

## **Spread of Disease Control**

**AUTHOR:** Norah Wulkopf, President of the Security Council, HS KUNA 3

### **BACKGROUND ON ISSUE**

As early as the 14th century, diseases and other infectious agents have been used as weapons during wartime. From plague ridden corpses being launched as projectiles by the Mongols, to Chinese POWs being tortured and experimented on with various diseases by imperial Japan, there is a long standing precedent for countries engaging in biological warfare. Although the Biological Weapons Convention prohibits signatory states from producing and using biological weapons, terrorist organizations have shown interest in developing biological weapons as well. In the midst of a pandemic, the threat and destruction of biological weapons is all the more real. People have witnessed the civil unrest, distrust in government, and increased global tension that a highly infectious disease causes first hand. With this past year in mind, it is more apparent than ever that uncontrolled spread of disease is an immediate threat to global peace and security.

After months of lockdown, nearly every country has experienced some form of civil unrest. Protest movements sprung up around the world, and nearly all of them were greeted by militarized and violent policing forces. Governments expanded their power and their militaries during the pandemic to put down these social movements. In response to the unrest brought on by social injustices, lack of economic support during the pandemic, and abuses of power, governments have centralized power to end these protests. In some countries, the increasingly powerful militaries have even seized power from the executive branch.

In addition to internal expansions of military power, many governments postponed national and subnational elections in response to the pandemic. At least 70 countries postponed their elections, expanding the terms of the officials in power. While on the surface this appears to be a safety measure to limit the spread of COVID-19, these shifts away from democracy threaten the legitimacy and stability of the ruling governments. For governments that went ahead and held elections as planned, there were also issues of legitimacy. Citizens questioned the credibility of these elections, partly due to the disillusionment caused by the pandemic and recent government expansions. Governments must find a balance between maintaining public health and allowing for free and fair elections.

Global tension is on the rise. As vaccines are beginning to be rolled out, it is increasingly apparent that the demand is greater than the supply, forcing countries to compete. A vaccine bidding war seems inevitable, making the poorest countries with the least developed medical infrastructure the last to receive vaccines. The COVAX facility is focused on ensuring equitable vaccine distribution, but the U.S., the WHO's largest financial donor, has only recently joined and began funding the initiative. Although COVAX is gaining support, it still faces many obstacles to ensuring global vaccination. The pharmaceutical

corporations that developed the vaccine are holding onto their patents, keeping vaccine distribution a private endeavor. Even Oxford University was pressured to sell the rights to their vaccine, which they previously promised to make as widely available and cheap as possible. Beyond just vaccine distribution, global tensions have also increased as countries look for others to blame as the pandemic gets more and more out of control. This need for a scapegoat and lack of a united global front in response to COVID-19 highlights how strained foreign relations are.

This issue brief outlines issues caused by the coronavirus pandemic that fall under the purview of the Security Council; there are countless more detrimental impacts of this disease beyond global security. One pandemic has completely halted our normal way of life. One pandemic has left 2 million people dead. One pandemic has left the world in complete crisis. Imagine the fallout another would bring.

### **QUESTIONS TO ADDRESS IN POSITION PAPERS (3)**

1. How has the COVID-19 pandemic affected the power and legitimacy of your government?
2. Has your country developed, used, or been attacked by biological weapons in recent history?
3. What is your country's stance on equitable vaccine distribution?

### **SOURCES FOR RESEARCH (5)**

<https://www.britannica.com/technology/biological-weapon/Biological-terrorism>

<https://www.gavi.org/covax-facility>

<https://www.idea.int/news-media/multimedia-reports/global-overview-covid-19-impact-elections>

<https://www.bloomberg.com/graphics/2021-global-discontent-threatens-the-balance-of-power/>

<https://khn.org/news/rather-than-give-away-its-covid-vaccine-oxford-makes-a-deal-with-drugmaker/>