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## Pandemic Legal Database



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COVID-19 spurred a vast increase in urgent legislative action directed at controlling the disease. However, poor design, implementation or enforcement of legal frameworks can do harm and impede efforts to end the pandemic. A new initiative has been launched to ensure that laws protect individual and public health and wellbeing.

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The [COVID-19 Law Lab](#) is a joint project of United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and the O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law at Georgetown University. It will create, manage and share a database of legal documents from more than 190 countries. This collection is aimed at helping national authorities to establish and implement efficient legal frameworks in relation to the pandemic and ensuring that international human rights standards are upheld.

Well-designed laws are critical for effective implementation of the WHO International Health Regulations: surveillance; infection prevention and control; management of travel and trade; and implementation of measures to maintain essential health services. They are also key to national COVID-19 responses, according to Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General. "Laws that impact health often fall outside the health sector. As health is global, legal frameworks should be aligned with international commitments to respond to current and emerging public health risks. A strong foundation of law for health is more important now than ever before," he says.

The COVID-19 Law Lab database includes state of emergency declarations, quarantine measures, disease surveillance, legal measures relating to mask-wearing, social distancing, and access to medication and vaccines, adopted by various states. Research on pandemic-related legal frameworks is also to be featured, including in areas such as human rights, public health laws, COVID-19 best practices and socioeconomic recovery. This work is based on the UHC Legal Solutions Network aimed at providing legal foundations for achieving universal health coverage.

Lawmakers from around the world are invited to contribute to this new set of laws that is constantly growing, which would help to prevent stigma, discrimination, further harm to marginalised populations, or negative impact on the implementation of the pandemic response strategies.

Source: [WHO](#)

Image Credit: COVID-19 Law Lab

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