

CONFORMITY
OF **COVID-19**
RESPONSES
IN AFRICA

THROUGH
THE PRISM OF
INTERNATIONAL
HUMAN RIGHTS
LAW

EDITOR
KWADWO APPIAGYEI-ATUA

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Conformity of COVID-19 responses in Africa through the prism of international human rights law

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PREFACE

It is said that a pandemic hits the world on average three times every century. The latest one to strike was caused by the coronavirus disease in 2019 (COVID-19), in turn occasioned by the severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). The first known case was identified in Wuhan, China, in December 2019 and has spread to every corner of the world.

Preceding this, in the particular context of Africa, the Ebola virus disease (recognised as an epidemic by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) (tagged a 'global epidemic')) have had their impacts on the continent. At the emergence of any of these diseases, African leadership would make bold decisions and pledges and issue communiques aimed at making financial and other commitments to address the problem. Yet, when the problem is over, the pledges are forgotten and life would return to 'normal'.

At the time of writing this book, 245.4 million cases of COVID-19 have been recorded out of which 4.9 million persons have died. The impact of the disease on international trade, democracy, human rights, international law, international relations and many other spheres of life has been massive. A number of publications have been produced, aimed at addressing the problem from various angles. What this work seeks to add to the discourse is a discussion from the African perspectives on international law, human rights and democracy.

The contributors reflect, analyse and share their perspectives on the COVID-19 phenomenon from different angles, identifying the problems in the health sector in Africa that the pandemic has exposed and assessing the effectiveness of the solutions that African leaders have proposed and implemented. Running through the discussion is an indictment on African States for paying lip service to socio-economic rights in general and the right to health in particular.

The detailed analyses of data, instruments, documents and events by the contributors provide useful insights into the subject-matter under investigation. These cutting-edge analyses help to provide useful

information on how, adopting a human rights-based approach, African leaders can invent and apply policies that will help to reduce morbidity and mortality resulting from such pandemic/epidemic outbreaks and the need to commit urgent and long-term investments in the health sector. At the same time, the contributors examine how other rights can be protected during the various emergencies proclaimed by African leaders to deal with the pandemic.

The book will make for useful reading, and is recommended, for students, policy makers, academics, government officials, non-governmental as well as the inter-governmental organisations.

The idea to produce this manuscript was initiated in July of 2020 when COVID-19 was at its peak around the globe. The book was finally completed in 2021 when the pandemic was still raging on. However, publication was delayed. Therefore, reference to some information in the chapter contributions is located in the prevailing conditions at that time. It was thought that it would be appropriate to keep the record as it is while making room for the production of a second volume to provide updates on the pandemic, its impact in Africa and measures being taken to address preparedness and response to future pandemics.

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