



## Duty vs Humanity: Police Officer's Point of Views in Implementing Policies as Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) Taskforce

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### **Abstract**

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic stimulates negative impacts on all people in Indonesia. The impacts are not only related to health but also to economic factors of the Indonesian people. This condition requires the Indonesian government to implement a policy in limiting community activities to reduce transmission rate increase of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Indonesia. The implementation of policies related to prevention of transmission rate increase of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) by the Indonesian government has led to various polemics, especially regarding the implementation carried out by the public officers of the task force in implementing the policy, one of which is the Indonesian National Police unit (POLRI). The polemic that is discussed by the society is regarding the form of enforcement actions by the police which are considered as aggressive acts since the acts are considered as ignoring/degrading humanity. This study aims to provide an overview of the actions of the police regarding the implementation of their duties as task force for the prevention of COVID-19. Method that is used in this research is discourse analysis by describing the humanist side and obligations in carrying out duties for the police. It can be concluded that society needs to be educated further regarding the main goals of taskforces that are formed by the government in reducing transmission of coronavirus disease (COVID-19). Furthermore, the society shall understand the dilemma experienced by the police officers in carrying out their duties as task force in decreasing transmission of coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

**Keywords:** *COVID-19; Duty; Humanity*

### **Introduction**

The development of the health world is currently in shock with the spread of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) which is suspected to have originated in the Wuhan area, China in December 2019 (Li Q, et al., 2020). This virus spread very quickly throughout the world so that on March 12, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared that Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) was a pandemic. Until now, the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is still entering the stage of being declared a pandemic considering the number of transmission cases worldwide and/or the number of deaths caused by the spread of the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) (WHO, 2020). The increasing number of transmission and death rates and the absence of drugs or vaccines that can cope with the spread and impact of the virus have caused various countries to implement policies that aim not only to suppress the spread of the virus but also to

create legal certainty regarding the acceleration of handling the spread of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The Indonesian government has implemented a policy known as wearing a mask, washing hands, and maintaining social distance to prevent the spread of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The implementation of the policies initiated by the Indonesian government is supported by the establishment of a task force tasked with maintaining public order in implementing the policies implemented by the government known as the Task Force for Acceleration in Handling and Preventing Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).

The formation of the task force is stated in the Presidential Decree of the Republic of Indonesia Number 7, 2020 where the main consideration is based on the incensement number of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) from time to time where the increasement causes casualties and material losses which have implications for social, economic, and community. This encourages the government to anticipate the impacts caused by Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) by synergizing cooperation with all levels of ministries/agencies and local governments. The Task Force of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) consists of various ministries/institutions where the state police agency of the republic of Indonesia is also included in the task force which functions as an implementing element. Presidential Instruction Number 6 of 2020 states that there are 4 main task points of the National Police as the implementing element, namely: 1) Indonesian Police Department is tasked with supporting and supervising the implementation of Health protocols; 2) Indonesian Police Department synergizes with the Indonesian National Armed Forces and the Regional Government in conducting patrols; 3) The police are tasked with providing guidance to the community; and 4) Indonesian Police Department is also tasked with implementing the effectiveness of law enforcement regarding violations of Health protocols (Satuan Tugas Penanganan Covid-19, 2021).

In carrying out their duties as part of the Covid-19 Task Force, members of the National Police have received a lot of attention regarding the firmness carried out in the field. Firmness that presents a stigma that police officers in carrying out their duties are less concerned about the value of human rights. Issues related to the assertiveness of Indonesian Police Department. members in carrying out their duties are marked by various reports both in the mass media and on social media which show that the assertiveness of police officers is considered to override the human side, thus creating social prejudice against Indonesian Police Department. Social prejudice and the assumption that members of the police override the human side show a misunderstanding between the community in understanding the responsibilities and burdens of police officers in carrying out their duties as part of the Covid-19 Task Force which seeks to prevent the spread and impacts caused by Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). The present study aims to portray This study seeks to provide an overview or point of view to the public regarding the firmness of police officers in carrying out their duties as part of the Covid-19 Task Force in preventing the spread and impacts arising from Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19).

### **Methods**

This study uses a discourse analysis method in which the researcher elaborates the texts or documents that are related to the duties of members of the National Police, both as state servants and as part of Covid-19 Task Force. Analysis of text or document afore mentioned aims to provide an overview to the public about the importance of the assertiveness of police officers in carrying out their duties as part of the Covid-19 Task Force and eliminate the prejudice in which police officers set aside the value of human rights in carrying out their duties.

### **Discussion**

The Indonesian government enforces the Physical Distancing policy through Government Regulation No. 21 of 2020 concerning Large-Scale Social Restrictions and Ministry of Health Regulation No. 9 of 2020. This policy aims to prevent the chain of spread and reduce the number of spread of the

Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). The implementation, implementation, and supervision of these policies requires the Indonesian National Police (Polri) to be at the forefront of efforts to prevent the spread of the virus Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). Indonesian Police Department becomes one of the front lines as part of the Covid-19 Handling Task Force because the National Police has four main points in developing tasks, namely: supporting and supervising the implementation of health protocols, conducting surveillance patrols on the implementation of health protocols, educating the public about the importance of implementing health protocols, and take legal action against health protocol violators.

The four points related to the authority and duties of the National Police in being one of the front lines of the Covid-19 Handling Task Force are in line with the main functions of the Police as stated in Law No. 2 of 2002 article 2 and Article 10 concerning the National Police which emphasizes that the Police have a function as a maintainer of security and order, law enforcement, protector, shelter, and community service (Sulistyo, et al., 2009). The implementation duties of the National Police are based on the principle of *Salus Populi Suprema Lex Esto* ((people's safety is the highest law) which principle is the principle of the National Police in carrying out their duties and authorities (Kharisma, 2020).

In carrying out their duties and authorities as the Covid-19 Handling Task Force, members of the National Police face various obstacles. One of the obstacles that is quite difficult for members of the police is the lack of public awareness in implementing health protocols and restrictions on community movement during the pandemic (Sagala, et al., 2020). The lack of public awareness of the importance of health protocols and restrictions on people's movements have made many police officers take firm actions. Strict actions aimed at suppressing the spread of the covid virus are manifested on several scales ranging from mild (reprimand) to severe (dissolution and imposition of sanctions) on people who violate health protocols and activities that cause crowds. The actions taken by members of the National Police have been adjusted to the standards and procedures mandated by both the Head of the Covid-19 Task Force and the Head Indonesian Police Department. However, unfortunately, the enforcement actions taken by members of the National Police in carrying out their duties are considered by some people as an action that stimulates the occurrence of human rights violation. The dispersal of the crowd, the closure of several places that are suspected to cause crowds, and the blocking of several roads are widely considered as actions that override the human side by the community. This was conveyed by some people through mass media and social media so that it gave rise to social prejudice against the police officers.

The presence of stigma from some people towards Polri members in carrying out their duties shows that most people do not fully understand the duties and responsibilities of Polri members in suppressing the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Control measures carried out by members of the National Police are based on policies implemented by various government agencies, specifically the Covid-19 Task Force. Policies that are basically meant to limit people from doing work, traveling, and physical interactions (Damanik, 2020). Negative stigma against members of the National Police arises due to a lack of public understanding of the duties and roles of police officers as the part of the Covid-19 Task Force. Referring to the duties and role of the National Police in being part of the Covid-19 Handling Task Force where the task of the Police is more emphasized on the function of law enforcement with the issuance of the Decree of the Chief of Police No. Mak/2/III/2020 Regarding Compliance with Government Policies in Handling the Covid-19 Virus. This decree is a real support for the Indonesian Police Department in enforcing regulations related to government policies in tackling the Covid-19 outbreak (Kurniawan, 2020). Moreover, control of crowd carried out by members of the police officers are also based on the discretion of members of the Indonesian Police Department where the principle of discretion is stated in Law Number 2 of 2002 concerning the Indonesian Police Department. The law states that police officers hold the authority to carry out an action/policy based on the personal considerations of the police officers where the action or policy is aimed at the public interest. Exercise of discretionary authority by the police officers is based on four principles, namely the principle of necessity; the principle of the problem; the principle of purpose; and the principle of balance (Sitompul,

2000). Prejudice related to violations of human rights for disciplinary actions carried out by the police officers is a form of public misunderstanding regarding the impact of current pandemic situation. This misunderstanding has led to disciplinary actions taken by members of the Indonesian Police Department in carrying out their duties as Covid-19 Task Force.

### **Conclusion**

The assertiveness of police officers in carrying out their duties as part of the Covid-19 Task Force creates a stigma that this action is an act that ignores humanity. The negative stigma is associated with human rights in carrying out various activities (gathering, working, and socializing). However, what needs to be considered is the condition in which members of the Indonesian National Police take decisive action to achieve a common or common goal, namely suppressing the spread of Covid-19 virus. The negative stigma concerning the actions taken by members of the Indonesian Police Department can be avoided by conducting cooperation between the government and community. The intended cooperation means public awareness of the importance of health protocols and the active participation of the community in complying with the rules or policies imposed by the government, especially the Covid-19 Task Force.

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