

**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF OFFENDER THERAPY AND
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SPECIAL ISSUE: COVID-19 AND CRIME LANDSCAPE IN AFRICA

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The Coronavirus pandemic has undoubtedly dealt the world an unprecedented blow. It is halting political activities and economic activities, re-ordering spaces of worship, shattering many old normative ways of living and more broadly redefining the nature and modes of human interactions. The initial anecdotal insinuations about the COVID-19 not being able to survive in Africa have now given way to concerted efforts by many African governments in respect of combating this invisible but virulent enemy. Clearly, the number of fatalities recorded and thousands of confirmed cases of infection have conscripted many African governments to entirely lockdown external spaces of human mobility such as airports and land borders. These measures have also been complemented with decisive but progressive internal restrictions on mobility which have not only taken the forms of partial and total lockdown but also varying combinations of these extremes sometimes within specific national boundaries. It is pertinent to note that all of the foregoing is set against the backdrop of the unique character of African economies most strikingly their reliance on their informal sectors for the preponderance of economic activities.

One of the emerging and unintended consequences of this lock-down, aimed at curtailing the spread of Coronavirus in most African countries, is violent criminality, murder, kidnapping, domestic violence (gender-based violence), and growing cyber-crimes among other criminal activities. For instance, in Nigeria, as in some other Africa countries, the first week of the lockdown witnessed reduction in crimes but this appeared not to be sustained in the following weeks as strain arising from threatened livelihoods triggered protests and criminal behaviours of different orientations. In like manner, there have been reports of violence against women and girls in Kenya while violent extremist attacks have heightened in Somalia, Chad, Mali and Mozambique among others. There are also reports of human rights violations while enforcing lockdowns in many countries. For instance, over twenty persons have been killed by the police in Nigeria. Such 'murder' has however come to be isolated as criminal acts by the State. In Ethiopia, the State has responded with a law that makes flouting policies to prevent COVID-19 spread such as violating lockdown order as criminal. The State is also being accused of leveraging on the pandemic to commit what can be termed 'palliative fraud' and COVID-fund fraud. What then is the nature and/or evolving character of the criminal landscape in this distinctive age of COVID-19 in Africa?

This special issue therefore invites both theoretical and empirical contributions that unpack and explain the ramifications of COVID-19 for the criminal landscape in Africa. Specifically, papers that interrogate the following pertinent questions are encouraged: What is the nature of these criminalities? Are there similarities and variations both within countries and across the continent? Are there emerging/new forms of criminality in the wake of COVID-19? Have there been adaptations of well known forms of criminality to the changing socio-economic contexts which the COVID-19 pandemic is producing in Africa? What is the nature and pattern of such criminality and who are the victims? How do current COVID-19 criminality challenge and/or strengthen criminology theories?

We invite contributions that interrogate these questions and touch on the following thematic areas:

1. COVID-19 and neighbourhood crimes
2. COVID-19 and gender based violence/crime
3. COVID-19 and the geography of crime
4. COVID-19 and violent crimes (rape, kidnapping, gang violence)
5. COVID-19 and Changing landscape of extremism
6. COVID-19 and offender characterisation
7. COVID-19 and new forms of state-defined crimes
8. COVID-19 and Opportunistic crime
9. COVID-19 and offender characterisation
10. Theorising COVID-19 crimes and criminality

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES AND DEADLINES

1. Deadline of Abstracts (500 words) submission to dotad2003@yahoo.com :
2. Notification of selection for full paper submission:
3. Manuscript submission deadline:
4. Publication date: **TO BE DETERMINED BY PUBLISHER**