

# [Covid-19 | How to ensure the protection of the rights of defenders during the pandemic?](#)

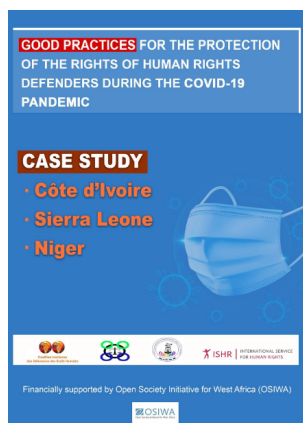
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**The health crisis caused by the Covid-19 pandemic has led States to take measures to combat the spread of the virus. Despite the state of health emergency, some of these measures were considered inappropriate and have considerably limited the rights of defenders with a considerable impact on their work.**



In the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, human rights defenders in Africa have been affected in two ways. Firstly, as citizens they have experienced the pressures imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Secondly, as human rights defenders they have suffered particular restrictions on their rights, and in addition, government decisions and actions taken without prior consultation in some countries have had considerable effects on the continuity of their work.

This leads us to wonder how defenders did continue their vital work for the protection of human rights for all during those difficult times? Which were the most harmful measures adopted by States and how did some States manage to ensure the protection of the most fundamental rights?



To answer these questions, ISHR collaboratively worked with national coalitions of human rights defenders in Côte d'Ivoire, Niger and Sierra Leone to produce a [compendium of good practices](#)[1] for the attention of governments, civil society organisations and international, regional and national mechanisms for the protection of human rights and defenders. This compendium presents the different measures adopted in these countries, their impact on defenders, some positive measures taken by States, the adaptation strategies implemented by civil society and recommendations to the different actors. The compendium is a 50-pages document available both in [English](#) and [French](#).

It is a reference document that aims to strengthen the collaboration between defenders and the authorities, maintain legal support in countries where laws protecting defenders have been adopted or are in the process of being adopted. It also promotes the need for a truly inclusive approach when it comes to future measures being adopted in times of crises to ensure the protection of human rights and more specifically the rights of

defenders.

Finally, the compendium aims to facilitate the work of defenders in the short, medium and long term and to feed into the work being done in other countries engaged in the process of adopting restrictive measures, ensuring that all the work done for the legal protection of defenders is preserved while combating the pandemic of Covid-19.

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