

MUNLAWS 20

STUDY

GUIDE

HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

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Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the vulnerability of those most exposed in our societies.¹ In this health crisis and the emergency measures associated with it, human rights have often been denied or endangered.

The pandemic itself has affected the right to life, the right to health and the right to equal treatment and non-discrimination.² On the other hand, the emergency measures as a response to the pandemic severely influenced the freedom of movement, which is a human right that facilitates the enjoyment of many other rights.³ They also affected freedom of speech and press, the right to privacy, and the right to a fair trial, access to justice, and the rule of law.⁴

Although countries must ensure an effective response to the pandemic, based on the United Nations' (UN) core principles, they must also ensure the protection of human rights. This way, the world will be able to rebuild itself better for everyone, not just the lucky few.⁵ As the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet put it: "it is precisely in times of crisis when core human rights values can help us steer the best course".⁶

¹ United Nations. April 2020. COVID-19 and Human Rights We are all in this together. Accessible on: https://www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/sites/www.un.org.victimsofterrorism/files/un_-_human_rights_and_covid_april_2020.pdf, pg. 2.

² United Nations. April 2020. COVID-19 and Human Rights We are all in this together. Accessible on: https://www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/sites/www.un.org.victimsofterrorism/files/un_-_human_rights_and_covid_april_2020.pdf, pg. 2-3.

³ United Nations. April 2020. COVID-19 and Human Rights We are all in this together. Accessible on: https://www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/sites/www.un.org.victimsofterrorism/files/un_-_human_rights_and_covid_april_2020.pdf, pg. 2.

⁴ United Nations. April 2020. COVID-19 and Human Rights We are all in this together. Accessible on: https://www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/sites/www.un.org.victimsofterrorism/files/un_-_human_rights_and_covid_april_2020.pdf, pg. 4.

⁵ United Nations. April 2020. COVID-19 and Human Rights We are all in this together. Accessible on: https://www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/sites/www.un.org.victimsofterrorism/files/un_-_human_rights_and_covid_april_2020.pdf, pg. 2-3.

⁶ United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner. Available on: <https://www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/COVID-19.aspx>.

Terminology

- **Pandemic:** “an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographic area (such as multiple countries or continents) and typically affects a significant proportion of the population: a pandemic outbreak of a disease.”⁷
- **Human rights:** “rights inherent to all human beings, regardless of race, sex, nationality, ethnicity, language, religion, or any other status. Everyone is entitled to these rights, without discrimination.”⁸

Current Situation

As defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), COVID-19 is an infectious disease caused by the coronavirus.⁹ In late 2019, the coronavirus was first identified in China in the Wuhan community.¹⁰ From this point on, the virus spread around the world. By January 2020 the WHO declared the coronavirus a global emergency¹¹ and on March 11th a pandemic.¹² As a result of the lockdowns and other emergency measures to control the spread of the disease, the world is now facing the deepest economic depression since 1929.¹³

Numerous countries have adopted emergency measures trying to combat the spread of the disease. As of September 2020, about 1,407 measures have been adopted in 208 countries and territories.¹⁴ However, although many of the measures were necessary to stabilize the

⁷ Merriam-Webster. 2020. Available on: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/pandemic>

⁸ United Nations. Available on: <https://www.un.org/en/sections/issues-depth/human-rights/>.

⁹ World Health Organization. Available on: https://www.who.int/health-topics/coronavirus#tab=tab_1.

¹⁰ BBC. 2020. Coronavirus: What did China do about early outbreak? Available on: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-52573137>.

¹¹ BBC. 2020. Coronavirus declared global health emergency by WHO. Available on: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-51318246>.

¹² Time. 2020. World Health Organization Declares COVID-19 a 'Pandemic.' Here's What That Means. Available on: <https://time.com/5791661/who-coronavirus-pandemic-declaration/>.

¹³ Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. September 2020. Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery. Accessible on: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Poverty/Covid19.pdf>, pg. 4.

¹⁴ Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. September 2020. Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery. Accessible on: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Poverty/Covid19.pdf>, pg. 4.

spread of the disease, some also strongly infringe upon human rights and must, therefore, be examined with great precaution. Based on the United Nations assessment, human rights should be used as a lens to craft COVID-19 solutions.¹⁵

In analyzing the current situation of human rights during COVID-19, we cannot dismiss the effects of the previous financial crisis. The consequences of the 2008 crisis left dilapidation of public services and socio-economic rights; especially an underfunded public healthcare system in many states.¹⁶ Therefore, in addition to specific sectoral unpreparedness, the world also entered this crisis in a state of extreme income inequality coupled with extreme wealth, also affecting our ability to effectively respond.¹⁷

In the following subsections, we look at the effects and consequences of the pandemic on different human rights and freedoms.

Freedom of Movement

Freedom of movement is mainly affected by the emergency measures such as lockdowns to limit the spread of the virus. People's inability to move freely through their communities impedes the enjoyment of other rights such as livelihood and security, access to healthcare, to food, water, sanitation, work, education and leisure, which we will look at below.¹⁸

¹⁵ United Nations. April 2020. COVID-19 and Human Rights We are all in this together. Accessible on: https://www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/sites/www.un.org.victimsofterrorism/files/un_-_human_rights_and_covid_april_2020.pdf, pg. 2.

¹⁶ Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. September 2020. Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery. Accessible on: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Poverty/Covid19.pdf>, pg. 17.

¹⁷ Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. September 2020. Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery. Accessible on: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Poverty/Covid19.pdf>, pg. 19.

¹⁸ United Nations. April 2020. COVID-19 and Human Rights We are all in this together. Accessible on: https://www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/sites/www.un.org.victimsofterrorism/files/un_-_human_rights_and_covid_april_2020.pdf, pg. 2.

Right to Social Security and Right to Access to Health Care

This public health crisis has important economic and social impacts, in which the big risk factor in accessing one's right to healthcare is poverty. Access to healthcare and therefore the right to life must be secured for the sake of individuals' human rights, but also for protecting the lives of others, since infringement upon these basic rights often leads to civil unrest.¹⁹

In terms of the right to social security, countries are responsible to apply social protections, taking in consideration the vulnerable situations such as those of informal workers and migrant communities. Although the recent responses from States have seen some programs targeting vulnerable groups, progress is still not equal.²⁰

Right to Equal Treatment and Non-discrimination

The general guideline for sustainable development in the United Nations includes the commitment that no one should be left behind. The same applies to the recovery from the pandemic. This means we must recognize unique challenges for older people, racial, ethnic and religious minorities, migrants, refugees, indigenous people, persons with disabilities, prisoners (persons deprived of liberty), the LGBTQI community, people with HIV, or people who use drugs.²¹

¹⁹ United Nations. April 2020. COVID-19 and Human Rights We are all in this together. Accessible on: https://www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/sites/www.un.org.victimsofterrorism/files/un_-_human_rights_and_covid_april_2020.pdf, pg. 6.

²⁰ Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. September 2020. Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery. Accessible on: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Poverty/Covid19.pdf>, pg. 7.

²¹ United Nations. April 2020. COVID-19 and Human Rights We are all in this together. Accessible on: https://www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/sites/www.un.org.victimsofterrorism/files/un_-_human_rights_and_covid_april_2020.pdf, pg. 10.

Human Rights of Older People

The protection of human rights for older people, an especially vulnerable group during this crisis, has been questioned. In the Welsh Government, this issue was addressed by the Older People's Commissioner and the Equality and Human Rights Commission, due to information that the testing in care homes was too slow and potentially breaching the right to life. For example, concerns were raised about discharging COVID-19 positive older people from hospitals to care homes and the blanket usage of "Do not resuscitate" notices.²²

The Human Rights Watch also reported about their concerns of protecting the human rights of older people due to the pandemic focusing on access to social services, care in nursing homes, violence against older people and discriminatory statements by public officials.²³ Firstly, they exposed that the lack of sufficient social services as a breach in itself, often also leads to an older person's need to go to a nursing home, leaving them more vulnerable in the time of a spreading disease. An example from Australia illustrates this nicely, since two-thirds of government expenditures for aged care is aimed at institutional and not community-based or home care services.²⁴

In nursing homes, the concerns rise due to emergency measures severely limiting the frequency and duration of visits. Infections in nursing homes have been especially high in the United States, which were present at high rates even before the pandemic. Additionally, many state laws, for example in New York, shield nursing homes from civil (in some cases also criminal) liability in connection to COVID -19.²⁵

Violence against older people is experienced especially by older women, evidenced by an increase of domestic violence as documented in Brazil. In addition to listed violations,

²² BBC. 2020. Available on: <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-politics-53485127>.

²³ Human Rights Watch. Available on: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/07/13/protecting-human-rights-covid-19-pandemic>.

²⁴ Human Rights Watch. Available on: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/07/13/protecting-human-rights-covid-19-pandemic>.

²⁵ Human Rights Watch. Available on: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/07/13/protecting-human-rights-covid-19-pandemic>.

discriminatory statements by public officials have also been documented as for example Ukraine's health minister, the Texas' lieutenant governor and Brazil's president.²⁶

Racial Disparities

In addition to older people, the COVID-19 crisis also materialized racial disparity in infections and deaths. In data analysis, it has been determined that in the United States the coronavirus disproportionately affects communities of color, where in New York City, the virus was twice as deadly for African Americans and Latinos.²⁷ These disparities result from intersecting threats. For example, African-Americans are disproportionately part of the essential work force as well as the group without insurance.²⁸ In the United States, activists are calling for housing stability, release of non-violent older and medically high-risk people from prison, expansion of Medicaid and employee protection as well as on the long term voter rights protection.²⁹

Income Inequality

The UN Special Rapporteur exposed that poor people are especially vulnerable in these crisis situations. In order to recover while respecting human rights, countries must adapt social protections to the multifaced realities of people in poverty. For example, in providing social assistance governments should avoid complex application procedures, bureaucratic jargon and ensure forms in appropriate languages.³⁰ In implementing social protection measures states also need to recognize that tax relief is not a significant factor for people with very low incomes, proof of residence in procedures is exclusionary and many social programs tend to exclude precarious young adults under 25.³¹ Inconsideration for these

²⁶ Human Rights Watch. Available on: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/07/13/protecting-human-rights-covid-19-pandemic>.

²⁷ Human Rights Watch. Available on: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/07/13/protecting-human-rights-covid-19-pandemic>.

²⁸ The New York Times. Available on: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/19/us/coronavirus-civil-rights.html>.

²⁹ The New York Times. Available on: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/04/19/us/coronavirus-civil-rights.html>.

³⁰ Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. September 2020. Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery. Accessible on: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Poverty/Covid19.pdf>, pg. 8.

³¹ Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. September 2020. Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery. Accessible on: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Poverty/Covid19.pdf>, pg. 8.

barriers leads to a higher burden of the pandemic on those with the lowest incomes. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic poverty levels could be set back 8 to 10 years in 70 of the developing countries.³²

Gender Impact

Women are also hurt disproportionately from the virus itself as well as the emergency measures adopted to combat it.³³ The intersectional vulnerability is seen among women, since they are overrepresented in “poorly paid jobs without benefits, as domestic workers, casual labourers, street vendors, and in small-scale services like hairdressing”, which we have pointed out lead to great vulnerability in the economic downturn of the crisis.³⁴ On top of this, at best women do three times more domestic work than men and therefore carry a heavier burden outside of paid work as well. Lockdowns have also seen an extreme uprise in domestic violence (in the UK reporting a 700% increase in calls).³⁵ The UN has been working with states to limit the rise, such as for example the UN partnership with the EU for the Spotlight Initiative to improve online services for domestic violence, expand shelters and support them.³⁶

Informal Workers, Migrant and Indigenous Communities

The UN Special Rapporteur also brings special attention to informal workers, who make up more than half of world’s workers and often face ineligibility for social protections.³⁷ In assessing vulnerability, indigenous people are especially affected since they are

³² Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. September 2020. Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery. Accessible on: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Poverty/Covid19.pdf>, pg. 21.

³³ United Nations. April 2020. COVID-19 and Human Rights We are all in this together. Accessible on: https://www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/sites/www.un.org.victimsofterrorism/files/un_-_human_rights_and_covid_april_2020.pdf, pg. 6.

³⁴ United Nations. Available on: <https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/pandemic-exposing-and-exploiting-inequalities-all-kinds-including>.

³⁵ United Nations. Available on: <https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/pandemic-exposing-and-exploiting-inequalities-all-kinds-including>.

³⁶ United Nations. Available on: <https://www.un.org/en/un-coronavirus-communications-team/pandemic-exposing-and-exploiting-inequalities-all-kinds-including>.

³⁷ Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. September 2020. Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery. Accessible on: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Poverty/Covid19.pdf>, pg. 10.

overrepresented in extreme poverty and the informal sector. Migrant and undocumented workers also face obstacles with built in ineligibility for social protection due to residency and citizenship requirements.³⁸

Freedom of speech and press

The response to the pandemic must be inclusive and transparent and the basis for such an effort is the freedom of speech and press.³⁹ With the expansion of power for numerous leaders due to the emergency situation, these freedoms have been at risk. For example, in Jordan, a defense law allows the government a crackdown on dissent, in Thailand the prime minister is imposing curfews and censoring media and in Chile the military was sent to public squares with protestors.⁴⁰

In addition, the freedom of press has been endangered with a trend of misinformation. The World Health Organization described this trend as a “second disease”, which makes it hard for people to decipher true information from all of its abundance.⁴¹ As the Reuters Institute study carried out in six countries reports, “roughly 1/3 of social media users have reported seeing false or misleading information about the coronavirus.”⁴² In this context of increased disinformation and misinformation, the media is even more necessary to access reliable information, which can in this period be lifesaving. However, media organizations have also

³⁸ Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. September 2020. Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery. Accessible on: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Poverty/Covid19.pdf>, pg. 8-15.

³⁹ United Nations. April 2020. COVID-19 and Human Rights We are all in this together. Accessible on: https://www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/sites/www.un.org.victimsofterrorism/files/un_-_human_rights_and_covid_april_2020.pdf, pg. 13.

⁴⁰ The New York Times. Available on: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html>.

⁴¹ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2020. Journalism, press freedom and COVID-19 Issue brief in the UNESCO series: World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development. Accessible on: https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/unesco_covid_brief_en.pdf, pg. 2.

⁴² United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2020. Journalism, press freedom and COVID-19 Issue brief in the UNESCO series: World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development. Accessible on: https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/unesco_covid_brief_en.pdf, pg. 3.

been hit hard from the perspective of the economic crisis as in other industries leading to layoffs, pay cuts and furloughs.⁴³

UN Special Rapporteur for Opinion and Expression has expressed that access to information, independent media and other free expression rights are crucial in overcoming this crisis.⁴⁴

The Rule of Law, Right to Justice, a Fair Trial and Right to Privacy

As mentioned above, many international leaders expanded their powers due to the emergency situation leading to complicated positions regarding the rule of law. The Hungarian prime minister was able to rule by decree, British ministers had power to detain people and close borders, in Israel the prime minister began intrusive surveillance and shut down courts and in Bolivia the elections were postponed.⁴⁵ The United States' Justice Department initially asked Congress for powers to eliminate legal protections for asylum seekers and detain people indefinitely without trial. Due to opposition, it later submitted a more modest proposal. Many of these power extensions had few to no provisions ensuring that after the pandemic the power distribution would return to normal.⁴⁶

The world has also seen an increase in police brutality during the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Human Rights Watch, in Australia's state Victoria, the police have used harsh measures during the lockdown, which were threatening basic rights such as excessive action against lockdown violators, not considering exceptional situations of pregnant

⁴³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2020. Journalism, press freedom and COVID-19 Issue brief in the UNESCO series: World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development. Accessible on: https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/unesco_covid_brief_en.pdf, pg. 15.

⁴⁴ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. 2020. Journalism, press freedom and COVID-19 Issue brief in the UNESCO series: World Trends in Freedom of Expression and Media Development. Accessible on: https://en.unesco.org/sites/default/files/unesco_covid_brief_en.pdf, pg. 11.

⁴⁵ The New York Times. Available on: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html>.

⁴⁶ The New York Times. Available on: <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/03/30/world/europe/coronavirus-governments-power.html>.

women resting on park benches.⁴⁷ A potential new law also draws attention, because it could extend powers of police officers to detain people who test positive and who are likely to fail to comply with the directions.⁴⁸ This can potentially lead to arbitrary and discriminatory decision making.

Human rights violations due to emergency measures also became a concern in Asia, impacting the right to privacy. In Cambodia, China, Pakistan and Thailand surveillance tools and technologies are being deployed in the forms of apps tracking the spread and drones monitoring curfews.⁴⁹ And alarmingly, analysts at Verisk Maplecroft found a correlation between arrests and citizens criticizing national COVID-19 responses in Cambodia.⁵⁰

The right to privacy can be severely infringed upon with the technological efforts to control the spread of COVID-19. Surveillance measures are illegal unless they meet strict criteria. The measures must be provided for by law, necessary, proportionate, time-bound and transparently implemented.⁵¹ Examples of countries using people's cellphone data to track movement, would need to have the protection of anonymization and aggregation to ensure human rights compliance. As a potential problematic example in China, the government is using 'smart' thermal scanners as well as facial recognition technologies in public places in order to track the spread of COVID-19.⁵²

On this topic, the Special Rapporteur highlighted that social protections intended for recovery from the pandemic must include the participation of the people as well as

⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch. Available on: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/24/australia-harsh-police-response-during-covid-19>.

⁴⁸ Human Rights Watch. Available on: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/09/24/australia-harsh-police-response-during-covid-19>.

⁴⁹ The Guardian. Available on: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/oct/01/drones-fever-goggles-arrests-millions-in-asia-face-extreme-covid-surveillance>.

⁵⁰ The Guardian. Available on: <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/oct/01/drones-fever-goggles-arrests-millions-in-asia-face-extreme-covid-surveillance>.

⁵¹ Amnesty International. Available on: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/04/covid-19-surveillance-threat-to-your-rights/>.

⁵² Amnesty International. Available on: <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/04/covid-19-surveillance-threat-to-your-rights/>.

accountability and oversight mechanisms.⁵³ The following is an obligation from Article 9 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights based on the General Comment No.19.⁵⁴

Past Resolutions

The Human Rights Council as well as the UN General Assembly have addressed the issue of human rights in the time of the pandemic in the following resolutions.

The Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/44/13⁵⁵ on extreme poverty and human rights emphasizes that those most affected by the pandemic are already the poorest and most vulnerable and that the crisis with its effects on poverty will hamper the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

The Human Rights Council resolution A/HRC/44/L.23/Rev.1⁵⁶ on the central role of the State in responding to pandemics and other health emergencies, and the socioeconomic consequences thereof in advancing sustainable development and the realization of all human rights emphasizes that human rights should be shaping responses to the pandemic and that all measures must be in accordance with applicable international human rights law.

The Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/43/L.42⁵⁷ on human rights implications of the COVID-19 pandemic (statement by the President of the Human Rights Council) calls on the States to protect human rights while implementing measures to combat the spread of the disease.

⁵³ Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. September 2020. Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery. Accessible on: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Poverty/Covid19.pdf>, pg. 15.

⁵⁴ Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. September 2020. Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery. Accessible on: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Poverty/Covid19.pdf>, pg. 15.

⁵⁵ The Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/RES/44/13

⁵⁶ The Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/44/L.23/Rev.1

⁵⁷ The Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/43/L.42

The Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/45/8⁵⁸ on the impact of the coronavirus disease pandemic on contemporary forms of slavery and slavery-like practices warns that the crisis is exacerbating existing inequalities which reinforce disparities and magnify tensions as well as migration flows. All of these circumstances increase the vulnerability to slavery.

The Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/45/44⁵⁹ Report of the Working Group of Experts on People of African Descent on COVID-19, systemic racism and global protests, expresses that in the context of the pandemic racial discrimination is persistent, leading to disparities in mortality rates and health outcomes.

The General Assembly resolution 74/270⁶⁰ of 2 April 2020, on global solidarity to fight the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) exposes the need for respecting human rights and nondiscrimination in the pandemic response.

General Assembly resolution 74/274⁶¹ of 20 April 2020, on international cooperation to ensure global access to medicines, vaccines and medical equipment to face COVID-19 emphasizes the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.

⁵⁸ The Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/45/8

⁵⁹ The Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/45/44

⁶⁰ The General Assembly resolution 74/270

⁶¹ General Assembly resolution 74/274

Further Guidelines

How can we recover from this global crisis while protecting human rights, but also building back better in the sense of ensuring an increase of human rights compliance after the pandemic? The answer has many dimensions accounting for economic, social and environmental factors.

Economically and socially, we must be aware that the price paid for the pandemic is and was not equally distributed. It affected most vulnerable the most and widened existing inequalities. Significant efforts in the labor and social protection spheres will be needed to reverse these trends.

Environmentally, the effect of the pandemic on the climate change situation was often painted as a positive aspect of the lockdowns due to COVID-19; however, the latest research shows that due to rebound effects, the lockdown effects on actual cooling by 2030 will be negligible.⁶² Therefore, recovering with climate justice in mind will still be crucial.

Further Reading

- United Nations. April 2020. COVID-19 and Human Rights We are all in this together. Accessible on:
<https://www.un.org/victimsofterrorism/sites/www.un.org.victimsofterrorism/files/un-human-rights-and-covid-april-2020.pdf>.
- The Human Rights Council Resolution A/75/53 Report of the Human Rights Council
- Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. September 2020. Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery. Accessible on:
<https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Poverty/Covid19.pdf>.

⁶² Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights. September 2020. Looking back to look ahead: A rights-based approach to social protection in the post-COVID-19 economic recovery. Accessible on: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Poverty/Covid19.pdf>, pg. 19-20.

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2. The Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/44/L.23/Rev.1
3. The Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/43/L.42
4. The Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/45/8
5. The Human Rights Council Resolution A/HRC/45/44
6. The General Assembly resolution 74/270
7. General Assembly resolution 74/274