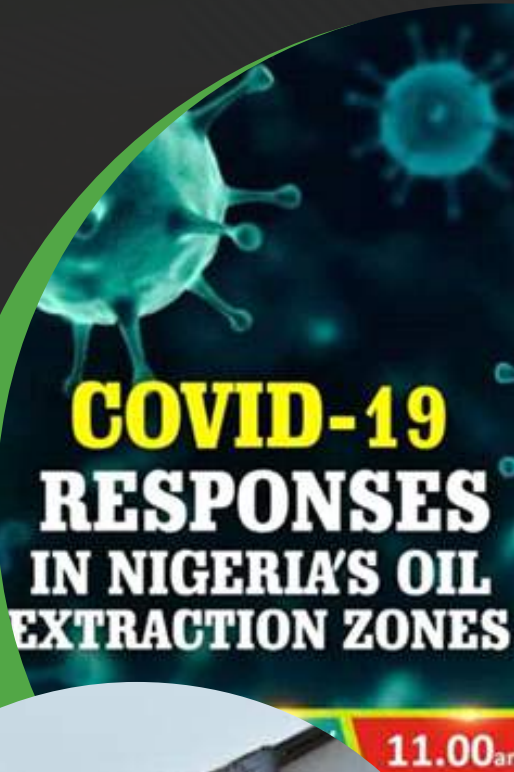




SPACES FOR CHANGE | S4C



ANNUAL REPORT

JANUARY – DECEMBER, 2020



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

I wish you could see the excitement on the faces of the staff and board members of Spaces for Change | S4C when we started year 2020 with an up and running strategic planning session where board and staff members came together to analyze, evaluate and polish up the organizations mission, vision and core programs for improved potency. The strategized plan put together at the sessions set clear targets, performance indicators and a course of action guide for our four thematic programs: Women and Youth Inclusion, Energy and Environmental Justice, Defending the Civic Space and Housing and Urban Governance.

Since its establishment in May 2011, S4C generated a dream that required strength and dedication. The planned session afforded a space for collective ideas and thoughts of that dream. With the deepest excitement, we are very proud of the tasks set out and achieved during the year particularly with the research studies, community engagements, stakeholder alliances, public interest litigation and social campaigns carried out within and across borders. Despite the pandemic, our greatest achievement is the growing number of citizens, especially the youths and women who have found their voice, and now fully understand their rights. These achievements highlight a glimpse of that founding dream, and there is now a peek into the future of the organization.

We couldn't have come this far without the support and cooperation of our Board of Trustees, our dedicated staff, volunteers, interns, mentors and our loving fans. As you flip through the pages, we hope that you find them inspiring and illuminating, the issues that we advocate.

Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri
Executive Director

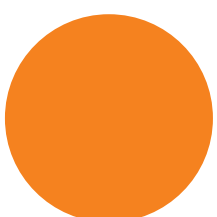


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WHO WE ARE

Spaces for Change

Spaces for Change (S4C) is a non-profit organization working to infuse human rights into social and economic governance processes in Nigeria. Through digital crowd-sourcing, research, policy analysis, advocacy, youth engagement, public interest litigation and community action, we aim to increase the participation of Nigerian youth, women and communities in the development of social and economic policy, and also help public authorities and corporate entities to put a human rights approach at the heart of their decision-making.

Vision

Our vision is to build a society of responsible young people and committed citizens working together to found a more peaceful and prosperous Nigeria, based on democratic values, social justice and fundamental human rights for all.

Mission

Our mission is to build the capacity of Nigerian citizens, especially of young people to participate in social and economic decision-making processes, and empower them to address development issues that affect their lives at the community, national and international levels.

Board of Trustees



Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri



**Reverend Sister Dr.
Anastasia Njoku**



Samuel Diminas



Sonny C. Onyegbula



Late Esther Uzoma

Members of Staff



Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri
Executive Director



Olusola Oluwafemi
Research & Communications



Nosayame Osahon
Program Officer, Energy
& Environmental Justice



Zikora Ibeh
Program Officer, Civic
Space



Omotayo Odukola
Litigation and Housing officer



David Olakanle
Accounts Officer



Rejoice Imozemeh
Program Assistant



Jecinta Mbamara
Program Assistant, Owerri



Kehinde Aderogba
Community Relations Officer



Chimee Adioha
Membership Engagement
Officer

Thematic Areas

Defending the Civic Space

S4C's research advocacy and social campaigns to reclaim the civic space have one central message: governmental measures to counter terrorism and illicit financial flows should not shrink the civic space and/or disrupt the work of legitimate non-profit entities. [Learn more](#)

Housing and Urban Governance

Programs & activities that improve the security of tenure, redress housing rights violations, prevent forced evictions and increase public participation in urban planning processes. [Learn More](#)

Energy and Environmental Justice

By systematically monitoring and evaluating the gaps between policy and practice in the energy sector, we build new evidence for deepening multi-stakeholder understanding and participation in the formulation and implementation of energy reform policies and programs in Nigeria. [Learn More](#)

Women and Youth Inclusion

Through empowerment, change of attitudes and perceptions, we bolster youth and women participation in decision-making processes and take urgent action to challenge discriminatory practices and injustices in public and private life affecting them. [Learn More](#)

OUR PARTNERS IN 2020





CHAPTER 1

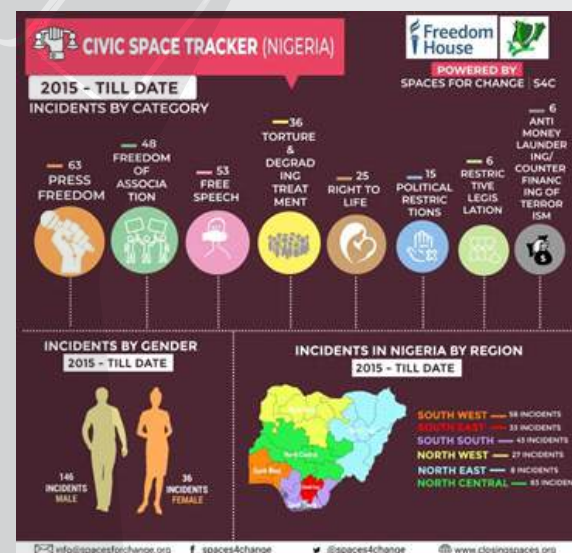
DEFENDING THE CIVIC SPACE



Image source: <https://www.hrw.org/news/2020/10/16/nigeria-crackdown-police-brutality-protests>

Curating Incidents of Closing Civic Spaces in Nigeria

Since 2015, S4C has been curating incidents of closing civic space in Nigeria on the digital database: www.closingspaces.org. The crackdowns on the civic space tracked on the database accumulates knowledge on the underlying trends, tactics, drivers and flash-points of shrinking civil society space in Nigeria and the West Africa sub-region. Through a systematic chronicle of incidents illustrating how various actors, actions and practices operate to limit civic space, the database provides human rights defenders with the levers to push back work more effectively to defend the common spaces available for civic engagement, debate and action.



LEARN MORE: [DATABASE OF CLOSING SPACES IN NIGERIA](http://www.closingspaces.org)



DATABASE ON CLOSING CIVIC SPACES IN NIGERIA: AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW

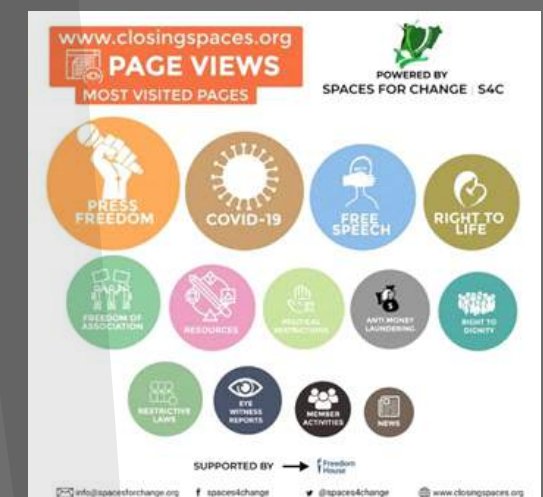
Who's visiting the [DATABASE OF CLOSING CIVIC SPACES IN NIGERIA](http://www.closingspaces.org)? Where do the users come from? What methodology is S4C using to track, verify and categorize the incidents reported on the database? In this independent review, Lotanna Nwodo, a Harvard-trained lawyer and Power Africa Legal Fellow, takes a closer look and gives some interesting feedback to current and future users of the database.

According to Lotanna, the database demonstrates, at a glance, why the fight to keep the civic spaces open must not relent. It also offers a tool of engagement and not merely for the sake of keeping statistics. This is why the interest of non-Nigerians in the database is a welcome development. At the time of writing, about 30% of the visitors to the database emanate from outside Nigeria. This notion of human rights beyond borders is actively manifested by the reportage to civic space crackdowns in other West African countries. It is expected that the database would grow into a truly Pan-African resource for human rights defenders.

LEARN MORE: [DATABASE ON CLOSING CIVIC SPACES IN NIGERIA](http://www.closingspaces.org)

Using the Data on Nigeria's Civic Space Tracker

Users from around the world are looking at the [DATABASE OF CLOSING CIVIC SPACES IN NIGERIA](http://www.closingspaces.org). What are they looking for? What are they [reading and downloading](#)? What types of incidents are generating interest? Press freedom and COVID-19 top the list! A [COVID-19 focus to the Closing Spaces Database](#) was added in March, 2020 following the spikes in human rights abuses, including deaths caused by security operatives enforcing COVID-19 lockdown directives in Nigeria.



SEE INFOGRAPHICS AT: [DATABASE OF CLOSING CIVIC SPACES IN NIGERIA](http://www.closingspaces.org)

We Won't Support the Over-Regulation of the Non-profit Sector ~ Committee



SPACES FOR CHANGE [S4C] facilitated a knowledge sharing session on Civil Society Organizations and Development Support Oversight at the retreat of the House of Representatives' Committee on Civil Societies and Development Partners, held in Lagos in March 2020. The Committee invited S4C as a resource person to provide federal lawmakers with expert advisory on the regulatory environment for non-profits and development aid partners in Nigeria.

The session began by introducing the legal foundations for the establishment of civil society and civil society organizations (CSOs). Section 40 of the 1999 Constitution of Nigeria guarantees the right of every person to assemble freely and associate with other persons, and in particular, form or belong to any political party, trade union or any other

association for the protection of his interests. A third critical dimension of the freedom of association & assembly is the right to participate meaningfully in public life, including participating in, and influencing processes of public deliberation and decision-making. (See UNHCR in its 2013 Resolution). Inherent in the above is the right of citizens and CSOs to act as independent watchdogs, influence government decisions and advocate for better governance processes. From the discussion around the legal and ideological underpinning for civil society evolution, S4C's Compliance Officer, Sola Olutayo Esq. clarified the composition of the sector and the 4-step modalities involved in the registration and formalization of non-governmental set-ups in Nigeria. She walked participants through the various laws implicated at each stage, the implementing agencies and the effects of non-compliance.

The prevalent notion out there is that the civil society sector, including non-governmental organizations (NGOs), are not adequately regulated. Why is this so? S4C's director, Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri extensively interrogated the myth about NGO regulation in Nigeria. NGO regulation is fragmented across several state and federal departments, with overlapping regulatory functions. After explaining the gamut of legal regimes, mechanisms, ministerial regulations, including the reporting obligations of NGOs to both federal entities and international development partners, the federal lawmakers raised concerns about the gradual drift towards over-regulating the sector, thereby making it difficult for help to reach those in greatest need, especially in the hard-to-reach locations and conflict-affected zones.

Another myth worthy of interrogation is whether terrorists can indeed, abuse NGO entities to facilitate their terrorist operations. Citing various provisions of Financial Action Task Force's (FATF's) Recommendation 8, the Interpretative Notes and the Best Practice Paper, Ms. Ohaeri addressed the question of high-risk organizations that are vulnerable to terrorism financing and what can be done to ameliorate the risk. High-risk organizations need to be identified through a risk assessment to identify not only which NPOs are at risk, but the extent of resources and efforts to be allocated toward countering the risks. In summary, FATF's R8 says: "[n]ot all NPOs are high risk, and some may represent little or no risk at all. It may be possible that existing measures are sufficient to address the current terrorism financing (TF) risks to the NPO sector identified in a country, although periodic reviews may identify new or evolved TF risks over time."

SPACES FOR CHANGE concluded the session by submitting that the problem with development support oversight in Nigeria is not a lack of laws, but rather, a lack of strong and independent institutions with the political will to implement existing laws and regulations effectively. Mere proliferation of laws and regulations does not necessarily translate to results. What the government needs to do is to strengthen the plethora of existing regulatory frameworks and mechanisms applicable to

NPOs such as the CAC, NPC, SCUML, FIRS, EFCC etc. Merely introducing another regulator for the civil society sector, without strengthening democratic institutions, particularly the investigative, prosecutorial and adjudicative capacities of existing regulatory bodies that exercise oversight over corporate entities, will simply impose unnecessary burdens on legitimate charitable operations of civil society organizations, and of course, lead to over-regulation.

The chair of the Committee, Honorable Kabiru Idris, thanked SPACES FOR CHANGE for providing evidence-based advisory which deepened their understanding of existing legal regimes applicable to civil society, including the justification for and effectiveness of new regulations to enhance development aid oversight. In one voice, committee members resolved not to take any steps or consider any legislative proposal that will burden the nonprofit sector any further.

The retreat was organized by the House of Representatives' Committee on Civil Societies and Development Partners in conjunction with the Policy and Legal Advocacy Center (PLAC).

READ FULL REPORT HERE:

['We Won't Support the Over-Regulation of the Non-profit Sector](#)

Compliance Clinic on AML & CFT Risks in Non-profit Organizations

SPACES FOR CHANGE | S4C conducted the maiden edition of the Compliance Clinic on Combating Anti-Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism Risks in Non-profit Organizations on Friday, March 20, 2020. 12 (twelve) finance officers & directors from 10 organizations in Lagos and Abuja were excited to embark on this COMPLIANCE journey.

In a feedback survey conducted at the end of the session, participants expressed their appreciation for the timely and comprehensive training. For some participants, what they liked most was the interactive nature of the session and also the fact that the facilitators broke down complex procedure and concepts for the better understanding of the participants. Participants further expressed how the training will influence them to make changes to their organizational policies in order to reduce operational risks and areas of vulnerability.

Conclusively, participants urged the organizers to expand the reach of the training to include NGOs in other parts of the country.



READ FULL REPORT HERE: [Compliance Clinic on AML & CFT Risks in Non-profit Organizations](#)

Policy brief: Legal Analysis of the Proposed Social Media Bill

Advancements in digital technology have widened exposure and access to modern communication tools, enabling and stimulating people's power and potential to express themselves, organize and engage governments on a wide range of issues. Aided by these tools, governmental behaviour is now more than ever, facing greater levels of scrutiny, and backlash, when things go wrong.

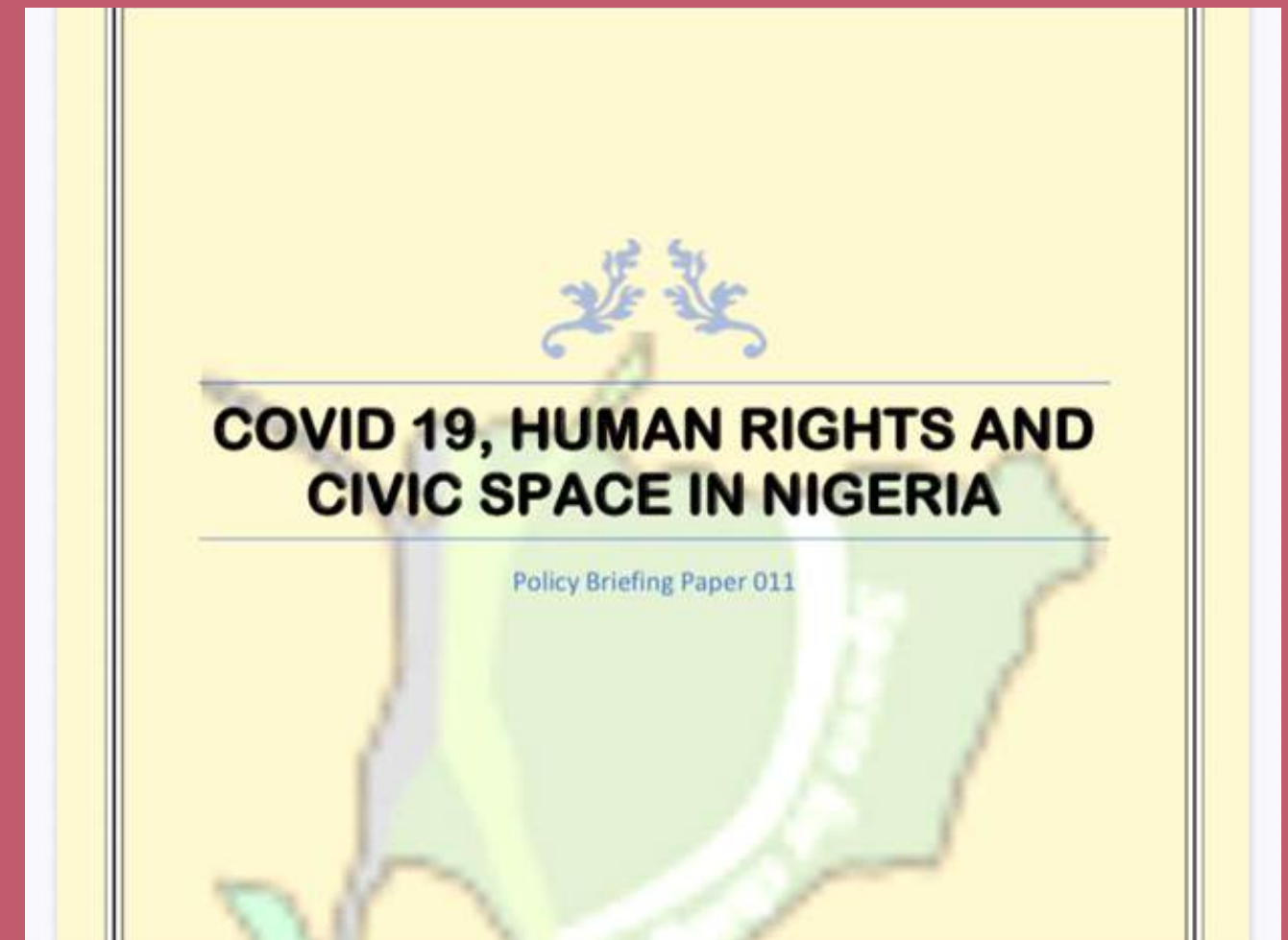
The PROTECTION FROM INTERNET FALSEHOODS, MANIPULATIONS AND OTHER RELATED MATTERS BILL, 2019, popularly known as the Social Media Bill, sponsored by Senator



Mohammed Sani Musa (APC Niger East), sought to prevent falsehoods and manipulations in internet correspondences and transmission in Nigeria. This bill is another restrictive proposal on the long list of legislations that hold enormous potential to restrict the civic space and push back on the growing citizens' ability to scrutinize government's actions. This policy brief, published in February 2020, highlights key concerns in the bill, while proffering recommendations to inform parliamentary deliberations.

LEARN MORE: [POLICY BRIEF: LEGAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROPOSED SOCIAL MEDIA BILL](#)

Policy Brief: COVID-19, Human Rights and Civic Space in Nigeria



In this Policy Briefing Paper, [COVID-19, Human Rights and the Civic Space in Nigeria](#), SPACES FOR CHANGE analyzed the COVID-19 disease containment measures of the Nigerian government within the context of economic, social and cultural rights, highlighting the broader implications on the civic space. The policy brief widely published in national dailies like [Business Day](#), [Premium Times](#), [The Daily](#), [ICIRNigeria](#) and a host of others, cautioned against re-purposing health emergency measures to close the space for civic freedoms.

SEE FULL BRIEF HERE: [COVID-19, HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE CIVIC SPACE IN NIGERIA](#)

COVID-19: The Legality and Limits of the President's Emergency Powers



On Sunday, March 29, 2020, President Muhammadu Buhari addressed Nigerians on the COVID-19 pandemic, detailing some of the stringent measures and restrictions the Nigerian government would implement to contain the further spread of the coronavirus. Among other things, he ordered the cessation of all movements in Lagos and Ogun States, alongside the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja, for an initial period of 14 days with effect from 11 p.m. on Monday, March 30. The affected locations recorded the majority of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Nigeria.

The above presidential fiat restricting civil liberties generated a flurry of legal debates regarding the legality of the president's orders. While some jurists have argued that in the absence of a law enabling restrictions to civic freedoms, the legality of the COVID-19 containment measures is questionable. Thus, that it is illegal to seek to impose sanctions or restrict citizens' movement, without a legal framework anchoring this. The proponents of this legal position further recommended that the National Assembly should, as a matter of urgency, pass a Coronavirus Act 2020. Legal minds sympathetic to this view urged the president to issue regulations pursuant to the Quarantine Act of 1926 for the safety and protection of Nigerians. On the other hand, however, some other legal scholars contend

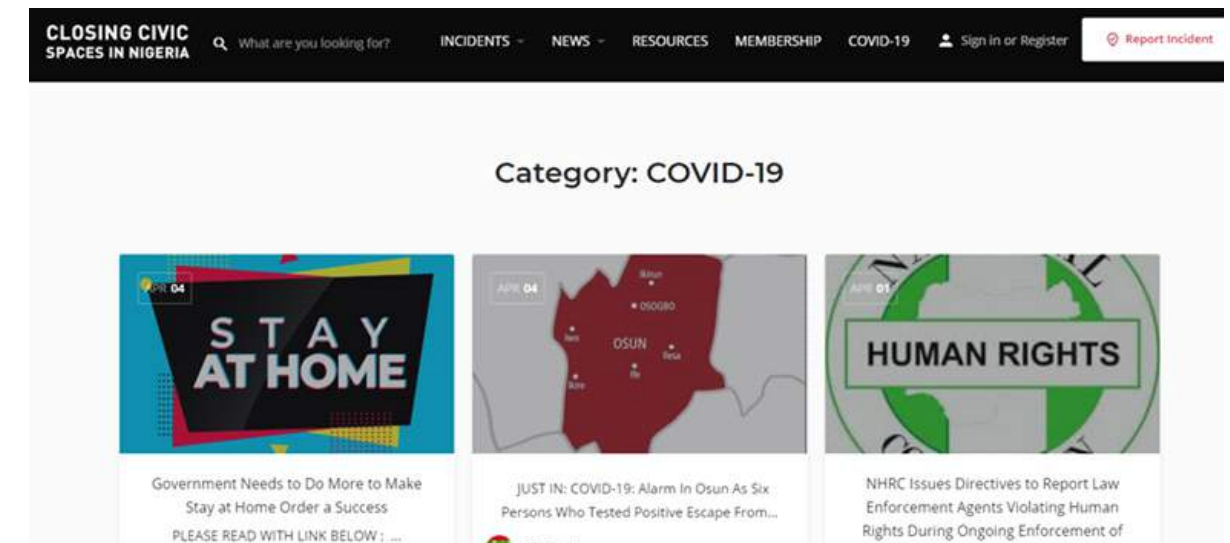
that rather than resorting to presidential fiats, the president should invoke his powers under the Constitution to declare a state of emergency, which must be approved by the National Assembly.

This article, by S4C's director, Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri, published in numerous national dailies contributed to the surging legal debate regarding the legality and limits of the president's emergency powers during a pandemic like COVID-19.

According to Victoria, "as clearly seen from the letters of the law, President Buhari's order for a total cessation of movement, except for essential supplies, in Lagos, Ogun and the FCT do not seem to align with the constitutional requirements laid down in Section 45 and 305. President Buhari did not declare any state of emergency, but went ahead to order the immediate implementation of measures that curtail rights and freedoms..."

READ FULL REPORT HERE: [COVID-19: THE LEGALITY AND LIMITS OF THE PRESIDENT'S EMERGENCY POWERS](#)

COVID-19 Response Tracker on Closing Spaces Database



Relying on the existing tools and technical support provided by the [Closing Spaces Digital Database](#), SPACES FOR CHANGE and a network of organizations, Action Group on Free Civic Space, are tracking, documenting and analyzing the COVID-19 disease control measures at the federal and state levels that have enormous potential for executive overreach, and shrink the civic space in Nigeria. The tracker assembles reports from Nigeria's 36 states, and the West Africa sub-region, while members deploy various mechanisms to both draw public attention to the reported incidents and push back on unduly restrictive measures.

LEARN MORE: [DATABASE ON CLOSING SPACES IN NIGERIA](#)

COVID-19 Lockdown: Right Groups Caution FG on Abuse of Citizens' Rights

SPACES FOR CHANGE joined Action Group on Free Civic Space, a coalition of non-governmental organizations, to denounce the wide-scale abuse of citizens' rights by law enforcement agents under the guise of ensuring compliance with COVID-19 lockdown. In a press statement published in [The Sun](#), [Sundiat Post](#), [The Niche](#), [The Daily](#), [News Express](#) and several news sites, the group urged the government to rise to its responsibility of providing adequate relief packages for households in want and ensure that relief items reach those in critical need of food and medical supplies, especially in the urban slums and rural areas.



READ FULL STATEMENT: [COVID-19 lockdown: Right groups caution FG on abuse of citizens rights](#)

COVID-19 and the Shrinking Civic Space in Nigeria

Defending the Civic Space



In a May 2020 article published on JUST SECURITY BLOG, Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri of SPACES FOR CHANGE explains how the COVID-19 pandemic is magnifying existing threats to civic space. This piece is part of Just Security's Assessing Emergency Powers During #COVID-19 series, which aims to highlight and give voice to legal and civil society voices from across the globe, assessing the specific legal consequences of declared and de facto emergencies.

With over 4 million infections and over 300,000 deaths across the globe, the coronavirus disease is spreading rapidly, destroying economies, compelling countries of the world to make tough decisions and to roll out measures aimed at controlling the spread and mitigating impacts of infection. With the same rapidity as its spread, COVID-19 seems to be taking over as the major driver of shrinking civic space in many parts of the world, displacing the popular buzzwords: national security. Growing evidence from across jurisdictions is exposing how State actors are exploiting the pandemic to stifle dissent, clamp down on civic freedoms, and push through restrictive measures, using COVID-19 as a pretext.

In Nigeria, as seen elsewhere, the COVID-19 pandemic is magnifying existing threats to civic space. While it is generally agreed that COVID-19 is a public health emergency threatening the life of the nation — necessitating the application of certain derogation measures — mounting evidence is pointing toward a deliberate exploitation of the pandemic to accelerate other non-health agendas. The database of closing civic spaces in Nigeria is replete with records of disease containment measures radically overstretched beyond context and enforced in ways that hurt civic freedoms. Since 2015, the database has tracked and reported only incidents of socio-political and legal restrictions on online and offline spaces for civil society activities in Nigeria and West Africa. On March 31, a COVID-19 focus was added to the database, following the spikes in human rights abuses. These have included deaths caused by security operatives enforcing the state-mandated lockdown, which was introduced to combat the spread of coronavirus.

Based on the records in the database, three notable trends have emerged revealing the exploitation of COVID-19 health emergency powers to close civic space.

READ FULL REPORT HERE: [COVID-19 AND THE SHRINKING CIVIC SPACE IN NIGERIA](#)

Congressional Briefing on Pandemic and Power Grabs: Protecting Human Rights during COVID-19

SPACES FOR CHANGE joined other civic space experts from around the world at the United States Congressional Briefing on Pandemic and Power Grabs: Protecting Human Rights During COVID-19 held on June 18, 2020, to discuss the parallel pandemic of governments seeking to use COVID 19 as an opportunity to limit civic freedoms. Organized by a consortium of international human rights organizations, the briefing was held against the backdrop of the US Congress considering a new legislation—Protecting Human Rights During Pandemic Act—that would respond to these autocratic strategies. It featured remarks from the sponsors of the bill, Senator Ed Markey from Massachusetts, Senator Marsha Blackburn in the Senate and Representative Jim McGovern in the House.

While the world is witnessing the disease pandemic of COVID 19, another pandemic is raging by the side, primarily manifesting in the form of increased spread of attacks on democratic institutions: from fake news legislation used to arrest and prosecute journalists and doctors for speaking the truth about what is happening in their countries, to the legislative grant of excessive authority to the executive under emergency powers laws. Whether it is the Chinese government's National Security Law aimed at limiting foreign funding for civil society in Hong Kong, or the Hungarian government's emergency power laws awarding the Prime Minister the power to rule by decree during a public health emergency, or doctors targeted by the Egyptian government for protesting the poor official handling of the pandemic, or Nigeria's overly restrictive legislative proposals designed to enlarge governmental powers to contain and respond to the outbreak of infectious diseases, all of these point to power grabs and rollbacks of individual freedoms using COVID-19 as an excuse.

READ FULL REPORT HERE: [CONGRESSIONAL BRIEFING ON PANDEMIC AND POWER GRABS: PROTECTING HUMAN RIGHTS DURING COVID-19](#)



An Observatory Panel on Civic Space



An Observatory Panel on Civic Space constituted under the banner of a collaborative research project between S4C and the UK-based Institute for Development Studies, brought together civil society leaders and expert voices engaging the civic space to analyse and synthesize findings of various documentations on civic space and citizen-state-society relations in Nigeria, especially in the light of COVID-19 realities. Undertaken under the auspices of the Navigating Civic Space component of DFID's A4EA programme, the research will focus more specifically on how Covid-19 is opening or closing spaces for civic action in three countries: Mozambique, Pakistan and Nigeria.

Launched on June 30, the Panel comprised 8 (eight) expert civil society leaders from across the country who participated in monthly dialogues exploring and dissecting the overall impacts of the pandemic on civil society operations in Nigeria. Panel members include Victoria Ohaeri of Spaces for Change; Abiodun Baiyewu of Global Rights; Chitra Nataragan, a researcher in North-East Nigeria; Emmanuel Ikule of NOPRIN Foundation; Fyनेface

Dunmamene of Youths and Environmental Advocacy Centre; Akindele Ayuba of Center for Community Education and Empowerment; and Moses Ilawole of Communities Alliance Against Displacement. The panel members have been selected to reflect key areas of difference including gender, capital-city vs subnational vantage points and fields of expertise/activism.

These expert commentaries and dialogues will provide a baseline for assessing changes that have followed the arrival of the pandemic in Nigeria, and inform the development of expert papers that will be published in peer-reviewed journals read across jurisdictions. This initiative has been designed to deepen the current understanding of the trends and drivers of closing civic space in Nigeria, through a comparative analysis of the trajectories of social, political and policy responses to them across the three focal countries.

READ FULL REPORT HERE: [AN OBSERVATORY PANEL ON CIVIC SPACE](#)

WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT DO HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS NEED DURING COVID-19?

In this op-ed published in October, 2020, David Mattingly, vice-president for Programs at the Fund for Global Human Rights (FGHR) submits that funders should trust and imitate their frontline partners' ability to assess their communities' greatest needs and offer the flexibility to pivot amid a crisis. Since 2016, FGHR has been providing flexible and timely support to SPACES FOR CHANGE premised on a culture of trust, mutual respect and solidarity.



READ FULL REPORT HERE: [WHAT KIND OF SUPPORT DO HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS NEED DURING COVID-19?](#)

Legal Analysis of the Control of Infectious Diseases Bill 2020 Defending the Civic Space

A draft statute introduced in the Nigerian parliament, titled, [Control of Infectious Diseases Bill 2020](#), aims to enlarge governmental powers to prevent and manage the outbreak of infectious diseases such as COVID-19.

Some of the bill's provisions have attracted heavy criticism, particularly the sections concerning compulsory vaccination, limits on



constitutional freedoms and excessive discretionary power to conduct public health surveillance programs and epidemiological investigations and surveys of people, animals, or vectors to determine the existence, incidence or likelihood of a possible outbreak of an infectious disease.

This policy brief examines the contentious provisions of the bill with a view to deepening understanding of the limitations placed on the enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

SEE FULL POLICY BRIEF AT: [LEGAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES BILL 2020](#)

Public Hearing on the Control of Infectious Diseases Bill



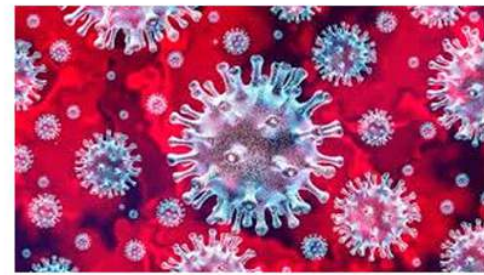
Nigeria's House of Representatives conducted a public hearing on the Control of Infectious Diseases Bill 2020 on Wednesday 10th and Thursday 11th June 2020 at the National Assembly Complex in Abuja, Nigeria. The bill, sponsored by Speaker of the Nigerian House of Representatives, Honorable Femi Gbajabiamila, seeks to strengthen the legal framework for disease surveillance and control by enlarging governmental powers to take a range of measures to prevent or respond to the outbreak of infectious diseases like COVID-19.

SPACES FOR CHANGE joined members of the human rights and civil society community to submit and present a legal memorandum to the federal lawmakers at the hearing. The memorandum which SPACES FOR CHANGE co-signed with 94 (ninety-four) media, human rights and community organizations under the auspices of the [Action Group on Free Civic Space](#) disapproved of several provisions of the bill, and advocated for an urgent review.

The Director-General of the Nigerian Center for Disease Control (NCDC), the Nigerian Governors' Forum represented by Governor Fayemi of Ekiti state, religious leaders, health experts, media organizations and a host of other stakeholders also joined to raise objections to the bill, citing numerous reasons. Following the tradition of the Nigerian parliament, Nigerians are optimistic that the current leadership of the lower house of the Nigerian legislature will heed the calls for restraint in the passage of the bill.

READ FULL REPORT AT: [PUBLIC HEARING ON THE CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES BILL](#)

Unrelenting Push for the Review of the Infectious Diseases Bill

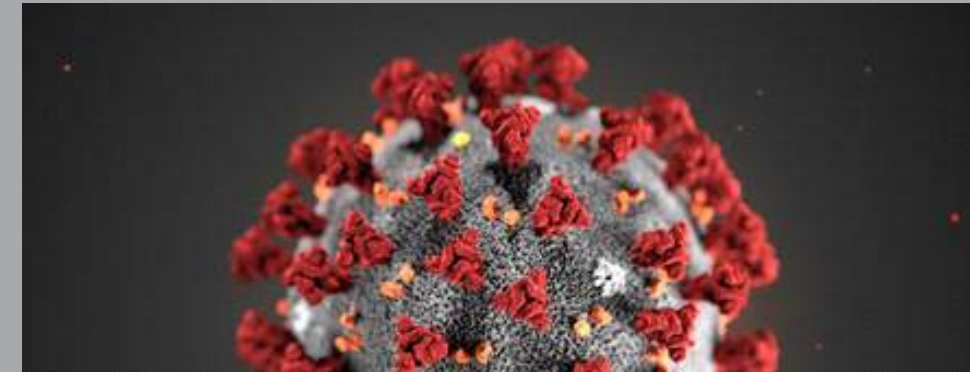


CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES BILL 2020

In this BBC interview (starting at 48.40), S4C explains why the Control of Infectious Diseases Bill won't make a good law for Nigerians. Numerous provisions of the bill grant overreaching powers to health officials, the national disease control agency and law enforcement officers, including the police to prevent and manage the outbreak of infectious diseases. An extensive redraft of critical provisions, or in fact, a fresh homegrown legal framework consistent with human rights standards, is what Nigeria needs at the moment.

LISTEN TO THE FULL AUDIO INTERVIEW HERE: [UNRELENTING PUSH FOR THE REVIEW OF THE INFECTIOUS DISEASES BILL](#)

COVID-19: Group Advocates for the Review of Infectious Diseases Bill



SPACES FOR CHANGE joined the [Action Group on Free Civic Space \(AGFCS\)](#), a coalition of non-governmental organizations, to denounce the wide-scale abuse of citizens' rights by law enforcement agents under the guise of ensuring compliance with COVID-19 lockdown.

In a press statement published in several news sites, the group strongly advocated for the review of the Control of Infectious Diseases Act Bill 2020, particularly the provisions that: (a) grant overreaching powers to law enforcement officers or the police to apprehend persons suffering from infectious diseases; (b) breach individual privacy, confidentiality agreements, and doctor-patient data privacy; (c) empowers state agents to arbitrarily restrict freedom of association, gatherings, public entertainments; and (d) requires state health officials and law enforcement officers to subjectively arrest without warrant, confiscate properties, and obtain information without any restraint.

Media Link

Sundiat Post: COVID-19: [Civil society group cautions security agents against using rights abuse to enforce lockdown](#)

The Guardian: [Reps condemn rights abuses, extortion of Nigerians by security operatives](#)

Vanguard: [COVID-19: Group advocates review of Infectious Diseases Bill](#)

The Niche: [Groups caution Nigerian govt on abuse of citizens rights under guise of enforcing COVID19 lockdown](#)

The Daily: - [COVID 19: State Governors lack constitutional powers to close borders](#)

Stakeholders Converge to Take a Harder Look at CAMA 2020

SPACES FOR CHANGE | S4C co-hosted a stakeholder briefing in collaboration with the European Center for Non-profit Law (ECNL) on September 9 to examine how the Companies and Allied Matters Act (CAMA 2020) recently passed into law is contributing to the dynamics of civic space in Nigeria.

Whilst certain provisions of the new law support the government's efforts to strengthen the framework for corporate regulation and curb illicit financial flows, some other provisions grant the government excessive regulatory powers over non-profit entities and hold enormous potential to make them operate under restrictive conditions. This briefing represents the first of many steps by civil society groups towards addressing the conflicting dynamics arising from the contentious provisions of the new law and also balance perspectives in the face of growing dissension.

As a member of the Open Government Partnership, Nigeria was applauded for reviewing the regulatory framework for corporations, and for particularly introducing new rules that enhance beneficial ownership transparency which could be helpful in the fight against corruption, money laundering and tax evasions. Against this backdrop, the briefing witnessed participation from a broad spectrum of stakeholders: policy makers, local and international civil society representatives,

religious leaders, academics, federal industry regulators, intergovernmental bodies, donor agencies, industry experts including Joe Powell, Deputy Chief Executive of Open Government Partnership, Dr. Buno Nduka, Director of Programs and Projects at Inter-Governmental Action Group against Money Laundering in West Africa (GIABA), Vanja Skoroc of the European Center for Non-profit Law, Dr. Sam Amadi and Dr. Abubakar Alkali, both senior law lecturers at Baze University Abuja, Reverend Father George Ehusani of the Lux Terra Institute, Bishop Olufemi Ore, Lagos Chair of the Pentecostal Fellowship of Nigeria, senior officials of the Ford Foundation, Fund for Global Human Rights, Special Control Unit against Money Laundering (SCUML), Global NPO Coalition on FATF, INGO Forum, Amnesty International, Action Group on Free Civic Space, EU's Agents for Citizen-Driven Transformation (ACT) Programme and many others.

An impressive lineup of speakers and experts addressed various issues beginning with the comparative analysis of the old CAMA 1990 vis-à-vis the new CAMA 2020. These presentations sparked debates among stakeholders on various issues raised by the panelists. In particular, the

discussion regarding how international financial regulations like the Financial Action Taskforce (FATF) are fueling a wave of restrictive regulations at the national level, prompted debates between GIABA officials and representatives of the Global NPO Coalition on FATF. There was also a discussion on regulatory uncertainties caused by the duplicity of regulations and overlapping institutional powers.

The briefing moderated by Ford Foundation's Dabesaki Ikemenjima concluded with salient strategies on the way forward among which include to approach the National Assembly to amend the repressive sections, to get the president of Nigeria to revoke assent of the law or send it back to the National Assembly to address the key concerns of stakeholders and to mobilize civil society groups to challenge the controversial sections of the law in court.

See full report at: [Stakeholders Converge to Take a Harder Look at CAMA 2020](#)

ACTION GROUP CONVENES MEDIA OUTREACH ON CAMA 2020 ACROSS STATES

Deeply concerned about the latest revisions to Part F of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020 (CAMA 2020) applicable to non-profit entities in Nigeria, especially the potential for numerous provisions of the new law to undermine fundamental freedoms and shrink the civic space in Nigeria, the Action Group on Free Civic Space (AGFCS) convened a sensitization outreach on September 16, 2020 in Lagos. The outreach held simultaneously across four Nigerian states: Lagos, Imo, Rivers and Enugu, attracted more than 100 representatives of the Nigerian civil society, media, justice and religious communities. Member-organizations of the AGFCS across states convened the outreaches to deepen stakeholder understanding of the recent legislative amendments and the implications for the legitimate operations of civil society organizations in Nigeria.

While the introduction of legal reforms aimed at strengthening the corporate governance framework was laudable, the AGFCS insists that human rights and civil liberties cannot be sacrificed at the altar of upgrading the business environment. The press statement read by Mr. Samuel Akpologun, the Executive Director of Ace and Vanguard Legal Practitioners, shed light on the contentious provisions of the new law. Provisions like sections 839, 842, 849 of the Act appear to be fixated on enlarging governmental powers to suspend and remove the trustees of an association,



thereby taking over the administration or management the association's property and bank credits. Empowering the Commission to vest the association's property in the hands of an official custodian, or order debtors to discharge their liabilities in an interest-yielding account held by the Commission for the benefit of the association, and to restrict the association's transactions, confer excessive powers on the government to overly restrict or interfere with the operations of non-profits.

The interactive session provoked interesting debates about the constitutionality of the recent legal revisions. Participants also flagged additional concerns that could hinder effective implementation by state actors, and corresponding compliance on the part of regulated entities.

SEE FULL REPORT HERE: [ACTION GROUP CONVENES MEDIA OUTREACH ON CAMA 2020 ACROSS STATES](#)



CIVIL SOCIETY LAW IN AFRICA



In September, 2020, SPACES FOR CHANGE's Executive Director joined other legal experts from across Africa, comprising Omolara Balogun, West Africa Civil Society Institute (Ghana); Yona Wanjala, Defenders Protection Initiative (Uganda); Leah Mitaba, Zambia Council for Social Development (Zambia) at a panel discussing the emerging trends in the civic space arising from anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing legal regimes.

The University of Pretoria's Center for Human Rights and the International Center for Non-profit Law (ICNL) organized the panel discussion as part of the advanced human rights short course on Civil Society Law in Africa.

READ MORE:
[CIVIL SOCIETY LAW IN AFRICA](#)

IN SOLIDARITY WITH #ENDSARS PROTESTS!



In solidarity with the #EndSARS nationwide protests in Nigeria, a coalition of civil society organizations under the banner of the Action Group on Free Civic Space (AGFCS) on October 21, 2020, issued a joint statement co-signed by 27 members and quickly dispatched a joint fact-finding mission to establish the facts and circumstances of the alleged atrocities committed by officers of the Special Anti-Robbery Squad (SARS), a unit of the Nigerian Police Force in Awkuzu, Anambra State.

The Action Group's Legal Helpline is also supporting protesters across states with relief assistance and legal representation, while field monitors are redoubling efforts to track and document attacks on protesters on the database of closing civic spaces in Nigeria.

SEE FULL STATEMENT:
[DATABASE ON CLOSING SPACES IN NIGERIA](#)

#ENDSARS CATEGORY ON THE CLOSING SPACES DATABASE



[#ENDSARS focus was added to the Closing Spaces Database](#) in the wake of the nationwide protests that started on October 8 following the shooting of a young man in Delta state by a SARS officer. Since then, the Closing Spaces Database has tracked numerous incidents of crackdowns on the civic space during the protests which include arrests of protesters in Lagos, Jos, Kano, Delta, Abuja, Ogun, Ekiti, Imo etc; alleged compilation of #ENDSARS protesters on a no-fly list, freezing of NGO donation accounts, sanctioning media organizations for their coverage of the #EndSARS protests, targeted attacks on journalists, reprisal attacks on indigenous communities by military officers, teargassing and indiscriminate shooting of protesters resulting in scores of deaths across the country.

LEARN MORE: [DATABASE OF CLOSING SPACES IN NIGERIA](#)

AFRICA RIGHTS TALK: #ENDSARS AND POLICE REFORM IN NIGERIA



In October, 2020, on the 16th episode of Africa Rights Talk hosted by the Centre for Human Rights at the University of Pretoria, SPACES FOR CHANGE discussed the need for police reform and justice for victims of police brutality in Nigeria.

In this conversation, S4C's Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri walks us through the tensions surrounding the October 2020 protests in the country and analyses these tensions in light of the wider implications on civic participation in Nigeria.

LISTEN TO THE EPISODE:
[AFRICA RIGHTS TALK: #ENDSARS AND POLICE REFORM IN NIGERIA](#)

#NWAORIEUBI MASSACRE: JUSTICE NOW FOR MBAITOLU COMMUNITIES!



A reprisal attack by officers of the 34 Artillery Brigade of the Nigerian Army resulted in the death of 6 Imo indigenes on Wednesday, October 21, 2020. The dead and the injured are mostly women, girls and young men. In a recent statement, SPACES FOR CHANGE described these killings as senseless and totally unlawful. At a time, Nigerians are calling on the government to halt police brutality and right historical injustices perpetrated by security operatives, the latest killings by the Nigerian Army in the wake of the #EndSARS protests reinforce the need for an immediate reform of the entire security architecture in the country.

See full report at: [#NWAORIEUBI MASSACRE: JUSTICE NOW FOR MBAITOLU COMMUNITIES!](#)

Legal Helplines Update: The Power of Collaboration

In April 2020, SPACES FOR CHANGE | S4C teamed up with CLEEN Foundation, NOPRIN Foundation, Rule of Law and Accountability Advocacy Center (RULAAC), JDPC Gowon Estate and the Network of Pro Bono Lawyers of Nigeria, to launch the Action Group Legal Helplines (08145000093 & 07039855775), with the aim of providing free legal services to persons whose rights are violated as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown measures in Nigeria. With the timely support of the Fund for Global Human Rights (FGHR), the pool of lawyers from the six organizations have been rendering a range of free legal services, including securing bails, on-the-spot legal advice, legal representation in courts, and petitioning agencies and institutions responsible for redressing wrongs. Beneficiaries of the scheme are drawn from different parts of the country.

As at June, 2020, the Action Group Legal Helplines has handled a total of 103 (One Hundred and Three) cases of human rights violations involving unlawful detention, extortion, assault, domestic violence, stigmatization and murder. Here's the breakdown:

In Lagos, the team freed a total of 68 persons (19 women and 49 men) from various detention facilities across the state. CLEEN Foundation and another organization, Partnership for Justice are handling the two complaints of gender-based violence received in Lagos.

In Imo State, the legal team freed 7 persons detained at the State Criminal Investigation Department, Owerri, for violating the curfew imposed as part of the lockdown measures to combat the spread of COVID-19. The arrested persons were held in detention

beyond the constitutional limits of 48 hours without any formal charge. At the time, state courts and judicial bodies remained shut while the mobile courts set up to try simple misdemeanors committed during the lockdown were not sitting to administer justice. Security officers exploited the lacuna to extort detained persons, while those who could not afford to 'pay for freedom' remained in custody longer than necessary.

On April 24, 2020, the Action Group's legal team issued a press release urging the governor to set up mobile courts and provide the resources needed for the mobile courts to sit and try defaulters of Imo State Executive Order 001 on COVID-19 Lockdown and Curfew. Yielding to advocacy pressure, the mobile court started sitting a few days later and the legal team continues to provide free legal representation to defaulters, particular women and those on essential errands, such as procuring food items, drugs, or seeking medical care at the time of arrest. So far, 23 persons have been freed in the state.

In addition to the above, the legal team released press statements, petitioned the Nigeria Army, the National Human Rights Commission and the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control. The legal team also offered pro bono services to indigent citizens arrested and or remanded for allegedly violating the lockdown order.

In Kaduna, the groups' legal representatives followed up with a case involving the arrest of over 900 persons that allegedly violated the lockdown order between April 27 to April 30, until all the suspects were eventually released. Majority of the suspects were religious leaders and business owners.

Actions taken by the legal team include referrals and petitions to state and federal agencies/institutions responsible for redressing some of these wrongs. In Delta State, the Action Group's legal team petitioned the National Human Rights Commission to investigate the death of one



Joseph Pessu who was reported to have been shot at close range by an army official for allegedly violating the lockdown order in the state.

In Benue State, the legal team petitioned the NHRC and the NCDC in respect of the case involving the continuous detention of the Benue State COVID-19 index case, involving one Ms. Susan Lawani.

In total, the team intervened in 106 (one hundred and six) cases involving arrests and detention, murder, physical assaults, domestic violence and extortion in Lagos, Bayelsa, Rivers, Imo, Delta, Kaduna and Benue States. While some of these cases have been concluded, some are still being judiciously handled by the team until a satisfactory conclusion is reached.

All of the above interventions in different parts of the country would not have been possible without the timely and flexible support from the Fund for Global Human Rights. SPACES FOR CHANGE is particularly grateful to the Fund for the flexibility to experiment with new ideas, test new strategies, learn from mistakes and make adjustments along the way. This approach, for us, has been empowering.

Read full report at: [Legal Helplines Update: The Power of Collaboration](#)

Legal Corner (Free Legal Service Program)

In 2020, S4C's legal team continued to offer free legal and advisory services to marginalized groups and informal communities in Lagos and Imo States. Through public interest litigation and community empowering initiatives anchored on the human rights paradigm, the organization's legal team handled a series of civil and criminal cases bothering on police brutality, extortion, domestic violence, sexual assault of minors among others, as well as a variety of pro-bono civil cases involving right to own property, administration of deceased estates, determination of children custody in matrimonial causes, labour cases, among others.

Details of cases handled are as follows:

ACTS	VICTIMS	PERPETRATORS	ACTIONS TAKEN	DATES	STATUS/OUTCOME
Trespass to land.	Aworetan Olatunde	INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE			
Illegal demolition	Sehinde Ebiesuwa	COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, LAGOS STATE			
unlawful arrest, cruel inhuman and degrading treatment of the claimants,	Durojaiye Anjola	MINISTRY OF PHYSICAL AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT LAGOS STATE.	S4C instituted the matter in court in June, 2018	18/1/19 12/3/19 12/4/19 4/5/19 19/11/19 14/1/20	Pending.
Assault with fire arms	Rasheed Raji	GOVERNMENT OF LAGOS STATE			
Malicious burning of properties	Iyabo Akinbulejo	CHIEF ABDUL-FATAI OYEBEMI AROMIRE			
	Kemi Malomo	CHIEF F.A.A. SULAIMAN			
	Manoah Emayinbase				
	Omotola Asemudara				
	Idowu Makanjuola (for themselves and on behalf of evicted members of Ajeromi community)				

ACTS	VICTIMS	PERPETRATORS	ACTIONS TAKEN	DATES	STATUS/OUTCOME
Child trafficking,	Biliki Adeoye	Sulaiman Raheem	S4C petitioned the Deputy Commissioner of Police, State CIID, Pantl.	9/12/19 13/1/20 22/1/20	The complainant has been given custody of two of her children while Sulaiman Raheem has custody of one child. Sulaiman Raheem is committed to paying the school fees and feeding allowance of the three children.
Domestic violence	Minor A		Legal Representation of complainant in Police station.		
Threat to life	Minor B Minor C				

ACTS	VICTIMS	PERPETRATORS	ACTIONS TAKEN	DATES	STATUS/OUTCOME
Abandonment	Aminat Adebayo Gbolahan Adebayo (Deceased), Adenike Adebayo, Bolaji Adebayo Olamide Adebayo	Alhaji Adekunle Adebayo	S4C wrote a petition to the Commissioner of Police. Legal representations at the police station.	7/8/19 26/9/19 11/11/19	Pending

ACTS	VICTIMS	PERPETRATORS	ACTIONS TAKEN	DATES	STATUS/OUTCOME
Kidnapping, Abduction, Threat to life, Attempted murder, Rape, Poisoning, and Defilement	Minor X	Goddy Okako	Legal representation at the Police Station.	9/6/19 10/8/19	Pending.

ACTS	VICTIMS	PERPETRATORS	ACTIONS TAKEN	DATES	STATUS/OUTCOME
Trespass to land	St. Vincent de Paul Centre.	Ovenseri Orosanye	Legal representations at LMDC Legal representations in Court	10/4/19 17/4/19 23/5/19 2/7/19 19/7/19 2/8/19 14/8/19 22/8/19 19/9/19 25/9/19 7/10/19 10/10/19 21/10/19 30/10/19 4/12/19 10/2/2020/ 17/3/2020	Pending

ACTS	VICTIMS	PERPETRATORS	ACTIONS TAKEN	DATES	STATUS/OUTCOME
Landlord and Tenant	Tobi Durojaiye	Dr. Abiodun Idowu	Legal representations at Magistrate Court, Ogba.	21/1/2020 10/3/2020 14/4/2020	Pending

ACTS	VICTIMS	PERPETRATORS	ACTIONS TAKEN	DATES	STATUS/OUTCOME
Torture, inhuman and degrading treatment.	Sebastian Aguofor	RSL International Company	Legal representations in Court	5/8/19 4/11/19 30/1/2020	Pending. Working on settlement.

ACTS	VICTIMS	PERPETRATORS	ACTIONS TAKEN	DATES	STATUS/OUTCOME
Torture, inhuman and degrading treatment.	Samuel Kpiki	Kayode Otolorin	Legal representations in Court	7/11/18 12/12/18 29/1/19 25/2/19 17/7/19	Pending

ACTS	VICTIMS	PERPETRATORS	ACTIONS TAKEN	DATES	STATUS/OUTCOME
Medical negligence, Cruel inhuman and degrading treatment, Infringement on right to life.	Mr. Christanthus Okeke Mrs. Obianaju Okeke. Master David Okeke (Late)	MS. CLEMENTINA OGUN PAKO HEALTH CENTRE RAUF AREGBESOLA HEALTH CENTRE ORILE-AGEGE GENERAL HOSPITAL LAGOS STATE PRIMARY HEALTH CARE BOARD LAGOS STATE MINISTRY OF HEALTH ATTORNEY-GENERAL, LAGOS STATE	S4C wrote letters to all the defendants proposing amicable settlement. When proposal for settlement failed, S4C filed an action in the High Court, Ikeja.	17/1/19 (Lagos Multi door Court). 5/2/19 27/3/19 18/4/19 28/5/19 26/6/19 17/7/19 9/3/2020 7/5/2020	Pending

ACTS	VICTIMS	PERPETRATORS	ACTIONS TAKEN	DATES	STATUS/OUTCOME
Trespass to land. Illegal demolition unlawful arrest, cruel inhuman and degrading treatment of the claimants, Assault with fire arms Malicious burning of properties	Aworetan Olatunde Sehinde Ebiesuwa Durojaiye Anjola Rasheed Raji Iyabo Akinbulejo Kemi Malomo Manoah Emayinbase Omotola Asemudara Idowu Makanjuola (for themselves and on behalf of evicted members of Ajeromi community)	INSPECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, LAGOS STATE MINISTRY OF PHYSICAL AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT LAGOS STATE. GOVERNMENT OF LAGOS STATE CHIEF ABDU L-FATAI OYEBEMI AROMIRE CHIEF F.A.A. SULAIMAN	S4C instituted the matter in court in June, 2018	18/1/19 12/3/19 12/4/19 4/5/19 19/11/19 14/1/20	Pending.

ACTS	VICTIMS	PERPETRATORS	ACTIONS TAKEN	DATES	STATUS/OUTCOME
Kidnap	Chika Onukogwu	Godwin Onukogwu	Petition to the Commissioner of Police.		Pending

ACTS	VICTIMS	PERPETRATORS	ACTIONS TAKEN	DATES	STATUS/OUTCOME
Unlawful denial of Severance Entitlement.	Jane Nwachukwu	Pharma Deko Plc	S4C wrote letters of demand to Pharma Deko Plc	8/1/2021 27/1/2021 4/2/2021 18/2/2021	The Company has promised to make a proposal on the schedule payment before the end of the month.

ACTS	VICTIMS	PERPETRATORS	ACTIONS TAKEN	DATES	STATUS/OUTCOME
Torture, inhuman and degrading treatment.	SIR. NICHOLAS OKAFOR	Officers of the Nigerian Police Force, OBOWO DIVISIONAL POLICE STATION, OTOKO, OBOWO LGA, IMO STATE	Legal representations before the Imo State Panel of Inquiry		Pending. Awaiting recommendation of the Panel to the Imo State Government.

ACTS	VICTIMS	PERPETRATORS	ACTIONS TAKEN	DATES	STATUS/OUTCOME
Extra Judicial Killing, Torture, inhuman and degrading treatment.	CHINEDU OSUNGBURU GWU	The Commissioner of Police, Nigerian Police Force, Imo State Command and NIGERIAN ARMY COMMAND, OBINZE, PORT HARCOURT ROAD, OWERRI, IMO STATE	Legal representations before the Imo State Panel of Inquiry	8/12/2020 13/1/2021	Pending. Awaiting recommendation of the Panel to the Imo State Government.

ACTS	VICTIMS	PERPETRATORS	ACTIONS TAKEN	DATES	STATUS/OUTCOME
Extra Judicial Killing, Torture, inhuman and degrading treatment.	Chukwunonso Okonkwo	The Commissioner of Police, Nigerian Police Force, Imo State Command and NIGERIAN ARMY COMMAND, OBINZE, PORT HARCOURT ROAD, OWERRI, IMO STATE	Legal representations before the Anambra State Panel of Inquiry	8/12/2020 13/1/2021	Pending. Awaiting recommendation of the Panel to the Anambra State Government.

ACTS	VICTIMS	PERPETRATORS	ACTIONS TAKEN	DATES	STATUS/OUTCOME
Extra Judicial Killing, Torture, inhuman and degrading treatment.	GODWIN AGOMUO	The Commissioner of Police, Nigerian Police Force, Imo State Command and NIGERIAN ARMY COMMAND, OBINZE, PORT HARCOURT ROAD, OWERRI, IMO STATE	Legal representations before the Imo State Panel of Inquiry	8/12/2020 13/1/2021	Pending. Awaiting recommendation of the Panel to the Imo State Government.



Action Group on Free Civic Space (AGFCS) sensitization outreach to review the latest amendment to the Part F of the Companies and Allied Matters Act 2020 (CAMA 2020) and its application to non-profit entities in Nigeria



Traditional rulers (Baales), Community representatives and residents of 16 informal communities reconvened at Communities Alliance against Displacement (CAD) general meeting.



S4C, CAD, LASRO, LAWMA, and the Lagos Mainland Local Government at Clean-up exercise in 7 Informal communities at Ebute-Meta Mainland Lagos.



S4C legal Office Sola Olutayo, CAD Executives during clean-up exercise at World habitat day.



Nosayame Osahon Program Officer, Energy & Environmental Justice at a community engagement on benefit sharing of natural resources in Ililee Community, Imo state.



Kingsley Okafor at a community engagement on benefit sharing of natural resource in Obitti Community Imo State.

A cross-section of guests and S4C staff at the December, 2020 closing-out cocktail party







TARKWA-BAY ISLAND: Another Community Bites the Dust!

Tarkwa Bay Island in Iru-Victoria Island Local Council Development Area of Lagos State, now adds to the long list of Lagos informal communities forcefully evicted and their inhabitants displaced without compensation, and without the provision of alternative shelter. This time around, federal agents, particularly a combined team of security operatives from the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation (NNPC), Nigeria Ports Authority (NPA) and the Nigerian Navy, conducted the demolition and mass eviction exercises, beginning from January 21, 2020, displacing thousands of poor families, disrupting children's education, while pushing poor households deeper into poverty. Federal authorities claim that the mass clearance exercise was aimed at clearing structures built illegally and protecting equipment belonging to the country's national oil company from "vandals".

When SPACES FOR CHANGE | S4C visited Tarkwa-Bay Island on January 22, 2020, the entire area wore a forlorn look, with heaps of residents' belongings—mattresses, refrigerators, television sets, boxes, cooking utensils, children's books etc—stacked in every corner. Having lived on the Island where they have been engaged in petty trading for decades, hundreds of women and children were seen stranded on the jetty and coastlines, with nowhere else to go. "This is where we work and live. Now that the security forces have forced us to leave, where do they want us to go to?" the displaced women bemoaned.

Tarkwa Bay Island is comprised of 6 communities namely Tarkwa Bay, Ajegunle, Okun-Ayo, Agbagbo, Ebute-Oko, and Ogogoro. The forced removal of Tarkwa-Bay residents appears to form part of a broader campaign to wipe out the inhabitants of waterfront communities under the guise of tourism development and pipeline protection. Before Tarkwa Bay, several waterfront communities like Idi-Mangoro,



Ilashe and Akalaba, have been targeted with ruthless clearance operations. Other communities like to follow include Sabo-Koji, Apapa, and Tomaro community, Snake Island and the list continues.

Too many of these evictions have been carried out in contravention of due process requirements as provided for in constitutional and statutory law, as well as in international human rights instruments, such as the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, to which Nigeria is a signatory.

READ MORE: [TARKWA-BAY ISLAND: Another Community Bites the Dust!](#)

From March 04 – 06, 2020, SPACES FOR CHANGE's Aizighode Obinyan joined housing rights advocates from El Salvador, Philippines, Cameroun and Germany at a Speakers Tour in Geneva, Switzerland, organized by the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR) and MISEREOR, the German Catholic Bishops' Organization for Development Cooperation, Aachen, Germany. In a private briefing with the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (UN-CESCR) during the tour, she discussed housing rights in the context of urbanization, environmental degradation, climate change and climate policies in Nigeria. She also participated in a side event during the 43rd session of the UN Human Rights Council and held meetings with staff of the United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Joining Ms. Obinyan at the Speakers Tour were Ms. Jacqueline Martínez, Fundacio nSalvadoren a de Desarrollo y ViviendaMi nima, El Salvador, Mr. Jules Dumas Nguebou, Association des amoureux du livre pour le Développement Local, Cameroon and by video participation, Luz Malibiran, Community Organizers Multiversity, Philippines. All of these organizations lead the campaign for the promotion and protection of economic, social and cultural rights (ESCR), especially the right to adequate shelter, in their various countries.

At the meetings with the UN-CESCR, the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate shelter and the staff of the Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (OHCHR), Ms. Obinyan provided an informed perspective on the housing sector in Nigeria. Housing rights within the context of urbanization in Nigeria comes against the backdrop of multiple challenges such as a housing deficit of 17 million units, widespread urban poverty, proliferation of informal settlements, also called slums, and



pervasive deprivation of basic social amenities. In order to address informality and the associated social inequalities, policies need to shift from economics to rights and opportunities. Targeted policies promoting the provision of adequate shelter and access to basic amenities for citizens, particularly, vulnerable groups (the poor, women, youth, persons living with disabilities etc.), are crucial. More tellingly, policy shifts need to be matched with innovative programs that expand access to social and economic opportunities and encourage self-sufficiency.

As part of the speakers' tour, Ms. Obinyan visited UrbaMonde, an organization progressively reoriented towards risk prevention and improving "urban conditions" for vulnerable populations by a transversal territorial approach. UrbaMonde has ongoing projects that support housing cooperatives in Geneva through processes of planning with specific attention to housing models, budgets and architecture. Participating in the various high-level discussions during the tour afforded S4C an opportunity to channel the needs and priorities of the urban poor in the global south in global development discourses. Working together with actors around the world, the organization will continue to clamour for inclusive and safer cities in line with the Sustainable Development Goal 11, which aims to "make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable".

SEE FULL STORY: [Taking Housing Rights Advocacy Across Borders](#)

Groups demand immediate resettlement of persons displaced by Lagos State Government during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown



Spaces for Change (S4C), Centre for Children's Health Education, Orientation and Protection (CEE-HOPE), and Community Life Project (CLP) strongly condemn the demolition of homes and properties at Yaya Abatan to Obawole in Ogba, Ikeja, Lagos by Lagos state authorities on April 22, 2020. Nothing beats the insensitivity of conducting demolitions at the peak of the federal government-mandated lockdown in Lagos State which has been in force since March 30, 2020. The lockdown directives, involving the total cessation of all non-essential movement, ban on public gatherings, school closures and compulsory stay-at-home (SAH) for all residents, have been recommended by health experts as critical preventive measures for combating the spread of the coronavirus pandemic.

At a time COVID-19 is ravaging the world and Lagos residents are substantially complying with public health advisories by staying at home, the Lagos State launched demolition attacks targeted at the homes of the predominantly urban poor households, vulnerable communities and small-scale businesses without providing alternative

safe spaces for the displaced. Compliance with stay-at-home orders is impossible for the 300 citizens displaced yesterday and forced into homelessness as a result of state-ordered forced evictions. Stay-at-home is only possible where people have a roof over their heads! The ill-planned displacement exercises potentially increase the risk of residents contracting and spreading COVID-19.

Recognizing that Lagos, Nigeria's commercial capital is the epicenter of the COVID-19 statistics in the country, S4C, CEEHOPE and CLP regard the Ogba demolition exercise by Lagos State authorities as a public health hazard. Conducting displacement exercises during a highly contagious pandemic without more, smacks of executive insensitivity and impunity. Such action, coming at a time when the economy faces recession, due to the crippling of social and economic activities all over the world, will not only add to the economic burden here in Lagos state, but also increase unemployment and make residents even more vulnerable to environmental and health hazards.

SEE FULL STATEMENT: [Groups demand immediate resettlement of persons displaced by Lagos State Government during COVID-19 pandemic lockdown](#)

COVID-19 in the Slums: CAD Reconvenes in August



With the gradual easing of the COVID-19 lockdown rules in Lagos State, the [Communities Alliance against Displacement \(CAD\)](#) reconvened on Thursday, August 6, 2020 after a long break. The scores of traditional rulers (Baales), community representatives and residents of 16 informal communities that thronged the venue of the general meeting reflects the collective desire of CAD members to get back together to revitalize and scale up their grassroots campaigns.

The general meeting afforded an opportunity for community members who have not seen each for some time to exchange hugs, banter, and resume their business of addressing multiple issues of importance to their members and communities.

During the community interface, representatives share information regarding the most pressing challenges they face in their communities and brainstorm ideas on how to resolve them. The outreach program involves visitation to the communities facing urban deprivations and threats to their shelter and livelihoods, and drawing the attention of urban stakeholders, including municipal or state authorities to intervene.

SEE FULL STORY: [COVID-19 in the Slums: CAD Reconvenes in August](#)

COVID-19 in the Slums: Lessons from Nigeria and Kenya

A virtual conference organized by Spaces for Change and the Kenya-based Do-It-with-Boldness Foundation, on August 11, 2020, united leaders and representatives of informal communities in Nigeria and Kenya to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 emergency response measures on under-served urban communities in the two countries. Whether it is the downtown locales in Badia and Otto Ilogbo in Lagos or the Mathare and Kibera communities in Kenya, the lockdown measures imposed by the Nigerian and Kenyan governments in response to the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic triggered a wave of unintended adverse consequences on the local economy, traditional livelihoods, food security, maternal wellbeing, security and the informal sector, with serious implications on the social, economic and cultural rights of citizens, especially the most vulnerable populations living in the informal urban settlements.

The conference featured presentations and sharing of experiences by the six panelists from the two countries comprising Asha Jaffar (journalist and communications professional from Kenya Nairobi), Winnie Ayieko Rasugu (Founder and CEO of Do It with Boldness Foundation, Kenya), Ishola Agbodemu (Community Development Association of Lagos Mainland), Mrs. Olabisi Williams (women leader of the Community Alliance against Displacement (CAD)), Joseph Were (human rights defender and Programmes Assistant



at Imarika Youth, Kenya) and Moses Anjola Ilawole (youth leader and Community Officer for CAD, Nigeria).

The conference provided valuable insights into the challenges facing slum dwellers in Africa and posited beneficial and practicable solutions which were shared by the different panelists. Accountability of the leadership at every level is indispensable if social development is to be attained. This entails the different tiers of government working cohesively to implement initiatives that improve living conditions in the informal settlements.

SEE FULL STORY: [COVID-19 in the Slums: Lessons from Nigeria and Kenya](#)

S4C, CAD and Lagos Government Agencies Co-host World Habitat Day Events

In commemoration of World Habitat Day, marked annually on the first Monday in the month of October, SPACES FOR CHANGE | S4C and Communities Alliance against Displacement (CAD), in collaboration with the Lagos State Resilience Office (LASRO), the Lagos Waste Management Authority (LAWMA), and the Lagos Mainland Local Government co-hosted a series of events themed – Community Participation in Flood Control and Mitigation Strategies in Lagos State.

The World Habitat Day event held on the 5th of October 2020 was divided into two sessions: a community-wide clean-up exercise in 7 informal communities within the Local Mainland Local Government Area — Otto, Ifeoluwa, Ifesowapo, AtitebiOgba-Elefo, Ottumara, and Toluwani — and a townhall featuring bespoke presentations on a wide range of issues relating to flood control and disaster management in the informal settlements.

Flagging off the celebration with a clean-up exercise led by S4C director, Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri, Lagos State's Deputy Chief Resilience Officer, Dr. Dania Fodayinka and the Vice-Chairman of the Lagos Mainland Local Government, Honorable Jubril Emilagba, the trio led residents on a tour of the communities, collecting waste materials along the way while isolating those of a recyclable nature. As the team moved from community to community, they sensitized residents on the importance of environmental cleanliness and responsible waste disposal. The recyclable materials retrieved included pet containers, aluminum

can containers, pure water sachets, plastic and lid covers, polythene bags among others. Total amount of recyclable waste collected weighed about 16 kilograms.

After the clean-up exercise, the group assembled at Eugenia Hall in Ebutte-Metta, Lagos where the townhall took place. S4C's Executive Director, Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri discussed the flooding projections issued by the Nigerian Hydrological Service which warned about unprecedented flooding in certain states, including Lagos between May and October 2020. Appraising state responses to the flood warnings, she urged communities to contribute their own quota towards preventing and reducing the impacts of flooding in their communities.

LASRO representative, Mr Adebayo Ade-ojo stated that clean-up exercises form part of the core strategies the agency deploys to increase the capacity of individuals and communities to survive and adapt to urban shocks and stresses. He reaffirmed LASRO's commitment to empowering communities to withstand heavy downpours and prevent flooding. This collaboration with S4C and CAD represents the kind of strategic alliances LASRO has forged with a broad spectrum of stakeholders to take advocacy to the doorsteps of flood-prone regions that face different flood hazards. In his address on behalf of the Lagos Mainland Local Government Chairman, Alhaji Tajudeen Quadri, the chairman of the Community Development Committee, applauded the efforts of S4C and CAD for initiating the clean-up exercise and pledged his continued support towards the attainment of the goal of cleaner and healthier communities.

SEE FULL STORY: [S4C, CAD and Lagos Government Agencies Co-host World Habitat Day Events](#)



DEBUNKING THE MYTH: "LAGOS SLUMS ARE SYNONYMOUS WITH CRIMINALITY"



Generally, it has been convenient to lay the blame for urban dysfunction on certain, usually disadvantaged, groups of people within society, leading to a mismatch between the solutions proffered and the real problems. In October, 2020, SPACES FOR CHANGE contributed a chapter, titled 'Slums in Lagos are Synonymous with Criminality', to a small booklet compiled by Rethinking Cities Initiative and Heinrich Boll's report which offers a selection of such stereotypes, all debunked by writers reflecting on alternative city-making opportunities as we drive towards more inclusiveness and climate resilience.

DOWNLOAD FULL REPORT: [DEBUNKING THE MYTH](#)

CAD COMMUNITIES DEEPEN THE BONDS OF SOLIDARITY THROUGH EXCHANGE VISITS

Determined to deepen the bonds of solidarity among Lagos informal communities threatened with forced displacement, the technical working team (TWT) of the Communities Alliance against Displacement (CAD) embarked on an exchange visit to member communities—Toluwani, Otumara, Ifeoluwa and Ifesowapo—in Lagos Mainland Local Government Area of Lagos State facing constant threats of gang violence, blocked drainages, waste-dump hills compounded by the chronic absence of basic services like sanitation and electricity. Since it was formed in March 2017, CAD has launched series of policy and litigation campaigns demanding reparation for land dispossession and improvements in access to basic amenities and housing/living conditions in their various member-communities.

Welcoming the TWT led by CAD president, Seinde Ebiesuwa and S4C's Community Relations Officer, Kehinde Aderogba to their community, the Baales and local residents from the four communities tabled a wide range of infrastructural challenges and social vices requiring immediate government intervention. The major challenge is flooding caused by the indiscriminate dumping of refuse in the drainages. All efforts to clear the drainage channels have proved abortive as the channels continue to be blocked with heaps of debris.

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The TWT shared ongoing plans to introduce waste recycling projects into CAD member communities. The project, themed, Waste2Wealth will avail member communities the chance to exchange their wastes for items and materials for the benefit of each community while also mitigating the possibility of disease outbreak within the communities. The project will commence in January 2021 with community education on separation of wastes, the benefit of recycling, and environmental sensitization exercises.

Elated representatives of these communities vowed to give their full cooperation and to comply with all given regulations to make the environment a healthier and cleaner place for everyone to live in. For other long-term actions, CAD seeks to continually engage the government on the need to adopt proactive measures against flood control and ease the process of land acquisition for persons residing in these flood-prone, low-income communities.



LEARN MORE: <https://spacesforchange.org/cad-communities-deepen-the-bonds-of-solidarity-through-exchange-visits/>





Make NDDC Work for Niger Delta Communities



Defying Port Harcourt's heavy rains and traffic gridlock on July 27, 2020, SPACES FOR CHANGE, KEBETKACHE WOMEN and a coalition of civil society organizations (CSOs) working in the Niger Delta marched to the headquarters of the Niger Delta Development Commission (NDDC) to protest the mind-boggling revelations of corruption involving highly-placed persons in the Commission.

In a statement co-signed by the coalition, the groups advocate for the efficient use of Nigeria's oil wealth for the betterment of the oil-rich region, by specifically considering an alternative benefit-sharing regime that places communities at the center of NDDC's operations.

READ FULL STATEMENT HERE: [NDDC: CIVIL SOCIETY GROUPS SEEK ALTERNATIVE BENEFIT-SHARING SCHEME FOR NIGER DELTA](#)

With over three million confirmed cases and above 200,000 deaths across the globe, the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is spreading rapidly, causing incalculable human suffering, social and economic losses. Countries of the world are rolling out measures each passing day to both control the spread of the virus and mitigate the impact on affected populations. In Nigeria's oil resource extraction zones, the enforcement of disease containment measures, especially the state-mandated lockdown, is having multifaceted impacts on local health systems, traditional livelihoods, maternal wellbeing and environmental sustainability.

The lockdown measures appear to have been successful in lowering the spread of coronavirus infections in the extraction zones. However, pre-existing problems of environmental pollution and degradation are not only undermining people's resilience and ability to comply with health protocols, but are also triggering unintended adverse consequences especially for women, children and the aged.

In a policy briefing paper, '[COVID-19 RESPONSES IN NIGERIA'S OIL EXTRACTION ZONES](#)', SPACES FOR CHANGE and KEBETKACHE WOMEN examine the impacts of the COVID-19 containment measures on local populations, especially the women in oil-producing communities of the Niger Delta, in order to inform the review of strategies and response actions aimed at reducing the potential spread and impact of infection.



SEE FULL REPORT:
['COVID-19 RESPONSES IN NIGERIA'S OIL EXTRACTION ZONES](#)

Equitable Sharing of Benefits of Natural Resources in Imo Host Communities



193 natives of the Ohoba community in Ohaji/Egbema Local Government Area of Imo State, including the Traditional Prime Minister of the community, members of the Eze's cabinet, women and youth leaders, converged at SPACES FOR CHANGE's townhall, tagged, Equitable Sharing of Benefits of Natural Resources in the Petroleum Host Communities held on October 3, 2020. The townhall, organized with the support of Ford Foundation, offered an opportunity for a fruitful debate among local stakeholders aimed toward maximizing the benefits of natural resources for host communities and minimizing potential harms.

With an estimated gas deposits in excess of 7.8 trillion cubic feet, Imo communities are attracting several multinational oil and gas companies interested in extracting their enormous natural resource deposits. Ohoba is one of the 11 communities with huge gas deposits hosting the Assa North Gas development (ANOH) project in Ohaji-Egbema local government area of Imo State.

In 2019, the project promoters, mainly Shell Petroleum Development Company (SPDC), Ohaji/Egbema constituted a Cluster Development Board with members drawn from the host communities comprising Avu, Umuapu, Obitti, Ohoba and Obosima, who will manage a 'N1 billion' community trust over the next five years and implement a Global Memorandum of Understanding (GMOU) established for the project. As experience from resource-rich locales have shown, high-scale extractive investments of this nature can fail to translate into long term sustainable development if not managed properly. –

It was on this premise that the townhall was convened to facilitate a discussion around how legal empowerment and equitable benefit-sharing principles can be integrated into the ANOH projects so that they can contribute to socially inclusive and environmentally sustainable development in the host community.

SEE FULL REPORT: [EQUITABLE SHARING OF BENEFITS OF NATURAL RESOURCES IN IMO HOST COMMUNITIES](#)

PIB 2020: A BETTER DEAL FOR HOST COMMUNITIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT?



With the relaunch of the Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB), environmentally-degraded communities that bear the brunt of petroleum operations watch with bated breath whether the new proposed law holds promise of a better deal for them in terms of environmental protection, economic benefits, equity stakes, infrastructure development, job creation and opportunities for local participation.

In this op-ed published in national dailies across the country in November 2020, SPACES FOR CHANGE's director, Ms. Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri, discussed the upsides of Nigeria's draft oil regime and the opportunities for reform.

She discussed how, overall, the PIB weaves together many upsides and downsides when measured against its clearly-defined policy goals. On the positive side, PIB 2020 does contain robust provisions among which are provisions aimed at protecting the environment against the adverse impact of oil and gas operations, which can cause damage to public and private property, indigenous communities and their livelihoods. In particular, a combination of provisions strives to remedy some of the

notable shortcomings in extant environmental regulations such as duplicative regulation, weak enforcement of standards, overlapping regulatory powers, hostility between operators and host communities etc.

Indeed, the litany of arrangements proposed in the bill are praiseworthy, and if implemented, will lay the foundation for stronger environmental protection for the benefit of communities in and around the extractive zones. However, huge gaps remain. Topping the list of numerous downsides, certain prohibitions are not absolute. The bill's major design flaw is the non-inclusive arrangements proposed for the administration of the Host Community Development Trust. The planned framework for delivering community development trusts is neither empowering nor beneficial to oil producing communities. It not only relegates host and impacted communities to the role of mere spectators in the management of the trusts, but also overlooks the existing community structures, the traditional institutions, including cultural and statutory organizations that have historically been responsible for undertaking community development in the host communities

LEARN MORE: [PIB 2020: Any better deal for host communities and the environment?](#)



BRIEFER

Environmental Protection in the Petroleum Industry Bill: Strong or Weak?

VICTORIA IBEZIM-OHAERI & HENRY NDUKWE¹

Summary of Observations

• Oil industry operations are stratified into upstream and downstream petroleum sectors, administered by the Nigerian Upstream Regulatory Commission (The Commission) and the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (The Authority) respectively.

• Gas flaring is not expressly prohibited. Gas flaring will be condoned in certain circumstances such as where it is required for facility start-up, or for strategic operational reasons, including testing. Absent a specified limit to the scope of operational reasons, this could be exploited to harm the environment, increasing communities' vulnerability to health hazards.

• With regard to the Environmental Remediation Fund, the Commission or Authority doubles as the Fund manager and the facilitator of investigation and remediation of sites that pose risks to human health and the environment. Consistent with the bill's

Summary of Observations:

•Oil industry operations are stratified into upstream and downstream petroleum sectors, administered by the Nigerian Upstream Regulatory Commission (The Commission) and the Nigerian Midstream and Downstream Petroleum Regulatory Authority (The Authority) respectively.

•The Commission and The Authority bear responsibility to ensure strict implementation of environmental policies, laws and regulations for upstream and downstream petroleum operations respectively. In doing this, they will adopt both penal and corrective measures to enhance industry compliance to environmental regulations not limited to suspension, modification and revocation of licenses, compensation, penalties and fines for violators.

•Some of the expansive regulatory powers for environmental matters in the petroleum industry vested on the Commission and Authority overlaps with the statutory responsibilities of the Oil and Gas Division of the Federal Ministry of Environment (FMOE). This means that the overlapping regulatory

powers between enforcement agencies persist which could offer polluters the advantage of cherry-picking which regulator to obey.

•Gas flaring is not expressly prohibited. Gas flaring will be condoned in certain circumstances such as where it is required for facility start-up, or for strategic operational reasons, including testing. Absent a specified limit to the scope of operational reasons, this could be exploited to harm the environment, increasing communities' vulnerability to health hazards.

•With regard to the Environmental Remediation Fund, the Commission or Authority doubles as the Fund manager and the facilitator of investigation and remediation of sites that pose risks to human health and the environment. Consistent with the bill's objective to create efficient governing institutions with clear and separate roles, the management of the remediation fund should be vested in the National Oil Spill Detection and Remediation Agency (NOSDRA) that is already charged with the mandate to carry out remediation of oil-impacted sites.

•The procedure and mechanism individuals and communities can use to access compensation for environmental damage is unclear. Environmental regulations and mechanisms remain relevant and effective when they can provide meaningful opportunities (including online) for the public to make contributions, while delivering the necessary level of protection to all stakeholders.

•The PIB obligates operators, called settlers, to create a Host Communities Development Trust. The utilization of this fund will take into consideration the host community needs from a social, environmental, and economic perspective. The institutional arrangements proposed for the administration of the host community trust is heavily-flawed, disempowering and perpetuates power asymmetries between locals and multinationals.

DOWNLOAD: [BRIEFER: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION IN THE PIB](#)

The Petroleum Industry Bill (PIB) 2020, a proposed law seeking to introduce far-reaching industry reforms in the Nigerian oil and gas sector contains provisions aimed at protecting the environment against the adverse impact of oil and gas operations which can cause damage to public and private property, indigenous communities and their livelihoods. Consistent with the bill's reform agenda, it will amalgamate and repeal 16 extant oil and gas legislations and remedy some of their notable shortcomings such as duplicative regulation, weak enforcement of standards, overlapping regulatory powers, hostility between operators and host communities etc. Against this backdrop, this brief weighs the adequacy of the new PIB provisions to respond to the gaps in extant environmental regulations and deliver the bill's intended policy objectives. This brief builds on the organization's PIB RESOURCE HANDBOOK published in 2013, which exhaustively examined the provisions of the 2012 version of the PIB relating to environmental protection and community participation.



CHAPTER 4

WOMEN & YOUTH INCLUSION



Gender and Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform in Nigeria: Findings and recommendations



In February 2020, SPACES FOR CHANGE | S4C shared its research report: [Gender and Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform in Nigeria: Findings and recommendations](#). The report examines the impact of kerosene subsidies and subsidy reform from a gender perspective in Nigeria. Based on the rigorous evaluation of secondary data, a survey of 1,000 households and focus group discussions in two Nigerian states (Imo and Lagos), the study found that women were negatively impacted by reforms when the kerosene subsidy was removed in 2016 and prices increased. This raises the question of whether the billions spent on an inefficient subsidy system on petroleum products might not be better spent on social protection programs.

The research had two main objectives. The first was to understand the extent to which existing subsidies for cooking and/or lighting fuel have distinct gender disaggregated effects on the welfare, productivity and empowerment of poor women and girls. The second was to understand how specific, nationally relevant reforms might have further gender disaggregated impacts on poor women and girls, including the provision of alternatives to fossil fuel subsidies.

S4C conducted the research in collaboration with the International Institute for Sustainable Development, with support from HIVOS ENERGIA and UK DFID.

DOWNLOAD FULL REPORT: [Gender and Fossil Fuel Subsidy Reform in Nigeria: Findings and recommendations](#).

COVID-19, Oil and Host Communities

SPACES FOR CHANGE | S4C in partnership with KEBETKACHE WOMEN DEVELOPMENT & RESOURCE CENTRE and WOMEN IN EXTRACTIVES co-hosted a webinar, COVID-19, Oil and Host Communities, on May 12, 2020. With 62 participants tuned in, the webinar brought together a diverse audience and speakers from the public, private and non-profit sectors to discuss how the COVID-19 containment measures are impacting on local populations, especially the vulnerable groups like women and children living in Nigeria's oil-producing communities in the Niger Delta region.

Following the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, countries around the world have suffered major upheavals in their social, economic, political, cultural and health systems. With over four million confirmed cases and above 200,000 deaths across the globe, Nigeria joined other nations to roll out measures aimed at controlling the spread of the virus and mitigating the devastating impact on affected populations. On May 4,

2020, S4C and Kebetkache Women launched a report, [COVID-19 Responses in the Oil Extraction Zones](#), which examined COVID-19 responses in Nigeria's oil extraction zones. The research covered nine oil-rich states that make up the Niger Delta region, namely: Rivers, Akwa-Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, Edo, Cross Rivers, Imo, Abia and Ondo States. The webinar was specifically hosted to publicly present and discuss the research findings with a broad spectrum of stakeholders.

Mrs. Ibim Semenitari, former Acting Managing Director, Niger Delta Development Commission, moderated the panel discussion featuring three panelists: Ms. Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri, Director of Spaces for Change; Ms. Emem Okon, Director of Kebetkache Women and Ms. Faith Nwadishi, Director of Women in Extractives. This report summarizes the webinar proceedings, particularly the speakers' presentations and participants' contributions.

READ FULL REPORT HERE: [COVID-19, OIL AND THE HOST COMMUNITIES](#)

Women, COVID-19 and ESCR in Nigeria



In a June 2020 blog post of the Global Initiative for Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (GI-ESCR), Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri and Emem Okon shared the findings of the joint briefer—[COVID-19 Responses in the Resource Extraction Zones](#)—co-produced by SPACES FOR CHANGE and KEBETKACHE WOMEN. Here, they discussed the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups like women, stating why human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights must lie at the core of COVID-19 emergency responses.

Women are particularly overrepresented among the low-wage workforce engaged in small and informal businesses, and predominantly living in the most precarious areas often known as slums. Because they are mostly self-employed, self-provisioning and self-producing on a subsistence basis, infection control measures that require them to stay at home, observe social distancing

and avoid mass gatherings hits hard on their livelihoods and income-generating strategies

Without an income, women are unable to feed their families, renew the rent for their homes and small shops, pay utility bills and cater for the needs of their dependents. Other than the government-provided palliatives, mainly in the form of food supplies designed to last a few weeks, introducing far-reaching social assistance programmes is necessary to facilitate the recovery of collapsing small-scale businesses while enabling the most vulnerable to cope with the impacts of the pandemic and mitigating the socio-economic consequences.

FULL REPORT: [WOMEN, COVID-19 AND ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS IN NIGERIA - VICTORIA IBEZIM-OHAERI AND EMEM OKON](#)





CHAPTER 5

INSTITUTIONAL STRENGTHENING INITIATIVES

S4C Receives Ford Foundation's BUILD Grant



SPACES FOR CHANGE | S4C is excited to receive the Ford Foundation's Building Institutions and Networks (BUILD) grant for the organization's general support, and project support for institutional strengthening. 'This generous support from Ford Foundation will uniquely position S4C to undertake cutting-edge knowledge-building and advocacy initiatives that protect the rights of marginalized communities, fearlessly demand accountability and steer policymakers to infuse human rights considerations in social and economic decision-making processes in Nigeria', says the organization's director, Ms. Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri.

Receiving Ford Foundation's BUILD grant in the time of COVID-19—when the pandemic is causing major disruptions in the workplace—is timely and strategic. This grant will enable the organization to set up an operational reserve and guarantee a safe and conducive working environment, enabling staff to work from home or from anywhere, without lowering work quality or productivity. It will also help the organization to launch initiatives that promote extractive justice, protect the rights of marginalized individuals, groups and communities, and in particular, continue its good work of defending the civic space in Nigeria and beyond.

The organization started in May 2011 as an online discussion forum on Facebook social networking site with an objective to provide a coordinated platform for young Nigerian professionals to engage in informed debates about social and economic policies and programs in Nigeria. Tapping the volunteer resources and professional networks developed in the online community, S4C got registered in March 2012, and has, since then, transitioned from a Facebook discussion group to a highly-respected advocacy organization with two offices in Lagos and Owerri—South-West and South-East regions of Nigeria—undertaking cutting-edge policy analysis and research advocacy focusing on strategic sectors such as energy and environmental justice, housing and urban governance, gender inclusion and defending the civic space.

READ FULL REPORT HERE: ['S4C RECEIVES FORD FOUNDATIONS BUILD GRANT'](#)

S4C's Director Joins Publish What You Pay Board

In June 2020, SPACES FOR CHANGE | S4C's Director, Victoria Ibezim-Ohaeri joined the Board of Trustees of [Publish What You Pay](#) a worldwide campaign for an open and accountable extractive industry. Comprising 700 member organizations and 45 national coalitions, PWYP is the global movement working to ensure that revenues from oil, gas and mining are used to drive development. Board members of PWYP serve a term of three years, which is renewable twice.



EXPANDING OUR TEAM



In November, 2020, Mr. Omotayo Joseph Odukola Esq., Olusola Oluwafemi Esq. and Mr. Nosayame Osahon joined SPACES FOR CHANGE as Legal Officer, Communications Officer and Programme Officer: Extractives, Energy and Environmental Justice respectively. Omotayo and Olusola, both of whom have a strong background in research, legal drafting, alternative dispute resolution and human rights litigation obtained their law degrees from Obafemi Awolowo University and University of Lagos and were both called to the Nigerian Bar in 2015 and 2014 respectively. Nosayame holds a Master degree in Environmental Microbiology. He is an environmental sustainability professional with expertise that cuts across various industries including energy, marine, metal fabrication, civil construction, and environmental risk assessment.

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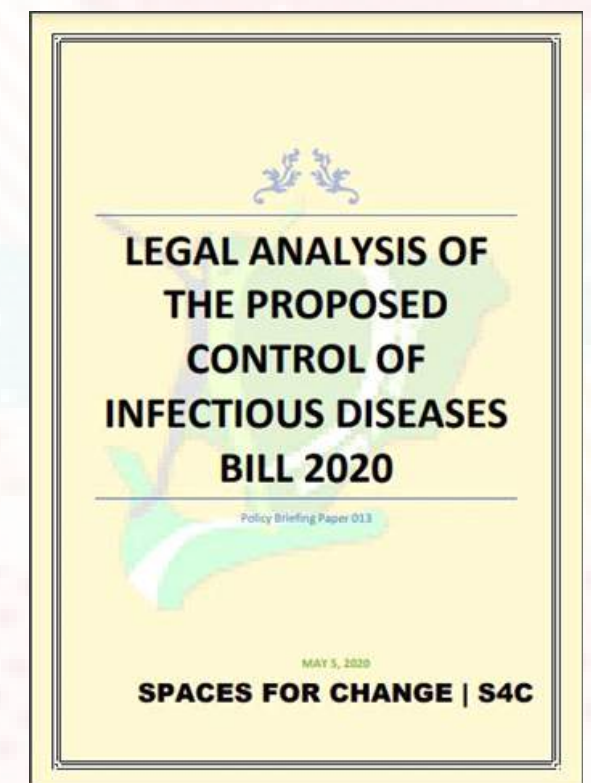
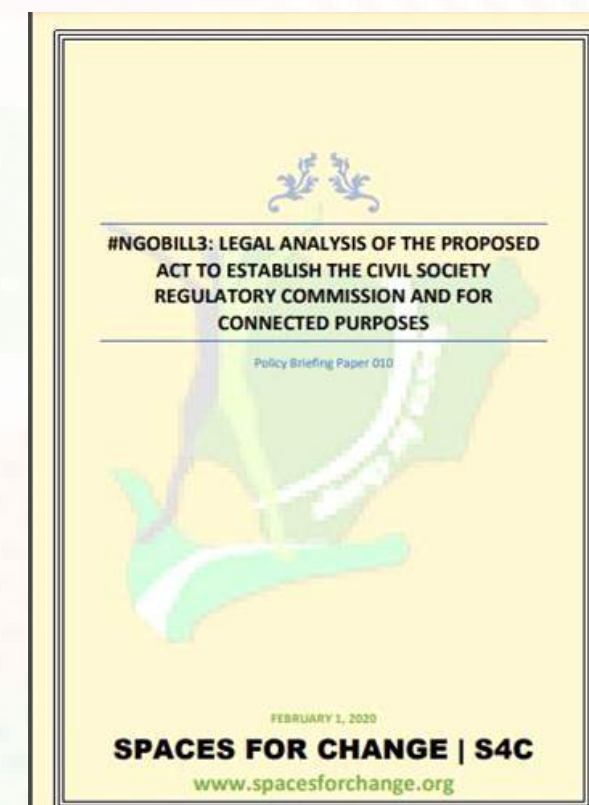
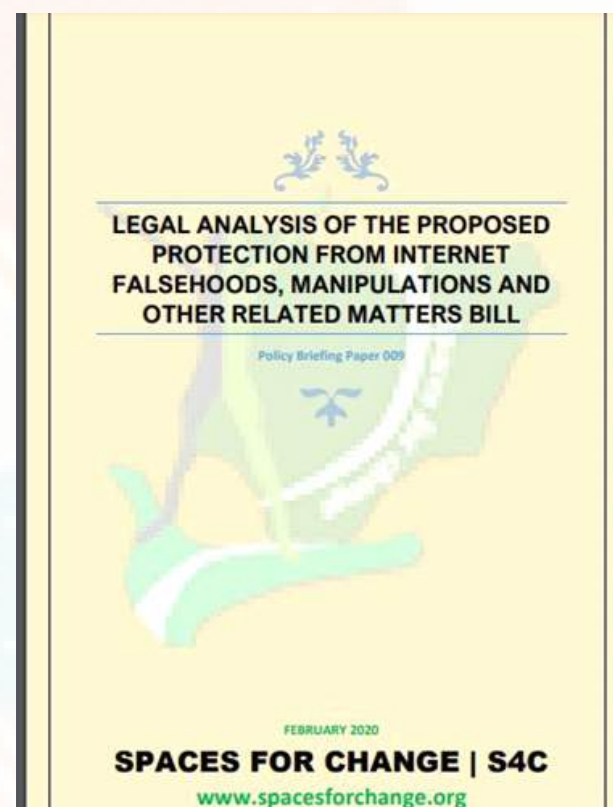
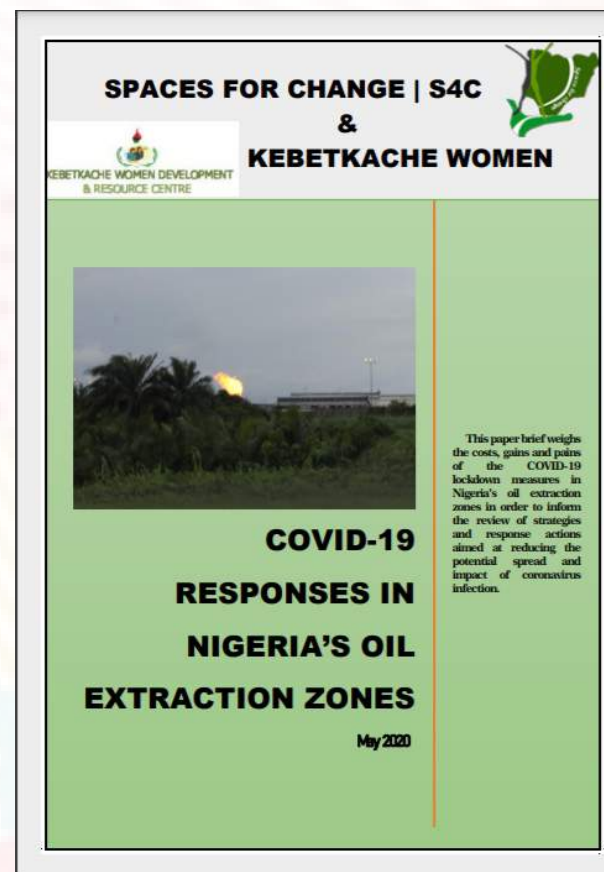
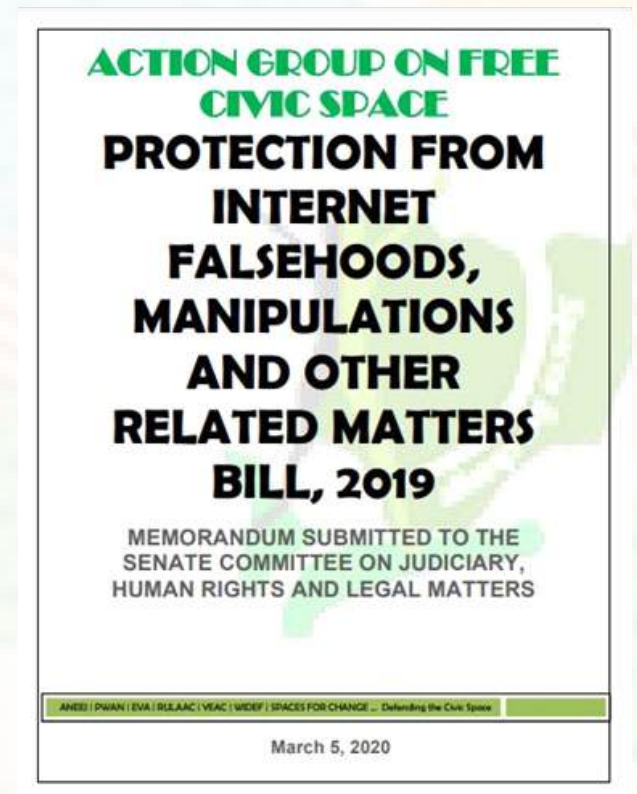
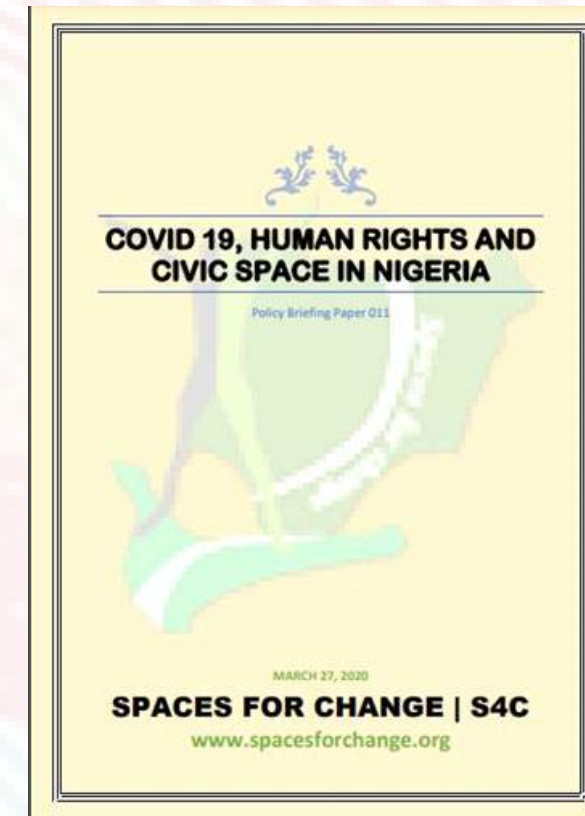
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