COVID-19 PANDEMIC: The Politics of Cross Border Crime

[1]Mohd Mizan bin Mohammad Aslam*

[1] Department of International Relation, Security and Law, Faculty of Defence Studies & Managemant, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

*E-mail: wellasandria@gmail.com

Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has endangered the whole world, occurred at a time when most countries were not prepared. COVID-19 also has an impact on the criminal justice system. During the spread of the pandemic, several local and worldwide crimes have been documented. Stakeholders frequently search for openings and opportunities to profit from the COVID-19 scenario. eight major worldwide safety consequences have been found. This encompasses (1) breakaway groups, (2) terrorism, (3) the defence industry, (4) cyber security, (5) food security, (6) health security, (7) local crimes, and (8) cross-border criminal activity. These eight factors of safety have good and bad consequences for every country on the planet. For the first time, world superpowers have shifted their exterior strategies to ensure the domestic security of their own countries. In fact, COVID-19 has resulted in more deaths than a few major conflicts in history, such as the Korean and Vietnam wars (McCarthy, 2020). This clearly demonstrates how COVID-19 has impacted the whole world, pushing them to re-evaluate their own safety policies.

Keywords: COVID-19 pandemic, several local crimes, worldwide crimes, cross border crimes and cyber security.

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has endangered the whole world, occurred at a time when most countries were not prepared (Ghebreyesus, 2020). Many nations have been too at easy and unprepared to tackle this catastrophe since they have been in a pleasant and safe zone for a long time (Aslam, 2020). The COVID-19 threat demonstrates the global security management's flaws, particularly in terms of military, food safety, health, and other connected industries. If this epidemic continues for a long period, the globe is likely to be in a situation of crisis. Despite the fact that COVID-19 has clearly had a big economic impact (Kalbana, 2020), the threat to security and defence is quite real. Without economic growth, a country's security and military industries will suffer.

Over the years, the world's focus has always been on defence and the country's overall security in comparison to others. Since the second world war, governments throughout the world have spent hundreds of millions of dollars, or a significant amount of their budgets, on military equipment such as fighter planes, ships, tanks, artillery, bombs, and other weapons (Davis, 2006). Ownership of military technology and information has become a top priority for all governments, whether superpowers or tiny states. In truth, several countries build their own military technology and intelligence in order to safeguard their citizens

and their country's sovereignty (Hechter, 1992). Every government on the planet is competing to create technologies and invest in these critical assets.

As a consequence of weapon sales, a handful of the world's largest arms manufacturers, such as the United States, Russia, China, India, and the United Kingdom, become extremely wealthy (Mattu, 2012). Most nations in the world devote a significant portion of their state budgets to military and security spending, which indirectly aids the growth of the global weapons business. Even if a country is not at war, possessing the most modern and advanced military equipment is a sign of sovereignty and authority. Weapons sales on a wide scale were conducted in nations that were involved in war or conflict, such as the Middle East and Africa. Some of these nations are used as proxy in the arms race between the West and the East. In such circumstances, more than 80% of these countries will prioritise defence and safety over fundamental requirements such as housing, food, and health (Davis, 2006).

During a time when the globe was experiencing a long, healthy life, most governments did not see the need to empower the food industry's safety and health. China has detected a sort of new virus known as the Wuhan virus between December 2019 till the advent of COVID-19 at the beginning of 2020. (Pomeroy, 2020). It began to have a significant influence on China towards the end of January 2020, leading the Chinese government to adopt a comprehensive lockdown in early February 2020. At this period, the world began to learn about Coronavirus, a virus that may bring death. Coronavirus spread around the world as a result, prompting the World Health Organization (WHO) to proclaim it a pandemic. Soon after, WHO designated the virus as COVID-19, which has spread to over 200 countries worldwide save for a few Pacific Island states including Tonga, Niue, Kiribati, Soloman Islands, and North Korea (Adriana, 2020).

Every country has been affected by COVID-19, and the significance of defence has diminished as a result. The world's attention is currently focused on health and food safety, as well as the economic sector's rehabilitation (Muhyiddin, 2020). There are a lot of things to talk about when it comes to COVID-19. The globe is anticipating a severe economic downturn, with many countries becoming impoverished. The unemployment rate will skyrocket, widening the divide between rich and poor. The international community will experience a new normal in which air travel and cross-country travel will become smaller, social separation and cleanliness will become a life priority, work-from-home will become a new option, schools and colleges will migrate to online learning, and so on. Nonetheless, the focus of this paper will be on COVID-19's consequences on worldwide safety issues (Muhyiddin, 2020).

At least eight major worldwide safety consequences have been found. This encompasses (1) breakaway groups, (2) terrorism, (3) the defence industry, (4) cyber security, (5) food security, (6) health security, (7) local crimes, and (8) cross-border criminal activity. These eight factors of safety have good and bad consequences for every country on the planet. For the first time, world superpowers have shifted their exterior strategies to ensure the domestic security of their own countries (Waxman, 2020). In fact, COVID-19 has resulted in more deaths than a few major conflicts in history, such as the Korean and Vietnam wars (McCarthy, 2020). This clearly demonstrates how COVID-19 has impacted the whole world, pushing them to re-evaluate their own safety policies. Which factor is most critical in guaranteeing a country's security?

Criminal Activities Across Borders

COVID-19 also has an impact on the criminal justice system. During the spread of the pandemic, several local and worldwide crimes have been documented. Stakeholders frequently search for openings and opportunities to profit from the COVID-19 scenario. Even if crime rates are on the down in general, it is still occuring and getting more inventive. Criminals will always be one step ahead of the game when it comes to their actions (Special Branch, 2020).

Drone delivery of pharmaceuticals has been documented in Brazil and England. Several programmes that can be downloaded on cellphones are used to carry out various drug use and wild parties in private. Prostitution is still practised through delivery services and other means. During the COVID-19 season, online gambling syndicates, pornography, online scams, and other crimes have all grown in popularity (Special Branch, 2020). This clearly shows that despite COVID-19 being widely distributed throughout a country and among its citizens, a security hazard still exists. Many nations have made internet connection available to alleviate the monotony of sitting at home. Although many people utilise this tool for educational purposes and to gain new knowledge, other people take advantage of it. Several investigations also show how rapidly internet frauds proliferate. Many people have been duped by various websites and fraudulent applications that have been launched. Every new government product will very certainly be launched on a phoney website to mislead the public, as it does in Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, Brazil, and the United States. This type of fraudsters targets communities who spend a lot of time on the computer or on the internet.

During the COVID-19 season, there have been several reports of cross-border crimes. Numerous offences relating to illegal immigration, narcotics smuggling (contraband), fire weapons, human trafficking and many more reported during COVID-19 (Aslam, 2020). (Aslam, 2020). Greece, Cyprus, England, Malaysia, and Australia, which are frequently targeted by illegal immigrants, continue to see an increase in the number of illegal immigrants. Viruses do not scare these thieves. They are more concerned with income from hidden luxury firms that do not necessitate a large sum of money. It is a contemporary kind of

slavery that exists today in many parts of the world. As a consequence of little inspection at a country's borders and entrance, this syndicate sees plenty of room and opportunity.

Aside from that, an immigrant or illegal immigrant's admission is seen to have a security impact if they carry a virus with them. They have a great risk of introducing COVID-19 or any other virus into the nations they travel. The virus will spread among them and then to the broader population with whom they come into touch. In the end, a country's safety is jeopardised, and its socioeconomic and political stability is jeopardised.

As a result, the security risk during COVID season is linked to the circulation of incorrect information. Many nations must strengthen existing laws or enact new legislation to combat the transmission of fake news and information, particularly in light of COVID-19 (Minsitry of Defence, 2020). False information has circulated throughout numerous nations, causing panic among the public. In order to handle the resulting unrest, the government is compelled to mobilise the army, police, and other assets. As a result, a government must establish a special set of regulations in order to combat the spread of false information and defeat the "keyboard warriors," a group that seeks attention from other people's problems. (Aslam, 2019b).

COVID poses a criminal danger that is also linked to hackers. This group believes that the whole world is migrating to the internet or an online-based system from a traditional system. The adoption of numerous open source platforms has put a specific agency's or country's security data system in jeopardy. Because they are ill-prepared to deal with the COVID-19 danger, certain government organisations rely on open platforms. As a result, several government entities have been targeted and their data systems have been compromised (Adel, 2018). If private information leaks and falls into the hands of the adversary or particular groups, the situation will become much more deadly (Aslam, 2019b).

Conclusion

The entire globe is in a state of emergency. Most nations in the globe have been in their comfort zones since World War II ended, and are not prepared to face dangers like these. The outbreak of COVID-19, which was later declared a pandemic by the Globe Health Organization (WHO), shocked the world and led to a hunt for the best treatment. Every argument side must return to the table and agree to take steps to end the current disagreement.

Every nation must collaborate, and those in conflict must foster excellent collaboration among themselves in order to put an end to the fight. Conflict-torn regions such as the Middle East and South Asia, as well as Latin America, have ties to other nations. For the dispute to be resolved, countries must work together. The effectiveness of crisis management does not depend on the efforts of a single party; it necessitates the participation of a number of serious and dedicated parties. At this moment, it is not required to have hidden intentions while dealing with disputes since a larger influence involving COVID-19 must be considered.

Cooperation from a variety of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) is critical and may be accomplished immediately. Initiatives by countries, communities, and governments, such as those in Yemen and Asia, appear to be a laudable attempt. Today, the effectiveness of dealing with COVID-19 is not just dependent on one country or administration. It appears, however, to be a concerted effort including a variety of entities, including non-governmental organisations and civil society organisations, all of which are working toward the same goal of resolving conflicts and, as a result, overcoming the COVID-19 danger. Every party, including religious leaders, women, and local officials, may be influenced in order to put an end to all types of violence in the world today.

The United Nations, as the world's top entity that unites all countries, must play a more effective role. Creating a monitoring team or special representatives is insufficient; instead, a more systematic and coordinated approach is necessary to address the global issues. The UN must promote collaboration among all parties through improving understanding and preventing long-term conflict. The United Nations must also consider the subject of conflict from the standpoints of humanity and justice, rather than the interests of specific parties. Is it still important to impose sanctions on countries like Iran, Cuba, Libya, Sudan, and North Korea today? Isn't it true that all of these limitations make it more difficult for governments to deal with COVID-19's spread? The UN must review its actions and should be allowed to take unprecedented action against superpowers with personal agendas. This is where the United Nations will be recognised as a free entity that fairly fights for the fate of all nations on the planet.

Blocks of other nations, like as the European Union (EU), the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), ASEAN, the OECD, and others, may also play a bold role in assisting in the development of safety and the resolution of other problems. These nations must also assist in the handling of COVID-19, particularly through relevant research discoveries. Healing and the use of particular antidotes must be shared across countries around the world. The success in dealing with COVID-19 is not limited to a single nation. If one nation is free of COVID-19 but others are still struggling to cope, the situation will not improve as expected. The epidemic continues to have an impact on economic, commercial, and tourism operations.

COVID-19 Convening conflict parties in direct discussions has become extremely difficult as a result of ini. It will not dissuade the entire globe from seeking the greatest possible conflict resolution. We must be innovative and will make extensive use of cutting-edge technology such as IoT and Big Data to keep open lines of communication and de-escalate violence.

Proactive dilomatic participation and action are required to support these projects. It is a difficult undertaking to include the views of other players, such as non-governmental organisations, civil society organisations, religious leaders, women, youth, and individuals, in our attempts to reach long-term accords to maintain international peace and security.

References

Adnan, A. (2019, June 18). *UN slams use of children as 'human bombs' in Nigeria*. Retrieved from aa.com: https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/un-slams-use-of-children-as-human-bombs-in-nigeria/1507188

Albana, M. S. (2020, April 20). *Lagi Wabah Corona, Teroris Poso Sebar Agenda Khilafah*. Retrieved from Tagar.id: https://www.tagar.id/saat-wabah-corona-teroris-poso-sebar-agenda-khilafah

Alibhai, Z. (2020, March 15). *Isis urges followers to stay away from Europe over coronavirus fears*. Retrieved from inews: https://inews.co.uk/news/world/isis-urges-followers-stay-away-europe-coronavirus-fears-2451169

Aljazeera. (2020, March 21). *UAE confirms first two COVID-19 deaths*. Retrieved from Aljazeera: https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/uae-confirms-covid-19-deaths-200321054815203.html

Ariyanti, H. (2019, Desember 13). *Lawan Kritik Penindasan Muslim, China Rilis Dokumenter Penyerangan Milisi Separatis*. Retrieved from merdeka.com: https://www.merdeka.com/dunia/lawan-kritik-penindasan-muslim-china-rilis-dokumenter-penyerangan-milisi-separatis.html

Aslam, M.M., (2019b). The Role of CSO: Malaysia's experience. Asia-Europe *Counter Terrorism Dialogue on 15-17th of September 2019*. Kuala Lumpur: The Continental Hotel.

Aslam, M. M., (2019c) Conversation with Altaf Deviyati, Director of Operation, IMAN Research on 07th of November 2019. Kuala Lumpur: Park Royal Hotel.

Avisha,g G., (2007). Terrorism on the Internet: Discovering the Unsought. Terrorism and olitical Violence, Volume. 9, Issue 4. P. 159-165.

BBC. (2018, May 13). *Surabaya attacks: 11 killed in Indonesia church bombings.* Retrieved from www.bbc.com: : http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-44097771

BBC News. (2013, January 13). *Profile: Al-Qaeda in North Africa*. Retrieved from BBC News: https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-17308138

Berita Dunia. (2019, July 26). *Sekjen Alumni Suriah Komentari Keterlibatan Bukalapak dan ACT dalam Donasi Teroris Suriah*. Retrieved from Berita Dunia: https://beritadunia.net/indonesia/sekjen-alumni-suriah-komentari-keterlibatan-bukalapak-dan-act-dalam-donasi-teroris-suriah/

Blanchard, L. P., & Cavigelli, K. T. (2018). *Boko Haram and the Islamic State's West Africa Province.* Washington, D.C.: In Focus: Congressional Research Service.

ustsecurity.org/69508/how-terrorist-groups-will-try-to-capitalize-on-the-coronavirus-crisis/

Boas, M. (2017). Terminology associated with political violence and asymmetric warfare. In W. Okumu, & A. Botha, *Domestic Terrorism in Africa: Defining, Addressing and Understanding Its Impact on Human Security* (pp. 7-13). Pretoria: Institute for Security Studies.

Burke, J. (2020, April 16). *Opportunity or threat? How Islamic extremists are reacting to coronavirus*. Retrieved from The Guardian: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/16/opportunity-or-threat-how-islamic-extremists-reacting-coronavirus

CNN Indonesia. (2019, December 27). *Aksi Uighur, Ketum FPI Serukan Penegakan Khilafah*. Retrieved from CNN Indonesia: https://www.cnnindonesia.com/nasional/20191227182406-20-460502/aksi-uighur-ketum-fpi-serukan-penegakan-khilafah

Duddu, P. (2020, March 27). *COVID-19 in the Middle East: Coronavirus-affected countries*. Retrieved from Pharmaceutical Technology: https://www.pharmaceutical-technology.com/features/coronavirus-affected-countries-middle-east-covid-19/

El-Shamaa, M. (2020, April 16). *Cairo shootout exploits coronavirus crisis*. Retrieved from Arab News: https://www.arabnews.com/node/1659356/middle-east

Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United Arab Emirates. (2020, May 21). *China and the United Arab Emirates*. Retrieved from Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the United Arab Emirates: http://ae.china-embassy.org/eng/sbgx/t150466.htm

Felter, C., Masters, J., & Sergie, M. A. (2020, January 10). *Al-Shabab*. Retrieved from Council on Foreign Relations: https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/al-shabab

Frantzman, S. J. (2019). *After ISIS: America, Iran, and the Struggle for the Middle East.* Jerusalem: Gefen Publishing House.

Garda World. (2020, January 29). *UAE: Health officials confirm first novel coronavirus case January 29*. Retrieved from Garda.Com: https://www.garda.com/crisis24/news-alerts/309336/uae-health-officials-confirm-first-novel-coronavirus-case-january-29

Gettleman, J. (2017, April 4). *Somali Pirates Attack, Raising Fears That a Menace Is Back*. Retrieved from The New York Times: https://www.nytimes.com/2017/04/04/world/africa/somalia-pirates.html

Gunaratna, G., Jerard. J., and Rubin, L., (2011). *Terrorist Rehabilitation and Counter-Radicalisation* (London: Routledge, 2011).

Gunaratna, R., (2015) 'Global threat assessment: a new threat on the horizon?', Counter Terrorist Trend and Analysis, *A Journal of International Centre for Political Violence and Terrorism Research*, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, vol. 7, issue 1, January/February 2015, 5.

Gunaratna, R., 2018. "Counterterrorism: ASEAN Militaries' Growing Role – Analysis." *RSIS Commentaries.* March 14. Accessed June 01, 2018. https://www.rsis.edu.sg/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/CO18042.pdf.

Gunaratna, R., and Ali, M., 2014. *Terrorist Rehabilitation: A New Frontier In Counter-terrorism.* London: Imperial College Press.

Hincks, J. (2020, April 29). *With the World Busy Fighting COVID-19, Could ISIS Mount a Resurgence?* Retrieved from Time: https://time.com/5828630/isis-coronavirus/

Hughes, C. (2020, April 7). *Coronavirus crisis is boosting Islamic State in Middle East sparking terror attack fears*. Retrieved from Mirror: https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/coronavirus-crisis-boosting-islamic-state-21826331

Kami, I. M. (2019, July 23). *Bukalapak Tepis Isu Gandeng Lembaga Donasi Terafiliasi Gerakan Radikal*. Retrieved from detiknews: https://news.detik.com/berita/d-4636522/bukalapak-tepis-isu-gandeng-lembaga-donasi-terafiliasi-gerakan-radikal

kumparanNEWS. (2017, November 28). *Serupa Tapi Tak Sama, Ini 3 Perbedaan ISIS dan Al-Qaidah*. Retrieved from kumparan: https://kumparan.com/kumparannews/serupa-tapi-tak-sama-ini-3-beda-isis-dan-al-qaidah/full

Laqueur, W., & Wall, C. (2018). *The Future of Terrorism: ISIS, Al-Qaeda, and the Alt-Right.* New York: Thomas Dunne Books.

Nesser, P. (2012). Single Actor Terrorism: Scope, Characteristics and Explanations. *Perspective on Terrorism*, 61-73.

Reynolds, T. (2020, May 3). *Seeing COVID-19 as an Opportunity*. Retrieved from The Cairo Review of Global Affairs: https://www.thecairoreview.com/essays/seeing-covid-19-as-an-opportunity/

Warrick, J., & Mekhennet, S. (2017, July 20). *A battered ISIS grows ever more dependent on lone wolves, simple plans*. Retrieved from The Washington Post: https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/a-battered-isis-grows-ever-more-dependent-on-lone-wolves-simple-plans/2017/07/19/3eeef9e8-6bfa-11e7-96ab-5f38140b38cc_story.html

Wijaya, P. (2020, March 2). *Catatan Penting Perang AS di Afghanistan, Dari 2001 Sampai Kesepakatan Damai 2020*. Retrieved from merdeka.com: https://www.merdeka.com/dunia/catatan-penting-perang-as-di-afghanistan-dari-2001-sampai-kesepakatan-damai-2020.html

Yeranian, E. (2020, March 9). *COVID-19 Pandemic: Egypt Reports 55 Confirmed Coronavirus Cases and First Casualty*. Retrieved from voanews.com: https://www.voanews.com/science-health/coronavirus-outbreak/egypt-reports-55-confirmed-coronavirus-cases-and-first-casualty

Zenn, J., & Clarke, C. P. (2020, May 26). *Al Qaeda and ISIS Had a Truce in Africa—Until They Didn't*. Retrieved from Foreign Policy: https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/05/26/al-qaeda-isis-west-africa-sahel-stability-jihadi-groups/