



Human Rights Institute

25 years promoting and protecting
human rights worldwide

IBAHRI Covid-19 Human Rights Monitor

Release date: 26.06.2020

1. **Gender-based violence and women's health**
2. **Refugee camps**
3. **Informal settlements and homelessness**
4. **Prisoners and detainees**
5. **Asylum procedures**
6. **Disability rights**
7. **Freedom of assembly**

1. Gender-based violence and women's health

On 24 June, the European Commission presented the first EU Strategy on victims' rights, to ensure that all victims of crime can fully rely on their rights, across all EU nation states. In light of the Covid-19 outbreak and subsequent lockdown measures, which led to an exponential rise in reported domestic violence, child sexual abuse and cybercrime cases, the [framework](#) aims to establish adequate assistance to victims during times of crisis.¹

Honduras

In Honduras, since the pandemic began, the number of reported cases of domestic violence and familial violence have increased by 4.1 per cent per week. Further, online searches for protection from gender-based violence increased thirty-fold in April. In the beginning of March, 17 femicides were reported, taking the total number for 2020 until the end of March to 72. The National Police and Attorney General also reported a drastic rise in the number of domestic violence cases, while acknowledging that many of the official figures to date are still underestimates. In order to combat gender-based violence and protest for women's rights during the Covid-19 pandemic, women union activists are using social media to push the national government to ratify a global treaty to end gender-based violence and harassment.

Kenya

In Kenya, reported cases of gender-based violence have increased from 61 reported cases in April to 753 reported cases in May.² Further, the government-instructed lockdown has seen a significant spike in sexual offences in the last two weeks of March in several parts of Kenya. Such offences constituted 35.8 per cent of all criminal matters reported during that period. Several of these cases included perpetrators who were family, guardians or otherwise known to the survivor(s). Courts are considering giving directions on early hearing dates in such cases, depending on the individual facts in each case. The Independent Policing Oversight Body said in a statement that it had received 87 complaints against police since the curfew began, and these included complaints of sexual assault.

Venezuela

In Venezuela, a reported a 65 per cent increase in femicides took place during lockdown measures in April. Since the government-instructed lockdown, the National Institute of Women launched a social media campaign to support victims of gender-based violence, and shelters for women at higher risk.

¹ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/IP_20_1168

² www.kenyanews.go.ke/domestic-violence-on-the-rise-in-kenya-in-the-wake-of-pandemic

Further, issues pertaining to protection for victims of gender-based violence have highlighted that there are no public shelters currently functioning during the pandemic, with survivors reporting that domestic violence helpline numbers provided by Venezuelan authorities not functional, and upon reaching institutions for help, they are told that the pandemic is the current priority. Moreover, recent data collected by Save the Children indicates that almost a third of surveyed households in Venezuela reported that Covid-19 related isolation measures have increased aggression and hostility against children.

Women's health

Africa

Preliminary data from Zimbabwe shows that the number of caesarean sections dropped by 42 per cent between January and April 2020, when compared with the same period in 2019. The number of live births in health facilities dropped by 21 per cent, and the number of new clients on combined birth control pills dropped by 90 per cent. Similarly, in Burundi, initial data indicates that the number of births with skilled attendants dropped to 4,749 in April 2020, as compared to 30,826 in April 2019. Clearly, as efforts focus on Covid-19, access to essential health services such as sexual and reproductive health is being adversely impacted.

Libya

In Libya, pregnant women about to give birth are presented with challenges in public hospitals because a marriage certificate is needed as required documentation for delivering a baby during Covid-19. Further, their husbands are required to accompany their pregnant spouses to the hospital. As a result, some pregnant women are choosing to deliver at home, presenting risks to themselves and their baby.³ Moreover, as divorce and custody cases have been postponed indefinitely, for those seeking refuge away from an abusive partner, this poses unique risks on pregnant women to contact their legal partner in order to have a safe delivery.

2. Refugee camps

As states worldwide continue to ease Covid-19 restrictions, the UNHCR's Annual Global Trends [Report](#) published last Thursday revealed that forced displacement is now affecting over one per cent of the human population. While World Refugee Day marked the end of a week of global reconciliation

³ www.humanitarianresponse.info/sites/www.humanitarianresponse.info/files/documents/files/covid-19_situation_report_no.7_libya_22june2020.pdf

and advocacy, last week nevertheless saw refugees, asylum seekers and internally displaced persons (IDPs) continuing to face mounting humanitarian issues.

Middle East

This past three months has seen the number of Syrian refugees seeking immediate cash support in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey increasing by approximately 200,000.⁴ Last week saw the UNHCR issuing a public warning that the economic ‘downturn’ brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic has left Syrian refugees in an increasingly more desperate humanitarian crisis.⁵

UNHCR spokesperson, Andrej Mahecic, stated that the humanitarian programmes currently in place to help Syrian refugees, lack the adequate funding to continue.⁶ As a result, while only 17,000 out of 49,000 newly arriving Syrian families have received emergency funding, 70 per cent of those in Turkey have lost their means of employment since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.⁷ With Covid-19 now entering into new global phases, it is clear refugees worldwide continue to remain trapped by its economic and humanitarian effects. Thus, while states begin to ease restrictions, greater focus is needed on mitigating the detrimental effects of the pandemic on those most vulnerable.

Greece

This Monday, Greece announced that the lockdown on more than 120,000 migrants and refugees currently residing in overcrowded camps and migrant holding centres will be extended until 5 July.⁸ The announcement came after a rally of 2,000 individuals in Athens took place last Sunday, with protesters demanding for the end of unsanitary and inhumane living conditions for migrants and asylum seekers nation-wide.⁹

The recent announcement by Greece has attracted widespread global criticism, with Greek authorities failing to provide an explanation for their newfound decision.¹⁰ Human Rights Watch has expressed concern that the lockdown extension is not justifiable by scientific evidence or legitimate derogation from fundamental human rights.¹¹ Eva Cosse, spokesperson for Human Rights Watch in Athens stated last week that, despite increasing financial support from the European Commission, Greece has failed to provide adequate protections for those residing in refugee camps in light of the current pandemic.¹²

Australia

⁴ www.unhcr.org/refugeebrief/the-refugee-brief-19-june-2020

⁵ www.unhcr.org/news/briefing/2020/6/5ee884fb4/syrian-refugees-profoundly-hit-covid-19-economic-downturn.html#_ga=2.1239409.1369214055.1592789500-950793806.1586072707

⁶ https://news.un.org/en/story/2020/06/1066492#_ga=2.223013211.1369214055.1592789500-950793806.1586072707

⁷ www.unhcr.org/refugeebrief/the-refugee-brief-19-june-2020

⁸ www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/greece-extends-lockdown-more-120000-migrants-refugees

⁹ www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/greece-extends-lockdown-more-120000-migrants-refugees

¹⁰ www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/greece-extends-lockdown-more-120000-migrants-refugees

¹¹ www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/greece-extends-lockdown-more-120000-migrants-refugees

¹² www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/greece-extends-lockdown-more-120000-migrants-refugees

Last week saw hundreds of protesters in Brisbane calling for the end of indefinite migrant detention and the offshore processing of asylum seekers.¹³ The protests come after Farhad Rahmati, a refugee transferred from an offshore processing centre to receive medical aid in Queensland, was forcibly transferred from a Brisbane Hotel to Brisbane's Immigration Transit Accommodation earlier this month.¹⁴

It is undisputed that the current conditions faced by asylum seekers and migrants in Australia do not comply with fundamental human rights and global refugee policy. Yet, with several Brisbane protesters now facing charges and arrests, greater effort is needed by Australia's Department of Home Affairs to respond to public concern and rectify the flaws in its current migrant policy.¹⁵

3. Informal settlements and homelessness

Informal settlements

Afghanistan

For Afghanistan, a significant proportion of the urban population in Kabul are living below the poverty line, with 2.2 million people reported to be earning 0.91 cent a day, according to data collected by UN Habitat. As the pandemic continues to affect those living in densely populated urban areas in Kabul, plans for construction and renovation of a city which has witnessed a 18-year conflict has halted due to Covid-19, leaving a majority of people reliant on housing reforms in cramped conditions, unemployed, and vulnerable.¹⁶ Kabul's Mayor, Daoud Sultanzoy, claimed that 'the majority of the city — over 70 per cent — is unplanned, with some areas barely accessible by car' and in order to tackle the suspension of construction planning, 'the municipality is now donating over three million pieces of bread every day to help families get through'.

Slovakia

During the initial outbreak of Covid-19, Slovakian police and army authorities placed five Roma settlements in a 16-day quarantine, which caused widespread condemnation. Jan Mikas, a public health official for the Slovakian government declared on 9 April that five regions will be forcibly quarantined, all five being Roma settlements, under the pretext of containing Covid-19. Prior to this move, authorities declared that quarantining of communities or towns would only take place if the percentage of infected

¹³ www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-21/refugee-detained-in-brisbane-hotel-describes-pain-and-sadness/12377532

¹⁴ www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-21/refugee-detained-in-brisbane-hotel-describes-pain-and-sadness/12377532

¹⁵ www.abc.net.au/news/2020-06-21/refugee-detained-in-brisbane-hotel-describes-pain-and-sadness/12377532

¹⁶ www.reuters.com/article/us-health-coronavirus-afghanistan-featur/hunger-or-coronavirus-in-fast-growing-kabul-poor-afghans-dice-with-death-idUSKBN23V005

people was higher than ten per cent. Of the 6,200 in Roma settlements, only 31 tested positive for Covid-19. In response, Amnesty International has stated ‘any measures that deliberately target entire communities, without evidence that such communities present a danger for public health during the pandemic, are likely to be arbitrary and disproportionate, and may constitute discrimination’.

United Kingdom

In the United Kingdom, gypsy and traveller communities around the country have been left without water and sanitation facilities during the coronavirus lockdown, prompting concern from politicians and charities, according to *the Guardian*. The all-party parliamentary group (APPG) for Gypsies, Travellers and Roma (GRT) said in a letter to the Local Government Association that for Gypsy communities in England, there is restricted access to sanitation, refuse collection, or water for drinking, cooking, showering and washing clothes.¹⁷ Further, reports have emerged of some local authorities directing vulnerable gypsies and travellers to ‘uncleaned public toilets with no hand-washing facilities’, while also attempting to evict camps, arguing that ‘basic facilities were needed for communities to physically distance, self-isolate and follow guidelines on hand washing and hygiene’.

Homelessness

Canada

On 30 May, St. Simon’s, a homeless shelter in Toronto, closed down after two men died from Covid-19 complications. According to the City of Toronto’s latest data, there have been 451 Covid-19 cases reported in the homeless shelter system.¹⁸ Further, three homeless shelters in Halifax are due to close as they were ‘only ever meant to be temporary and now that public health is easing some Covid-19 restrictions, the shelter spaces are scheduled to be repurposed for use by HRM’ according to the provincial housing department. In the State of Homelessness in Canada 2016 report, it was estimated that at least 235,000 Canadians experience homelessness in a given year. The actual number is potentially much higher, given that many people who are unhoused live with friends or relatives, and encounter emergency shelters.¹⁹

Japan

In Japan, as the government’s cash handout programme implemented in their Covid-19 contingency plans, to tackle economic instabilities and unemployment, required a bank account for the distribution of state support, this directly excludes the homeless community.²⁰ As the exact figure of homeless people in Japan is still under dispute, an independent survey in 2019 by a Tokyo-based citizens’ group

¹⁷ www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/04/gypsies-and-travellers-in-england-left-without-water-during-lockdown

¹⁸ www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/st-simons-outbreak-toronto-1.5590942

¹⁹ www.homelesshub.ca/about-homelessness/homelessness-101/how-many-people-are-homeless-canada#:~:text=In%20the%20State%20of%20Homelessness,into%20contact%20with%20emergency%20shelters

²⁰ <https://izanau.com/article/view/homeless-in-japan>

found that the homeless population is 2.8 times more than the figure recorded in Tokyo's metropolitan government database. Further, the Advocacy and Research Centre for the Homeless (ARCH) stated that the statistics are far higher than official records.²¹

4. Prisoners and detainees

Prisoners

Egypt

In Egypt's Tora Prison, it was reported on 15 June that a third detainee has died of a suspected case of Covid-19.²² Tora Prison, south of Cairo, has been known for the lack of medical treatment offered to patients prior to the Covid-19 outbreak, which during this pandemic, highlights the inhumane and degrading treatment of those incarcerated. Coupled with restrictions in accessing medical treatment, even basic preventative measures to combat a virus have been limited, as prison authorities had restricted supplies of hand sanitiser and soap provided by prisoners' families, and failed to provide adequate information on Covid-19 to protect them from infection. Further, a reported 60,000 political prisoners are held in prisons across Egypt, according to Human Rights Watch, describing inadequate medical care as 'the norm'.

Nicaragua

In Nicaragua, on 12 June the organisation 'Victimas de Abril' denounced the inhumane conditions of imprisonment of 86 political prisoners, with 45 displaying Covid-19 symptoms. Detainees have reported that within the Jorge Navarro prison, they have only received one medical visit in ten weeks and are only provided with two buckets of water a day. Access to hygienic products is limited and visits have not been suspended. One wing of the prison has been dedicated to prisoners showing symptoms of the disease, yet, certain prisoners have developed symptoms while cleaning the facility.²³ The Inter-American Commission for Human Rights (IACHR) warns that prison overcrowding in the Americas, along with their unsanitary conditions, have facilitated the spread of Covid-19 among prisoners.²⁴

Iran

²¹ <https://english.kyodonews.net/news/2020/06/7a479c38ccaa-homeless-initially-excluded-from-blanket-cash-handout-program-in-kochi.html>

²² www.middleeastmonitor.com/20200615-egypt-third-detainee-dies-of-suspected-coronavirus

²³ www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/libya/document/libya-covid-19-situation-report-no7-22-june-2020

²⁴ <https://havanatimes.org/news/human-rights-rapporteur-jails-are-a-covid-19-time-bomb>

In Iran, almost 70 per cent of prisoners at the Urmia Central Prison have tested positive for Covid-19, sparking protests for prison staff on the conditions in this facility²⁵. Further, hundreds of prisoners at the Greater Tehran Penitentiary face severe water shortages after the water supply in one ward was shut off on 19 June, with emergency water supplies being cut off shortly after and prisoners locked in their cells in order to mitigate protests against inhumane conditions.²⁶ As Iran's Covid-19 cases are rapidly increasing, with 212,501 positive cases and 9,996 reported deaths from the virus, urgent action must be taken to safeguard the wellbeing of prisoners, and prevent further abuses against their fundamental human rights.

5. Asylum procedures

Croatia

In Croatia, reports have emerged of escalated police brutality on groups of migrants and asylum seekers on the Croatian border, according to Amnesty International. Amnesty International has received disturbing reports of migrants and asylum seekers being bound, beaten and tortured by Croatian police officers, who 'fired their weapons in the air, kicked and repeatedly hit the restrained men with metal sticks, batons and pistol grips'. Subsequently, Croatian police forces 'mocked their injuries and smeared food on their bleeding heads to humiliate them'. So far, six men from a group of 16 Pakistani and Afghan asylum seekers have detailed the abuse they have suffered at the hands of Croatian police forces between 26–27 May, as they tried to reach safe grounds.²⁷ Although the Croatian police officers involved in this attack were arrested on 18 June, as reported in a previous Monitor in May, these incidences of abuse are not rare. Instances of Croatian police forces beating asylum seekers and migrants and spray-painting orange crosses on their heads as they tried to reach safe grounds, for example, is indicative of the disregard for the human rights of asylum seekers and refugees. Urgent action must be taken to protect the rights of refugees and asylum seekers.

United Kingdom

In the UK, lockdown restrictions began to ease in England this week. For a disproportionate amount of asylum seekers and refugees living in emergency accommodation, there are increased uncertainties over the impending 'move-on process' from the Home Office, according to Inside Housing. The Home Office declared in March that asylum seekers who had received decisions on their claims will not be

²⁵ <https://iran-hrm.com/index.php/2020/06/04/70-percent-of-inmates-infected-coronavirus-urmia-central-prison>

²⁶ www.ncr-iran.org/en/news/latest-news-in-brief/latest-news-in-brief-june-24-2020

²⁷ www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/06/croatia-fresh-evidence-of-police-abuse-and-torture-of-migrants-and-asylumseekers

evicted for a period of three months, and decisions on further extensions will be made in June. Given the Home Office's decision to continue with the 'move-on process', concerns have been raised by charity and advocacy groups about the vulnerable position of refugees and asylum seekers during the pandemic. Andy Hewett, head of advocacy at the Refugee Council, said the organisation was 'gravely concerned' to hear of the Home Office's decision to resume evictions in the middle of a global pandemic, putting refugees at risk of both 'homelessness and contracting the virus'.²⁸

A significant number of migrants in the UK with no recourse to public funds, a condition granted to some migrants with 'indefinite leave to remain' status if their asylum claim has been rejected, bars access to state welfare and housing and therefore raises significant questions about how the Home Office's 'move-on process' will affect them during a public health emergency. Multiple organisations have called for the UK government to reform the 'no recourse to public funds' policy and to allow for migrants and asylum seeker to claim benefits in order to prevent severe poverty, destitution and homelessness. David Renard, housing spokesperson for the LGA and leader of Swindon Council, has called for 'clarity and funding for those who are destitute and homeless because of their migration status'.

Uganda

On 16 June, the Ugandan government decided to open their borders to the 10,000 displaced people waiting to seek asylum on the border with Democratic Republic of Congo since May, with aims to ensure their safe entry and settlement process.²⁹ This move comes after the Ugandan government closed their borders in March in order to mitigate the spread of Covid-19, leaving a significant proportion of people destitute along the border. Duniya Aslam Khan, spokesperson for the UN refugee agency in Uganda, said it is 'working with the government, local authorities and aid groups to set up a quarantine facility and testing centre near the border with DRC'.³⁰ So far, Uganda is one of the only nations in Africa to reopen their borders. On 22 June, a coalition of 39 international, national and refugee-led organisations in the Horn, East and Central Africa (HECA) called on governments in the region to reopen borders for asylum seekers and to put in place measures that manage the current health emergency while ensuring asylum seekers can seek protection.³¹

Greece

²⁸ www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/hundreds-of-asylum-seekers-at-risk-of-homelessness-as-home-office-ends-eviction-ban-66936

²⁹ www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2020/06/east-africa-people-seeking-safety-are-trapped-at-borders-due-to-covid-19-measures

³⁰ www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jun/24/uganda-reopens-border-to-thousands-of-people-fleeing-violence-in-drc

³¹ <https://heca.oxfam.org/latest/press-release/thirty-nine-organisations-call-governments-ensure-access-asylum-seekers-during>

In Greece, the Greek government has begun the next phase of lockdown restrictions across the country, enabling international travel. However, for the 120,000 asylum seekers placed in overcrowded camps to mitigate the spread of Covid-19, their position remains uncertain. So far, Greece's Migration and Asylum Ministry said confinement for those in the country's migrant holding centres would be extended to July 5, a second extension decreed by authorities since first imposed in March.³² As a result, 2,000 people rallied in Athens for World Refugee Day on 20 June, demanding an end to the forced confinement of asylum seekers and migrants. Further, for those recently granted asylum, the cessation of EU-funded accommodation programs and abandonment by Greek authorities leaves a vast amount of asylum seekers homeless. Victoria Square, a public park in Athens, hosts 66 people, including four pregnant women and children who were expelled from the Moria Camp on Lesbos Island in Greece after being granted asylum, according to Anadolu Agency.³³

6. **Disability rights**

Mental health

On 23 June, the Office for the High Commissioner of Human Rights released a report by UN Expert Dainius Puras highlighting how the Covid-19 pandemic has exposed decades of neglect and underinvestment in mental health care, calling for the ultimate elimination of closed psychiatric institutions where the impact has been more severe.³⁴ Dainius Pūras, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to health, claimed that the Covid-19 pandemic has exacerbated inequalities in mental health care. As a result, urgent action must be taken by state governments, international organisations and stakeholders to 'radically reduce the use of institutionalisation in mental health-care settings, with a view to eliminating institutional care and replacing it with quality care in the community'.

United Kingdom

In the UK, a disabled man starved to death during the government-instructed lockdown measures, according to Labour MP Bell Ribeiro-Addy. Riberio-Addy claimed that the disabled man was unable to access state benefits due to the restrictive government list of vulnerable and disabled people. Fazilet Hadi, interim policy manager at Disability Rights UK, stated that due to government guidelines on wearing a mask in public on 15 June being unclear, inaccessible information hinders disabled people from protection from the virus. Further, Hadi claims that 'disabled people are also being confronted by

³² www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/greece-extends-lockdown-more-120000-migrants-refugees

³³ www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/greece-asylum-seekers-spend-nights-on-streets-/1877939

³⁴ www.ohchr.org/EN/NewsEvents/Pages/DisplayNews.aspx?NewsID=25988&LangID=E

members of the public for not wearing face masks on public transport despite having legitimate reasons under guidance published on 15 June'.³⁵

Uganda

In Uganda, the strict lockdown curfew implemented in March has been argued as excluding vulnerable members of the community due to the inaccessibility of public information. On 30 April, Local Defence Units shot a young deaf and blind man five times in the leg for opposing curfew hours and for ignoring spoken orders, regardless of the fact that he could not see or hear the officers prior to the attack. Further, a government-instructed ban on public and private transport in March, to mitigate the spread of Covid-19, negatively affect those with physical disabilities. Reports of those reliant on private transport and assistance being harassed by Ugandan soldiers arrested and detained highlight that urgent action must be taken in Uganda to provide vital information, support and protection for the 16.5 per cent of Ugandans with disabilities.³⁶

7. Freedom of assembly

Hong Kong

Each year on 1 July, an annual pro-democracy rally is held in Hong Kong to commemorate the day of the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, originally organised by the Civil Human Rights Front. However, this year, with the region facing a further crackdown on peaceful protests, the rally is expected to be banned. The convener of the Civil Human Rights Front, Jimmy Shan Tsz-Kit has reported a 'lacklustre' response from police forces in coordinating the organisation of the rally, and that they are using the pandemic as an excuse to suppress the annual protest despite proposals to include social-distancing measures and control crowds. As previously reported in editions of the Covid-19 Human Rights Monitor, the current Covid-19 pandemic has created a guise under which peaceful assembly can be further restricted in Hong Kong. Given this, we watch in concern of how the annual peaceful assembly will be handled by police forces.

United States

Peaceful protesters involved in the Black Lives Matter protests throughout the US faced great backlash to their actions, by the government and citizens alike, for the protests' potential to cause a spike in the number of Covid-19 cases. In previous editions of the Covid-19 Human Rights Monitor, it has been

³⁵ www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/coronavirus-death-starved-disabled-food-lockdown-bell-ribeiro-addy-streatham-a9584286.html

³⁶ <https://globalvoices.org/2020/06/23/people-with-disabilities-left-stranded-during-national-lockdown-in-uganda/>

reported that UN officials have asserted that peaceful protests cannot be prohibited under the guise of protecting public health during the current Covid-19 crisis. This is made more pertinent as a study assessing data from 315 US cities, proved that the widespread protests had little effect on the spread of the virus throughout those cities. In fact, it was also proven that the protests increased wider adherence to the 'stay at home' guidance as others sought to stay safe from the potential spread. Thus, the pretext of failure to follow social distancing guidelines as an excuse to unnecessarily detain peaceful protestors is proven to be groundless. On top of this, placing individuals in detention only serves to increase the risk of spreading the virus, where prisons have a high risk of spreading the virus due to the inability to safely socially distance in overcrowded conditions.

Ecuador

On 14 May, peaceful protests broke out in Ecuador to protest the government's response to the Covid-19 crisis. Ecuador has been one of the worst affected countries in South America, and the country has faced grave economic consequences, with 150,000 jobs lost because of the crisis. In response, police exercised excessive force by breaking the protestors' efforts to implement social distancing measures and beating protestors, leaving several injured. These accusations have been confirmed in videos recorded by civil society organisations and journalists. Following the protests, four were arbitrarily detained. However, on 15 May, a judge ruled there was insufficient evidence to prosecute the protestors and released them. On 29 May, the Ecuadorian Government passed a ministerial resolution governing the use of force in law enforcement operations. The resolution broadly defines in what circumstances force is acceptable as 'meetings, demonstrations, internal disturbances and other situations of internal violence' during a 'state of exception'. While the resolution is worrying in itself for condoning unnecessary force, it is made more so since a state of emergency has been declared since 15 March, and again renewed for 60 days on 15 June. This resolution therefore legitimises police force, as witnessed in the protests held in May during the present crisis. The resolution does allow for force 'in operations supporting other state institutions' outside of emergencies, but during the current crisis it, to a further extent, condones police force which is entirely contradictory to the aims of protecting public health.