


## MANIFESTATION OF COLLECTIVE SECURITY IN ASEAN AS A REGIONAL ORGANIZATION DURING PANDEMIC COVID-19

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<b>Info Article</b>	<b>Abstract</b>
<p>Received : 02 Desember 2023</p> <p>Revised : 11 Januari 2024</p> <p>Accepted : 03 Februari 2024</p> <p>Publication : 29 Februari 2024</p>	<p>This research is entitled Manifestation of Collective Security in ASEAN as a Regional Organisation During the COVID-19 Pandemic. This research aims to identify ASEAN policies and efforts to realise collective security during the COVID-19 pandemic period. This research examines the manifestation of collective security in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a regional organisation during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research method is to use a qualitative approach, combining desk research and data analysis. The results highlight ASEAN's important role in enhancing regional security through cooperation, particularly in the economic and diplomatic sectors, ASEAN utilises digital platforms for information exchange and coordination. The ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Health Development and the ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting facilitate open communication, allowing countries to share best practices and resources. For example, Thailand received early notification of COVID-19 through the ASEAN Emergency Operations Centre Network, enabling swift preparedness actions. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated ASEAN's capacity to uphold its mission of regional stability and security. Through coordinated efforts, resource sharing, and international partnerships, ASEAN has effectively addressed the challenges posed by the pandemic. This experience underscores the importance of collective security and regional cooperation, reaffirming ASEAN's role as an important actor in maintaining stability and fostering resilience in Southeast Asia. This study concludes that ASEAN as a regional organisation plays an important role in ensuring the collective security of its members.</p>
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## **PENDAHULUAN**

ASEAN was established in 1967 within the hope of regional stability and security in Southeast Asia. This organization promotes economic and political cooperation, society integration among its members. As a regional organization, one of the fundamental aspects in ASEAN is the concept of collective security which highlights the pivotal role of mutual assistance on addressing common threats or problems that may occur. This particular concept is very relevant in times of crisis in which we are going to explore more COVID-19 Pandemic. COVID-19 Pandemics as a real life case of the interdependence of nations in regulating the crisis of the health field. As the regional organization ASEAN was expected to facilitate mutual assistance on addressing this crisis.

Regionalism theory itself explains how countries are grouped based on zones or territories where the members share certain interests or characteristics. ASEAN itself unlike the EU was a group based on interest which is the creation of stability and security whereas the EU is a more likely group based on characteristic and belief. Regionalism could be define in two types soft regionalism and hard regionalism. Soft regionalism characterized based on a sense of regional awareness while hard regionalism emphasize more on formal structures and legal frameworks. ASEAN as the hard regionalism represent more integration where it has its own institution and often involve policy making between member states.

In the beginning of 2020, World was faced by another pandemic after 10 years of the discovery of Pandemic H1N1. Pandemic COVID-19 in 2020 put the world regime in a critical condition not only in the medical field but to the extent of threatening national security. The spread of this virus is found first in China and as a country who has a level of activity that is quite high, it is not long until other countries reported their first cases. This rapidly spreading virus creates instability and threat not only in the scale of states but also in regional. The handling of the Covid-19 pandemic has developed into a global issue that transcends national borders. In this case, international organizations such as ASEAN are taking action to deal with the pandemic in countries within the ASEAN region. In order to combat the ongoing Covid-19 outbreak, Indonesia and other ASEAN countries are collaborating to establish an international body. It can be observed that state actors learn through international cooperation that the formation process is not a simple matter.

ASEAN as the regional organization needs to prove its ability on manifesting its fundamental aim which is creating stability and security in Southeast Asia countries. In dealing with this, external approach and cooperation should be pursued including but not limited to the ASEAN Regional Forum, ADMM-Plus, etc. In facing the crisis, cooperation holds the pivotal role. Every country is required to be open for multilateral corporations. The cooperation could be in any field, health, economic, education or knowledge and many more. ASEAN first attempt in manifesting the collective security in its region through this pandemic is by holding a ASEAN forum which resulted in a resolution by conducting research and information exchange (Arta, 2021). Several meetings in the matter of tackling the COVID-19 Pandemic has resulted in three meetings, SOMHD ASEAN on april 2021, AHMM on may 2022

As the global response to COVID-19 is expected to meet the urgent need to affirm international political and economic cooperation in dealing with the impact of COVID 19. Regional security is crucial because of how countries are interdependent with each other, therefore countries will always tend to ensure that their regions are in a safe position and avoid threats. The presence of the COVID 19 pandemic in the world, especially in ASEAN, presents demands in creating collective security through cooperation opportunities between ASEAN members. By overcoming the existing demands and opportunities, ASEAN plays a role in creating security and stability for regional countries through cooperation between ASEAN members. From there, the author wants to analyze the significance of Indonesia's increased cooperation in the ASEAN region as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic for the realization of collective security in the perspective of functionalism.

## **METHOD**

This research uses qualitative research as its methodology. Sugiyono in his book explains that qualitative research is used to research on natural object conditions. Qualitative research is aimed at understanding the phenomena of what is experienced by the research subject for example and is not limited to actions. Qualitative research is also known as naturalistic research, as for the character in qualitative type research is to use bottom up thinking patterns, with expected output grounded theory with a collection process through a deep understanding of the symptoms at hand (Dr Abdul Fattah Nasution, 2023). In this writing, the author will use a qualitative research type of historical research in which the author will reconstruct events that occurred in the past

using an interpretative approach. In addition, the author will also combine it with a phenomenological type that makes the research subject the covid-19 pandemic by describing interactions and reconstructing events that occurred during covid-19.

This research will use two types of data, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data is data obtained directly from research subjects using measurement tools or data collection tools directly to the subject as the source of the information being sought. Meanwhile, secondary data is a type of data obtained. The author uses library research to collect data (facts and figures) for this research, which is a method of collecting data by examining and studying books, journals, papers, annual reports, and documents related to the topic discussed, both in libraries and in other research institutions.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study highlight the significant role of ASEAN in enhancing regional security. World Health Organization announced the recognition of COVID-19 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on January 30, 2020. ASEAN undoubtedly carries a burden to showcase its effectiveness as a regional organization in tackling this problem. As one of the first efforts, on 15 February 2020 ASEAN recognized the importance of collective action in curbing transmission of this virus. On 4 April 2020 ASEAN held its first High Level Forum to seek a solution in facing the new pandemic. This forum involved three partner countries outside of ASEAN which are China, Japan and South Korea.

ASEAN emphasizes its first goal which is to promote and emphasize the importance of providing a collective and holistic regional response in order to minimize the infection number regionally. This was also highlighted by the ASEAN declaration on “One ASEAN One Response” which encourages strong cooperation to this matter. Several regional mechanisms have been applied in response of COVID-19. Retno L.P Marsudi as the foreign minister Indonesia mention that ASEAN countries have a huge gap in vaccination where she also emphasize that equality is an engine for recovery and how she said recovery for all depend on equality for all (Kementerian Luar Negeri Republik Indonesia, 2021). Next, the writer would analyze the initiatives that ASEAN called out in tackling the COVID-19.

First initiative that comes from ASEAN is the funding of the vaccine. ASEAN leaders have come into agreement regarding the funding of the vaccine that will be

funded by a volunteer contribution from ASEAN members along with an external partner with 10% of it allocated from ASEAN development budget. ASEAN also called for ASEAN Regional Reserved for Medical Supplies, in recognizing the lack of medical supplies in several countries, particularly countries that have the high case in which case in the Philippines, on November 20 ASEAN launched the RRMS for ensuring equal access of Medical Supplies.

In tackling this issues each country has carry out different approach, most of the country based on the laws force. For example restricting to even ban travels, lockdowns and social distancing. However one of the principle of ASEAN is not interference, but in this case leaders of ASEAN expected to committed and comply to the rule of minimizing contact. This policy would put charge in case there is a non-compliance. This take create tangible impact on regional cohesiveness and more unified response in COVID 19 (OECD, 2020, p. 9).

On the other effort, ASEAN has also attempted to leverage the incentives by ensuring the distribution of information through online meetings such as ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Health Development and AHMM which have proven effective in facilitating an open method of coordination. One valid proof of the success of the ASEAN attempt is when it says that Thailand first received notification on the matter of emerging public health COVID-19 through the ASEAN EOC Network which helped Thailand to prepare and measure the preparations against the pandemic.

In the matter of medical supplies, the southeast region, who has been affected by the shortage of the medical supplies, ASEAN responds to these issues by implementing cooperation within ASEAN partners like China, South Korea that enable the fulfillment of medical supplies. ASEAN also managed to establish a response fund from countries like China and the United States. Another example is coming from India's contribution of US\$ 1 Million as a response fund and an offer to explore potential cooperation like vaccine production, medical technology, and supply chain.

But despite its external attempts, ASEAN with each of the member undoubtedly exchange aids like Singapore sending medical supplies to the other member like Brunei, Indonesia, Myanmar, Indonesia while Vietnam providing medical assistance to Indonesia, Laos, Cambodia and Myanmar. (CSIS, 2021). All these put emphasize on the solidarity within ASEAN. The ASEAN also held a meeting in the matter of prioritizing the health frontliner which resulted in USD\$ 10 Million budget for frontline health. Indonesia within Indonesia Red Cross giving supplies to Cambodia in a form of

drugs and food supplies, to Timor Leste in a form of medical supplies like face shield, disinfectants, thermometers.

Thailand sending Mobile Isolation to Cambodia, Lao, Malaysia and Myanmar and sending COVID-19 test kits to Singapore. Kamboja sent medical supplies like ventilator, oxygen supplies to Lao, Myanmar and Vietnam (CSIS, 2021). On May 5, WHO announce the end of the Pandemic COVID-19. The attempt and effort from ASEAN continues except it has change mission to recovery after the outbreak. At the end, the manifestation of Collective Security in Southeast Region has showcased by the attempt of ASEAN and all the member. However it is undoubtedly that the Pandemic COVID-19 would create huge impact on the aspect of life particularly on economic and security. The onset of the pandemic was pictured with sharp economic declines which as caused by lockdowns. However this was experience by almost every country. Up until now, ASEAN effort on manifesting the collective security shown by a better condition in ASEAN members economic and it still continues recited by ASEAN Post-COVID Digital Policy Priorities (ASEAN Main Portal, 2023).

## **CONCLUSION**

When COVID-19 emerged in early 2020, it rapidly escalated into a global pandemic, putting immense pressure on national and regional security. As the virus spread from China to other countries, ASEAN faced the challenge of proving its effectiveness in handling such a widespread crisis. The organization's response began with high-level forums and collaborations with partner countries like China, Japan, and South Korea, emphasizing the importance of a collective and holistic regional response.

Different ASEAN countries adopted various approaches to combat the virus, often relying on legal measures such as travel restrictions, lockdowns, and social distancing. Despite ASEAN's principle of non-interference, member states demonstrated a strong commitment to collective rules aimed at minimizing contact and ensuring compliance. This approach creates a tangible impact on regional cohesiveness and response effectiveness.

The ASEAN response to COVID-19 has been a testament to the organization's foundational aim of ensuring regional stability and security through cooperation. Even as the World Health Organization declared the end of the pandemic in May 2023, ASEAN's efforts have transitioned to recovery and rebuilding. The pandemic underscored the critical need for regional organizations like ASEAN to facilitate

collective action in times of crisis, highlighting the importance of interdependence and cooperation in ensuring the well-being of member states.

ASEAN also leveraged digital platforms for information exchange and coordination. The ASEAN Senior Officials Meeting on Health Development and the ASEAN Health Ministers Meeting facilitated open communication, allowing countries to share best practices and resources. For instance, Thailand received early notifications about COVID-19 through the ASEAN Emergency Operations Center Network, enabling prompt preparedness measures.

Collaboration extended beyond ASEAN's borders, with partnerships involving China, South Korea, and other countries ensuring the supply of medical resources. Contributions from nations like India, which provided \$1 million for response funds and explored cooperation in vaccine production and medical technology, exemplify the importance of global solidarity in regional efforts.

In conclusion, the COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated ASEAN's capacity to uphold its mission of regional stability and security. Through coordinated efforts, resource sharing, and international partnerships, ASEAN has effectively addressed the challenges posed by the pandemic. This experience underscores the significance of collective security and regional cooperation, reaffirming ASEAN's role as a pivotal actor in maintaining stability and fostering resilience in Southeast Asia. The lessons learned from this crisis will undoubtedly strengthen ASEAN's framework for future responses to regional and global challenges, solidifying its position as a cornerstone of regional integration and cooperation.

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