



**Department of Politics and International Relations**  
In collaboration with the Johannesburg Institute for  
Advanced Study

Postgraduate Student Webinar

# PROTECTING AFRICAN NETIZENS AGAINST DIGITAL ATROCITIES, WAR AND CRIME

# JIAS

**Presenter: Neo Letswalo, Master's Candidate, DPIR**

Date: 6 October 2021 / Time: 16:00-17:30

Zoom meeting link: <https://zoom.us/j/98212583223>

Passcode: 612938

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*COVID-19 has heightened the digital paradigm, underlining and promoting the role of digital communication in contemporary societies, including those in Africa. However, the inseparability of the soft and the physical poses the need to construct and conceptualize linkages between digital communication and social and political instability.*

*Three fundamental questions arise: (1) Could sustained linkages develop between digital freedoms and protracted social conflicts? (2) Are those linkages likely to occur in digitally democratic or digitally autocratic regimes? And (3) Would the international construction and labelling of digital atrocities, crimes and war against netizens mitigate the development of digitally linked social conflicts?*

*Digitisation has the potential to promote peace and security in Africa, but the responses of national governments to digital spaces and digital freedoms will play a*

*decisive role. Both centralized (illiberal) and decentralized (liberal) digital practices by states have far-reaching implications for conflict on the continent.*

*On the one hand, netizens' free speech can lead to anarchic gatherings and behaviour, as exemplified by the #FreeJacobZuma looting. On the other, content filtering by governments could be used as instruments of indoctrination and propaganda, to suppress legitimate political dissent, and restrict media freedom.*

*This webinar will examine this vital new dimension in political life and discourse, specifically the issue of how netizens could be protected against the emergent notions of digital atrocities, war and crime.*

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**The future.  
Reimagined.**

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