID-19 crisis](#) (Amnesty)
- [Collecting Open Government Approaches to COVID-19](#) - The Open Government Partnership (OGP) has created an open space for the open government community to share where they see open government approaches to tackling COVID-19 being implemented, either by governments themselves or civil society, citizens or the private sector.

Recommendations:

- [CIVICUS: States should put human rights at the centre of all responses to COVID-19](#) (CIVICUS)

To learn more about the need for multilateral solutions:

- [Planning for the world after the coronavirus epidemic](#) (World Politics Review)

Tips for monitoring government exercise of emergency powers

- [Checking our instincts: We need to remain evidence-based and standards-driven in times of crisis](#) (Medium)

Tips on how members can move from advocacy to concrete commitments on policing.

- [Transparency and Accountability at the Frontlines of Justice](#) (OGP)

Insights and lessons learned in responding to the pandemic and in framing sustainable recovery strategies that engage citizens' participation and trust, and build resilience for the future.

- [Rule of Law-Based Policymaking for COVID19 Response and Recovery](#)

Policy Brief: *Rule of Law and COVID-19* highlights three key elements - enabling legal frameworks, mitigating impact and continued investment in a culture of justice - essential for a rule of law-based response to the pandemic.

- <https://www.idlo.int/publications/policy-brief-rule-law-and-covid-19> (IDLO)

PRECAUTIONS AND PREPAREDNESS

COVID-19 puts many people at risk. We must prioritize the safety and health of our frontline defenders and communities.

- [COVID guidance for legal empowerment organizations](#) (Namati)