

ASEAN Community and Covid-19: An Assessment of An Infected Region's Present and Future Condition

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Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) (2019-2021)

What ASEAN has done on Covid-19?

Existing Policy:

- ASEAN Blueprint – Forging Ahead Together (2016-2022)
 - **APSC - Enhance ASEAN capacity to address transnational crimes and transboundary challenges:** meetings, if necessary to address challenges of transboundary or transnational nature: haze pollution, **pandemics**, TIP, ...
 - **ASCC- Empowered People and Strengthened Institutions:** Increase competencies of stakeholders & institutional capacity to address current challenges: disasters, **pandemics** and climate change
- ASEAN Post-2015 Health Development Agenda
 - ASEAN Health Cluster 2: Responding to All Hazards and Emerging Threats Work Programme (2016-2020):
 - Ensure a high level of capability, collaboration, and **capacity to detect, investigate, contain and manage communicable diseases** (incl. infectious diseases)
 - Strengthening **laboratory capacity** as well as **preparedness for pandemics** and other public health emergencies

What ASEAN has done on Covid-19?

- Starting in Dec 2019:

- Some AMS activated their **national steering task forces**, working with sub-national and local bodies focusing on prevention and control measures, incl. the early detection of cases, tracing of their contacts, and the treatment of cases particularly those that need medical management
- ASEAN Health Sector Cooperation mobilised existing **regional coordination mechanisms and platforms** to reinforce national and regional efforts in responding to COVID-19.

- 15 Feb 2020:

- Chairman's Statement on *ASEAN's Collective Response to the Outbreak of the 2019 Coronavirus*:
 - Strengthen the **coordination** of national and regional efforts in ensuring ASEAN's readiness and responsive measures to **mitigate and subsequently eliminate the threats of the COVID-19**;
 - Instruct diplomatic missions of AMS in third countries to provide appropriate **consular assistance to nationals of AMS** in needy situations;
 - Ensure a coherent and **holistic approach** of the ASEAN Community in response to COVID-19;
 - Ensure that the people are rightly and **thoroughly informed on the COVID-19** situation and are not being misled by **disinformation** pertaining to the COVID-19

What ASEAN has done on Covid-19?

Series of Coordination Meetings

- *Special Video Conference (SVC) of the ASEAN EOC Network and China on the Clinical Management of COVID-19, 20 February 2020.*
- *SVC on Briefing on China's Experience on COVID-19, 12 March 2020*
- *SVC of ASEAN SOMHD in Enhancing Cooperation in the COVID-19 Pandemic Response, 13 March 2020.*
- *Ongoing coordination through the ASEAN EOC Network for Public Health Emergencies and through the ASEAN Plus Three SOMHD Platform*
- *Special Video Conferences of the ASEAN Health Ministers on COVID-19 back-to-back with the ASEAN Plus Three Health Ministers on 7 April 2020.*

Results:

- **Cooperation** providing technical support and resources in enhancing implementation of containment and mitigation measures during the pandemic phase, i.e. **equipment and supplies** for diagnosis and clinical case management.
- Strengthen **cooperation** with China, Japan, Republic of Korea, Canada, and WHO.
- Identified capacity health needs and gaps from AMS should be addressed in our **whole-of-government responses**.
- ASEAN Health Sector to support the **front-liners** in combatting the spread of the virus, and ensuring that communities maintain their safety and health.

Key ASEAN regional responses so far

- A. Mobilisation of the **ASEAN Emergency Operation Centre Network for public health emergencies**, as led by **Malaysia**, to facilitate timely and accurate exchanges of information and technical inputs;
- B. Circulation of **daily situational updates and information** on prevention, detection and response measures, complemented by real-time information sharing through mobile instant messaging;
- C. Production and circulation of reports on **Risk Assessment for International Dissemination of COVID-19 ASEAN Region** from the **ASEAN BioDiaspora Virtual Centre**, as led by **Philippines**;
- D. Conduct of **special video conferences** to further enhance technical exchanges including situational updates and other relevant information on prevention, detection and response to COVID-19. These exchanges also facilitated identification of areas of cooperation within the ASEAN Health Sector, with non-health ASEAN Sectors, and with Dialogue and Development Partners;
- E. **Exchange on laboratory readiness and response actions** through the Regional Public Health Laboratories Network (RPHL) led by **Thailand**. The Network also offers support to specific AMS national public health laboratory requiring technical or material support; and,
- F. Current national **risk communication actions** to disseminate preventive and control measures, including combating false news and misinformation circulated in the social media, have also benefited from the preparedness and capacity building programmes of the ASEAN Risk Assessment and Risk Communication Centre (ARARC) hosted by **Malaysia**.

What ASEAN has done on Covid-19?

- **9 April 2020**: ASEAN Foreign Ministers Hold Video Conference on COVID-19, (the 25th Meeting of the ASEAN Coordinating Council (ACC))
- Endorsed:
 - **Sharing of information** and best practices,
 - Measures to **mitigate the negative socio-economic impact** of the pandemic,
 - The establishment of a **COVID-19 ASEAN Response Fund**,
 - Ensuring **food security**, particularly a stable rice supply,
 - Ensuring **access** to medicines, personal protective equipment, and other essential medical supplies.
 - Maintaining **peace and stability** in the region during this crucial time, particularly in the South China Sea.
- **14 April 2020**: ASEAN Special Summit and ASEAN +3

Future engagement and collaboration on Covid-19

- A. Enhance the regional emergency health preparedness and response;
- B. Continue to **share lessons learnt, good practices and experiences** in prevention, detection and response to COVID-19 and other potential health threats;
- C. Pursue further **drug and vaccine self-reliance and security** including combating anti-microbial drug resistance; and addressing substandard and falsified medicines;
- D. Concretise regional framework of preparedness and response to all hazards including robust regional mechanisms of **disease surveillance and laboratory networking**;
- E. Strengthen **national and regional capacities in mitigating** and responding to all hazards;
- F. Strengthen **management of big data analytics for risk assessment** and communication; and,
- G. Establish a mechanism for national and regional **capacities on health-security interface**.

How about AICHR?

AICHR

- Statement on Covid-19 and human rights by AICHR Reps, on 20 April 2020, focusing on:
 - The importance of respecting, protecting and fulfilling human rights in fighting Covid-19;
 - Non-discrimination, prioritise vulnerable groups, respect FOE, dealing with disinformation.
- Plan to organise two regional dialogues on the right to health: UHC

AICHR Indonesia

- Using Social Media to convey quick message on 'Fighting Covid-19 Human Rights Way'
- Campaign on right to health, universal health coverage.
- Monitoring and documenting the implementation of human rights during Covid-19 in AMS:
 - the restriction imposed by the AMS and how they comply with Siracusa Principles,
 - incidences on stigma and discrimination during Covid-19,
 - the implementation on the right to health,
 - the economic stimulus programmes,
 - the impact Covid-19 outbreak to the most vulnerable and marginalised groups.

Monitoring human rights during Covid-19 in AMS (Mid Feb – Mid March 2020)

Restrictions

- All AMS imposed different level of restrictions: border closures, travel bans, movement restriction,
 - Legality, Legitimacy, Necessity, Proportionality
- Some AMS prefer state of emergency
- Mobilise police and military personels - militarisation
- Impact to FOE, media freedom, FoRB, FoMovement, Right to Education, Right to Work, FoAA, the right of migrant workers

Responses

- Testing, Contact-tracing, Treatment
- Daily press conference
- Economic stimulus
- Social protection
- App: Tracing together (SG), PeduliLindungi (IND)
- AMS early released prisoners to reduce crowd – physical distancing

Monitoring human rights during Covid-19 in AMS (Mid Feb – Mid March 2020)

Human Rights Violations

- Discrimination: harassment against Chinese (tourist, guests, visitors, students, immigrants)
- Stigma, hateful and racist speech against Chinese descent as 'carriers'
- Islamophobia: (a) attack against those participated the *Tabligh* in Kuala Lumpur and (b) demand to imprison Muslim population
- Persecution to those who violate quarantine order and criticise gov's policy on covid-19
- Longer working hours - domestic workers work almost 24 hours/day
- Internet blackout

The most marginalised group

- Homeless
- Poor: the first hit by the outbreak
- Informal and daily wage workers
- Migrants and refugees are the last to receive information, supports, health protection & treatment,
- Women – GBV

What we don't know yet...

- COVID-19 and CVE: discourses shaping
 - (a) God's trying your faith: rewarded as shahid
 - (b) preparation for war (jihad): online propaganda, recruitment
 - (c) Direct amaliyah (operation): China's interest, virus transmission

Post-Covid 19?

Challenges to human rights

- Number of poor, people with no job will increase

Ways Forward

- Universal health care/coverage
- Safe migration should be facilitated by health prevention measures in place