

Criminological Colloquium

The KFN cordially invites you to the following guest lecture:

**Gender-based online violence against female politicians in West Africa:
A case of Sierra Leone**

Makalay Sonda (Njala University)

Time: Tuesday, 04th March 2025, 18:00 to 19:30

Location: KFN e.V., Lützerodestraße 9, 30161 Hannover

Participation possible in presence and online

Note: As the title and abstract already suggest, this is an English lecture.

Subject of the lecture:

Sierra Leone's troubled past coupled up with socio-economic factors has had a legacy impact on the marginalisation and underrepresentation of women. The country has a history of colonisation, numerous coups, a one-party totalitarian government, an eleven year bloody civil war (1991-2002) and Ebola crisis (2014-2015) which all left the country with numerous challenges including systemic inequalities and structural violence. The political sphere is male dominated and the participation of women in politics is still low even though there have been efforts to increase their participation through legislations and advocacy. Only 29% of seats in Sierra Leone's parliament is held by women and 30% of cabinet positions are occupied by women. Because of the anonymity that online communication offers, violence against women is exacerbated. Stereotypes, sexism, and regressive gender norms are reinforced.

Sierra Leone has only 30% of its population connected to the internet. Nonetheless, the impact of online gender-based violence have been stark because online communications are deeply interwoven with offline communications.

Online communication is among the drivers of the agenda for public discussions as audio recordings found online is further disseminated through speaker boxes in town squares and other informal settings. There is a continuum of violence as online violence does not stop online, it goes to the streets and become word on the street and have real life impacts and consequences for the victims. It impacts women politicians in the most gendered and profound way: how they are perceived as political candidates/public figures and how their capabilities as leaders are assessed. There have been notable attacks online such as hate speech, harassment, image distortion, revenge porn on politicians especially women politician and public facing women in recent years.

Participation requirements:

To take part, you must register using our [online form](#). You will receive the participation link directly after registration, so that this can also be done at very short notice. Participation is free of charge. A certificate of attendance will be issued on request and sent to you by e-mail in the days following the event.