

[Working Paper Series: Pandemic Crisis and Democratic Governance in Asia – Part 2]

## Global Pandemic: Challenges and Opportunities for Democracy in Mongolia

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### Introduction<sup>1</sup>

As countries around the world have begun to implement their own risk management policies, the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared COVID-19, the new infectious disease, a pandemic. According to articles 11.2 and 11.3.3 of the Law on Disaster Protection, issued by the State Emergency Committee (SEC) on February 13, 2020, the “high level of readiness” against COVID-19 was partially initiated in Mongolia. This resolution was pursuant to Article 4, Resolution No. 62 of the February 12, 2020 Resolution of Government of Mongolia.<sup>2</sup> The Law on Disaster Protection identifies and specifies the measures for the three levels of readiness to combat the coronavirus: everyday level of readiness, high level of readiness and all-out level of readiness.

In Mongolia, the first verified community transmission case was announced on November 11 and as suggested by the SEC, the government shifted the country to the “Total Readiness Stage” on November 12. However, there was a strong sense of uncertainty and mistrust in Mongolian society regarding the transition to the “total readiness stage.” The Mongolian government declared the country to be at this level as the first week was filled with panic, as decisions changed daily and there were discrepancies in the information source. Mongolian citizens also became frustrated with the economic situation of businesses and individuals and the lack of clarity on how to regulate day-to-day activities.

However, the ten months of high alert regulations set by the SEC did not yield substantive results. Therefore, this research aims to study the factors that contributed to the social atmosphere that doubts the viability of government and their ability make appropriate recommendations.

The main goals of the research are the following:

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout the year, ADRN members will publish a total of three versions of the Pandemic Crisis and Democratic Governance in Asia Research to include any changes and updates in order to present timely information. The first and second part will be publicized as a working paper and the third will be publicized as a special report. This working paper is part I of the research project.

<sup>2</sup> “Disaster Protection Law”, Law of Mongolia, Ulaanbaatar city, <https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/12458?Lawid=12458>; “On transfer to the ready rate”, Article 4, Number 62, Resolution of the government of Mongolia, <https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/15081?Lawid=15081>.

1. To determine whether Mongolia has a political risk management system
2. To identify positive effects of quarantine on governance (the ability to differentiate between populist politicians and whether democratic governance can be more efficient in correcting decisions and information)
3. To identify psycho-social features that are caused by quarantine and government decisions and implementations (Psycho-social refers to the interrelationship of social factors and individual attitudes, thoughts, and behaviors).

The term political crisis management is used in modern risk management to describe the nature and style of governance. For example, while society requires rulers to minimize risk exposure, the opposition uses the media to engage in strong policy review, and how to prevent this can be understood as political risk management. In this particular case, the choice of the most appropriate policy option can be considered good management or good governance. The traditional approach to crises and risks maintains that risk has the following three main characteristics: they are unpredictable, decisions that are not appropriate to the situation fail to achieve results, and decisions that are made quickly are more prone to change. On the other hand, in risk management, risks and crises can be predicted, and decisions are scientifically based options that are appropriate to the situation and ability of the policy level<sup>3</sup>

Decision-makers must consider the following factors when managing risk: sense-making, decision making and coordinating implementation, meaning-making, accounting and ending, learning from success and failure.

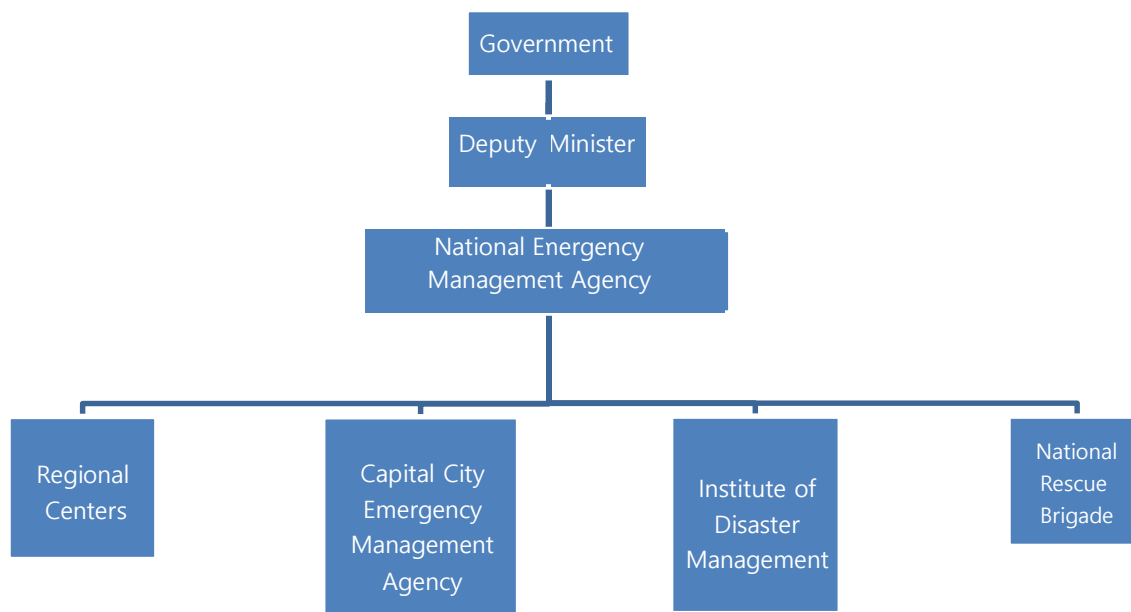
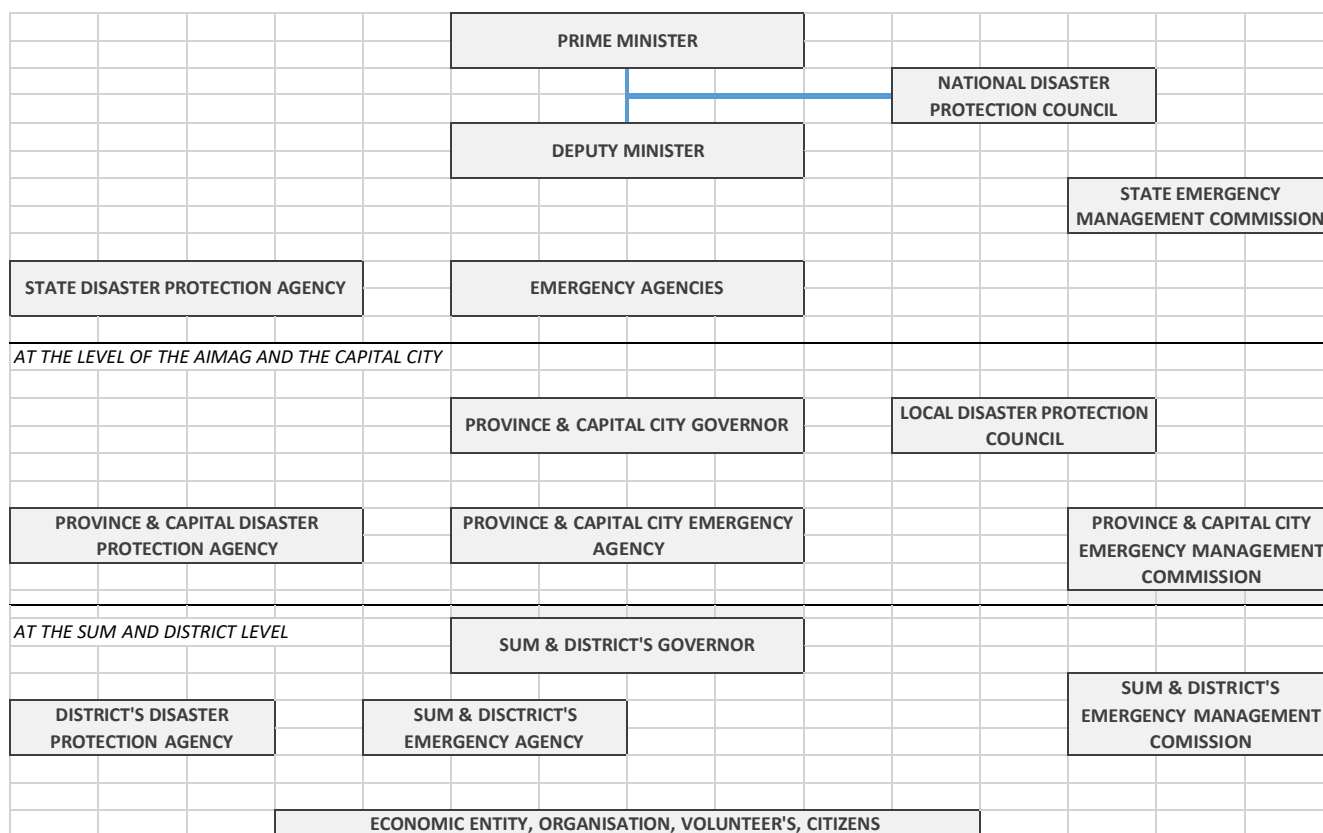
If these factors are not incorporated into the decision-making process, the decision will be ineffective. In the case that the civil society is not satisfied with the decision made and the outcome related to the pandemic, it can be said that Mongolian political risk management is weak.

The measures taken regarding the COVID pandemic in Mongolia can be divided into the following three stages: the early policy stage (when the outbreak was first detected and policies were focused on the prevention of the pandemic), the plague and election policy stage, and the policy of losing COVID-19 internally stage.<sup>4</sup> The following diagrams show the structure and organization of the management system to make decisions and provide guidance during emergencies in Mongolia.

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<sup>3</sup> Boin, A., t Hart, P., Stern, E., & Sundelius, B., “Crisis management in political systems: Five leadership challenges. In *The Politics of Crisis Management: Public Leadership Under Pressure*” *Cambridge: Cambridge University Press* (2005): 1-17. 10.1017/CBO9780511490880.001

<sup>4</sup> “Avoiding and overcoming the crisis by utilizing intelligence”, Control Risks, <https://www.controlrisks.com/jp/our-thinking/japanese/covid-19-uncertainty>.

**Figure 1.** Structure and Organization of the National Emergency Management Agency**Figure 2.** During the state of Emergency in Mongolia, Decision Implementation Phase\*SUM<sup>5</sup><sup>5</sup> Territorial administrative unit of Mongolia

In the event of any security or social catastrophe in Mongolia, the SEC represents the National Security Council and the Parliament represents the government for actions to be implemented. The graphs show that the government is fully responsible for managing the SEC. Through the organization of the government, it is evident that Mongolia is the same as other countries in implementing decisions from the executive branch.

Upon further examination of the graphs above, it is evident that the government makes the final decision regarding pandemic measures. It is also possible to observe whether or not the ruling party has the capacity for governance and political risk management. Currently, measures taken by the government have significantly increased in social welfare but have failed to provide adequate support to private businesses.

The following are just some of the measures that have been implemented:

1. Increase of child benefit
2. Full exemption from social insurance (all private enterprises and their employees, public and private schools, employees of diplomatic consulates, NGOs, and international loan projects).
3. The Unemployment Insurance Fund provided MNT 200,000 per employee per month to companies that maintained employees.
4. The government provided an one-time support of MNT 300,000 to every citizen of Mongolia for successfully overcome the quarantine.<sup>6</sup>
5. Business entities and households are to be exempted from electricity, water and heating bills until July 1, 2021 with an exception to some companies including banks, mining, cryptocurrency miners and fuel importers.<sup>7</sup>

All the decisions and measures listed above have been implemented since April 2020. For example, a family with four children under the age of 18 received a total of MNT 80,000 per child before the pandemic but increased to MNT 400,000 per month. In addition, citizens received their salaries in full without a tax cut for the first time. Although this policy was beneficial to ordinary citizens, it was detrimental to the state budget. According to the political economy cycle theory, these economic measures can be said to have been influenced by the annual elections as the parliamentary elections were held in June, two months after welfare policies were implemented in April (excluding water and heat release).<sup>8</sup>

## COVID-19 Pandemic Measures and Their Impact on Democracy, Human Rights and the Media

<sup>6</sup> Anudari M. "Citizens to each receive MNT 300 thousands under lockdown relief initiative", *MONTSAME News Agency*, April 08, 2021, <https://www.montsame.mn/en/read/259858>

<sup>7</sup> "On some measures to support households, organizations and organizations during the coronavirus infection (Covid-19)", Number 211, Resolution of the government of Mongolia, December 13 2020, <https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/15792?Lawid=15792>.

<sup>8</sup> "On Measures to Protect People's Health and Income, Save Jobs and Stimulate the Economy During the Outbreak of Coronavirus (COVID-19).", Number 21, Resolution of the Parliament of Mongolia, <https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/15236>

According to a study by the Global State Democracy, Mongolia had one of the fastest responses to the pandemic by closing its Chinese border at the end of January in addition to closing schools and kindergartens. However, the government did not declare a state of emergency during this period. Instead, parliamentary elections were held in June with appropriate restrictions and precautions. On March 24, 2020, the National Emergency Management Agency declared that the country would be under the “high level of preparedness” until April 30, 2020, but this level was extended until August 31, 2020. However, the first verified COVID-19 cluster case on November 11, led the government to announce the implementation of the “Total Readiness Stage” as suggested by the SEC.<sup>9</sup>

**Figure 3.** Global State of Democracy Index: Mongolia



Source: The Global State Democracy Institute, 2020<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> “International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)”, The Global State of Democracy Indices, 2019, accessed 2020, <https://www.idea.int/gsod-indices/indices/countries-regions-profile?rsc=%5B712%5D&covid19=1>

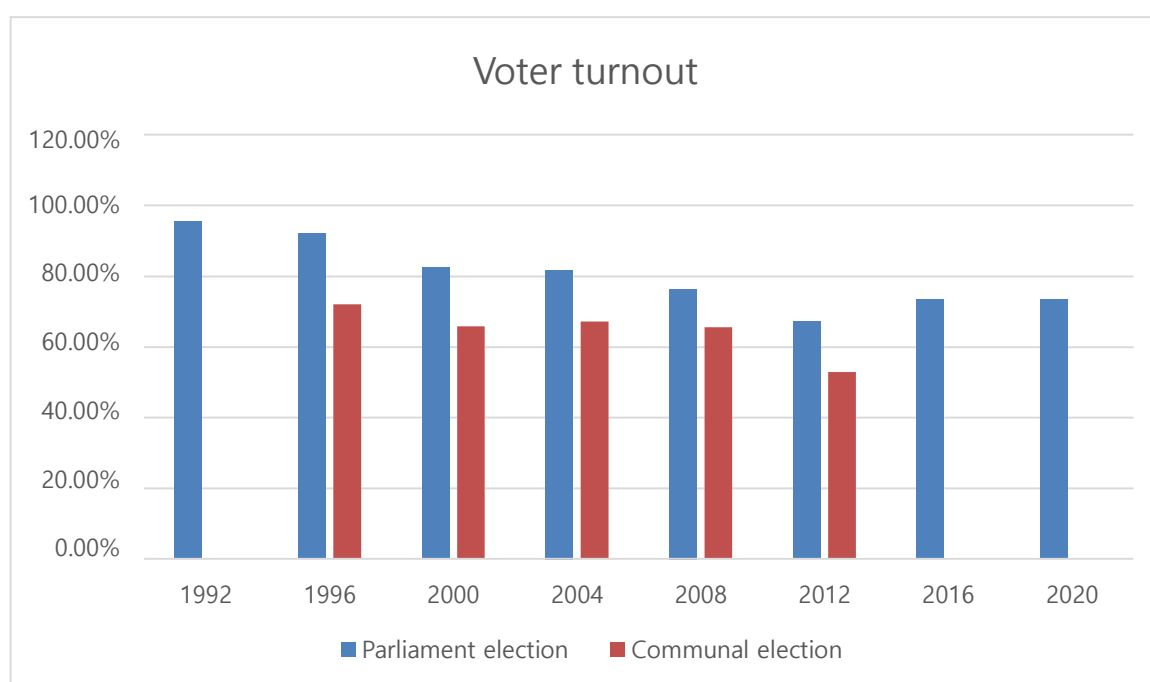
<sup>10</sup> “International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA)”, The Global State of Democracy Indices, 2019, accessed 2020, <https://www.idea.int/gsod-indices/indices/countries-regions-profile?rsc=%5B712%5D&covid19=1>

According to the Global State of Democracy Index, the measures taken by the Mongolian government during the COVID-19 pandemic were in accordance with the principles of democratic governance and the protection of human rights and freedom. However, the only insufficient indicator was direct democracy which was due to the inability to hold public meetings during quarantine.<sup>11</sup>

Earlier in the year, the president of Mongolia proposed to postpone the parliamentary elections, but the parliament did not find it necessary to postpone the elections. In addition, President Khaltmaa Battulga called for measures to overcome the coronavirus crisis like “[saving] money and [centralizing] public administration in times of crisis.”<sup>12</sup>

Voter turnout was relatively high at 73.65 percent during the parliamentary elections, with the ruling Mongolian People’s Party, one of the oldest political party in Mongolia, winning absolute majority. D. Urtnasan, a voter turnout researcher, found that from 1992 to 2020, Mongolia held a total of eight parliamentary elections in which the voter turnout for the first six elections declined steadily. However, in 2016, the country experienced a 6.28 percent increase in voter turnout reaching 73.58 percent. Mongolia has managed to maintain the growth in voter turnout in 2020 by reaching 73.60 percent (Figure 4).

**Figure 4.** Voter Participation 1992-2020



Source: “New Mirror” Magazine, Volume 81<sup>13</sup>

<sup>11</sup> T. Tumenjargal and G. Erdenebayar, “Amendments and the Election Law of Mongolia: implementation and improvement issues,” *Politology magazine* 534, no.18, (2020): 94-116

<sup>12</sup> Balijmma T. “President calls for measures to overcome coronavirus crisis”, *MONTSAME News Agency*, March 26, 2020, <https://montsame.mn/en/read/220192>.

<sup>13</sup> “New Mirror” Magazine, *The Academy of Political Education* Volume 81, (2020): 62.

Despite the threat of the pandemic and the fear that citizens would be inactive at this time, the high turnout was due to well-organized voter education campaigns. To resolve the low youth participation in elections, the private sector and civil society organizations jointly organized online movements during the 2020 parliamentary election. For example, a series of online campaigns and events encouraging young voters to share “MORNING” and “I HAVE ONE VOTE” on their social media accounts were found to have been very successful in increasing the voting rates of young people. International organizations have also provided support through e-campaigns.<sup>14</sup> It is also important to note that many citizens who were unable to return to Mongolia due to travel restrictions were unable to vote in the parliamentary election. In addition, the law on parliamentary elections does not have any articles on the “right of Mongolian voters who are studying, working or living abroad to participate and vote in parliamentary elections.” This led to the inability of more than 150,000 voting-age citizens to participate in the 2020 parliamentary elections.<sup>15</sup>

### COVID-19 Measures and Human Rights during the Pandemic

A total of four strict lockdowns have been imposed across Mongolia as of current.

**Table 1.** Lockdown in Mongolia (by time)

| No             | Starting Date            | End Date                 | Duration |
|----------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------|
| 1              | 10.11.2020               | 14.12.2020 <sup>16</sup> | 35 days  |
| 2              | 22.12.2020               | 11.01.2021 <sup>17</sup> | 21 days  |
| 3              | 11.02.2021               | 23.02.2021 <sup>18</sup> | 13 days  |
| 4              | 10.04.2021 <sup>19</sup> | 08.05.2021 <sup>20</sup> | 29 days  |
| Total duration |                          |                          | 98 days  |

In Mongolia, the government imposed a total of 98 days of strict lockdown by the decision of the government. In addition, more than 5,000 employees worked 24 hours a day during the lockdown.<sup>21</sup> - During the public holidays, the Government of Mongolia mobilizing a total of 27,000 government officials to patrol the streets caused

<sup>14</sup> “The “Morning” Project Urges Young People to Vote in the Election.” *TIME.MN*, September 24, 2020. <http://time.mn/oYH.html>

<sup>15</sup> T. Tumenjargal and G. Erdenebayar, “Amendments and the Election Law of Mongolia: implementation and improvement issues,” *Politology magazine* 534, no.18, (2020): 94-116.

<sup>16</sup> “The lockdown was lifted and the government surprised its citizens”, *Mongolian News & Media Agency*, December 20, 2020, <https://news.mn/r/2384734/>

<sup>17</sup> A. Suren, “Traffic will increase by 70 percent from Monday”, *Mongolian News & Media Agency*, January 10, 2021, <https://news.mn/r/2390513/>

<sup>18</sup> E. Buram, “Participate in traffic with a work permit during quarantine”, *Mongolian News & Media agency*, February 06, 2021, <https://news.mn/r/2399320/>

<sup>19</sup> S. Munkhbaatar, “Switch to a strict quarantine regime for 15 days”, *MONTSAME agency*, April 08, 2021, <https://montsame.mn/mn/read/259843>

<sup>20</sup> Sh. Adshaamaa, “The lockdown was extended until 06.00 am on May 8, 2021”, *Mongolian News & Media Agency*, April 23, 2021, <https://news.mn/r/2424943/>

<sup>21</sup> B. Tsetseg, “There are 5,000 employees working 24 hours a day in the capital city”, *Mongolian News & Media Agency*, December 12, 2020, <https://news.mn/r/2371869/>



a great deal of controversy.<sup>22</sup> During the Mongolian national holiday of Tsagaan Sar, government officials were mobilized to stand outside every street and apartment then demanding anyone trying to leave to re-enter their homes. This was criticized on social media as the government required officials to perform duties not specified in the employment contract, and that the mobilization lasted for more than 10 days.

Due to quarantine, the interests of law enforcement officers and citizens were seriously affected. From January 2020, police officers were worked in high alert during quarantine and in most cases, they were worked 24 hours followed by 24 hour rest. However, they were paid non-compliant salaries.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, their association appealed to the National Human Rights Commission, but the organization has not yet issued a public response.

Due to the lack of communication between the government, the State Special Commission, and the police to enforce decisions, the violation of the rights of ordinary citizens is reported through social media on daily basis.

The following list some human rights violation cases on the 20th report on the situation of human rights and freedoms in Mongolia:

1. A 17-year-old resident of Songinokhairkhan district received a call from the police while on the bus informing him that he tested positive and instructing him to get off the bus. A police officer instructed the bus driver to stop the bus and not to let anyone off. At the time, drivers of the National Center for Infectious Diseases did not receive overtime pay, prompting protests that led to isolation delays. As a result, from 11:00 am to 5:30 pm, the occupants of the bus were isolated in a closed and stuffy environment, and their work was interrupted. Meanwhile, the bus passengers became upset, insulted, and beat citizen “Sh”, and some passengers defended him, causing a quarrel among the people on the bus. As a result, citizen Sh broke the window of the bus, and when he got off the bus, he was handcuffed by a police officer who was on guard, and the National Center for Infectious Diseases' Emergency Response Team stopped outside until 5:00 p.m. It was about negative 15 degrees outside at the time, and citizen Sh told the National Human Rights Commission that he was wearing thin clothing. This suggests that it is inhumane to handcuff and freeze a person suspected of being infected with COVID-19. The National Human Rights Commission concluded that the right to inviolability and liberty of citizens was violated due to the lack of coordination, insufficient manpower, and unclear management responsibilities.<sup>24</sup>
2. When a police officer took an infected man from his home to an isolation shelter, he found him trying to escape through another door, saying, "Let's forget about it at home and get it back." In this case, a person at risk of infection fled in panic due to a lack of understanding and information about the communicable disease. In addition, the police officer's use of a safety net, known as a “clamp,” became widespread on

<sup>22</sup> R. Adiyasuren, “27,000 civil servants are mobilized and on patrol”, *Gogo news portal*, February 11, 2021, <https://gogo.mn/r/mq61e?fbclid=IwAR2e1ejbcaBiVbnJS0as-qpn3cVPFSdn1c22GxXPx7IUFIbINV94XUC-OBA>

<sup>23</sup> “The Association for the Protection of the Rights of Police Officers appealed to the National Human Rights Commission”, *Tovch news*, February 20, 2021, <https://tovch.mn/n/1680>

<sup>24</sup> “20th Report on the Situation of Human Rights and Freedoms in Mongolia”, National Human rights Commission of Mongolia, accessed 2021, <https://nhrcm.gov.mn/%D0%BC%D1%8D%D0%B4%D1%8D%D1%8D/%D0%B8%D0%BB%D1%82%D0%B3%D1%8D%D0%BB/>



social media. 918.4.4 of the Regulation on the use of “safety nets” or special devices are approved by the order of the Chief of the General Police. It approves of the use in situations that are “risks such as arrest, detention, rehabilitation center, public disorder, counter-terrorist operations, prosecution, arrest of a person who has committed a serious crime, escorting a person who has committed a crime or searching a potential crime scene. Special protective equipment must be used for other operations.” In the above cases, the use of safety nets for coercive measures is inhumane. This suggests that there is a risk of emotional and physical harm, such as blaming or intimidating an infected person for failure to receive COVID-19-related isolation and hospitalization procedures.<sup>25</sup>

3. The Bayanzurkh district governor imposed a curfew in the 26th Khoroo from March 17 to 21. Citizens of the Khoroo protested in various ways, including organizing rallies and making demands. The National Human Rights Commission stated that the partial quarantine and restriction of citizens' rights, which were announced in advance to citizens and organizations, and the unannounced and sudden response, violated the rights and freedoms of citizens.<sup>26</sup> In addition, the Bayanzurkh District Governor's Decree No. A / 103 included three consecutive working days during the restriction period, and many citizens' official and private activities were disrupted due to the sudden and unannounced decision. The commission concluded that the restrictions were not appropriate and that the restriction of human rights and freedoms is not at an appropriate level or in accordance with the principle of necessity, appropriateness and non-transgression. It is also unfortunate that a citizen, who was under partial detention in the Khoroo, fell from a height and died. Authorities say the negligence and lack of oversight by the COVID-19 pandemic prevention, control, response and monitoring of officials may have contributed to the case.

These human rights violations reflect the government's and the authorities' methods to combat the pandemic, and on January 19, 2021, a woman who has given birth in “Urgoo” Maternity Hospital was diagnosed with COVID-19 and transferred to the Center for Infectious Diseases in an inhumane way. Specifically, the release of a video of a woman and her baby being taken out of the hospital without warm clothes in -20 degrees weather was met with strong opposition from the public.<sup>27</sup> On January 20, 2021, 10,000-13,000 people gathered in Sukhbaatar Square, the capital of Ulaanbaatar, to demand the resignation of the State Emergency Commission and the Minister of Health and protesters were shocked that the government had resigned at a press conference later that day.<sup>28</sup> When he was

<sup>25</sup> “20th Report on the Situation of Human Rights and Freedoms in Mongolia”, National Human rights Commission of Mongolia, accessed 2021, <https://nhrcm.gov.mn/%D0%BC%D1%8D%D0%B4%D1%8D%D1%8D/%D0%B8%D0%BB%D1%82%D0%B3%D1%8D%D0%BB/>

<sup>26</sup> “20th Report on the Situation of Human Rights and Freedoms in Mongolia”, National Human rights Commission of Mongolia, accessed 2021, <https://nhrcm.gov.mn/%D0%BC%D1%8D%D0%B4%D1%8D%D1%8D/%D0%B8%D0%BB%D1%82%D0%B3%D1%8D%D0%BB/>

<sup>27</sup> “Employees who treat a woman with a baby inhumanely will be held accountable”, *Isee news agency*, January 20, 2021, <http://isee.mn/n/17581>

<sup>28</sup> “U.Khurelsukh: The President must be held accountable”, *Mongolian News & Media Agency*, January 21, 2021,

announcing his responsibility, President Kh. Battulga was blamed for the current situation, and for the first time, Mongolian society discovered that relations between them had deteriorated.<sup>29</sup> As mentioned above, the relationship between the President and the former Prime Minister since then has been a battle for the 2021 presidential election.

### Decisions related to quarantine

The Lockdown restricted the freedom of movement. As of February 23, 2020, the Mongolian government deployed 336 checkpoints and mobilized 832 officers across the country. Domestic and international flights were restricted until May 31, 2020, with an exception to scheduled flights that were arranged to allow Mongolians living abroad to return home. From May 6 to 8 of 2020, a separate quarantine and emergency preparedness exercise was held in the Chingeltei district of Ulaanbaatar lasting from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm.<sup>30</sup>

In mid-June, public places, cinemas, bars, and restaurants were to open to the public, but competitions and gatherings were still banned. The Mongolian National Naadam Festival was also canceled and organized virtually. From mid-July, establishments such as fitness clubs, nightclubs, and karaoke were allowed to operate, and customers were instructed to measure their temperature and wear protective masks.<sup>31</sup>

The government approved cultural and public events, and the operation of retail, manufacturing, and entertainment venues as of September 16. The authorization to open all general education institutions, with limitations on time and number of students, was given on September 21. However, as lockdown measures were initiated in November due to a sudden internal COVID-19 outbreak, educational institutions began to operate virtually and through television.

The Total Readiness Stage can be said to have directly affected basic human rights. The right to freedom of movement is stated in the Mongolian constitution and in international law, such as the UN Convention on Human Rights. Article 16.18 of the Constitution of Mongolia states that “a person shall have the right to freely travel in the territory of his / her country, choose a place of temporary or permanent residence, go abroad, reside and the right to return, the right to travel and reside abroad may be restricted only by law in order to ensure national and public security and to maintain public order.”<sup>32</sup> Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the country,”<sup>33</sup> and Article 12 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (IBUTETOP) states that “A person has the right to move freely within legally staying territory of any country and freely choose his / her place of residence.”<sup>34</sup>

The 61.6 percent increase of violent domestic crimes in the first quarter of 2020 is another negative

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<https://news.mn/r/2394344/>

<sup>29</sup> “Beginning and the end of relationship between U. Khurelsukh and Kh. Battulga”, *Ulaanbaatar news LLC*, January 22, 2021, <https://www.ubn.mn/p/10323>

<sup>30</sup> Amarsaikhan S. “Capital city Emergency Management Commission, report,” “We thank the people of Chingeltei district for successfully organizing the quarantine during the plague,” *Mongolian News & Media Agency*, May 08, 2020 <https://news.mn/r/2297704/>

<sup>31</sup> “Open Bars and Karaoke.” *News.mn*, July 25, 2020. <https://news.mn/r/2319244/>

<sup>32</sup> “Constitution of Mongolia,” State Information Bulletin, No.1. January 13, 1992.

<sup>33</sup> “General Declaration of Human Rights”, International Treaty of Mongolia, <https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/1271?lawid=1271>.

<sup>34</sup> “International pact on civil and political rights”, Law of Mongolia, <https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/1257>.

consequence of the lockdown.<sup>35</sup> Government resolution No.178, declared Mongolia to Total Readiness Stage on November 12.<sup>36</sup> This measure restricted the right of citizens to go to the capital city and rural areas for health, official or personal reasons. According to a series of Open Society Forum reports, this led to other negative consequences such as, spending the night outdoors and in the car, malnutrition, neglect of young children, and not being able to work and earn money.<sup>37</sup>

The Constitution of Mongolia states that the “right to return to the home country cannot be restricted except during the coronavirus pandemic or declared ‘state of emergency or war,’ in accordance with Article 16.18 of the Constitution of Mongolia<sup>38</sup> and 12.4 of the International Convention Civil and Political Rights.”<sup>39</sup> However, it was concluded that this restriction violated Article 10.2 of the Mongolian constitution, which states, “Mongolia shall faithfully fulfill its obligations under international agreements.”<sup>40</sup> Moreover, according to Articles 7.1.12 and 7.1.22 of the Law on Prevention, Control and Reduction of Social and Economic Impacts of COVID-19, the government of Mongolia is obligated to provide housing, food, and clean drinking water to the homeless and poor; organize infection prevention activities; reduce the negative impacts on children, elderly, the chronically ill, those in need of regular health care, the disabled and pregnant women; and is responsible for providing financial support to vulnerable groups. This obligation applies not only to citizens at home but also to citizens abroad. In this regard, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mongolia issued Order A / 45 on “Investing” on October 29, 2020, to provide one-time financial support to 113 citizens abroad.<sup>41</sup>

Due to the Total Readiness Stage, all educational institutions continued to provide online and television classes. However, this prevented students without access to the internet and electronic devices, as well as people with special needs, from receiving the same level of education.

Mongolia has had a relatively strict policy of closing its borders since January 2020, banning classes in educational institutions, intercity transportation, the activities of some business organizations, and public events.<sup>42</sup> However, it currently ranks 23rd out of 49 countries in Asia in terms of the prevalence of coronavirus per 1 million

<sup>35</sup> “Violations due to domestic violence in the first quarter of 2020 increased by 61.6 percent”, *unuudur*, May 29, 2020, <https://unuudur.mn/2020-%D0%BE%D0%BD%D1%8B-%D1%8D%D1%85%D0%BD%D0%B8%D0%B9-%D1%83%D0%BB%D0%B8%D1%80%D0%B0%D0%BB%D0%B4-%D0%B3%D1%8D%D1%80-%D0%B1%D2%AF%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B9%D0%BD-%D1%85%D2%AF%D1%87%D0%B8%D1%80%D1%85%D0%B8%D0%B9%D0%BB%D0%BB%D0%B8%D0%B9%D0%BD-%D1%83%D0%BB%D0%BC%D0%B0%D0%B0%D1%81-%D2%AF%D2%AF%D0%B4%D1%81%D1%8D%D0%BD-%D0%B7%D3%A9%D1%80%D1%87%D0%B8%D0%BB-61-6-%D1%85%D1%83%D0%B2%D0%B8%D0%B0%D1%80-%D3%A9%D1%81%D0%B6%D1%8D%D1%8D/>.

<sup>36</sup> “Transfer to universal readiness”, No. 178, Resolution of the Government of Mongolia, November 11, 2020.

<sup>37</sup> “Prohibitions and Restrictions”, COVID-19 and human rights, Open society forum, [https://www.forum.mn/res\\_mat/2020/OSF\\_COVID-19%20and%20Human%20Rights\\_3.pdf](https://www.forum.mn/res_mat/2020/OSF_COVID-19%20and%20Human%20Rights_3.pdf).

<sup>38</sup> “Constitution of Mongolia”, <https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/367>

<sup>39</sup> “International Convention Civil and Political Rights”, <https://www.legalinfo.mn/law/details/1257>

<sup>40</sup> “Lockdown and the right to return”, COVID-19 and human rights, Open society forum SERIES 3, [https://www.forum.mn/res\\_mat/2020/OSF\\_COVID-19%20and%20Human%20Rights\\_4.pdf](https://www.forum.mn/res_mat/2020/OSF_COVID-19%20and%20Human%20Rights_4.pdf).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> E. Sosorburam, “Human rights violated during lockdown”, *Mongolian News & Media Agency*, April 16, 2021, <https://news.mn/r/2422517/>

population.<sup>43</sup> Even though the border has been closed for 10 months, COVID-19 leaked from the “Enkh Saran” resort, which was in charge of the IOC, to isolate foreigners. A lot of criticism has risen from businesses and individuals who have been banned from doing business for a long time for no reason.<sup>44</sup> The Mongolian government, which has taken strong action in the absence of domestic infection, is stepping up its response to the current difficult situation.

**Table 2.** COVID-19: Stringency Index – East Asia<sup>45</sup>

| Spread ranking | Country     | Stringency index | Tot Cases / 1m pop <sup>46</sup> |
|----------------|-------------|------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1              | Mongolia    | 90.74            | 11,580                           |
| 2              | Japan       | 47.22            | 4,690                            |
| 3              | South Korea | 43.52            | 2,402                            |
| 4              | China       | 78.24            | 63                               |
| 5              | Taiwan      | 25.00            | 48                               |

Mongolia has one of the strictest policies in East Asia, but it is also one of the most plague-prone countries in the world.

### Vaccination in Mongolia

On February 23, 2021, the first 150,000 doses of AstraZeneca-Oxford double-dose vaccine were delivered to Mongolia under the COVAX program. HE Mr. M. P Singh<sup>47</sup> handover to the Mongolian government has given Mongolians great hope.<sup>48</sup>

Mongolia, like other countries in the world, provides vaccination without coercion and has the opportunity to choose from the following vaccines<sup>49</sup>:

#### 1. AstraZeneca-Oxford

<sup>43</sup> “COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic”, Worldometer, accessed May 02, 2021, <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

<sup>44</sup> R. Urnaa, “More than 3 million people at risk because of the irresponsibility of “Enkh Saran” Resort”, *Urug Mongolian Independent Media*, November 12, 2020, <https://www.urug.mn/news/4217>

<sup>45</sup> “COVID-19 Government response tracker”, Blavatnik School of Government, University of Oxford, accessed April 30, 2021, <https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/research/research-projects/covid-19-government-response-tracker>

<sup>46</sup> COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic, Worldometer, accessed May 02, 2021, <https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/>

<sup>47</sup> “Ambassador,” Embassy of India, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, <https://eoi.gov.in/ulaanbaatar/?7749?000>

<sup>48</sup> “Joint Press Release on COVID-19 Vaccination Roll-out in Mongolia”, Unicef in Mongolia, accessed February 23, 2021, <https://www.unicef.org/mongolia/press-release/covid-19-vaccination>

<sup>49</sup> Ts. Ganzorig, “Citizens can choose from four types of vaccines”, *Gereg.mn*, February 16, 2021, <https://gereg.mn/news/74132>

2. Sputnik-V
3. Sinopharm-Verocell
4. Pfizer-BioNTech

Although Ts. Ganzorig (Spokesman of the Government of Mongolia) listed the possibility of these vaccines, in reality people cannot be vaccinated due to the shortage of Sputnik-V and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines. On social media, many people say they will be vaccinated only by Russian vaccines.

**Table 3.** Vaccine stock (05.02.2021)<sup>50</sup>

| Type of Vaccine          | Dosage    |
|--------------------------|-----------|
| AstraZeneca              | 214,800   |
| Синофарм                 | 1,834,400 |
| Спутник V                | 60,000    |
| Pfizer-BioNTech          | 25,740    |
| Total composed (51.636%) | 2,134,940 |
| Required dose            | 4,134,584 |

A total of 2,067,292 people over the age of 18 are expected to be vaccinated and as of May 2, a total of 838,248 people, 42.9%, were vaccinated by the first dose and 409,290 people, 19.8%, were vaccinated by the second dose.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, the Government of Mongolia has announced that from May 5, 2021, those who have received double dose of the vaccine will not give PSR, will not be subject to quarantine and will be able to travel freely between cities.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>50</sup> *Ikon: Next Horizon*, May 02, 2021, <https://ikon.mn>

<sup>51</sup> G.Murun, "Yesterday, 82,683 people were vaccinated against coronavirus", *Ikon: Next Horizon*, May 02, 2021, <https://ikon.mn/n/27gn>

<sup>52</sup> A.Nyam-Ulzii, "Vaccinated and cured people will not be allowed on the road from May 5.", *Ikon: Next Horizon*, April 30, 2021, <https://ikon.mn/n/27ec>

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