



AGA-AFRICA
PARTNERSHIPS FOR JUSTICE

AFRICA TRACKER **NEWSLETTER**

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Coronavirus resurgent in Africa, but there is hope on the horizon

The week started with [WHO Africa reporting](#) on June 15 that there were over 240,000 confirmed COVID-19 cases on the African continent - with more than 109,900 recoveries and 6,400 deaths. Three AGA-Africa zone countries were in the top 5, with South Africa confirming 70,038 cases and 1,480 deaths; Nigeria in third with 16,085 cases and 420 deaths; and Ghana fourth with 11,422 cases, and 51 deaths.

On the up side, after a three-month lockdown, Tunisia recorded zero local cases for almost a month and will be the first nation in North Africa to reopen its borders, on June 27. Several other countries too continued to move towards easing their Covid-19-fuelled lockdowns, but we also began to see some like [Botswana](#) clamping back the controls, and others like [Uganda](#) and South Africa warning of similar action.

The [Africa CDC reported](#) that 43 African countries and regions remained under full border closure due to concerns related to the rapid spread of COVID-19 in Africa.

We will explore a series of responses and economic and political developments around and the pandemic, including leadership changes and elections, for they raise the specter of possible new infections because there is hardly any social distancing during rallies.

Meanwhile, the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, which has sparked over two weeks of protests in the US and around the world, continued to reverberate in Africa. A [letter to the UN Human Rights Council, signed by 54 African countries](#), asked the rights body for a debate on police brutality against Black people. Late June 15, the [Council announced](#) it is going to investigate “systemic racism” and police brutality in the US.

Shocking gender violence continued to be reported, reaching near-crisis levels in in South Africa and Nigeria. In an unprecedented move, [36 Nigerian state governors resolved to declare a state of emergency on](#) rape following a spate of sexual violence, which was [exacerbated by the coronavirus lockdown](#).

In a town in the northern state of Kano, a man had been [arrested after 40 alleged rapes](#).

Finally, in sunnier developments, after months of reports of sharp rises in cybercrime with increased digital-dependency, we report on positive data indicating that the coronavirus pandemic boosted online trade in Africa, though the criminals are still very active.

The newsletter tracks developments in Africa's response to the Covid-19 pandemic, and other related developments reported in continental and global media as they relate to the range of transnational crime and rule of law issues that we work on:

- Read About [AGA-AAP, A Partnership For Justice](#)
- For updates on Covid-19 in Africa see: [AfricaCDC](#), [WHO Africa Region](#), [Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Research Center](#).



South Africa's COVID-19 cigarette ban may be earning criminals R3 billion (US\$175 million) a month, gifting [criminal syndicates at least R6 billion](#) so far, estimates Johann van Loggerenberg, author of [Tobacco Wars](#). The country is now the [target of international criminal syndicates](#) eager to get a share of the multi-billion rand pie, as the ban on the sale of all tobacco products continues.

Meanwhile, organised crime networks trafficking people, drugs, wildlife products and other goods are increasingly [using the ancient Swahili coast trade routes between Africa, Pakistan and the Arab world](#), according to the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organised Crime (GI-TOC).

In Uganda, four poachers were arrested [after killing a rare Silverback mountain gorilla](#), known as Rafiki. Rafiki, who was believed to be about 25, was the leader of the famed Nkuringo gorilla group, which has been popular with tourists for decades.

The [last time a mountain gorilla was killed](#) by a spear was in June 2011, but there are signs that poaching in gorilla parks has increased recently as tourism has fallen because of the coronavirus pandemic.



South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, spoke out against a "dark and shameful week" for his country following a [surge in violence against women](#).

His remarks came after several femicides, including one where a woman who was eight months pregnant was found stabbed and hanging from a tree.

In Kenya, three police officers were [arrested after one of them was filmed apparently dragging a 21-year-old woman](#) tied to a motorcycle.

At the beginning of June, the police watchdog said at least 15 people had been killed by police during the nationwide dusk-to-dawn curfew, aimed at curbing the spread of coronavirus.

Malawi's government placed [Chief Justice Andrew Nyirenda on leave weeks before an election re-run](#) ordered by the courts.

Nyirenda led the court that annulled President Peter Mutharika's election victory last year and ordered a rerun. The new election is scheduled for June 23.

In Burundi, the Constitutional Court ruled that [president-elect Evariste Ndayishimiye should be sworn in as soon as possible](#) following the sudden death of President Pierre Nkurunziza on June 8.

Legally, the Speaker of parliament, Pascal Nyabenda, should have become the interim leader. But the cabinet decided to refer to the court and now Ndayishimiye is due to become president two months early.

Ndayishimiye was elected in May to replace President Nkurunziza, who had been in power for 15 years.

And Ethiopia's parliament approved a motion to allow Prime Minister [Abiy Ahmed and all assemblies to stay in office beyond their current mandate](#) after elections planned for August were postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.



A researcher in France won a protracted legal battle for [access to ex-President Francois Mitterrand's archives on the 1994 Rwandan genocide](#), in which Kigali accuses Paris of having played a role.

Rwanda President Paul Kagame has accused France of being complicit in the bloodshed in which Hutu militias killed about 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed.

In Tanzania, Parliament Speaker Job Ndugai, a close ally of increasingly authoritarian President John Magufuli, said that after the next general election (that he is sure the ruling party CCM will win), the [legislature will change the Constitution to allow Magufuli extend his presidency](#) beyond the two term limit. In the past Magufuli has said he wouldn't back such plans, but most leaders in Africa have been consistent in changing their minds on that matter.

Zambia's elections authority [denied recent reports that the country was considering delaying its upcoming 2021 general elections](#). It said preparations for the ballot to take place in August 2021 were ongoing despite the novel coronavirus outbreak.



Kenya joined the list of countries to have [imposed tariffs on tech giants](#) such as Google, Netflix and Facebook. Kenya's finance minister announced in a budget statement that the country will levy a 1.5% digital tax on tech companies in an effort

to squeeze more from online firms that do business and earn profits in the country. In South Africa, a massive [labour migration is starting in the mining industry](#) post-lockdown. To illustrate the scale of the challenge, Sibanye Stillwater, the biggest platinum producer, said bringing back all of its more than 80,000-strong workforce could take until the third quarter. About 14,000 of them are foreign workers from the southern African region.

[Struggling to service its \\$11 billion debt, one third of it owed to China](#), Zambia has asked the [Paris Club of creditor nations to let it suspend principal and interest payments on debts](#) to all its official creditors from May to the end of December. Zambia, Africa's second largest copper producer, has seen its external government debt jump to 45% of GDP in 2019, up from 37% in 2018, while total debt stock was estimated at 89%.

While increased cybercrime has focused minds, better fortunes were reported from the digital world in Africa. The Ivorian online fashion label Afrikrea said orders have doubled since February, resulting in a [53% increase in turnover](#). Every third order included hand-sewn protective masks. Pan-African retailer Jumia – which has been struggling with heavy price losses since its Wall Street IPO a year ago – also reported its highest earnings in a long time. In the second half of March, as COVID-19 swept across the globe, [orders for consumer goods quadrupled](#).

And, in a double-edged sword, it was reported that exchanges in the East African island state of Seychelles, a tax haven, moved [\\$36 billion worth of bitcoin across international borders in 2019 – the most in the world](#). The US was second.



COVID-19 DEVELOPMENTS

Rwanda reported the [highest single-day spike of 41 new COVID-19 cases](#) on Sunday, taking the total to 582.

The eastern Rwandan town of Rusumo, its only official border with Tanzania, is one of the major entry points for imported cases into the country. They are unlikely to have much cooperation from Tanzania, where President John Magufuli, again claimed the country is [free of the coronavirus because of the power of prayer](#) — six weeks after his government stopped publicly updating coronavirus data.

“Corona in our country has been removed by the powers of God,” Magufuli declared at a church service, and praised the congregation for not wearing face masks.

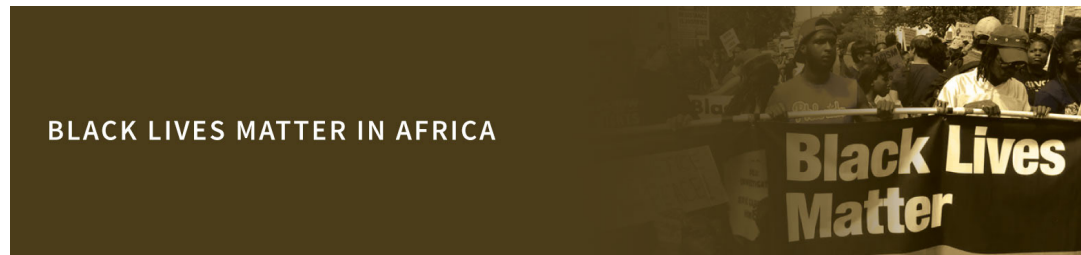
Uganda started [distributing free face masks](#), and Kenya's Health Cabinet Secretary Mutahi Kagwe, while urging everyone to wear a face mask in public places, had the most succinct advice on how to respond in an encounter with someone who isn't wearing one – [RUN!](#)

President Nana Akufo-Addo announced on Sunday that [wearing face masks in public is mandatory](#), and that Health minister Kwaku Agyeman Manu had tested positive for COVID-19.

Somalia's Islamist group Al-Shabaab said on June 12, they had [set up a COVID-19 treatment centre](#) in an area under its control, and said the disease posed a grave threat, citing international health authorities. Somalia has registered over 2,500 coronavirus cases.

Ironically, this development is important for Uganda and Kenya, because they provide the largest contingents respectively of the African Union peacekeeping force in Somalia, AMISOM. There were worries that the virus could spread from militant-

controlled areas to northern Kenya, which is battling a spike, and return home with recycling troops, after a [Ugandan soldier in AMISOM tested positive](#) for Covid-19 in April.



Fifteen [Americans were among those arrested last week in the Uganda capital, Kampala](#), at a Black Lives Matter protest in Uganda. The protesters were rallying in the wake of the death of George Floyd. Demonstrations continued in several African cities.

The outcome was brighter in Ghana, where Floyd's name was mounted on the [wall of the Diasporan African Forum](#) at the W.E.B. Du Bois Centre in the capital, Accra.



- Kenya's Anti-Counterfeit Authority (ACA) reported that a study it commissioned between October 2019 and February 2020 showed that [illicit trade cost the country Sh103 billion \(US\\$966 million\) in revenue](#) in 2019.
- A worldwide survey showed [cybercrime on the rise, and more companies are coughing up](#) to pay ransomware attackers. In South Africa, City Power, the City of Johannesburg, and Life Healthcare Group, are among the organizations and firms that fell victim to ransomware attacks in 2019. The median ransom payment has jumped 300% since 2018.
- Breadline Africa used to finance 14,000 meals at 27 sites, mostly in Cape Town. But since the Covid-19 lockdown started on 26 March the organisation has been financing [59,000 meals a week](#) - and it's far from enough to meet the need.



- Lesotho's ex-prime minister Thomas Thabane, ousted in May, and his wife [paid a local criminal gang to kill his estranged wife three years ago](#), according to court documents released in the capital Maseru. Thabane ordered the \$177,000 hit on Lipolelo Thabane in 2017 to allow his current wife Maesaiah, who's already been charged with the murder, to become the first lady, ahead of his inauguration. Lipolelo Thabane was involved in a bitter divorce negotiation with Thabane before her death.
- Israel named a new female ambassador to Egypt in a [historic first](#). Amira Oron will be the first female envoy to Egypt since the signing of the 1979 peace treaty.

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