

# THE ROLE OF THE DEFENSE INSTITUTIONS IN HANDLING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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**Abstract** – The involvement of the military in the global health crisis has begun since the COVID-19 outbreak broke out in Indonesia, starting from the implementation of Large-Scale Social Distancing to the implementation of the new normal adaptation phase. However, the involvement has received mixed responses. Some parties consider it as natural, while others question the urgency of the military involvement. This study focuses on the role of two defense institutions, namely the Indonesian National Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defense in handling the COVID-19. It employs a qualitative research method and the theory of role, the concept of national defense, and the concept of Pandemic Management to analyze the problem. This study finds that the Indonesian National Armed Forces has a strategic role in several fields such as health, security and socio-economic as part of the efforts to contain COVID-19. The Ministry of Defense also plays a strategic role both internally and externally, by cooperating with other ministries, domestic private companies, state-owned enterprises in the defense industry sector, and with other countries in containing the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** role, defense, military, pandemic, COVID-19

## Introduction

Indonesia confirmed the first positive case of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on 2 March 2020. Then, as of 5 July 2020, the number of positive cases of COVID-19 reached 63,749, consisting of 31,473 patients in care, 29,105 patients recovered, and 3,171 patients passed away. Looking at the graph, the distribution pattern of COVID-19 in Indonesia is still increasing and there are no visible sloping curves.<sup>4</sup>

The COVID-19 pandemic, which has become a global health crisis, has not only human health impact, but also has a domino effect on the economic, social

and security sectors. The impact of the pandemic on the economic and social conditions of the community can be seen from many people experiencing layoffs (PHK), an increase in unemployment which then leads to an increase in poverty. In addition, the declining economic conditions of the people have a domino effect on the security sector, such as increased crime rates during a pandemic that threatens security and public order in the society. Furthermore, a lockdown policy implemented by a neighboring country such as Malaysia has led to the illegal repatriation of Indonesian Workers (TKI) via illegal route.

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<sup>4</sup> Covid-19 Handling Acceleration Task Force, "Peta Sebaran," <https://covid19.go.id/peta-sebaran>, 5 July 2020, accessed on 6 July 2020.

Repatriation without strict screening process has the potential to increase COVID-19 transmission at TKI's arrival and in their hometown.

On 13 April 2020, after considering the escalation of the spread of COVID-19 in Indonesia and its various impacts, President Joko Widodo issued Presidential Decree (Kepres) No.12 of 2020 concerning The Determination of Non-Natural Disaster of COVID-19 Transmission as a National Disaster. The issuance of the Presidential Decree is an indication that the government sees the COVID-19 pandemic as a form of material non-military threat that requires special handling, in accordance with Law No. 23 of 2019.

The government has made a number of efforts to overcome the COVID-19 pandemic, starting by establishing a Task Force for the Acceleration of COVID-19 Handling which synergizes with a number of relevant ministries/institutions and local governments. The Ministry of Defense and the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) are two defense institutions that also participated in COVID-19 countermeasures.

This study focuses on the role of two defense institutions namely the TNI and the Ministry of Defense in handling COVID-19. The involvement of the military in this health crisis has begun since the outbreak of COVID-19 broke out in

Indonesia, during the period of Large-Scale Social Distancing (PSBB), up to the application of new normal today.

However, military involvement in COVID-19 countermeasures and new normal adaptations has received mixed responses. Some consider it to be natural while others question the urgency of involving the military.<sup>5</sup> The dissenting party criticized several things such as the absence of state political decisions that should be made before the deployment took place, the duration of Military Operations Other Than War (MOOTW), and whether TNI can still operate in full capacity if they are suddenly needed to implement their main duties.<sup>6</sup> In addition, there is a concern that the military's entry into the civilian sphere can create a tense atmosphere which might potentially lead to the violation of human rights resulting from abuse of power.

In principle, the involvement of the TNI and the Ministry of Defense is in accordance with applicable regulations, as stipulated in Presidential Instruction (Inpres) No. 4 of 2019 and the TNI Law No. 34 of 2004. In spite of the various criticisms above, defense institutions such as the TNI and Ministry of Defense have taken a number of strategic and operational steps in helping the government cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Based on this background, the purpose of this study is to analyze the role

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<sup>5</sup> Hani Anggraini, "Keterlibatan Militer Menuju Fase New Normal Tuai Tanda Tanya," <https://www.dw.com/id/keterlibatan-militer-menuju-fase-new-normal-tuai-tanda-tanya/a-53823336>, 16 June 2020, accessed on 5 July 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Diandra Megaputri Mengko, "TNI dan Kenormalan Baru," <http://www.politik.lipi.go.id/kolom/kolom-2/politik-nasional/1403-tni-dan-kenormalan-baru>, 2 June 2020, accessed on 4 July 2020.

of defense institutions, specifically the TNI and the Ministry of Defense, in handling the COVID-19 pandemic. This study analyzes the type, scope and coverage of the roles carried out by defense institutions to achieve the desired expectations.

### **Research Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research method. According to Bodgan & Taylor, qualitative research is research that produces descriptive data in the form of written or oral words from individuals and observed behavior.<sup>7</sup> The data used in this study consists of primary data sources such as official documents and secondary data sources such as journals, books, media, and official sites. The research process is carried out by collecting data, analyzing data, interpreting data, and writing research reports. Our analysis employs data analysis techniques according to Creswell which is consisted of reducing data to facilitate researchers in analysis, presenting data in the form of descriptive analysis, tables, or graphs, and drawing conclusions based on interpretations of the analyzed data.<sup>8</sup>

### **Framework for Analysis**

#### **Role Theory**

A role is a set of behaviors that are expected of someone in accordance with the social position given both formally

and informally. Roles are based on prescriptions (role rules) and role expectations that explain what individuals must do in a particular situation in order to meet their own expectations or the expectations of others regarding these roles.<sup>9</sup>

The role includes three things:<sup>10</sup>

1. The norms associated with the position or place of someone in society, meaning that there are a series of rules that guide someone in social life.
2. A concept of what can be done by individuals in society as an organization.
3. Individual behavior that is important for the social structure of society.
4. According to Bruce J. Biddle, role can be considered as identity, behavioral characteristics, and expectations to be achieved. These expectations include norms or pressure to act in certain ways. Individuals will receive the message, interpret it, and respond in various ways.<sup>11</sup>

#### **National Defense Concept**

Based on Law No. 3 of 2002 concerning National Defense, the definition of national defense is all efforts to maintain national sovereignty, the territorial integrity of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia, and the safety of all nations from threats and disturbances to the

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<sup>7</sup> Lexy J. Moelong, *Metodologi Penelitian Kualitatif*, (Bandung: Remaja Rosdakarya, 2002).

<sup>8</sup> John W. Creswell, *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative and mixed Approach (Terjemahan)*, (USA: Sage Publication, 1994).

<sup>9</sup> Soerjono Soekanto, *Sosiologi Suatu Pengantar*, (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2006).

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>11</sup> Bruce J. Biddle, *Role Theory: Expectation, Identities, and Behaviors*, (New York: Academic Press, 1979).

integrity of the nation and state.<sup>12</sup> The national defense effort is carried out by considering the dynamics of each form of threat faced. The development of the strategic environment creates changes to the complexity of threats, both military threats and non-military threats. The national defense function is to realize and maintain the entire territory of the Unitary Republic of Indonesia as one defense unit. National defense is carried out by the government and is prepared early in the national defense system by building and fostering the ability and deterrence of the state and nation and overcoming any threat.<sup>13</sup>

A national defense system is a universal defense system that involves all citizens, territories and other national resources, and is prepared early by the government and is carried out in a total, integrated, directed, and continuing manner to uphold state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and secure the whole nation from all threats. The universal defense system can be carried out by mobilizing all elements of national resources, including national defense elements, such as Main Component, Reserved Component and Supporting Component.

The Main Component is the Indonesian National Armed Forces which is ready to be used to carry out defense tasks. The Reserve Component is a

national resource that has been prepared to be mobilized to enlarge and bolster the strength and capability of the Main Component. Meanwhile, Supporting Component is national resources that can be used to improve the strength and capability of the Main and Reserve Components.<sup>14</sup>

### **Pandemic Management Concept**

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), there are five phases in dealing with epidemics. The first is anticipation phase to anticipate the re-emergence of outbreaks or potential new outbreaks by facilitating early detection and response. The second is early detection in animals and humans. The third is the containment phase of the disease at the initial transmission stage. The fourth is the control and mitigation phase during amplification. The fifth is eliminating the risk of disease transmission.<sup>15</sup>

In addition, WHO also provides effective coordination measures in dealing with epidemics. First, coordination between stakeholders, not only about dividing tasks but also about financial and resource management. This requires the construction of an emergency operation center, various tools that support the optimization of the organization and meetings between stakeholders, documentation and joint

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<sup>12</sup> Law of Republic of Indonesia No. 34 of 2004 concerning Indonesian Armed Forces.

<sup>13</sup> Minister of Defense Regulation No. 16 of 2012 concerning the Integration of State Defense Components Policy.

<sup>14</sup> Law of Republic of Indonesia No. 34 of 2004 concerning Indonesian Armed Forces.

<sup>15</sup> World Health Organization, "Managing Epidemics", <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/m-anaging-epidemics-interactive.pdf>, 2018, accessed on 8 June 2020.

plans of action that are updated regularly in accordance with the development of disease outbreaks. Thus, the coordination can determine the type of intervention(s) needed and how to distribute the roles and responsibilities among decision-makers.

Second, develop health information that contains disease outbreak surveillance and information about the results and impacts of interventions or policies that have been made. Third, dealing with infodemic, which is massive and rapid dissemination of false information, rumors, gossip, and other information that cannot be accounted for. To deal with infodemics, policymakers must disseminate official information as well as listening to and managing hearsays. Fourth, health sector intervention which aims to reduce transmission, morbidity, mortality and negative impacts on the health system as well as the political sector and other sectors.<sup>16</sup>

### **Result and Discussion**

The legal basis justifying the involvement of defense institutions in helping accelerate the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic is stipulated in Law No. 34 of 2004 concerning the TNI. Article 7 paragraph 2 of the law states that one of TNI's main tasks is to carry out the MOOTW, which in this case aims to help overcome the consequences of natural disasters, displacement, and the

provision of humanitarian assistance.<sup>17</sup> In addition, Presidential Instruction No. 4 of 2019 concerning Capacity Building in Preventing, Detecting and Responding to Epidemics, Global Pandemics, and Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Emergencies also forms the legal basis for assigning the TNI to assist the government in overcoming this global health crisis.

Furthermore, the TNI Commander is also instructed to: (a) mobilize personnel, facilities and infrastructure as well as efforts to prevent, detect and respond quickly before, during, and after a public health emergency and/or non-natural disaster; and (b) provide tactical command in the event of a public health emergency and/or non-natural disaster, whether intentional or otherwise.<sup>18</sup>

In the regulation, the president also gives instructions to the defense minister to improve coordination, synergy, and cooperation in the deployment of defense resources to prevent, detect, and respond to public health emergencies and/or non-natural disasters, whether intentional or otherwise.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Law of Republic of Indonesia No. 34 of 2004 concerning Indonesian Armed Forces.

<sup>18</sup> Presidential Instruction No. 4 of 2019 concerning Capacity Building in Preventing,

Detecting and Responding to Epidemics, Global Pandemics, and Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Emergencies.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

## The role of the TNI

### 1. Health Sector

In the health sector, the TNI has first refocused or reallocated a budget of IDR 196.8 billion originating from budgetary needs (Headquarters of the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI Headquarters), Indonesian National Army (TNI AD), Indonesian National Navy (TNI AL), and Indonesian National Air Force (TNI AU) to assist COVID-19. Of the total budget, the TNI Headquarters budget of IDR 25.7 billion was allocated for the procurement of Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) laboratory equipment and coronavirus special reagent kits. Then, the Army's budget of IDR 39.9 billion was allocated for the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE), test kits and swabs as well as smart helmets; the Navy's budget of IDR 64.5 billion was allocated to increase the procurement of health facilities such as isolation rooms, raw materials for hand sanitizers, vitamins, ventilators and incentives for health workers; while the Air Force' budget of 69.5 billion IDR was allocated for health workers incentives in several Air Force hospitals.<sup>20</sup>

Secondly, the TNI contributed in providing health service facilities such as COVID-19 special referral hospitals including the Mintoharjo Hospital and Gatot Subroto Army Hospital. At present, the government has prepared a budget of IDR 3.2 trillion for the deployment of TNI troops to accelerate the handling of the corona pandemic for 150 days. The funds were used to increase the capacity of 109 health service facilities owned by the three dimensions in all regions. This is done so that the health facilities can be used for handling COVID-19 in the area.<sup>21</sup>

In addition, 68 hospitals owned by the Indonesian Army will also be equipped with laboratories that have PCR test kits to bolster the capacity of each hospital to examine 10,000 specimens per day.<sup>22</sup> The TNI also established alert posts, tents and isolation rooms in several areas, complete with medical equipment and vigilant medical personnel. The posts and isolation tents were used to speed up the initial handling of people suspected of being infected with the COVID-19 virus before being referred to a referral hospital.<sup>23</sup>

Third, in terms of human resources in the health sector, the TNI

<sup>20</sup> Haryanti Puspa Sari, "TNI Realokasi Anggaran Rp. 196,8 Miliar Guna Tangani COVID-19," <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2020/04/15/12493251/tni-realokasi-anggaran-rp-1968-miliar-guna-tangani-covid-19>, 15 April 2020, accessed on 1 May 2020.

<sup>21</sup> Anton Setiawan, "Perjuangan TNI Menumpas Pandemi," <https://indonesia.go.id/ragam/komoditas/eko>

<https://indonesia.go.id/ragam/komoditas/eko> nomi/perjuangan-tni-menumpas-pandemi, 17 June 2020, accessed on 5 July 2020.

<sup>22</sup> Robertus Wardi, "68 RS TNI AD Dilengkapi Tes PCR," <https://www.beritasatu.com/kesehatan/648599-68-rs-tni-ad-dilengkapi-tes-pcr>, 24 June 2020, accessed on 5 July 2020.

<sup>23</sup> Indonesian National Armed Forces "Antisipasi Virus Corona Yonkes 2 Kostrad Siagakan Tenda Isolasi," <https://tni.mil.id/view-173699->

prepared health workers such as medical staff, paramedics, and other support staff to treat COVID-19 patients. This includes military doctors (general practitioners and specialists), nurses, other health workers, and non-medical personnel placed in the COVID-19 Emergency Hospital at Wisma Atlet to treat patients infected with the coronavirus. In addition, the Indonesian Army has mobilized Zeni Nubika (Nuclear, Biological and Chemical) soldiers to carry out mitigation, extraction, triage and decontamination.<sup>24</sup>

Fourth, in terms of logistics, the TNI also assisted the government in distributing PPE to various regions. The distribution of PPE aims to help overcome the limitations of PPE for medical personnel who treat COVID-19 patients. The TNI uses air transportation such as the Hercules Aircraft to transport and distribute PPE mainly to regional areas. As of 2 April 2020, 352,450 PPE had been distributed to 34 provinces in Indonesia.<sup>25</sup>

Fifth, the TNI helps the government in tracking medical intelligence such as massive sampling,

aggressive contact tracing & tracking, and strict quarantine to suppress the spread of COVID-19.<sup>26</sup> Sixth, in terms of research and development (R&D), the TNI collaborates with universities to conduct research and development in developing vaccines, serums or drugs that can counteract COVID-19 at the Military Health Laboratory.<sup>27</sup>

## 2. Security Sector

In the field of security, the leadership of the TNI has formed four Integrated Joint Task Commands (Kogasgabpad) in four regions. The formation of the Kogasgabpad also involved elements of the combined Armed Forces-Police, and related ministries and agencies under the main operational command (pangkotama ops) of the TNI. The four Kogasgabpads consist of: (1) COVID-19 Emergency Hospital at Wisma Atlet Jakarta led by the Military Commander; (2) Kogasgabpad Natuna led by Pangkoopsau I; (3) Kogasgabpad Sebaru Island led by Pangkoarmada I; and (4) Kogasgabpad Special Hospital for Galang Island Infection led by Pangdam 1 Bukit Barisan.<sup>28</sup>

Furthermore, the TNI also helped raise awareness in the use of

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antisipasi-virus-corona-yonkes-2-kostrad-siagakan-tenda-isolasi.html, 19 March 2020, accessed on 3 May 2020.

<sup>24</sup> Hani Anggraini, *op.cit.*

<sup>25</sup> Indonesian National Armed Forces “TNI Bantu Distribusikan APD ke Berbagai Daerah,” <https://tni.mil.id/view-174714-tni-bantu-distribusikan-apd-ke-berbagai-daerah.html>, 3 April 2020, accessed on 3 May 2020.

<sup>26</sup> Bunaiya Fauzi Arubone, “Pasien COVID-19 Keluyuran, Ini yang Diakukan TNI,” [https://rri.co.id/nasional/821033/pasien-covid-](https://rri.co.id/nasional/821033/pasien-covid-19-keluyuran-ini-yang-dilakukan-tni)

[19-keluyuran-ini-yang-dilakukan-tni](https://rri.co.id/nasional/821033/pasien-covid-19-keluyuran-ini-yang-dilakukan-tni), 15 April 2020, accessed on 8 May 2020

<sup>27</sup> Syaiful Hakim, “TNI Lakukan Penelitian Tangkal COVID-19,” <https://www.antaraneews.com/berita/1449528/tni-lakukan-penelitian-tangkal-covid-19>, 28 April 2020, accessed on 3 May 2020.

<sup>28</sup> Anton Setiawan, “Perjuangan TNI Menumpas Pandemi,” <https://indonesia.go.id/ragam/komoditas/ekonomi/perjuangan-tni-menumpas-pandemi>, 17 June 2020, accessed on 5 July 2020.

masks and the application of physical distancing in public places such as public transportation.<sup>29</sup> In order to uphold and oversee the implementation of the PSBB and the transition phase, the TNI conducts joint patrols from public places to the regional borders. For example, the Indonesian Navy held an Order and Discipline Enforcement Operation (Gaktibplin) aimed at suppressing traffic violations for personnel and Civil Servants (PNS).

Furthermore, the TNI also increased routine patrols and intelligence patrols on the border between Indonesia and Malaysia, especially in the illegal route which is often used as a path for arrivals of illegal migrant workers returning to Indonesia. This patrol aims to anticipate the spread of COVID-19 from abroad. Through this patrol, the TNI has managed to secure 36 illegal migrant workers from Malaysia in the waters of the Nipah River<sup>30</sup> and up to mid-May 2020, TNI has secured 713 illegal migrant workers who returned to Indonesia illegally through Lanal Tanjung Balai Asahan.<sup>31</sup> After capturing, all passengers were inspected by the COVID-19 Task Force

by applying the COVID-19 pandemic inspection procedures. The procedures include health checks, body temperature measurements, and spraying disinfectant liquid to passengers as well as the luggage and the ships.<sup>32</sup>

Then, in terms of transportation, the TNI has facilitated the evacuation of Indonesian citizens abroad to return to Indonesia because of this emergency situation. The TNI has recorded 13 evacuations of around 3,500 Indonesian citizens (WNI) working as crews (ABK) on global cruise ships. For example, the evacuation of 188 WNI Crew of the World Dream Ship, 324 WNI ABK of the MV Costa Mediterranean and 68 crew members of the Diamond Princess. In addition, KRI Dr. Soeharso was also used in carrying out humanitarian missions to help return migrant workers from Malaysia who were locked down. Similarly, three aircrafts owned by the Air Force were also deployed to take 245 Indonesian citizens who had just arrived from Wuhan to be taken to Natuna Island for observation.

Furthermore, as a preventive measure, the TNI has also prepared a

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<sup>29</sup> JPNN, "Peran TNI dalam Penerapan PSBB di Tengah Pandemi COVID-19," <https://www.jpnn.com/news/peran-tni-dalam-penerapan-psbb-di-tengah-pandemi-covid-19>, 15 April 2020, accessed on 3 May 2020.

<sup>30</sup> Ratna Puspita, "TNI AL Tingkatkan Patroli di Jalur Tikus RI-Malaysia," <https://republika.co.id/berita/q8hqdn428/tni-al-tingkatkan-patroli-di-jalur-tikus-rimalaysia>, 9 April 2020, accessed on 4 May 2020.

<sup>31</sup> Rusli HR, "TNI Amankan 124 Pekerja Migran Ilegal di Labuhanbatu Utara,"

<https://sumut.sindonews.com/read/32761/717/tni-al-amankan-124-pekerja-migran-ilegal-di-labuhanbatu-utara-1589677531>, 17 May 2020 accessed on 11 June 2020.

<sup>32</sup> Indonesian National Armed Forces "TNI AL Kembali Menangkap 20 Orang Pekerja Migran Ilegal di Tanjung Balai," <https://tni.mil.id/view-176175-tni-al-kembali-menangkap-20-orang-pekerja-migran-ilegal-di-tanjung-balai.html>, 27 April 2020, accessed on 4 May 2020.



contingency plan as the worst-case scenario if the COVID-19 pandemic has not shown signs of decline in the near future. The spread of the coronavirus has caused a decline on the socio-economic condition of the community, so there is a possibility of social unrest which can potentially lead to anarchy. Therefore, this contingency plan is prepared to reduce social upheavals that occur in the community, so as to minimize security risks.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, as we enter the new normal phase that is currently underway, the TNI is also deployed to secure a number of vital national objects. The government is preparing a plan to deploy 340,000 TNI-Polri personnel in four provinces (DKI Jakarta, West Java, West Sumatra and Gorontalo) and 25 districts/cities in order to supervise and discipline the implementation of health protocols in the community. There are 1,800 public objects or facilities that will be safeguarded by TNI-Polri personnel such as shopping centers, markets, terminals, bus stops, and stations, by emphasizing persuasive efforts.<sup>34</sup> For example, the TNI and Polri fielded

2,702 personnel consisting of 1,293 soldiers and 1,409 polices in shopping centers in Jakarta and its surroundings which are within the jurisdiction of the Jakarta Metropolitan Police.<sup>35</sup> With the involvement of the TNI and Polri in disciplining the public to comply with health protocols, it is hoped that the community can be productive and safe from COVID-19 transmission.<sup>36</sup>

### 3. Socio-Economic Sector

In the socio-economic sector, to minimize the impact of the COVID-19 and PSBB pandemic, especially for the lower middle class, the TNI has an active role in distributing food donations and social assistance to people in need. In addition, the TNI also cooperated with the National Police to build public kitchens in several locations including Kota Tua, Tamansari, Tanjung Priok, South Tambun, Kemayoran, and two areas in South Jakarta. The TNI-Polri officers take turns cooking to serve food to local residents such as freelancers,

<sup>33</sup> Syaiful Hakim, "TNI Lakukan Penelitian Tangkal COVID-19," <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/1449528/tni-lakukan-penelitian-tangkal-covid-19>, 28 April 2020, accessed on 3 May 2020.

<sup>34</sup> Achmad Nasrudin Yahya, "Era New Normal, Pemerintah Diminta Libatkan Ahli Epidemiologi Ketimbang TNI-Polri," <https://nasional.kompas.com/read/2020/05/28/20233591/era-new-normal-pemerintah-diminta-libatkan-ahli-epidemiologi-ketimbang-tni?page=all>, 28 May 2020, accessed on 5 July 2020.

<sup>35</sup> Tribrata News, "Ribuan TNI Polri Awasi Protokol Kesehatan di Pusat Perbelanjaan," <http://tribrataneews.polri.go.id/read/533/36/ribuan-tni-polri-awasi-protokol-kesehatan-di-pusat-perbelanjaan-1592280399>, 16 June 2020, accessed on 5 July 2020.

<sup>36</sup> Syaiful Hakim, "Kesiapan TNI-Polri Terapkan Normal Baru di Tengah Pandemi COVID-19," <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/1552824/kesiapan-tni-polri-terapkan-normal-baru-ditengah-pandemi-covid-19>, 14 June 2020, accessed on 5 July 2020.

online motorcycle taxi drivers, and others.<sup>37</sup>

Another example, the Army in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture created a rice ATM to help residents during this pandemic. As an initial stage, the program was only implemented in 10 Military District Commands (Kodim) and in the future it is planned to cover all Kodims. This program is intended for people affected by COVID-19 who are not registered as beneficiaries of assistance from the government.<sup>38</sup>

### **The Role of the Ministry of Defense**

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indonesian government cut the Ministry of Defense budget from around Rp. 131 trillion to Rp. 122 trillion to be allocated to the handling needs of COVID-19.<sup>39</sup>

#### **1. Ministry of Defense's internal steps and Cooperation with Related Ministries**

The Ministry of Defense's step in helping the handling of COVID-19

patients is by organizing blood donor activities. In addition, the Ministry of Defense also provides disinfectants within the Ministry of Defense and other institutions and ministries. Then, the Ministry of Defense held a Technical Guidance for Supporting Component for National Defense in Health Sector in the context of accelerating COVID-19 counter-measures. The participants consisted of 300 volunteers from various health disciplines including medical health, public health, nurses, nutritionists, health analysts, pharmacy, psychology and radiology. After attending the training, the volunteers will be on duty for 1 month and 14 days of quarantine at Dr. Suyoto Hospital as a medical staff.<sup>40</sup>

Furthermore, the Ministry of Defense also distributed 5,000 COVID-19 rapid test kits to the Mayor of Bekasi as one of the risk areas<sup>41</sup> and the Deputy Regent of Bogor for pandemic control.<sup>42</sup> In addition, the

<sup>37</sup> Bonfilio Mahendra Wahanaputra Ladjar, "TNI-Polri Buat 7 Dapur Umum untuk Warga Terdampak Pandemi COVID-19," <https://megapolitan.kompas.com/read/2020/04/14/21333811/tni-polri-buat-7-dapur-umum-untuk-warga-terdampak-pandemi-covid-19>, 14 April 2020, accessed on 4 May 2020.

<sup>38</sup> Sabik Aji Taufan, "Bantu Warga Terdampak Covid-19, TNI AD Luncurkan Program ATM Beras," <https://www.jawapos.com/nasional/30/04/2020/bantu-warga-terdampak-covid-19-tni-ad-luncurkan-program-atm-beras/>, 30 April 2020, accessed on 3 May 2020.

<sup>39</sup> Francisca Christy Rosana, "Faisal Basri Gemas Anggaran Kemenhan Hanya Dipotong Rp. 9T," <https://bisnis.tempo.co/read/1344569/faisal-basri-gemas-anggaran-kemenhan-hanya-dipotong-rp-9-t/full&view=ok>, 21 May 2020, accessed on 12 June 2020.

<sup>40</sup> Ministry of Defense, "Upacara Pembukaan Bimbingan Teknis Pertahanan Negara Bidang Kesehatan TA. 2020 dalam Rangka Percepatan Penanganan COVID-19," <https://www.kemhan.go.id/badiklat/2020/04/22/upacara-pembukaan-bimbingan-teknis-pertahanan-negara-bidang-kesehatan-ta-2020-dalam-rangka-percepatan-penanganan-covid-19.html>, 22 April 2020, accessed on 12 June 2020.

<sup>41</sup> Rayful Mudassir, "Kementerian Pertahanan Salurkan 5.000 Rapid Tes ke Pemkot Bekasi," <https://kabar24.bisnis.com/read/20200428/15/1233970/kementerian-pertahanan-salurkan-5.000-rapid-tes-ke-pemkot-bekasi>, 28 April 2020, accessed on 12 June 2020.

<sup>42</sup> Ministry of Defense, "Irjen Kemhan Serahkan Bantuan Alkes Kepada Bupati Bogor Sebagai Upaya Penekanan Penyebaran COVID-19," <https://www.kemhan.go.id/2020/05/11/irjen->

Ministry of Defense also provided medical equipment to the South Sulawesi Regional Police for the handling pandemic in South Sulawesi. The assistance consisted of 500 PPEs, 2,000 masks, 500 glasses, 1,000 headgears, 500 gloves, 500 rapid test kits and 100 bottles of vitamin C.<sup>43</sup>

Then, the Ministry of Defense also focused on improving the quality of defense human resources in the health sector by establishing the Faculty of Military Medicine, the Faculty of Military Pharmacy and the Faculty of Military Engineering at the University of Defense. Furthermore, the Ministry of Defense plans to establish pharmacy and virology for independent health resilience in the future.

The Ministry of Defense realizes that COVID-19 has an impact on people's lives, one of which is the problem of food availability. Therefore, the Ministry of Defense also focuses on building food security to anticipate the impact of future disease outbreaks in coordination with relevant ministries. On 23 June 2020, the Deputy Minister of Defense attended a meeting to discuss the

management of the Ex-Peatland Development Area (PLG) in Central Kalimantan Province. The meeting was also attended by the Minister of Public Works and Housing along with representatives of the Ministry of Forestry and Environment, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of SOE. This meeting discussed the joint action of the ministries in developing food estate in Central Kalimantan in supporting programs to strengthen food security.<sup>44</sup>

## 2. Ministry of Defense Collaboration with Domestic Private Companies

The Ministry of Defense has received 100,000 hydroxychlorokina tablets from PT. Indadi Setia to be given to COVID-19 patients.<sup>45</sup> The Ministry of Defense also cooperates with PT. Japfa Comfeed Indonesia in distributing 2,500 ready-to-eat food packages to 25 Hospitals in Greater Jakarta. This food package will be routinely distributed every Tuesday and Thursday. The Ministry of Defense also involved the Mahajaya Student Regiment (Menwa) and the Ministry of Defense Cadres as

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<sup>43</sup> Sindonews, "Kapolda Sulsel Terima Bantuan Almatkes dari Sekjen Ministry of Defense," <https://makassar.sindonews.com/read/55015/710/kapolda-sulsel-terima-bantuan-almatkes-dari-sekjen-kementerian-pertahanan-1591002416>, 1 June 2020, accessed on 12 June 2020.

<sup>44</sup> Ministry of Defense, "Wamenhan: Kekuatan Ketahanan Pangan Tak Kalah Penting dengan

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<sup>45</sup> Syaiful Hakim, "Kementerian Pertahanan terima hidroksiklorokina obati pasien COVID-19," <https://www.antaraneews.com/berita/1453092/kementerian-pertahanan-terima-hidroksiklorokina-obati-pasien-covid-19>, 30 April 2020, accessed on 12 June 2020.

volunteers in distributing the food packages.<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, the Ministry of Defense and PT. Japfa Comfeed Indonesia Tbk again provides 3,000 food assistance for medical personnel. As of 21 May 2020, the Ministry of Defense has provided 16,000 meals to the community. This program is included in the COVID-19 assistance national defense action program. The assistance was distributed by the National Defense Forum (FBN) and the National Defense Cadre Association (PKBN).<sup>47</sup> In addition, the Ministry of Defense also received medical equipment assistance from Beihang UAS China representatives in Indonesia, in the form of 200 sets of PPE, gloves, protective shoes, and eye protection.<sup>48</sup>

### 3. Ministry of Defense Collaboration with State-Owned Enterprises (SOE) in the Defense Industry Sector

The massive amount of COVID-19 patients in Indonesia makes the need for medical devices quite high while its availability is limited. This situation encourages the involvement of SOEs

to produce medical devices. In the current pandemic, a number of SOEs can utilize the ability of its resources such as machinery or engineers to participate in producing the necessary medical equipment, such as ventilators, oxygen cylinders, operating room masks, disinfecting booths and other needs.<sup>49</sup>

One of the SOE sectors involved in this policy is the SOE in the Defense Industry (Indhan) sector. Two SOEs in the National Defense and High-Tech Industries (NDHI) cluster, namely PT. Pindad and PT. Dirgantara Indonesia (PTDI), is able to make ventilators that have passed product tests from the Health Facilities Safety Center (BPFK) of the Ministry of Health. PT. Pindad has made a Ventilator Pumping Machine that functions as a breathing aid for patients who experience respiratory failure. Meanwhile, PTDI produces a portable ventilator called Vent-I (Ventilator Indonesia) which is used for sick patients who are still capable of breathing without aid. Vent-I is also a product of cooperation between Dirgantara Indonesia and

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<sup>46</sup> Ministry of Defense, “Kemhan Dukung Tenaga Medis Hadapi COVID-19,” <https://www.kemhan.go.id/2020/05/07/kemhan-dukung-tenaga-medis-hadapi-covid-19.html>, 7 May 2020, accessed on 12 June 2020.

<sup>47</sup> Ministry of Defense, “Kemhan Salurkan 16.000 Makanan ke Tenaga Medis Melalui Aksi Bela Negara Peduli COVID-19,” <https://www.kemhan.go.id/2020/05/21/kemhan-telah-salurkan-16-000-makanan-ke-tenaga-medis-melalui-aksi-bela-negara-peduli-covid-19.html>, 21 May 2020, accessed on 12 June 2020.

<sup>48</sup> Ministry of Defense, “Sekjen Kemhan Terima Bantuan Alkes dari Beihang UAS China Untuk Atasi Penyebaran COVID-19,” <https://www.kemhan.go.id/2020/05/11/sekjen-kemhan-terima-bantuan-alkes-dari-beihang-uas-china-untuk-atasi-penyebaran-covid-19.html>, 11 May 2020, accessed on 12 June 2020.

<sup>49</sup> Ministry of Defense, “Wamenhan Dukung Industri Pertahanan Produksi Ventilator,” <https://www.kemhan.go.id/2020/04/25/wamenhan-dukung-industri-pertahanan-produksi-ventilator.html>, 25 April 2020, accessed on 3 May 2020.

Bandung Institute of Technology (ITB).<sup>50</sup>

#### 4. Ministry of Defense Collaboration with Other Countries

Indonesia through the Ministry of Defense established cooperation with other countries both bilaterally and regionally in order to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, the Ministry of Defense collaborates with the TNI to launch a humanitarian relief operation by sending an Air Force C-139 aircraft to bring medical equipment from China such as the COVID-19 test kit, N-95 mask, surgical mask, medical protective clothing and portable ventilator<sup>51</sup> which was then distributed to the COVID-19 referral hospital.<sup>52</sup>

Then, at the regional level, the Ministry of Defense seeks to establish communication in the context of strengthening cooperation in handling COVID-19. One of them is through the ASEAN Defense Senior Officials Meeting Working Group (ADSOM-WG), which took place virtually on 12 May 2020 and served as

a preparatory meeting to hold the ASEAN Defense Senior Officials Meeting (ADSOM). ADSOM-WG was followed by the Director of International Defense Cooperation and aims to remind all ASEAN members to follow the agreement of the defense ministers in the joint statement adopted at the ADMM Retreat meeting on 18-20 February 2020 in Hanoi. ADMM Retreat discusses defense cooperation in handling pandemics in ASEAN.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, on 15 May 2020, the ADSOM meeting shared experiences in dealing with the pandemic, discussing defense cooperation in 2020 and online COVID-19 tabletop exercise. It is hoped that the ASEAN region will be able to control the COVID-19 pandemic through the exchange of information, medical assistance, and appropriate policies and regulations.<sup>54</sup>

We believe that the above explanation has elucidated the urgency of military involvement to take part handling this global health crisis because the capacity of civilians

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<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>51</sup> CNN Indonesia, "Bantuan Medis Corona dari China Tiba di Indonesia," <https://www.cnnindonesia.com/internasional/20200328213252-113-487878/bantuan-medis-corona-dari-china-tiba-di-indonesia>, 28 March 2020, accessed on 12 June 2020.

<sup>52</sup> Ministry of Defense, "Menhan Prabowo Subianto Serahkan Bantuan Alkes dari Tiongkok untuk Rumah Sakit Rujukan Penanganan COVID-19," <https://www.kemhan.go.id/2020/03/23/menhan-prabowo-subianto-serahkan-bantuan-alkes-dari-tiongkok-untuk-rumah-sakit-rujukan-penanganan-covid-19.html>, 23 March 2020, accessed on 12 June 2020.

<sup>53</sup> Ministry of Defense, "Diskersinhan Ditjen Strahan Kemhan Ikuti Pertemuan Virtual ADSOM Working Group," <https://www.kemhan.go.id/2020/05/12/dirkersinhan-ditjen-strahan-kemhan-ikuti-pertemuan-virtual-adsom-working-group.html>, 12 May 2020, accessed on 12 June 2020.

<sup>54</sup> Ministry of Defense, "Sekjen Kemhan RI Ikuti Pertemuan Virtual ADSOM Membahas Kerjasama ASEAN dalam Penanganan COVID-19," <https://www.kemhan.go.id/2020/05/15/sekjen-kemhan-ri-ikuti-pertemuan-virtual-adsom-membahas-kerjasama-asean-dalam-penanganan-covid-19.html>, 15 May 2020, accessed on 12 June 2020.

alone is not enough to overcome all the problems on the ground. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the TNI held three types of humanitarian operations included in the MOOTW, i.e.: (1) Medical Handling Operations, in the form of providing health facilities through the TNI Hospital and the Dr. Suyoto Hospital of the Ministry of Defense; (2) Security Operations in the form of securing land, sea and air borders as well as securing logistical lines and supporting the security of vital objects in coordination with the National Police; (3) Support Operations in the form of fetching aids from other countries such as China, distributing logistics as well as coordinating with and supporting the National Police and related agencies in maintaining public discipline in complying with health protocols during the PSBB and new normal adaptation phase.

If analyzed based on the phases of epidemic management determined by WHO, currently Indonesia has gone through the first phase of anticipation because it has had more than 60,000 positive cases and the number continues to grow. The TNI and Ministry of Defense have played a role since the first phase by appointing the TNI Commander to be part of the COVID-19 National Task Force, Lieutenant General Doni Monardo who is an active officer in his capacity, as Head of the National Disaster Management Agency (BNPB) as well as chairman of the task force. Furthermore, all health personnel

along with TNI-owned hospitals are also prepared to become a referral hospital for COVID-19 patients, Patients under Surveillance (PDP), and People under Monitoring (ODP).

Indonesia has also gone through the second phase of early detection in animals and humans with massive tests through PCR and rapid tests. In this second phase, the role of the TNI and the Ministry of Defense is very important, especially in facilitating the transportation of rapid test kits and other medical devices from other countries and distributing them to various regions in Indonesia. Indonesia has also gone through the third phase, which is the containment of diseases that were attempted at the initial transmission stage, because there has been a local transmission and the government has implemented PSBB in vulnerable areas. The TNI and Ministry of Defense were also involved in combating the pandemic through mobilizing troops to maintain public discipline to comply with the COVID-19 health protocol during PSBB and patrols in Indonesian border lanes, especially in illegal routes to monitor access to human mobility and conduct health screening for those going in and out of Indonesia.

Currently Indonesia is in the fourth phase, which is the control and mitigation phase during amplification (development/expansion). In this phase, Indonesia is implementing a transition to new normal adaptation. The Indonesian government

establishes zones in accordance with the level of risk of outbreaks in each region and establishes restriction policies in areas included in red, orange and yellow zones as well as unrestricting areas included in green zone. This change in circumstances led to the TNI being involved in maintaining the discipline of the community to comply with local and national authority regulations in accordance with its zoning. In addition, the economic impact caused by the pandemic also increase crime rates—hence, the presence of the TNI and Police is considered necessary as a deterrence to increase the sense of security in the community. Indonesia must also prepare for the fifth phase, which is eliminating the risk of disease transmission. The TNI and Ministry of Defense have prepared for the fifth phase by paying attention to food security, preparing human resources in the health sector capable of anticipating future outbreaks and making contingency plans with various scenarios.

WHO also recommends effective coordination measures in the form of: *First*, coordination among stakeholders and financial management. The TNI and Ministry of Defense have done this by coordinating with related institutions such as ministries, SOE, domestic private parties and coordinating with defense institutions of friendly countries. The TNI and Ministry of Defense have also reallocated budgets for important sectors during

the pandemic; *Second*, create health information and information about the impact of applied policies. The Ministry of Defense and the TNI periodically communicate the policies and steps taken during the pandemic through statements from relevant officials and through various media platforms including official social media; *Third*, dealing with infodemic, which is massive dissemination of false information. The Ministry of Defense and the TNI are not directly involved in this work because there are already ministries and related agencies in charge of infodemic, but the communication of policies carried out by the Ministry of Defense and the TNI can indirectly help to minimize infodemic in the community; *Fourth*, intervening in the health sector to reduce transmission, morbidity, death and other negative impacts. This is the task of the COVID-19 task force which is led by Operations Assistant of the TNI Commander as the deputy chairman and whose members consisted of TNI elements. The role of the TNI and Ministry of Defense in this step is to follow the direction of the task force. Furthermore, the establishment of Kogasgabpad in the four regions is also a strategic step in implementing effective coordination for MOOTW during the pandemic.

### **Conclusions, Recommendations, and Limitations**

The Main and Supporting Component of defense have been involved in helping the government cope with the COVID-19

pandemic. The TNI has played a role at the operational level in handling COVID-19 in the community, including in the fields of health, security, and socioeconomics. Furthermore, the Ministry of Defense has also played a role at the strategic policy level by taking internal steps, cooperating with relevant ministries, the private sector, state-owned defense industry, and other countries to bolster national and regional defense against the pandemic.

In general, the involvement of the TNI in the effort to deal with COVID-19 has a number of advantages such as the readiness and vigilance of the soldiers, because they are trained to always be ready to face various conditions and situations, including during the current crisis conditions. In addition, the existing command system in the TNI can facilitate the mobilization of soldiers in various regions to carry out operations. The TNI also has a strategic and comprehensive plan so that its implementation can be carried out effectively and integrated.

On the other hand, the Ministry of Defense has taken internal steps and cooperated with relevant ministries, SOE, private sector and other state defense institutions as well as refocusing its budget to serve pandemic management needs. Thus, we can conclude that defense institutions such as the TNI and Ministry of Defense have an important role in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic in Indonesia.

First, the government needs to prepare carefully the state's political decisions related to military involvement during the COVID-19 pandemic which

contains clear rules regarding the duration of CSOs, urgency of engagement, scope of roles, calculation of the impact of engagement on key tasks, up to indicators and standards for measuring the success of the operations. Secondly, the government needs to provide protection and health insurance for military personnel and their families because TNI personnel who are involved in the field become vulnerable and are at risk of contracting the coronavirus. Third, the government needs to conduct oversight of military involvement when disciplining the public to ensure Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) can take place properly.

Fourth, the Ministry of Defense can raise health issues as an agenda in international defense forums, especially in the ASEAN framework, in order to facilitate the sharing of information and best practices from countries that are more developed and experienced in the field of military health. Fifth, the Ministry of Defense should also make documentation and joint plans of action that are updated regularly in accordance with the development of the epidemic issue and its impact in the defense and security.

Sixth, defense institutions need to continue to support policies issued by civilian authorities to jointly cope with pandemics according to their portion as in the security function; logistics distribution; medicines and medical devices; transportation facilities to difficult terrain; provision of emergency health facilities and health facilities under defense institutions; research and



development by deploying the capabilities of the defense industry; good communication and coordination with civil and community authorities; provide health protection for military personnel and civilian personnel who work under defense institutions during the MOOTW. Last but not least, the defense institutions, namely the TNI and the Ministry of Defense, are expected to be able to work can work in an accurate and measurable manner to maximize their role and contribution in the community in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic.

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