

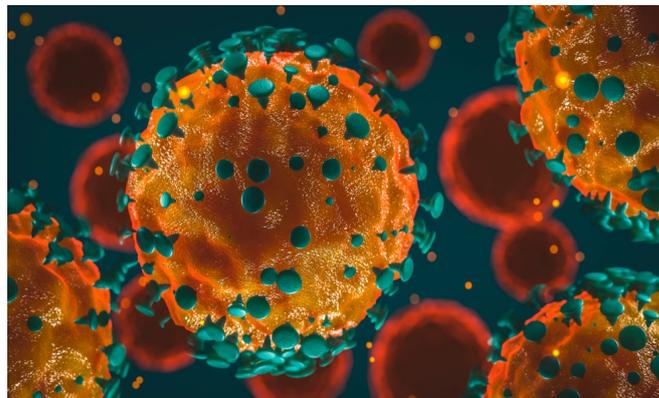
Institute of Small and Micro States



ISMS provides an informed, independent interdisciplinary research platform for the small states community. It is the home for the analysis and debate about contemporary legal small states' issues with an eye for practical solutions. We are committed to facilitate law reform in and for small states and to assist with relevant training.

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SMALL STATES EMERGING FROM COVID-19



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Although the world has recorded more than 5.59 million cases of COVID-19 infection, small states have been successful in containing the virus.

Due to early lockdowns and various restrictions, many small states have limited, if not prevented, the spread of COVID-19.

Although small states have been spared from the current healthcare crisis, they are not spared from the pandemic's economic and agricultural impact.

We bring you a summary of how states are coping in each region.

Oceania

During the COVID-19 crisis, the region was hit by Cyclone Harold. Vanuatu was hit hardest, with an estimated 80-90% of its

population losing their homes. Tonga, Fiji and Solomon Islands were also affected, but to a lesser degree. The International Monetary Fund disbursed aid to the Pacific island states.

Climate troubles loom ahead as Tuvalu predicts low rainfall for summer. The country is encouraging preservation of food stock.

Although restrictions have eased, Pacific island states maintained social curfews and price ceilings on food. They need to prolong the availability of food and fuel as imports are disrupted.

Europe

Despite being the hardest hit continent, small European states have avoided a healthcare catastrophe.

Although Estonia was off a rocky start in mid-April when a volleyball match and champagne festival sparked a COVID-19 outbreak, it managed to contain the spread.

Iceland carried out randomised testing and has tested 10% of its population, one of the highest per capita in the world. Iceland's Prime Minister announced plans to welcome tourists by 15 June.

Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia and Malta remain cautious to re-open borders, starting with immediate neighbours and then the rest of Europe.

Caribbean

The Caribbean has seen mixed success in containing COVID-19. Joining Antigua and Barbuda, Saint Lucia has also implemented a phased reopening of its borders. While both countries have set up health protocols, Saint Lucia went further to require tourists to be tested for COVID-19 up to 48 hours prior to their flight.

Jamaica remains cautious by keeping lockdown restrictions. It is working on offering low-cost insurance plans to visitors when borders reopen on 15 June.

continue reading →

Small states emerging from COVID



Africa

Africa is the last region to be hit by COVID-19.

Lesotho recorded its first COVID case on 14 May after easing restrictions. Similarly, Botswana also confirmed a new case on 11 May after relaxing lockdown restrictions.

Elsewhere in the region, Mauritius is keeping strict movement restrictions.

African states affected by reduced exports are turning inwards to encourage the consumption of local produce.

Asia

The Asian region has the longest COVID-19 battle due to its geographical proximity to China and other regional COVID-19 hotspots.

Bhutan, (landlocked between China and India) has managed to con-

tain community spread by implementing immediate lockdown.

Gearing up for reopening, Brunei recently launched "BruHealth", an app that shows users' location and records their daily self-assessed health check.

In the Maldives', the Minister of Home Affairs warned that the country has reached the peak of its outbreak in mid-May. It is currently enforcing lockdown restrictions.



China's foreign policy strategy



Strategic meeting between China and Pacific island states, 13 May 2020. Image source: Samoan government's Twitter account.

Apart from New Zealand and Australia, the rest of the Pacific states are not joining 62 other countries in an inquiry into the outbreak of COVID-19.

China has also invested \$1.9 million into an emergency fund for the Pacific Island countries to fight COVID-19.

Top leaders from Pacific Island countries attended a Zoom conference on 13 May to reiterate their strategic alliance.

In a joint press release published by China and Pacific Island countries, the Governments call against "stigmatization, politicizing or labeling the virus".

Over recent weeks, more and more states are calling for China to be held accountable for its response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Threats to economic, social and cultural rights in small island developing states



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Small island developing states (SIDS) are vulnerable to social, economic and climate impact in the aftermath of COVID-19.

With limited natural resources, small domestic consumer population, SIDS are reliant on tourism for growth. A global recession post pandemic disproportionately affects SIDS.

SIDS have high numbers of non-communicable diseases which increases the fatality of a virus infection. On average, only 5.9%

of GDP of SIDS are allocated to healthcare, highlighting weak health infrastructure.

While COVID-19 calls for international co-operation, countries are doing the opposite. The international institutions and enforcement of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, are teetering in the face of geo-political fallout.

COVID-19 poses a far larger threat to SIDS compared to larger states.



5th Annual Small States Conference 2020

Date: 12 & 13 November

Location: London

Theme: Human Rights and Small States: Challenges, Resilience and Advocacy

Keynote addresses:

Margarette Macauley, former Judge of the Inter American Court of Human Rights & current Commissioner of the Inter American Human Rights Commission

Philippe Sands QC, Professor of Law at University College London

Simon Mount QC, Attorney-General for the Pitcairn Islands

Organised by: International Arbitration Group, Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP London, British Institute of International and Comparative Law and Institute of Small and Micro States

Our People



ISMS Deputy Director becomes first Pacific counsel to ICC

ISMS is proud to announce that our Deputy Director, Ana Tuiketeti Bolabiu, is the first Pacific counsel to join a global roster of lawyers working for the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The appointment will bring an exciting opportunity for the Pacific region following two decades of under-representation in the global court system.

Although Pacific states such as Fiji, Nauru, Samoa, Cook Islands and Vanuatu are signatories of the ICC, there has only been one ICC judge from the Pacific. Ana's appointment also serves as a timely reminder for more female representation in the regional and international legal sphere. in the ICC. A strong advocate for female empowerment, Ana hopes to inspire more women and more Pasifika lawyers to be part of the global court system.



Dr Sarina Theys is a Postdoctoral Research Associate in Climate Change Governance at Newcastle University in United Kingdom. She is working on a project that aims to improve the United Nations climate change negotiations via mediation. She is also the Principal Investigator for the 'Ontological Security of Pacific Island Countries and Islanders' project' in the context of climate change.



Dr Ilan Kelman is a Professor of Disasters and Health at University College London. His research focus is on island states and small states, in particular states' borders. His work integrates climate change into disaster research and health, based on the ethos that prevention is better than cure. Cross-cutting themes that can be found in his publications include migration, disaster diplomacy and health diplomacy.



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We are committed to disseminate Small and Micro State scholarship- please let us know what you have published (petra.butler@vuw.ac.nz)!

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