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Media Narratives on Cross-Border Migration During the COVID-19 Pandemic: A Qualitative Exposition

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KEYWORDS Cross-border Migration. COVID-19. Development Communication. Health. Media. Pandemic

ABSTRACT This study explored the media reports on cross-border migration issues during the COVID-19 pandemic. The agenda-building and development media theories served as theoretical anchors to describe how the media report issues on cross-border migration during the COVID-19 pandemic. A mixed method (content analysis and systematic review method) was used to achieve the objectives of the study. The findings of the study identified five predominant issues reported by the media on cross-border migration during the pandemic. These issues were increased cases of forced displacement, increased cases of infection among migrants at borders, rising cases of food insecurity, poor border control management and victimisation of women and child migrants. The study recommends that the media can be used as a platform to enlighten and mobilise individuals to support social interventions to mitigate cross-border migration issues during threatening social realities such as the COVID-19 pandemic.