Symposium Call for Papers (Deadline Extended): You're Not Alone: Normative Debates on (Digital) Solidarity in International Law and Policy

By:

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Solidarity is an important principle that spans across many areas of international law and policy, including in the field of human rights, trade, peace, humanitarian action, responsibility to protect and environmental protection. Digital environments hold both potential and challenges for solidarity, yet normative debates on solidarity and on the digital sphere appear to be patchy, take place with little connection. In terms of potential, digital environments have helped amplify minority and vulnerable groups' voices through social media network hashtags and trends. Importantly, States and humanitarian

organisations also showed solidarity in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic through digital solutions.

As to challenges, disproportionately affecting the Global South, the digital divide has resulted in a vast number of the world's population remaining offline or unable to meaningfully connect. Other challenges include questions of security and regulation of data. This is of concern to refugee populations, in particular, given that governments and humanitarian agencies sometimes collect data and share them without the full consent of refugees and may use the data for non-humanitarian purposes (e.g., to exclude refugees from state borders).

The ongoing dialogue for a UN Global Digital Compact initiated in the UN Secretary-General's 'Our Common Agenda' report (2021) is another example of the importance of bring to the fore normative discussions on the meaning and implications of solidarity in the digital sphere. Crucially, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, in its landmark resolution adopted in 2021, has emphasised that the ideals of solidarity (and human rights and African values, including Ubuntu) must be considered in the development of regulatory frameworks of digital technologies.

This Call for Papers, hosted by the Afronomicslaw.org and convened by PhD students (Karin Frodé, Christopher Yaw Nyinevi, and Yohannes Eneyew Ayalew) and affiliates of the Castan Centre for Human Rights Law at Monash University, Australia, seeks to examine the broader challenges, opportunities, and debates of digital solidarity in international law and policy. We welcome contributions from both established and emerging scholars with an interest in the topic. We highly encourage submissions from Global South scholars and critical voices addressing these topics in ways that raise matters of concern to Global South communities. Potential focus areas could include but are not limited to:

1. Normative discourses on the meaning of 'digital solidarity' under international and (sub)regional laws and policies.

2. Methodological and theoretical approaches in understanding (digital) solidarity in international law.

3. Critical and decolonial approaches on (digital) solidarity and their implications in law and policy makings.

4. Emerging legal, policy and practical initiatives, and institutions in fostering digital solidarity at global and regional level.

5. Digital solidarity in times of crises like armed conflicts, economic recession, pandemics, refugee status determination and disaster responses.

6. The role of digital solidarity in social movements such as the Black Lives Matter movement (#BLM), #EndSARS etc.

7. Digital Samaritans and the role of non-State actor's such as social media companies in mitigating harms in the digital environment.

Deadlines and Requirements:

Accepted contributions will be published in English as a 2,000-word blog post that forms part of a special symposium on Afronomicslaw.org. See below for deadlines and how to express interest.

Overview of tentative deadlines:

Deadline for abstract submission: 30 June 2023

Draft papers due: 31 July 2023

Review of papers: 31 August 2023

Final papers due: 30 September 2023

Publication of blogs as special symposium posts on AfronomicsLaw: TBD

Expression of Interest: Please express your interests by submitting abstracts in English (250 words) to *karin.frode@monash.edu* by 23:59 AEST on **30 June 2023**.

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