



AGA-AFRICA
PARTNERSHIPS FOR JUSTICE

AFRICA TRACKER **NEWSLETTER**

   AGA-Africa  www.agafrica.org



We are delighted to introduce the AGA-Africa weekly Newsletter, which we will publish for the next couple of weeks as we work to come to terms with a world that has been dramatically upended by the COVID-19 pandemic.

By May 7, 2020, nearly every country in the world had confirmed cases of COVID-19, and in Africa, the sole exception was the mountain kingdom of Lesotho. Nearly 4 million cases were reported globally, with close to 265,000 deaths.

At the outset, there were fears that poor countries and emerging markets with relatively fewer resources for mitigating the pandemic and the economic disruption it creates, would be particularly hard hit. On our part, we were deeply concerned about the impact that the pandemic would have on the work we do in Africa combating human trafficking, counterfeit drugs, money laundering, wildlife trafficking, and cybercrime.

In all but one of these mandate areas, there have been both setbacks, but also some positive outcomes.

On the whole, the human toll in Africa is still far less than was feared. By May 21, the entire continent was reporting 51,698 COVID-19 cases and 2,012 deaths. This has been a relief because it means while Africa represents about 17% of the world's population, it has only 1.29% of its COVID-19 cases and 0.75% of its deaths.

Part of this is because the virus emerged in Africa later than in Asia, North America, and Europe, and several countries – particularly Uganda, Rwanda, South Africa, Nigeria, and Kenya where AGA-Africa has programs, responded very early and in a positively aggressive fashion.

The social and economic impact, though, has been devastating.

Our weekly newsletter, therefore, does three things. First, it is our contribution to bringing the various stories and developments in the areas we work on in different African countries in one place. Secondly, to spotlight reversals, celebrate victories, and appreciate the work of our partners.

Thirdly, to share lessons from the rest of the world about dealing with the coronavirus crisis with Africa, and bring the learnings of African successes to the world.

This first one will be a look back at the past months much more than future editions will do. We will also have companion social media reporting and work to bring the wonderful insights of our members and partners together as we forge a path to recovery.

May you and your families be safe, and our hearts go out to those in our community who have lost their loved ones, dear friends, and colleagues.

Markus Green

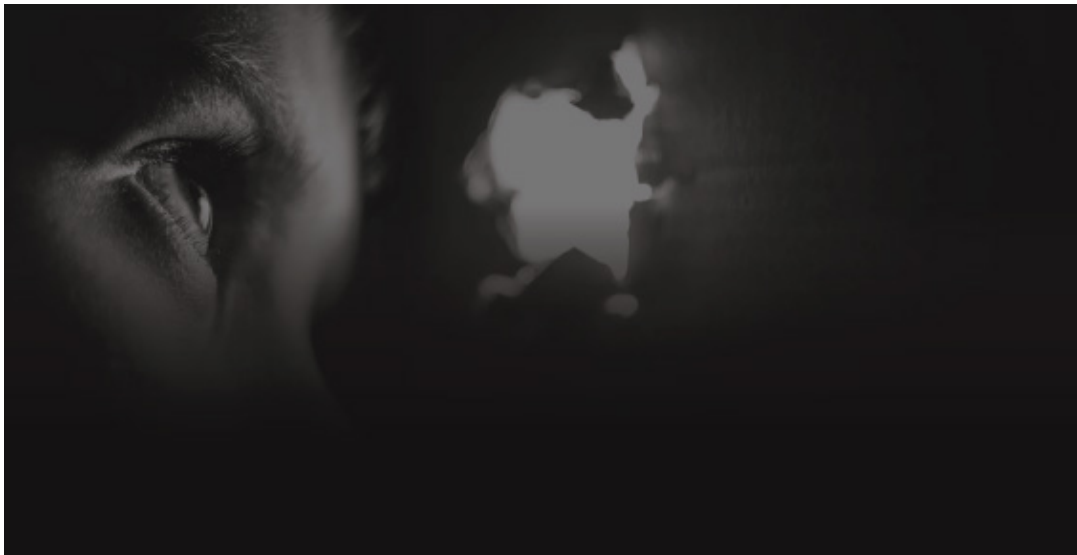
Board Member AGA-Africa

AFRICA COVID19 STATUS UPDATE

The newsletter tracks developments in Africa's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, the setbacks, the triumphs, and pointers to the future as reported in continental and global media as they relate to the range of transnational crimes that we work on:

-Read About [AGA-AAP, A Partnership For Justice](#)

-For update to data on Covid-19 in Africa see: [AfricaCDC](#), [WHO Africa Region](#), [WorldOmers](#), [Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Research Center](#).



HUMAN TRAFFICKING

Covid-19 related travel restrictions, which include airport and border closures, have been a bitter-sweet experience in parts of Africa; slowing or disrupting human trafficking, but also leading to victims being abandoned in vulnerable conditions.

In Kenya, Police rescued 29 suspected victims of human trafficking abandoned by

recruitment agents after restrictions to control the new coronavirus were imposed.

And in a surprising twist, the pandemic has caused reverse migration – with the traffickers making even more money on it. One report said human smugglers are charging up to five times what they normally levy to smuggle migrants from coronavirus-hit parts of Europe back to Africa.



COUNTERFEIT DRUGS

Some studies estimate that between 11% and 48% of medical products circulating in low- and middle-income countries are either substandard or fake. Experts warn that falsified drugs, already very deadly in Africa, will become an even greater problem under Covid-19.

In Ghana, the Food and Drug Authority chief executive Mimi Darko warned that the country may see an increase in falsified and counterfeit medicines due to the pandemic. That is because efforts to contain the virus' spread, like social distancing rules and lockdown, mean that routine market surveillance for counterfeit drugs is hampered.



MONEY LAUNDERING & CYBERCRIME

Remote working has led to unprecedented digital dependency, an increase in cyber fraud in countries like Zambia and South Africa. “Criminals are preying on our vulnerability during the Covid-19 crisis”, says Kevin Hogan, head of Fraud Risk of South African leasing and financing firm Investec.

The most common types of such fraud include Phishing emails, authorized push payments (APP) fraud, invoice interceptions, among others.

Also Read: South Africa: Gangs profit though guns are silent



WILDLIFE TRAFFICKING

Poaching in some African wildlife reserves and parks, whose protection services have been disrupted by the pandemic and resultant collapse of tourism, has gone up tenfold.

In Nigeria, even coronavirus has not stopped the trade in pangolins, believed to be the world's most trafficked mammal, and accounting for as much as 20% of all illegal wildlife trade. Poachers kill as many as 2.7 million African pangolins every year.

On a more cheerful note, Rwanda Development Board in partnership with The Ellen Fund, Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund, and Habitat XR, celebrated Earth Day, April 22, by bringing the country's mountain gorilla trekking experience to people's living rooms through a virtual reality (VR) film.

Also Read: D.R. Congo: Thirteen rangers killed in attack on DR Congo national park famous for its mountain gorillas



GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

Domestic violence went up significantly around the world, as governments imposed lockdowns to spread Covid-19 infection, doubled in some cities, with 90% related to the epidemic.

Data from regions of Africa reflected an increase in gender-based violence (GBV), with the use of the military and service personnel to enforce restrictions exposing women to sexual harassment and exploitation.

In an open letter to the South African people, President Ramaphosa condemned as “despicable” actions of violence, including GBV, and promised to prioritize a pushback in the national response to the pandemic. South African banned the sale of alcohol (and cigarettes) during the lockdown, as it was considered one of the drivers for domestic violence

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