

ANALYSIS REGULATION OF PREVENTION FOR DE-CONSTRUCTING TERRORISM DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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ABSTRACT

The research conducted aims to explore the regulations for preventing damage due to terrorism during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The research method used a literature study with a normative and socio-economic study approach. The study collects secondary data related to government policies and terrorist activities in various parts of the world, namely Asia, the Middle East, and Africa, during the Covid-19 pandemic. The research raises the theme of events that occur due to terrorism and policies that prevent terrorism. The results of the study revealed that in the three regions made various efforts to prevent terrorism through strict guidelines. Collaboration with multiple institutions or community organizations is the first step in maintaining unity and integrity so that terrorism is not susceptible to infection. It considering that during a pandemic, it is very vulnerable to acts of injustice that can trigger conflict. This research can contribute to global security policies for the prevention of terrorism during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords: Covid-19 Pandemic, De-Constructing, Prevention, Regulation, Terrorism.

INTRODUCTION

The impact of COVID-19 is greatly felt by every country, resulting in the importance of defence no longer significant. The focus of the world now is more directed towards health and food safety, as well as the redevelopment of the economic sector (Muhyiddin, 2020). There are indeed many aspects regarding COVID-19 to be discussed. The world foresees a devastating economic recession that results in many countries becoming poor. The rate of unemployment will increase drastically and the poverty gap will become bigger. The world community will live in a new-normal condition which views air travel and cross country to become smaller, social distancing and hygiene to become a life priority, Work-from-home to become a new alternative, online learning migration for schools and universities, and many more. Nonetheless, this article will focus on the effects of COVID-19 on global safety aspects (Muhyiddin, 2020).

At least eight main effects on global safety have been identified. This includes

1. Breakup groups;
2. Terrorism;
3. Defence industry;

4. Cyber security;
5. Food security;
6. Health security;
7. Local crimes;
8. Across crime borders.

These eight aspects of safety have positive and negative impacts on all the countries in the world, without exception. World super powers also, for the first time, have changed their external policies to the internal safety of their respective countries. In fact, the effect of COVID-19 has caused massive deaths exceeding a few vital wars in history such as the Korean and Vietnam wars (Hewitt, et al., 2020). This clearly shows how COVID-19 has affected the whole world, requiring them to re-evaluate the safety policy owned by them. Which is of utmost importance in ensuring the safety of a nation?

A country's rate of dependence on other countries also puts the world in an imbalanced state and exposed to risks (Muhyiddin, 2020). The same situation is also seen in the food industry which has led to the cut off of food supply for the domestic market in some countries. The domino effect of the COVID-19 impact has also resulted in online and across border crimes to be on the rise. In a broader landscape, the pandemic has also led to activities related to violence to increase in some countries such as Indonesia, Nigeria and Iraq. However, the rate of terrorism has started to globally decline significantly (Aslam, 2019).

Terrorism in a Time of Pandemic in Asia

Despite the possible vectors, the case of COVID-19 outbreak has caused an enormous immobility throughout the globe since social distancing and other health measures should be implemented in order to prevent any further case. Consequently, all agendas in the domain of state affairs should be revisited and this includes the agendas of terrorism mitigation. With the authority being crippled by the pandemic, it seems that the terrorists have gained a window of opportunity to launch either a small-scale attack or even a large-scale attack. Thus, almost all nations throughout the globe should double their guard in order not to be surprised if any of these attacks might come to the surface. The same situation also applies to the People's Republic of China. Assessing the situation in this country, the threats have been more imminent since the country should not only be cautious with the pandemic but also with the movement of the terrorist group that might attack anytime.

Long before the outbreak of COVID-19, People's Republic of China has been suffering quite a lot from the act of terrorism. One of the most notable terrorism conducts in the country is the sabotage and the terror that have been perpetrated by the followers of a spiritual movement known as Falun Gong. The presence of Falun Gong has been quite a disturbance to the government of PRC. When China held the biggest sports event in 2008 namely the Olympic 2008, some members of Falun Gong posted a national security threat toward the event (Bambang, 2008). The root within the dissension between the Falun Gong and the authority of the People's Republic of China lies in the fact that the ideology of Falun Gong has gone against the state ideology namely communism. Due to this situation, the authority should take any necessary measure in order to maintain their power throughout the country and this includes banning the Falun Gong organization and its activities (Bambang, 2008; Pratikto, 2009). As a result, the warfare between the two parties has become inevitable.

Indeed, the dissension between the Uyghur people and the authority of China has gone for ages. The cause behind the dissension is that Uyghur people are mostly Moslem and these people have been widely exposed to the ideology of extremism and radicalism. The reason is that the Province of Xinjiang, the homeland of the Uyghur people, is in direct borders with Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan and Mongol (Nurkhoiron, 2019). As a result, the Province of Xinjiang might be vulnerably penetrated by the groups of terrorists. In line with the statement, approximately 20,000 Uyghur people had fled away under illegal manner in order to join ISIS (Ariyanti, 2019). Consequently, the authority of PRC should work hard in order to hail away the influence of both radicalism and extremism from being widely spread throughout the Province of Xinjiang. This might explain why many Uyghur people are sent into the concentration camp. Not to mention, unknown to many people, the Province of Xinjiang has been provided with some kind of privilege and the privilege takes the form of autonomy. Through the provision of the autonomy, the people who live in the Province of Xinjiang, including the Uyghur people, are allowed to practice their faith and even to preserve their culture, which has been different to any other regions throughout the People's Republic of China. Although the autonomy might be controversial, the autonomy should be preserved in order to keep the Province of Xinjiang as part of the country and, altogether with the developmental initiatives that have been carried out in the province, it is expected that the autonomy might be helpful for battling the act of terrorism in the country despite the envy of the other provinces (Nurkhoiron, 2019). Thereby, the authority of PRC might secure the national stability since the economics in the country have been thriving recently.

The invisibility of coronavirus perfectly matches the ideology of the terrorist group notably the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria known as ISIS. A famous speech entitled "*That They Live By Proof*" has incited the terrorist group's sympathizers by scaring the "*crusaders*" and terrorizing them so fiercely until the neighbours fear one another (Marone, 2020). The fear among the neighbours does make sense since the perpetrators of the terrorism have always been able to disguise themselves well. In relation to the current pandemic, they might even disguise themselves much better. Then, in the context of Asia alone, there are two notable examples that might describe how the terrorist group has utilized the current pandemic to launch their attack and preserve their agenda. On April 17th, approximately one month after the President of Philippine Mr. Duterte has ordered the quarantine across the country, several gunmen that have been in affiliation with ISIS launched an attack to the military convoy in the remote province of Sulu (Hincks, 2020). The attack has killed 11 troops, who were en route to conduct an operation toward the leader of ISIS in Philippines. Not far from Philippine, in Indonesia a suspected terrorist with the initial MR had been under arrest in the gas station near Ciawi and the arrest was followed up by a search in the futsal court where the suspected terrorist had kept several semi-military equipment (Anugrahadi, 2020; Ma'ruf, 2020).

Departing from the thorough elaboration, an interesting association might be drawn between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Indonesia. This association is worth to discuss since Indonesia is a country with the highest population of Moslem People. With such characteristics, Indonesia might be considered as a "*fertile land*" for the development of the terrorism ideology, especially the extremism and radicalism. Not to mention, there has also been insurgence of radical Moslem people throughout the country. Prior to the pandemic, Indonesia suffered a huge impact of a well-designed attack toward three churches in Surabaya, turning the city in the eastern part of Java Island into code red situation (BBC, 2018).

In sum, the act of terrorism will continue to expand amidst the outbreak of the pandemic. The terrorism itself will be much more complex since the terrorist groups will use all means necessary to continue perpetuating their agenda. One of such effort might be benefitting the pandemic situation nowadays to launch their full-scale attack since the terrorist group, notably ISIS, has incited its sympathizers to not cease attacking their targets. This situation might be terrifying because both COVID-19 and terrorists are able to disguise themselves well, causing people to be left surprised when an attack breaks out. Not to mention, the current pandemic situation itself might be benefitted for collecting the fund to fuel the terrorism act under the disguise of humanitarian aid. Therefore, the security forces should double their guard to avoid the occurrence of further problems in relation to the national security.

Terrorism in a Time of Pandemic in Middle East

Being completely different than the Asian counterpart, the Middle East regions have had a long history of terrorism. Despite the fact that some of the countries in this region share the same property in the Asian counterpart, most of the time the conflict within the Middle East has been centred on two aspects namely religion and territory. The most notable example of the conflict that involves both aspects is the war between Israel and Palestine, which has been going on for years even until the time when this article is composed. Prior to the resurgence and the end of Al-Qaeda, and even far long before the establishment of Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, the countries in the Middle East region had been battling over Israel and Palestine. The warfare between the two states involved an act of terrorism, specifically the one that had been done by the members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine in cooperation with the members of the Red Army Faction. With reference to the statement, the most famous act of terrorism in this regard is the hijack of a French airline en route from Israel to France. The hijacked plane stopped in Entebbe Airstrip with the hijackers letting go 258 passengers who were not Israeli or Jewish while keeping the remaining 103 hostages. Several hours later, the authority of Israel launch a military operation in order to free the hostages and, later, this operation known as “*Entebbe Raid*” (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020).

In spite of the pandemic, ISIS central has exhorted its supporters to expand their operation by benefitting the pandemic situation since the pandemic has weakened the capacity of law or security enforcement throughout the globe (Hincks, 2020). This situation can be very dangerous especially for the counter-ISIS operation initiatives and there are several findings that have confirmed the utilization of the pandemic for launching attacks. First of all, the U.S forces, altogether with the France and UK military powers, have been withdrawn from Iraq due to the spread of the COVID-19 (Magid, 2020; Viriyapah, 2020). The case of U.S. force itself is quite terrible since the withdrawal has been initiated by the attack toward the top-brass Army office Qassim Suleimani, who had been the front figure in battling the IS force in the Middle East (Zraick, 2020). Consequently, the surveillance area has been shrunk down, leaving more and more areas that left uncovered. Due to this situation, there is a high possibility that ISIS will be able to revive itself within these uncovered areas (Magid, 2020).

Furthermore, in Iraq alone there have been several attacks led by ISIS during the pandemic. In April 12, an ISIS sniper shot and killed an Iraqi federal policeman at a checkpoint in Hawija; on the other hand, IS also ambushed Iraqi army soldiers, federal policemen, and Popular Mobilization Units (PMU) in Province of Kirkuk on April 13 (Lucente, 2020). The tour

was intended to look for the army soldiers, the federal policemen, and the PMU members who had been captive by ISIS. At the same time, during the pandemic, unguarded prisons is likely to be attractive targets because such condition has constituted the duty for the ISIS supporters to strike harder in order to raid prisons and free prisoners (Bloom, 2020). For example, a riot took place in Hasakeh Prison on March 29th, 2020, where many high-risk persons, including Indonesians, have been imprisoned and the riot resulted in an unknown number of escapes (Institute for Policy Analysis of Conflict, 2020). This situation is similar to the one in which 750 inmates had escaped from the Ain Issa Camp, in the northern east direction of Syria, due to the riot that took place after an attack toward the Kurdish force by the Turkish military in October 2017 (Sanders & Allinson, 2020; Hughes, 2020). Not to mention, within the camps alone the leaders of ISIS has utilized the terrible condition caused by the pandemic to radicalize young people (Hughes, 2020). In addition to the raid, the ISIS supporters might also utilize the COVID-19 by spreading terrible news on how the governments have been unable to contain the spread of the virus and provide the necessary health measures (Bloom, 2020; Laqueur & Wall, 2018). One of the possible ways in spreading such news is showcasing that the governments have been laid to the public about the infection numbers. By doing so, ISIS has the upper hand in causing confusion and thus spreading further over the people. At the same time, they might attract and recruit more and more people in order to build new powers. This can possibly take place since ISIS has been losing its sanctuaries and strongholds recently.

In sum, the way ISIS weaponries the coronavirus might similar to the one that the soldiers of Mongolian Kingdom carried out in the Siege of Caffa long time ago (Broughton, 2020; Wheelis, 2002). In this time, the Mongolian Kingdom soldiers catapulted the infected people into Caffa where the Italian traders had been under siege. Fearing about to lose the battle, some people fled themselves to Italia by the sea. Instead of getting the cure, these fleeing people already infected with the plague known as the Black Death and they just spread it all over Italy. With this current pandemic situation, it is highly possible that ISIS might attempt similar manner especially due to the fact that they have been losing their sanctuaries and strongholds and even territories (Amiga & Schuster, 2018). As a result, the government should double the guard despite the break of the COVID-19. Otherwise, there might be spectacular attacks that come by surprise with devastating effects.

Terrorism in a Time of Pandemic in Africa

Similar to Middle East, Africa, or the Africa Continent in general, has already had long history of terrorism. Prior to the insurgence of ISIS, and even Al-Qaeda, there are several attacks that have been launched by various terrorist group (Spies, 2013). For instance, in 1973 there was assassination toward the U.S. diplomats led by 8 members of a terrorist group known as Black September. Then, in 1988 there was a bombing toward Pan Am Flight 103 by two Libyan intelligence officers. Ten years after, there were dual U.S. embassy bombings. The first U.S. embassy bombing took place in Nairobi, Kenya, while the second one took place in Dar as Salaam, Tanzania. The two bombings marked the very first presence of Al-Qaeda into the stage of global terrorism. With regards to these acts of terrorism, there are several factors that become the impetus for such as. In the very first place, these factors might be poverty, marginalization, and underemployment; the factors become more complicated when they are paired with environmental problems, crime, corruption, and benefits from oil-producing activities (Boas,

2017). The impacts of such situation are widespread predation, mass starvation, failed international intervention, and even on-going absence of rudimentary state institution. Certainly, there are many gaps that might be exploited by the terrorist groups. Not to mention, these situations might be the sole reason why the Somalia pirates have always been in operation despite the international efforts to take them down (Gettleman, 2017).

The insurgency of Al-Qaeda has changed the map of militant Islamic terrorism throughout the globe. This also includes the neighbouring countries of the Middle East such as Somalia. Indeed, the insurgency Al-Qaeda has given birth to a militant Islamic terrorist organization known as Al-Shabaab, meaning “*the Youth*.” At the beginning, Al-Shabaab was established as part of Islamic Council Union in order to battle the lawlessness and the banditry that had been taking place in the area around 2004 after the collapse of the government of Mohamed Siad Barre in 1991 (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020). Al-Shabaab is one of the terrorist groups in Africa that has launched many attacks between 1997 and 2015 with many devastating impacts (De-Albuquerque, 2017). Then, the fighters who joined Al-Shabaab were from the already disbanded al-Itihaad al-Islamiyah and the Al-Qaeda network. The core band of al-Itihaad al-Islamiyah a band of Middle East-educated Somali extremists who was partly funded and armed by the Chief of Al-Qaeda namely Osama bin Laden (Felter et al., 2020). In early 2006, Al-Shabaab played an important role in supporting ICU for combatting the Mogadishu warlords, who had been covertly supported by the United States of America.

Indeed, both of Al-Shabaab and Boko Haram have posed lethal threat to Africa continent in general. The presence of both radical Islamic terrorist groups has drawn the international attention for a long period of time. In relation to the current pandemic, certainly the international world should be more cautious with their movement. The reason is that the ISIS central has ordered its affiliates worldwide to take advantage from the current outbreak to launch more attacks and execute more operations; this strategy is known as “*exploit disorder*” (International Crisis Group, 2020). The current situations that have been caused by the outbreak of COVID-19 have certainly left open so many gaps in the security and these gaps might be well-benefitted by ISIS and its affiliates. The first outbreak of COVID-19 in Africa has been reported by two regions namely the Sahara region and the sub-Saharan region. In the Sahara region, the first case of COVID-19 outbreak has been reported by Egypt with 55 suspects and 1 casualty (Wise, 2011). The single casualty was a German tourist who had been infected during the trip in Luxor. Due to the outbreak, the security in the Cairo Airport has been tightened by means of test administration. At the same time, schools and some universities have also been closed following the casualty in order to prevent the occurrence of worse situation that might take place in the near future. On the other hand, in the sub-Saharan region the first case of COVID-19 outbreak has been reported by Nigeria (BBC News, 2020). The first patient of COVID-19 in Nigeria is an Italian citizen who works in Nigeria. The patient might be infected by the virus during the flight into the commercial city of Lagos from Milan on February 25th, 2020. The patient did not display any symptom as he arrived at the Murtala Muhammad International Airport in Lagos on Tuesday. After the case has been identified, the patient has been hospitalized with signs of stability and has been under treatment in a hospital within the city. Despite the outbreak, and quite different to Egypt, the health authority of Nigeria states that there is not any need for alarm in the country since Nigeria has been well prepared to deal with the virus.

With reference to the previous paragraph, it is completely apparent how the gaps in the national security might be well-benefitted by ISIS. Not to mention, Egypt and Nigeria are two

among several countries in Africa that have been targeted by ISIS. In Egypt, for example, there was a shootout in El-Amireya neighborhood located in the eastern part of Cairo (El-Shamaa, 2020). The shootout was intended to attack the Christian Coptic holiday celebrations. Due to the quick reaction by the security authority, the shootout might be intercepted, resulting in the dead of seven terrorists and, unfortunately, one police officer. Despite the quick reaction by the security authority, the shootout that took place in Cairo might be a definitive indication that there has been increasing emergence of the terrorism. The terrorists have targeted the Christian Coptic people again, something that has never been done in recent years since the collapse of Moslem Brotherhood in Egypt. On the other hand, Boko Haram has stepped up their feet by launching attacks in West Africa. IS, to which Boko Haram has stated its allegiance, has urged its followers to execute any attacks and show no remorse in the time of crisis. This statement has been confirmed by several attacks that has taken place in Nigeria. A faction of Boko Haram ambushed the military convoy in Gorgi, Yobi State, on March 24th, with the total casualty of 47 soldiers. This situation is very grim especially because Nigeria, as many other African countries, has scare resources and yet they are pushed to fight not only the radical Islamic terrorists but also the stem of the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, another insurgency has taken place in Mozambique. Within the first several months of March 2020, there has been a significant increase on the number of attacks in the northern province and these attacks have been attributed to Ahlu Sunnah Wal Jamaah or ASWJ (Intel Brief, 2020).

In overall, the situation of terrorism in Africa has been grim. One of the indicators is that the terrorist groups in the regions that have not been associated with Islamist terrorism now have emerged there and these groups are among the deadliest of all African terror groups (Meservey, 2019). Certainly, this situation demands more preventive security measures especially for containing the march of both ISIS and Al-Qaeda. Recalling the peculiar characteristics of terrorism in the Africa continent, the countries in this continent, especially the ones located in the North and West Africa should be more alert even toward the smallest detail of any possible attack in the future. By doing so, it will be possible for these countries to contain the influence of the Islamist terrorism in both the near and far future although the progress of such efforts might be daunting.

CONCLUSION

Cooperation from various Non-Governmental Agencies (NGO) and also Civil Society Organizations (CSO) is essential and can be moved now. Initiatives of country-community and government-private taken such as in Yemen and Asia too seem to be a noble effort. Today, the success of handling COVID-19 is not only put on one particular country or government. It however appears as a collective step by involving various agencies including NGO and CSO which have the same objectives, which are to end the disputes and consequently overcome the COVID-19 threat. Every party, including influential individuals from religious groups, women and the local leaders can also be moved in order to end all forms of conflict in the world today.

UN as the highest body which connects all the countries in the world must play a more effective role. Creating a monitoring team or special representatives are not adequate, in fact a more systematic and integrated movement is required to handle the conflicts that happen worldwide. UN must encourage cooperation between all parties by strengthening understanding and avoiding prolonged conflict. UN needs to also see the issue of conflict from the humanity

and justice perspectives, and not on the interest of particular parties. Is the restriction on a nation such as Iran, Cuba, Libya, Sudan and North Korea still relevant today? Don't all these restrictions make it more difficult for the countries to handle the spread of COVID-19? UN has to recheck the steps taken and should be able to take unparalleled action with super powers who have personal agendas. This is where UN will be seen as a free body which fights for the fate of all the nations in the world fairly.

A brave role can also be taken by blocks of other countries such as European Union (EU), Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), ASEAN, OECD and others, in playing a role to assist the improvement of safety and end other conflicts. These countries also need to help in the process of handling COVID-19 especially through related research findings. The process of healing and using certain antidotes must also be shared among countries in the world. The success in handling COVID-19 is not confined to one country only. If a country is free from COVID-19, but other countries still struggle handling it, then the condition will not recover as usual. Economic, trade and tourism activities are still affected by the pandemic phenomenon.

COVID-19 has made extremely challenging to convene conflict parties in direct negotiations. It will not deter the whole world from pursuing best conflict solutions. We must be creative and shall use latest technology such as IOT and Big Data to the maximum extent possible to open maintain channels of communications and de-escalate conflict. This initiatives need to be supported by pro-active diplomatic engagement and action. It is a big task to bring the voices of other actors including NGO, CSO, religious leader, women, youth and every single unit of people, in our efforts to secure sustainable agreements to uphold international peace and security.

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