

SOME THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL ISSUES TO ENSURE HUMAN SECURITY IN THE PREVENTION AND CONTROL OF THE COVID-19 EPIDEMIC IN VIETNAM

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***Abstract:** The epidemic situation in general and COVID-19 pandemic in particular have had significant impacts on human security in Vietnam and around the world. Epidemic diseases have greatly affected the economy, politics, culture, society, life of the country, and life and activities of the majority of people. The article carries out an in-depth analysis of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on political security, economic security, health security, environmental security, community security, in doing so, proposes the solutions by the authorities to prevent, halt these impacts on human security in Vietnam.*

***Keywords:** Human security, pandemic prevention.*

1. Access to human security in disease prevention and control

The concept of "human security" first mentioned in the Report Human Development of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) in 1994 has been recognized by the United Nations Human Security Commission and international organizations. According to UNDP, security has long been regarded as national security in many countries, encapsulated in terms of

threats to sovereignty, territorial integrity, or issues associated with the survival of a country like war, arms race, proliferation etc. UNDP supposes that in security perceptions, countries do not pay attention to legitimate security concerns of ordinary people in their daily lives. Therefore, this organization has introduced the concept of "human security", including 7 main elements: *political security, economic security, food security, health security,*

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*environmental security, personal security and community security.*¹

In the current complicated pandemic on a global scale, human security is always threatened, specifically: Political security is associated with the guarantee of respect for fundamental rights of people when they live in a society. Ensuring political security is to protect people from the oppression, mistreatment, intimidation or harm of the political forces of the country or the authorities. Economic security is the guarantee of basic human income by working in the private sector, the state or from the social welfare of the government. Health security is to ensure the health of all people, health effects are directly affecting security. Food security is to ensure that all people have access to basic food to ensure enough nutrients for an efficient and healthy life, and when a pandemic occurs, citizens are difficult to access to the source of food due to limited distribution system or the inability of people to supply and produce to use. Environmental security is the protection of people from environmental threats such as natural disasters (floods, droughts, earthquakes, tsunamis) or caused-by-humans threats (water pollution, land pollution, air pollution, deforestation) causing climate change and ecological disasters, which result directly from human activities.

A pandemic is defined as *"an epidemic that occurs globally or over a large area across national borders, and*

*often affects a large number of people".*² Historically, many pandemics have been witnessed and corona virus epidemic 2020 (SARS-CoV-2 virus) caused in many countries has become a new pandemic. An epidemic is declared a pandemic when it spreads in many parts of the world, across many continents and affects a large quantity of people. A pandemic is related to its geographic spread, not to the severity of the disease.

The fundamental difference between a pandemic and a disease is that "epidemic" is known as an outbreak of a disease with an unforeseen rate of infection, out of control but within an area, a country. Meanwhile, "pandemic" is an epidemic on a much larger geographical scale, transcending the scope of a country, affecting many people around the world. There are many reasons for the World Health Organization (WHO) to declare an epidemic a pandemic, one of which is to control seriously, not ignore symptoms, and get the necessary finance to tackle and control it. According to WHO's pandemic prevention plan, when a global pandemic is announced, it requires governments to take action: to distribute personal protective equipment, antivirals and other medical supplies as a national program by mobilizing the entire health system, facilities and workers at the national and local levels. Along with that, an International Public Health Emergency (PHEIC) is announced by (WHO) when

there is "an extraordinary event that poses a public health risk to other countries through international spread of the disease and requires a coordinated international response".³ PHEIC regulations were formulated and adopted in 2005 by 194 countries in International Health Regulations (IHR). Up to now, WHO has declared a global health emergency 5 times for pandemics including: Swine H1N1 (2009), Polio (2014), Ebola (2014), Zika (2015), and a relapse of Ebola (2019). The pandemics have had a great deal of infection and destruction.

On March 11, 2020, WHO leaders officially declared the acute respiratory illness (COVID-19) caused by a new strain of corona virus (SARS-CoV-2) as a global pandemic. The COVID-19 pandemic, also known as acute pneumonia associated with a new strain of corona virus, is an infectious pandemic caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The WHO statement was made when the COVID-19 epidemic had infected more than 100,000 people in 83 countries and territories, of which more than 80,000 people in China. As of April 15, 2020, there were 210 countries and territories affected with a total of 1,930,805 cases of infection and 120,069 deaths, Vietnam had 266 cases of infection, 167 recovered people and has had no fatal case yet.⁴

2. The functional agencies' work of ensuring human security in COVID-19 epidemic prevention and control in Vietnam

From the aspect of Human Security, the epidemic situation has had a significant impact on human rights in Vietnam and around the world. The epidemic has greatly affected the economy, politics, culture, society and the lives, activities of the majority of the global population. For example, more than half of the world's population is blocked and minimized going out of the house, people are only allowed to leave home for essential work or medical cases. The COVID-19 epidemic has completely reversed the lives of people on the planet, many governments have to increase travel restrictions, close schools and offices, millions of people have to work at home, many people have lost their source of income. The epidemic and its consequences have been making direct impacts on political security, economic security, health security, environmental security, food security, etc.

In Vietnam, following the Party's direction, the Government from the central to local levels, the standing agency for ensuring social security, order and safety (the Ministry of Public Security) has coordinated the synchronous implementation of measures to ensure security and order in COVID-19 epidemic prevention. Specifically:

- Immigration management has been strictly carried out
- The work of patrol, control, and anti-epidemic posts was carried out quickly, urgently and synchronously.

Local police continued to assign forces to participate in more than 1,000 posts belonging to interdisciplinary working groups, patrol and control groups, self-management groups for disease prevention and control at gateways, roads controlling the directions of transportation and people to the locality to organize a quick test of COVID-19, strengthened the supervision of Vietnamese and foreigners who were isolated at home and community; deployed the security force of 08 concentrated isolation points, etc.⁵

Parallel to the tasks at interdisciplinary posts, districts and cities also established more similar checkpoints on roads with high traffic density or crowded, complicated places, and promptly reminded and strictly handled over 300 individuals violating regulations on disease prevention and control such as not wearing masks in public places, refusing to be isolated, etc.⁶

- The fighting and handling of violations on epidemic prevention and control were carried out seriously and drastically. The police of units and localities actively fought against criminals, especially robbers, thefts, the criminals of smuggling, making counterfeit goods related to epidemic prevention and control, etc. From 04-10/4/2020, the police of units and localities discovered and administratively sanctioned 3,500 cases of violating the regulations on epidemic prevention and control with a total of money nearly 10 billion VND.

They checked and reminded nearly 3,000 business establishments that failed to comply with regulations on price listing and trading of goods without invoices proving origin, crowded services, non-compliance temporary shutdown restaurants. On April 8, 2020, the Police Division investigating economic crime, corruption and smuggling of Hanoi Police discovered the production and sale of thousands of counterfeit medical equipment and costumes related to the COVID-19 epidemic prevention at Duc Anh Medical Service and Trading Co., Ltd, No. 5, Lane 178, Trung Liet Ward, Dong Da District.⁷

- The reviewing and screening work was focused and thoroughly implemented.

- Propaganda and guidance on epidemic prevention: Police of units and localities also paid special attention to propaganda and mobilization of the people to join hands to prevent and combat the COVID-19 epidemic; advised authorities at all levels to close the sightseeing and tourism areas to contribute to disease prevention and control, strengthened patrol and control; continued "Walk each lane, knock each house, check each person" to distribute propaganda leaflets, ask people to strictly abide by Directive 16/CT-TT of the Prime Minister.⁸ The Ministry of Public Security directed the strict handling of false information about the epidemic and failure to comply with regulations on disease prevention and control.



Policemen stopped the vehicle, instructed the driver to check and measure body temperature on the North Thang Long-Noi Bai road. Source: vov.vn.

3. Ensuring human security on the Covid-19 epidemic prevention and control in Vietnam

The complicated evolution of the COVID-19 epidemic has been making a comprehensive impact on all fields of life and society, especially a significant impact on social security, order and safety. The Party, Government and Ministry of Public Security have directed many measures to ensure human security and maintain social order and security.

Firstly, ensuring political security: Many subjects take advantage of epidemics to set up fake websites to steal customers' account information to get money, which lead to the increase in the criminals of fraud and appropriation of assets on cyberspace affecting the transaction process, security and safety of banking operations. They take advantage of cyberspace to mislead

information and propagate the epidemic to cause psychological insecurity, confuse public opinion, create instability, divisions, and potential risk of the instability of political, social order and safety. In addition, taking advantage of the epidemic situation, hostile forces, reactionary forces increase in making propaganda, distorting and destroying, if the epidemic is not controlled soon, the psychological instability and chaos in social, latent "hot spot" on security and order will be risen, which negatively affects political and social stability. The epidemic has also affected the immigration and border management, resulting in many complex security and order issues, which poses challenges to the management of residence for foreigners.

Following the direction of the Prime Minister, the Ministry of Public

Security proactively formulates plans to ensure social security, order and safety; police responding plan to anti-epidemic levels. The Ministry of Public Security issues telegrams and orders on strengthening prevention and handling of crimes violating the regulations related to the COVID-19 epidemic prevention and control. In particular, it is required that the police of units and localities needs to well grasp the situation, proactively forecast the effects of COVID-19 and post-COVID-19 epidemic on economic, life, social security issues, which might arise complications about crime and social order and safety in each locality and field so as to have proactive measures to prevent and control effectively. The police has to actively coordinate with the Procuracy and the Court of the same level to select a number of key cases to perform shortened procedures in accordance with the Criminal Procedure Code to promptly prosecute and adjudicate before the law in order to threaten, etc.

It is necessary to improve the fight against wrong and hostile views; strictly handle acts of spreading news that fabricate, cause negative effects on epidemic prevention and control. The Department of Cyber Security continues to work closely with the Police of units and localities to actively grasp the situation on cyberspace, and the evolution of the epidemic; the conspiracy and activities of hostile, reactionary forces, bad subjects spreading false information,

distorting the epidemic situation, causing confusion, inciting negative psychology among the people.

Untruthful propaganda against the Party and the Country is actively controlled. At the same time, news agencies and newspapers are coordinated to propagate about strictly handling violating organizations and individuals. Paying special attention to the coordination of functional units was of great importance to ensure the security and safety of the national information network system, especially the Web Portal, websites of important agencies, not to spread untruthful and misleading information about the epidemic that caused confusion among people.

Secondly, ensuring economic security: The COVID-19 epidemic has had dramatic impacts on the economic sector, employment, income arising complex problems about security order and status of individuals, organizations that hoarded goods and medical supplies to push prices up for profit, etc., which might lead to the adverse effects of the risk of recession, even global crisis on Vietnam's growth, especially the economy of wide open country. The COVID-19 epidemic could lead to reduced labour productivity, production stagnation, supply chain disruptions, reduced trade and investment, and tourism stall, etc.

Due to the complicated evolution of the COVID-19 epidemic, the Government, ministries and branches

have made efforts to prevent and fight against the epidemic and protect the people, and take up measures simultaneously to promptly support the business community as well as labourers. Accordingly, the Ministry of Industry and Trade is drastic and proactive in offering many solutions to stabilize the market and limit adverse effects from the epidemic. The Ministry of Planning and Investment and the State Bank of Vietnam coordinate with relevant agencies to study a number of credit policy packages to support small and medium enterprises, cooperatives, and farmers affected by the epidemic; liquidity assistance, loan maintenance, interest rate exemptions, debt freezing, debt rescheduling, loosening repayment terms, speeding up the process and time of loan application review and loan disbursement and exempt from overdue interest on loans.

The Ministry of Public Security directs the Economic Police Department to guide the National Economic Police force to focus on monitoring the situation, detecting, combating and handling of smuggling, speculating, manufacturing, trading, and transferring counterfeit and poor-quality medical supplies in the service of epidemic prevention and control. The Ministry of Public Security coordinates with ministries and branches to come up with urgent solutions to stabilize the market, facilitate and support businesses and employees to have legitimate sources of income, contributing

to the guarantee of social security such as reducing production and business costs; expanding the subjects eligible for extension of tax or land rental payment terms; promoting import, export and trade on the basis of ensuring food security. Localities implement policies, mobilize donations to support poor and near poor households, workers lost their jobs due to the epidemic in the area in various ways such as cash, rice and other necessities.

Ministries, departments and agencies coordinate with authorities at all levels to solve many difficulties for enterprises, pay a part of the existing salary or arrange alternate work, helping employees to still have income. At the same time, the departments and agencies coordinate with the General Confederation of Labor in diversifying forms of propaganda and dissemination of policies, laws and knowledge about occupational safety and hygiene; educating to raise awareness and responsibility of employers and employees in implementing the regulations on occupational safety and hygiene, especially the COVID-19 epidemic prevention and control.

Thirdly, ensuring health security: the directive of the Party and Government to continue steadfastly has to be strictly complied with five anti-epidemic principles: Prevent, detect, quarantine, localize, and stamp out epidemics. This knowledge is gathered from previous anti-epidemic times with reference to international experience, experts and

especially consistent and synchronous operation. Minister To Lam said that the police force had to mobilize hundreds of thousands of officers and soldiers to participate in the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic every day, especially work at the front line, hence there were tens of thousands of officers and soldiers who were at risk of contracting the epidemic at any time. However, in that context, the police of units and localities continue to strictly implement plans, carry out "Walk each lane, knock each house, check each person" to prevent and combat COVID -19 epidemic, simultaneously they desire citizens to change their habits when going to medical examination and treatment in hospitals, because people could be checked online, or call directly if they have a doctor to follow up to schedule medical examination and treatment to avoid rushing to hospitals which might lead to overload and unnecessary pressure etc.

The Ministry of Public Security asked the Immigration Department to closely coordinate with the health sector and relevant functional forces to do well the medical quarantine, promptly advise and propose leadership to strengthen the measures of managing and controlling immigration activities at border gates and strictly complying with the compulsory medical declaration according to the direction of the National Steering Committee on epidemic prevention and control; simultaneously, coordinate with

the authorities to strictly handle those who did not make health declaration or make wrong declaration in accordance with the law. Prison units, detention camps, compulsory education establishments, reformatory schools need to continue to promote propaganda among soldiers, well prevent epidemic and propagate to the offenders about the epidemic prevention; propose appropriate visitation policies to control well epidemic prevention.

Fourthly, ensuring community security: With a large population, nearly 100 million people, and a long border with China (the first country to experience COVID-19), Vietnam is a country at high risk of infection. But as of April 15, 2020, the number of infected cases in Vietnam was 266 people, standing the 103th in the world, with no death,⁹ which shows that our country has had the right leadership, right implementation in epidemic prevention and control. In particular, Vietnam has always determined that the People have a leading role in the prevention and fight against epidemic, and other forces are the core, so that there is a plan to propagate and mobilize people to be aware of participation in epidemic prevention which is of great important.

The role of the functional forces directly on duty should be promoted such as the Army, the Police and to the functional forces at the grassroots giving specific and detailed instructions for the people, the methods of protecting people's health should be strengthened by actively

propagating and mobilizing local people to voluntarily make medical declarations at the grassroots, proactively taking isolation and response options when someone was infected or suspected infection. People must be propagated to raise awareness and understanding about the COVID-19 epidemic (identify symptoms, prevent infection measures, as well as instructions on implementation of quarantine when exposed to at-risk sources of infection, etc.) to avoid subjective psychology or being too confused and anxious. At the same time, there must be a laws propaganda to handle those who lack awareness and intentionally spread epidemic diseases; failure to make a medical declaration etc.

The police force strengthens the management of the area to check and verify cases from epidemic zones, foreigners who come to stay in suspected epidemic areas to have a zoning isolating, epidemic prevention plan effectively. In addition, the police at grassroots need to coordinate with the core forces in promoting propaganda to prevent epidemics from spreading among the people, creating a pervasive power in the People's community. The police of units and localities actively discuss with functional agencies of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of National Defense about the epidemic situation to advise the Standing Committee of the Central Public Security Party, leaders of the Ministry of Public Security direct the

synchronous deployment of appropriate measures to respond to situations and scenarios on the COVID-19 epidemic prevention and control.■

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