Knowledge, evidence
and learning for
development

Covid-19, Conflict, and Governance Evidence Summary No.23

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This weekly Covid-19, Conflict, and Governance Evidence Summary aims to signpost the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and other UK government departments to the latest evidence and opinions on Covid-19 (C19), to inform and support their responses.

This week, features resources on: protest and civic restrictions in the time of C19; how US-Chinese rivalry may shape the post-C19 Asian order; and how C19 is exacerbating the challenges facing African Regional Human Rights bodies.

Many of the core C19 themes continue to be covered this week, including: suspicions of C19-related corruption in Europe and the UK; the disproportionate impact of C19 on informal workers; and the varied roles civil society groups are playing in C19 responses.

The summary uses two main sections – (1) literature: – this includes policy papers, academic articles, and long-form articles that go deeper than the typical blog; and (2) blogs & news articles. See the end of this report for details on the method taken for this rapid summary. It is the result of one day of work, and is thus indicative but not comprehensive of all issues or publications.

LITERATURE

GOVERNANCE

Title/URL	Name of author; publisher; publication type	Summary
The Twin Chessboards of US-China Rivalry: Impact on the Geostrategic Supply and Demand in Post-Pandemic Asia	Cheng-Chwee Kuik; Asian Perpectives Journal; Journal Article	How will US-China rivalry affect the post-C19 Asian order? This journal article argues that while the US still dominates in high politics (arms, alliances, maritime security), China is making more headway in lower politics (e.g. in trade and regional multilateralism, infrastructure connectivity-building and other functional cooperation). China's long-term advantageous position in the Southeast Asia region is due to geography, deeper interdependence between China and Southeast Asia (ASEAN as a whole has replaced the EU as China's largest trading partner in 2020), China's decades-long active involvement in Asian multilateral institutions, and Southeast Asian elites' performance-based legitimation (development is both an economic and political matter). It remains to be seen if these trends will continue

All in all, the increase in US-China competition is likely to reinforce the three-pillar architecture of Asian order: US-led alliances and alignments, ASEAN-based multilateralism, and China-centred developmentalism. |
| The State of African Regional Human Rights Bodies and Mechanisms 2019-2020 | Amnesty International; Report | How is C19 affecting African Regional Human Rights bodies and mechanisms 2019-2020? This report finds that between July 2019 and June 2020 African regional human rights bodies and mechanisms have been characterised by abysmal cooperation and continued political pressure from states, on the one hand, and minimal progress or stagnation in execution of mandate, on the other. The three regional bodies experienced unprecedented disruptions to most of their activities due to C19. |

		A major finding of the report is the chronic lack of cooperation by African states with the three rights bodies, a pattern of lack of political will that is reflected in their indifference and open hostility. This was evident from failures to meet their human rights treaty reporting obligations to refusals to respond to urgent appeals, facilitate country visits and comply with decisions.
Covid-19 and its impact on informal sector workers: a case study of Thailand	Wichaya Komin; Asia Pacific Journal of Social Work and Development; Journal Article	How has C19 impacted informal sector workers in Thailand? Drawing on a survey of 380 Informal Sector (IS) workers from five regions in Thailand, this journal article finds IS workers experienced dramatic decreases in their monthly income, although the reduction varied across occupation and geographic region. To compensate for reduced income, IS workers tapped their savings and increased their debt. A Thai government programme to provide income support for workers during the shutdown reached less than half of IS workers. Social workers can help provide better social protection to IS workers from pandemic-amplified social exclusion. Details: • 95% of respondents said they now face economic insecurity, making only 27% of the average monthly income they earned before C19. • To survive, 84% of respondents sold valuable assets; another 33% withdrew savings. More than 25% received a personal loan (e.g., from family and friends) and another 11% from loan sharks. Only 5% acquired loans from formal sources of capital. 27% relied on charities for food and necessities. • Almost 90% of respondents registered for a government cash grant (through an emergency programme), yet only 44% received an award, with 20% waiting processing. Nearly 25% had their applications denied. The reasons for the low award rate varied. Many workers were missing from government databases or were listed as farmers (making them ineligible). In other cases, IS workers could not successfully complete the online registration,

		while others struggled with understanding the application because of low levels of education.
Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) Assessment on COVID-19 - Community Based Migration Programme, September 2020	Tenadi Gölemerz et al.; Turkish Red Crescent Society and International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies; Assessment;	What are community knowledge, attitudes and practices (KAP) on C19 in Turkey? Drawing on 3,800 phone interviews and online consultations/focus group discussions with 320 refugees and local people (in July-August), this assessment finds: • Community members in all locations are well aware (97%) of C19, including symptoms, how it spreads, and how to reduce infection risks, indicating high exposure to C19 information. • The most popular information sources on C19 are: TV (66%), government officials (39%), Facebook (34.8%), health workers (31%), websites (24%) and family and friends (43%). • Communities' most trusted sources of information are: Government officials (46.9%), TV (44%), health workers (35%) and doctors (22%). • A majority of respondents view C19 as very dangerous (84%). Some respondents said that a minority of people in their community believe C19 is a political problem, or does not really exist. • When asked if a person who is infected or has recovered from C19 is faced with discrimination, 22% of the host population answered "Yes" compared to 9% of the refugee respondents. Two-thirds (67%) worry they might become infected, 9% fear losing employment, 9% fear having lost employment, 9.4% paying rents/bills, etc.
The Pandemic and the Transformation of Liberal International Order	Qingming Huang; Journal of Chinese Political Science; Journal Article	Has is C19 shaping the liberal international order? This journal article explores how the current liberal international is under intense pressure as C19 has exposed its contradictions, and has exacerbated three challenges: (a) the entrenchment of authoritarianism, characterised by authoritarian resilience, autocratisation, and the consolidation of competing authoritarian political-economic models; (b) the exacerbation

		of nationalism enabled by nationalist and populist politicians; and (c) the intensified competition among major powers such as China and the West. This may reconfigure the liberal international order into an order that is more fragmented and confrontational. It concludes that the West should rethink chasing idealistic chimeras globally and accept the coexistence of competing models in the international order.
Balancing health and economic livelihoods: Policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic in Zambia	Miyanda Malambo et al; International Food Policy Research Institute; Brief	How has the Zambian government responded to C19? Based on data collected during the first six months of C19, this brief finds: • The government set up strategic institutions to handle C19, e.g. a national epidemic preparedness committee, a prevention, control, and management committee, etc. • The government partially locked-down on 20 March even though cases were relatively few, including: closing most national points of entry, banning social and religious gatherings, etc. • Economic and social protection policies include: funding for microfinance institutions and commercial banks for businesses, cash transfers for vulnerable households. • Food security responses have been limited compared to other policy responses, with some exceptions, e.g.: the Aquaculture Seed Fund. • Foreign aid was highest for the health sector ($60 million), then social protection ($20 million), with funds also going to equipment/medical supplies ($2 million), and agriculture ($1 million). The Zambian government acted relatively quickly to C19, however, policy responses have declined in recent months, and the paper reports of a surge in August 2020. The surge may be driven by lax adherence to public health measures, e.g. people increasingly not wearing masks correctly or social distancing in public spaces.

Extra papers – without summary

Title/URL	Name of author; publisher; publication type
Democracy under Lockdown	Sarah Repucci and Amy Slipowitz; Freedom House; Report
Global operational resilience and COVID-19 survey report	Norton Rose Fulbright; Report
Political Regime and Suspected COVID-19 Death Data Manipulation	Susumu Annaka; Waseda University; Working Paper
Low incidence of COVID-19 in the West African sub-region: mitigating healthcare delivery system or a matter of time?	Taofik Olatunji Bankole et al.; Journal of Public Health; Journal Article

CONFLICT

Title/URL	Name of author; publisher; publication type	Summary
Civic Freedoms and the COVID-19 pandemic: A snapshot of Restrictions and Attacks	CIVICUS; Brief	What is the state of civic freedoms in the wake of C19? Based data from CIVICUS activists and partners (from April to August) this paper finds: • Civic activism continues during C19 and people continue to mobilise to demand their rights. Many people mobilised using creative forms of protest, including online and socially distanced protests. • Violations of protest rights have been documented: protesters are being detained, protests are being disrupted and excessive force is being used by states. • Restrictions on freedom of expression and access to information continue.

		States are enacting overly broad emergency legislation and legislation that limits human rights. Restrictions have disproportionately impacted excluded groups e.g. LGBTQI+ people who were already at risk prior to C19. But there have also been positive developments – e.g. In Kenya, activists and CSOs successfully challenged excessive police force, with at least a dozen officers being indicted.

Extra papers – without summary

Title/URL	Name of author; publisher; publication type
Women's mental health: acute impact of COVID-19 pandemic on domestic violence	Sabrine Sediri et al.; Archives of Women's Mental Health Journal; Journal Article

BLOGS & NEWS ARTICLES

GOVERNANCE

Title/URL	Name of author; publisher; publication type	Summary
Covid-19 Raises New Hurdles for CSOs	Nicola Nixon; Asia Foundation; Blog	How has C19 affected civil society organisations (CSO) in South-east Asia. Based on interviews with 47 CSO representatives in Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Thailand and Timor-Leste (in March to April), this blog finds: • CSOs are providing essential services to vulnerable and marginalised communities throughout the region, often substituting for government. But civil society is also struggling to cope with C19, and for organisations whose mission involves democratisation and human

		rights, the political environment in many places has become even more constrained than before.
		• CSOs are holding governments to account for their C19 responses. E.g. in some countries, they have questioned the accuracy of C19 data, and press authorities on testing and updating official numbers.
		• CSOs need sustained support from donors to continue their work, particularly as poverty and inequality are rising.
		• Donor flexibility during C19 is key. CSOs need support to cover the added costs of new and adapted activities (e.g. the shift to online work).
		• C19 shines a light on the crucial role of civic spaces, yet it has arrived when shrinking external funding and democratic backsliding in many areas makes vibrant and open civic spaces increasingly difficult to sustain.
UK businesses being set up at record rate, register says	FT; News article	Businesses are being set up in the UK at a record rate, according to the government's register of national corporate activity, as criminals attempting C19-related fraud establish companies alongside entrepreneurs creating new ventures. Senior bankers have raised concerns that criminals have formed companies to take out lightly checked government-backed loans. The National Audit Office this month warned that tens of billions could be lost through fraud and defaults.
Europe's COVID-19 Spending Spree Unmasked	Adriana Homolova & Dada Lyndell; Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP); Article	OCCRP and media partners in 37 countries have made a database with 37,000 C19 related tenders and contracts worth over 20.8 billion euros, running from February to October this year. The data is far from complete, but it gives an unprecedented view of European governments' C19-related spending including, e.g.: governments bought respirator masks at prices that varied wildly, from just 20 cents per unit to 37 euros each; and a boom in hydroxychloroquine and chloroquine sales, the controversial drugs that have limited evidence that they work.

Extra blogs & news articles – without summary

Title/URL	Name of author; publisher; publication type
People, data, money: Why innovation can do more to tackle society's biggest problems	Ravi Gurumurthy; Nesta; Blog
Latin American Governments Must Commit to Surveillance Transparency	Katitza Rodriguez and Veridiana Alimonti; Electronic Frontier Foundation; Blog
Liberia: Head of Internal Audit Agency Found Dead at Home; 4th Auditor-Related Death in 8 Days	Rodney Sieh; Front Page Africa;
UN Statement on Corruption and COVID-19 is too little too late	Transparency International UK; Press Release;
What COVID-19 means for work, inequality, and politics	Ian Goldin; World Bank; Blog
COVID-19 Crisis demands Actions not Words from G20 Anti-corruption meeting	Transparency International; Press Release
Coalition blasted after blaming Covid for delay in creating federal anti-corruption body	Paul Karp; The Guardian; News

CONFLICT

Extra blogs & news articles – without summary

Title/URL	Name of author; publisher; publication type
Covid-19 and conflict forced over 12 million children from school across Africa's Central Sahel region	Norwegian Refugee Council; News;
Thai protests: Tens of thousands gather again in mass defiance of government	Jonathan Head; British Broadcasting Corporation; News

EVENTS

29 October 2020 – 17: 00 to 18: 00 (BST) Covid-19 and development: cities of the future, Institute for Development Studies – This event explores how C19 might shape development in cities.

10 December 2020 - 17:00 to 18:00 (BST) Covid-19 and development: queer & feminist perspectives in South Asia, Institute of Development Studies – This event explores the views of queers and feminists in South Asia on C19 and development.

DASHBOARDS, TRACKERS & RESOURCE HUBS

K4D - Covid-19 Resource Hub

Global Voices - Covid-19: Global voices for a pandemic

ICNL - COVID-19 Civic Freedom Tracker

ECPR Standing Group on Organised Crime - Controcorrente (dedicated Covid-19 blog series)

The Syllabus - The politics of Covid-19 readings

Political Settlements Research Programme - Conflict, development and Covid-19 resources

IDS - Covid-19: the social science response to the pandemic

GI-TOC - Covid Crime Watch

CGD - Coronavirus preparedness & response

ODI - Reforms, initiatives and campaigns on migrants' contributions to the Covid-19 response

OECD - Tackling coronavirus (COVID-19) Contributing to a global effort resource hub

The New Humanitarian – Coronavirus news, data, and policy response tracker

ACLED – Covid-19 disorder tracker

Various - Crowd-sourced cross-disciplinary coronavirus syllabus

African Arguments - Coronavirus in Africa Tracker

Insecurity insight – Covid-19 and security monitoring

Council on Foreign Relations - Peace, Conflict, and Covid-19

KPMG – Covid-19 tax developments

European Council on Foreign Relations - European solidarity tracker

Westminster Foundation for Democracy - Pandemic Democracy Tracker

ACAPS - Covid-19 ACAPS Resources

ReliefWeb – Covid-19 Global Hub

The Economist – Covid-19 news

IPA - RECOVR Research Hub

Dalia research - Democracy Perception Index 2020

V-Dem Institute - Pandemic Democratic Violations Index

Gender and Covid-19 - Gender and Covid-19

University of Oxford - Coronavirus Government Response Tracker

UNDP - COVID-19 Global Gender Response Tracker

K4D - COVID-19 Evidence Search

ACAPS – Secondary impacts of C19

Suggested citation

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Methodology

Due to the emerging nature of the Covid-19 crisis, this rapid weekly summary includes blogs, and news articles, in addition to policy and academic literature. The sources included are found through searches of Google and ReliefWeb with the keywords:

> ("COVID-19" OR "coronavirus") AND ("developing countries" OR "Africa" OR "Asia" OR "Middle East" OR "Latin America" OR "Pacific") AND ("conflict" OR "peace" OR "violence" OR "resilience" OR "fragility")

> ("COVID-19" OR "coronavirus") AND ("authoritarian*" OR "democra*" OR "corrupt*" OR "transparency" OR "state legitimacy" OR "non-state actors" OR "state capacity" OR "state authority" OR "politic*" OR "state institutions")

Plus searches of Google Scholar with the keywords:

> ("COVID-19" OR "coronavirus") AND ("developing countries" OR "Africa" OR "Asia" OR "Middle East" OR "Latin America" OR "Pacific")

> ("COVID-19" OR "coronavirus") AND ("developing countries" OR "Africa" OR "Asia" OR "Middle East" OR "Latin America" OR "Pacific") AND ("conflict" OR "peace" OR "violence" OR "resilience" OR "fragility")

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The searches are restricted to articles published in the previous seven days, in English. This is complemented by: a focussed Twitter search (using just the pages of a small selection of research organisations, and key scholars/thinkers, including those funded by the UK government's Department for International Development (DFID)); and through email recommendations from DFID advisors and leading experts. This is trial and error approach, which will be refined and changed over the coming weeks. If you have literature to include in the weekly summary, please email – s.herbert@bham.ac.uk

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About this report