

Abuse of power during COVID-19 pandemic

Andrew Jatis*

Department of Sociology, University of The Azores, Ponta Delgada, Portugal

*Corresponding author. E-mail: andrewjatisj@gmail.com

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DESCRIPTION

Among survey interviewees, 27 percent reported government abuse of power as one of the three issues most affected by the coronavirus outbreak. Officers and security services perpetrated violence against civilians, detained people without justification, and surpassed their legal authority. Governments are also using the pandemic as a defense to grant themselves special powers beyond what's nicely necessary to cover public health. They've also exploited these exigency powers to intrude in the justice system, put unknown restrictions on political opponents, and undermine pivotal legislative functions. As one replier said of Turkey, "Coronavirus was used as an reason for the formerly rough government to do effects that it has long planned to do, but hadn't been suitable to."

The high rates of abuse by authorities in Incompletely Free countries likely indicate that governments with both a fairly active opposition and weak checks on their own power perceive a lesser need and occasion to resort to violence. One Incompletely Free country, Liberia, endured "brutal and loose enforcement of curfew orders by security forces." In another, Zimbabwe, " COVID-19 has also been used to arrest, kidnap, rape, assault, and blackjack mortal rights activists, opposition party leaders/ sympathizers, civil society leaders, intelligencers, and other differing voices on 'allegations of violating lockdown conditions. '" Surveillance has greatly increased during the epidemic, and broad monitoring can fluently come inordinate and intimidating. For illustration, a replier on the Philippines reported that authorities have visited the homes of individualities that may have been exposed to the contagion, and apprehensions are constantly carried out for violations as simple as not wearing a mask while crossing a border. In Sri Lanka, a check replier described the "house-to- house collection of ménage- position information by the police, accompa-

nied by military intelligence."

At the same time, parliaments have been hamstrung by health restrictions and emergency laws, and at times manipulated for political purposes. One respondent on Singapore noted that the most disturbing development has been the "passage of laws that curb freedom but claim to check the virus." Nearly 4 in 10 (39 percent) of the surveyed experts, representing 65 countries, said meetings of the national council were canceled for at least part of the pandemic. Similar abuses may reflect a government's fear of losing power, rather than confidence in its own strength. Overall, 57 percent of respondents felt that governing parties in their country of focus have grown weaker since the start of the coronavirus outbreak, compared with only 27 percent who believe they're stronger. In the countries where democracy was seen as weakening this year, experts were likely — by a margin of 6 percentage points — to see governing parties in a stronger position, as in Bangladesh, Burundi, Poland, and Sri Lanka. Still, this apparent "bump" for governing parties in democratically declining countries represents only a fraction of the profit enjoyed by governing parties in better performing countries where there are high rates of approval for the public government's response to the coronavirus, or where the frugality is strong, similar as Estonia. The check findings stressed two countries that aren't long-standing republic yet have defied assessing extensively vituperative measures in response to the coronavirus outbreak. The 10 experts who responded to the check on Tunisia, which came a Free country in Freedom in the World 2015, all expressed blessing of the public government's running of the outbreak. At the time of this jotting, contagion cases were on the rise, and there have been reports of police abuse and arbitrary enforcement of lockdown measures, but officers have refrained from serious infringements on fundamental freedoms. In Georgia, which remains a Incompletely

Free country, the government has been extensively confided among the population for assessing strict, but transparent, measures to attack the epidemic. Georgia has had one of the smallest death rates encyclopedically, performing in a significant popularity boost for the ruling Georgian Dream party ahead of October choices. These cases are a reminder that any country can take way to manage health risks while considering human rights.

Abuses of power during the pandemic have had a disproportionate impact on communities that were already marginalized. Among the experts surveyed, 29 percent said a lack of protection for minorities and vulnerable

populations was one of three issues most affected by the coronavirus response; 25 percent said new or increased restrictions on ethnical and religious minorities have been put in place as a result of the coronavirus outbreak in their countries of focus. In some cases, these groups suffered disproportionately because their status put them at greater threat. But the dearth of responsibility precipitated by weakened independent media or acquiescent legislative and judicial branches has allowed both state and non-state actors to discriminate against certain groups with impunity.