

The Citizens' Health Protection In Brunei Darussalam (Expectations and Reality)

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Abstract

This paper tries to analyze a set of policies of the state of Brunei Darussalam in the health protection sector of citizens and some of the empirical effects that arise in society as a result of the implementation (enforcement) of these policies. Using anthropological, phenomenological and direct observation methods, this study explores the constitutional philosophical basis of the nation and state in this country and its translation into operational technical policies, especially in ensuring the realization of the health protection of its citizens. From this study it was found that the government of the State of Brunei Darussalam has always been committed and loyal to Islam in managing the nation and state, so that in the health protection sector, citizens are not only able to achieve most of the WHO health targets and standards, but even more so when an attack occurs. In the storm of the COVID-19 pandemic, this country is classified as very few countries in the world that can survive and manage to control it.

Keywords: Health Protection; COVID-19 Pandemic; Melayu Islam Beraja; State of Dzikir; Good Governance.

1. Introduction

On January 1, 1984, Brunei Darussalam officially took over its full responsibility as an independent and sovereign country. But the country's national day is celebrated nationally every year on February 23. Brunei is a very young and small country but is known for its very high level of welfare for its people. Many have speculated about the factors behind this prosperity, ranging from the abundance of oil resources to its relatively small population. In addition, there are many debates about the definition of welfare itself, where each will perceive it according to the subjectivity of the worldview or weltanschauung they have. Because the indicators and variables as well as the methodology used to measure and assess welfare are all subjective. Then, besides that, usually this welfare is often also associated and juxtaposed with happiness. Both of these are the inner side of man which is very qualitative and subjective in nature. Therefore, in order to obtain results/data that are close to the truth, objective and reliable, efforts to quantify welfare/happiness into numbers or percentages absolutely require caution and accuracy in searching for relevant and adequate indicators and variables. Otherwise, this quantification will always end up in subjective and false results/data, and therefore, very potentially misleading. Efforts to quantify well-being/happiness into numbers or percentages absolutely require caution and accuracy in finding relevant and adequate indicators and variables. Otherwise, this quantification will always end up in subjective and false results/data, and therefore, very potentially misleading.

Likewise, health, which is usually used as one of the parameters, indicators or index variables of wellness/happiness, generally tends to be understood physically/body only. Whereas physical health, by experts and medical experts as well as religious experts, actually does not stand alone, but is also closely related to, and influenced by, the stability of one's mind, mind and soul (psychosoma).

The point to be emphasized here is that analysis, studies, statistics and so on, both quantitative and qualitative, cannot be separated from the worldview of the actors and the parties associated with them. Thus, this paper will try to present an anthropological and phenomenological analysis based on direct observations related to the topic "Protection of Citizens' Health in Brunei Darussalam" by examining the correlation between the constitutional basis translated into various official operational technical policies of the kingdom, and its real impact on the government of daily people's life. Then specifically, it will focus on efforts to handle the COVID-19 pandemic as a case study.

2. Result and Discussion

2.1. Islam in Brunei Darussalam

There are striking differences between Brunei Darussalam and other countries in the world, even with Islamic countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Malaysia. Even though they both make Islam the official state religion in their respective constitutions, but in terms of implementation and enforcement, its translation into legal regulations and operational technical practices, it can be said that the state of Brunei Darussalam shows very significant advantages, which impact The positives are felt in all walks of life, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic/emergency like now. Perhaps, and as usual, there will still be parties who are less appreciative of this reality by putting forward arguments *cliché*, namely that Brunei is a small country, has a small population, abundant natural resources, and so on. Arguments like this are showing unintelligence, laziness of original thinking and a very disgusting colonial mentality. Because empirical facts speak that the success and progress of a nation, both small and large, is more determined by the quality of human resources (SDI) or human resources and good governance (good governance). In the context of the state of Brunei Darussalam, this condition is confirmed by the actualization of Islamic teachings which have been firmly established throughout the history of the Sultanate of Brunei.

In the working paper of the 2004 National Day Seminar, entitled "Politics, Administration and Insights: Implementation and Goals" by Dato Paduka Haji Hazair bin Haji Abdullah, Permanent Secretary General, Position of Prime Minister,¹ presented, among others, about the originality and consistency of the Sultanate of Brunei in holding and maintaining Islam in an *Ahlussunnah Waljama'ah* manner throughout its approximately six centuries of history. Drawing on the history and features of Brunei's

¹ This working paper can be accessed via internet by the following link:
<http://www.bruneiresources.com/speeches/politik.html>

government, you will be able to see the insights of the state and the Kingdom, which always act on the religion of Islam.

In summary, the government of this country can be divided into four periods, namely: (i) government in the form of tradition; (ii) government after Brunei's treaty with the United Kingdom in 1906; (iii) government after the Institutionalization (Constitution or Constitution) of 1959; and (iv) the post-Independence government in 1984.

2.1.1. Tradition Reign

The style of government of Brunei before the Brunei Treaty with the British in 1906 was as a sultanate country which according to the customs and foundation of Islamic Ugama that the Sultan was the leader of the people and became the government to run the government of the country.

The basis of traditional government consists of four things:

1. *Kanun* – Brunei's *Kanun* law inherited by Sultan Hassan, the 9th Sultan of Brunei;
2. *Syarak* – Islamic Religious Law;
3. Customs – Customs related to the king with the customs used by the community;
4. *Resam* – *resam* a small group of people or clans.

2.1.2. Government after Brunei's treaty with the United Kingdom in 1906

To ensure the safety of Brunei, the 1906 treaty was signed. A British Resident advised the Sultan in all matters except those relating to Islamic religion and Malay customs.

2.1.3. Government after Institutionalization (Constitution or Regulation) in 1959

The formulation and formulation of the Institutional Constitution (UUD) in writing of the State of Brunei Darussalam of 1959 was a very significant change to the politics and modern administration of the 20th century State of Brunei Darussalam. This incident has restored the status of the State of Brunei Darussalam as the government of the Sultanate of Brunei in addition to shaping the politics and administration of the State of Brunei Darussalam as a mix of traditional and modern government.

Under Duli His Majesty (KDYMM) Your Majesty Seri Sultan Haji Omar Ali Saifuddien Sa'adul Khairi Waddien, the Sultan and the Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam have decreed that the State Institution of Brunei Darussalam in 1959 was a major step in the progress of the country's development. This led to a full and independent kingdom in which this institution focused on Islam as the official state religion, outlined the executive power of the Sultan, Islam as the official state religion, and made Malay the official state language.

The Brunei Darussalam Institution, Part II Religion and Customs reads: "The official religion of the State of Brunei Darussalam and ways of worship. 3. (1) The official religion for the State of Brunei Darussalam is Islam: But other religions may be practiced safely and perfectly by those who practice them."

2.1.4. Government after Independence in 1984.

The vision of the State of Brunei Darussalam as an independent and sovereign country is clearly contained in the decree for the recognition of independence Under

Duli His Majesty (KDYMM) Your Majesty Seri Sultan and the Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam during the Independence Day of Brunei Darussalam on January 1, 1984 where His Majesty has ordered, among other things:

... The State of Brunei Darussalam is with the permission and abundant blessings of Allah *Subhanahu Wata'ala*, will forever and ever become an independent, sovereign and democratic Malay Islamic State that is based on the teachings of Islam according to the Experts *Ahlussunnah Waljamaah* and based on justice and trust. and freedom, and with the guidance and grace of Allah *Subhanahu Wata'ala* will always strive to obtain peace and safety, virtue and happiness for the We people, and also the maintenance of friendly relations among nations or the basis of mutual respect for independence, sovereignty, equality and territorial integrity for all countries that are free from foreign interference....²

2.2. Citizen Health Protection

In discussing the issue of the health protection sector for citizens of Brunei Darussalam, it is necessary to explore the basics of all laws and regulations, policies and their enforcement, which are generally based on the *Melayu Islam Beraja* (MIB) philosophy and the motto of the State of *Dzikr*. Both are a legacy of the Malay Islamic tradition which has roots in the community, and was inaugurated by the decree of Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah.

- a. The Philosophy of *Melayu Islam Beraja* (MIB), as read above, is a very basic basic provision in the state and national order of Brunei Darussalam which got its legality in the decree of the proclamation of independence by Under Duli, His Majesty Seri His Majesty the Sultan and His Majesty the State of Brunei Darussalam on January 1, 1984. As a concept and ideology that upholds Islamic principles and values based on the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet SAW, MIB is a milestone for all activities that touch the interests of the state, nation, language and culture of Malay as well as the primacy of the royal institution for the government system of the State of Brunei Darussalam.
- b. In its actualization at the practical level of national and state life, MIB is supported by the concept of the State of *Dzikr*. The State of Brunei Darussalam was publicly announced as the State of *Dzikr* in the order of the KDYMM of Your Majesty Seri Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah, which was delivered at the remarks of *Aidil Adha* day on 09 Zulhijjah 1428 H./ December 19, 2007 M., in which His Majesty has ordered, among others:

Brunei is a country that is always together with *Ar-Rahman* (the Most Merciful), who is always decorated with remembrance and makes it a habit. Because of that, Allah also turns us away from any troubles and disasters from various factors that can damage security. God willing, we will continue to strive to make Brunei a "State of *Dzikr*" that always

² The history and features of the government of Brunei Darussalam are based on the working paper mentioned above.

glorifies God, so that we are always in His care and care, according to His promise in *Surah Al-Baqarah*, verse 153, his interpretation: "If you remember me, believe I remember you, too."³

The concept of the State of *Dzikr* was then elaborately defined by YB Pehin Datu Seri Maharaja Dato Paduka Seri Setia (Dr.) Ustaz Haji Awang Abdul Aziz bin Juned, Mufti of the Kingdom of Brunei as follows:

A country where many people make remembrance, a country that is always lively with remembrance, a country that is built and administered with remembrance, a country that is defended and maintained by remembrance. The State of *Dzikr* is a country that is oriented and acts of remembrance. The rest is remembrance strategy, the economy is remembrance, social is remembrance, and the defense is remembrance.⁴

From the combination of the two philosophical concepts above, the government (governance) in the State of Brunei Darussalam is organized and implemented (enforcement) to ensure justice and trust in the country so that a just and prosperous society can be realized, namely an ideal country. Namely a good country that always gets the protection of the forgiveness of the Most Forgiving God (*Baldatun Thayyibatun wa Rabbun Ghafūrun*). If according to the United Nations Human Rights (UNHR) that the key question regarding good governance is: "are the institutions of governance effectively guaranteeing the right to health, adequate housing, sufficient food, quality education, fair justice and personal security?"⁵ (Are government institutions effectively guaranteeing the right to health, adequate housing, adequate food, quality education, fair justice and personal safety?), it can be said that the facts and real conditions of the people of the State of Brunei Darussalam have answered this key question affirmatively.

Regarding the health protection sector for citizens in Brunei Darussalam, this good governance is embodied in various policies and the provision of facilities and community services that are directly or indirectly related to public health. Based on the NBD Constitution and the KDYMM Sultan's command, all laws and policies in this country, which are translated into the Brunei Insight 2035, always refer to and ensure the achievement of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* (Law goals)⁶, which are ranked in order of urgency by scholars and jurists into 3 levels: (i) *al-darūriyyāt* (emergency matters); (ii) *al-ḥājīyyāt* (things that are necessary); and (iii) *al-taḥsīniyyāt or al-kamāliyyāt* (things that are

³Quoted in Pengiran Dato Seri Setia Dr. Haji Mohammad Pengiran Haji Abdul Rahman, "Aqidah Ahli Sunnah Waljamaah: Pengaruhnya di Brunei Darussalam," (06/11/2017), published through:<http://www.pelitabrunei.gov.bn/Lists/Rencana/NewDisplayForm.aspx?ID=636>

⁴ Ibid.

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<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Development/GoodGovernance/Pages/AboutGoodGovernance.aspx>

⁶ The efforts of the kingdom of Brunei Darussalam in ensuring the "Wawasan Brunei 2035" has the effect of *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah* can be accessed via internet by the following link: <http://rtbnews.rtb.gov.bn/Lists/News/DispForm.aspx?ID=4356&ContentTypeId=0x0100AA1BCCD118BC9648BD0175EF8A615DAA>

perfect).⁷ Health matters are an inseparable part of the emergency *Maqāṣid al-Sharī'ah (al-ḍarūriyyāt)* which were identified by the scholars as 5:

- a) Maintaining of religion (*ḥifẓ al-dīn*)
- b) Maintaining of life (*ḥifẓ al-ḥayāh*)
- c) Maintaining of thinking (*ḥifẓ al-'aql*)
- d) Maintaining of property (*ḥifẓ al-māl*)
- e) Maintaining of lineage (*ḥifẓ al-nasab*)

In short, health facilities and infrastructure, both physical and mental/spiritual/inner health, receive serious attention from the government. Among them are: (i) educational facilities and infrastructure ranging from pre-school, low or elementary school to tertiary education and religious education to ensure the creation of mental/spiritual/inner health of the community; (ii) very adequate environmental hygiene and sanitation; (iii) quality and adequate and adequate sports and recreation facilities and infrastructure; (iv) green, clean and smoke-free public spaces; etc. In other words, the basic rights of every individual citizen of Brunei Darussalam to obtain or access health, religion, life, intellect, property, and lineage are truly guaranteed and maintained. Because access to all health facilities, facilities and infrastructure and public services is provided free of charge. In addition, to ensure the functionality of the health rights of each individual citizen, the kingdom applies (enforcement) very severe sanctions to violators. One example, under the *Kanun "Order for Compulsory Religious Education, 2012"*,⁸ there are quite severe penalties for parents who fail to send their children of school age to religious schools, with a fine of \$5,000, (Rp.53,750,000.-), imprisonment not exceeding one year, or both, as stated in the *Kanun* which reads as follows:

Chapter 5. (1) Each parent should, if their child is a child of compulsory religious school age on one day of January during the year of schooling, ensure that the child is registered as a student in a religious school in that year and continue to be a student for the period of compulsory religious education.

(2) Parents who violate divorce (1) are doing something wrong.

Chapter 12. (1) Any person who commits an offense under section 5(2) may, if the sickle of guilt be subject to a fine not exceeding \$5,000, be sentenced to imprisonment for a period not exceeding one year or both.

Another example of public health protection enforcement is a penalty or fine of \$300, - (Rp.3,225.-) imposed on smokers.

2.3. Health facilities and physical facilities

⁷See, for example: AL-Ghazālī, *Al-Mustaṣfā min 'Ilm al-Uṣūl* (Cairo: Sidra, tt); Al-Shāṭibī, *Al-Muwāfaqāt* (Al-Khabar: Dār Ibn 'Affān, 1997).

⁸ This "Perintah Pendidikan Ujama Wajib, 2012" can be accessed via internet by the following link: <http://www.kheu.gov.bn/SitePages/Perintah%20Pendidikan%20Mandatory.aspx>

To ensure the realization of citizen health protection and services, in addition to the above set of laws and practical operational policies, the NBD kingdom has established high quality and adequate physical health facilities and facilities. The construction of complete public hospitals and public health centers is spread out in every district throughout the country. According to statistics from the Brunei Ministry of Health,⁹The total number of government public hospitals is 6 and private public hospitals are 2. Meanwhile, there are 9 government public health centers in Brunei Muara district, 4 in Tutong district, 3 in Belait district and 1 in Temburong district. In addition, there is 1 national dental hospital (National Dental Hospital) in Bandar Seri Begawan, and 1 national isolation center (National Isolation Center) which has been operating since December 3, 2012.

The number of health workers (medical staff) is also very ideal and meets WHO standards. In accordance with the report published by the Borneo Bulletin, that up to February 2021 there were 738 doctors under Ministry of Health NBD, of which 51 percent are local. This means that the ratio of the comparison to the NBD population of around 400,000 people is 1: 542. Meanwhile, the total number of nurses is 2,500 people consisting of 95 percent of local nurses, with a ratio of 1: 160.¹⁰

2.4. Special handling of COVID-19 Pandemic

Since the first outbreak of the COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan, China towards the end of 2019, NBD has carried out very strict monitoring, as an anticipatory step to protect the safety (security) of the country and all its people. This is evidenced by the detection of the first case of a Brunei citizen who was positively infected with COVID-19 on March 9, 2020. The kingdom through the Ministry of Health immediately announced officially to the public regarding the confirmation of this positive case of COVID-19 along with policy measures, health protocols and medical actions taken and must be obeyed by the whole community.¹¹ On March 10, Ministry of Education Brunei has suspended its first annual school leave from March 16 to March 11, and has closed all face-to-face teaching and learning activities. A week after the first case and it turned out that 50 new positive cases of COVID-19 were detected, then on March 16, 2020, the Brunei royal party took a firm decision, namely to impose what can be called a "lockdown". This decision is "medium" all Bruneians than leaving the country but for certain reasons with the truthPrime Minister's Office."¹² On the same date, *Hal Ehwal Ugama's* (Religion) Ministry announced the closure of all mosques in the country for a week from the next day until March 23, including the cancellation of Friday prayers, although the call to prayer, remembrance and prayers are still being heard. Likewise, all types of sports

⁹ <http://www.moh.gov.bn/Pages/BruneiFacilities.aspx>

¹⁰ Further reports on these medical personnel can be read via internet by the following link: <https://borneobulletin.com.bn/number-of-doctors-in-brunei-increasing/>

¹¹ <http://www.moh.gov.bn/Lists/Latest%20news/NewDispForm.aspx?ID=366>

¹² Covid-19 Press Statement on 15.03.2020 by the Brunei Ministry of Health. <http://www.moh.gov.bn/Shared%20Documents/2019%20ncov/press%20releases/PRESS%20STATEMENT%20COVID-19%2015.03.2020%20FINAL%20V5.pdf>

activities are stopped immediately. This was followed by the closure of all access to the NBD by land, sea and air on March 24, 2020.¹³

In a tense atmosphere and deep concern, on Saturday, March 21, 2020 for the first time KDYMM Sultan was pleased to convey the "KDYMM Special Mission Order Regarding the Outbreak of the COVID-19 Outbreak, including:

To improve the ability of laboratory analysis, We have allowed additional virology laboratory development, which will be placed in the National Virology Referral Center. This additional facility is expected to be able to increase the ability to analyze up to ten times, and be able to issue test decisions more quickly.

Shari'a law, has also outlined guidelines based on the Qur'an, for us not to throw ourselves into destruction. While the hadiths of the Prophet Muhammad *Sallallahu 'Alaihi Wassallam* also strictly forbid, from entering any place or earth that applies in it *ta'un* (infectious disease/Outbreak) and must not leave that place after entering it, and even, the hadith also reminds, that run away from the disease.

As a nation of faith, apart from continuing our physical efforts, we are also required to multiply our spiritual efforts by increasing our prayers and remembrance of Allah and doing *Amar Ma'ruf and Nahi Munkar*.

This is where our culture is different. We know, this plague does not exist by itself, but comes from, who is called 'the Creator'. No one among us knows why he was brought in. But reflecting on the events recorded in the Qur'an, it can be understood that every calamity or disaster or epidemic is a warning or punishment or intimacy from Allah.

There is only one hope that remains, namely that we both come to God humbly, confessing our sins while begging for His mercy. O Allah, protect and save us from this terrible plague. Only You are the best of maintenance.

To the Ministry of Religious Affairs, guide and guide the people to pray and *Dzikr*. Provide the text of the prayer and remembrance for convenience. Prioritize what is easy but *wirid*, so that it is easy for people to do it. God willing, through this very virtuous endeavor, may Allah accept him.¹⁴

Then on Saturday, April 13, 2020, for the second time KDYMM was pleased to convey the "KDYMM Special Mission Order Regarding the COVID-19 Outbreak," after YB the Minister of Health of Brunei with tears in his eyes publicly announced and ratified the case. The first death due to an outbreak of COVID-19, namely the 25th case, on March 28, 2020. In a decree KDYMM's Special Envoy this time, His Majesty Sultan and

¹³Rita Uli Hutapea (24 Mar 2020). "Cegah Corona, Semua Warga Asing Dilarang Masuk ke Brunei Mulai 24 Maret". *detikNews* on the link:<https://news.detik.com/internasional/d-4951638/Prevent-corona-all-warga-asing-dilarang-enter-ke-brunei-mulai-24-march>.

¹⁴Author's affirmation. Read the full KDYMM Special Mission Order at the link:<http://www.jpm.gov.bn/Lists/TITAH/NewDispform.aspx?ID=353&Source=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Ejpm%2Egov%2Ebn%2FLists%2FTITAH%2FAllItems%2Easpx&ContentTypeld=0x0100AF42384C11293487FFC972E117993487FC973C>

Yang Di-Pertuan NBD, among others, ordered to express their deep condolences for this death case and several new policies including introducing several Economic Stimulus Packages to help merchants, so they can continue their respective businesses, as follows:

However, with great sorrow, a sick person has passed away to *Rahmatullah*, may his spirit be placed with the believers.

For this purpose, we have also built the National Virology *Makmal*. This *Makmal* helped a lot, especially for the Ministry of Health to further improve analytical efforts and be able to quickly issue exam decisions.

We have also ordered the relevant Ministries to cooperate in building the State Virtue System (SKN).

To appreciate their service and dedication, We sees, they are very reasonable to be involved with a 'special fee' of \$400 (Four hundred ringgit) a month, specifically for doctors, nurses, paramedics, guides, ambulances, volunteers, cleaners, safety guards and others all those who work with the Ministry of Health.

Through this opportunity, We would like to suggest that we both practice reading *Surah Yaseen* in addition to the others *surah* in the Qur'an, because *Yaseen* has many blessings for our safety in this world and in the hereafter. God willing, with *Yaseen's* blessing too, COVID-19 will leave us and the country behind."¹⁵

As a follow-up from two commands of KDYMM's Special Mission Regarding the Outbreak of the COVID-19 Outbreak," then several new steps and policies were taken immediately. Among them:

- Upgrade the capacity and quality of the National Isolation Centre.
- Upgrade the capabilities of the national virology lab.
- Implement the *Bruhealth* smart application which is specifically designed as “a one-stop mobile application for anything COVID-19 related in Brunei Darussalam.” This application has very advanced features, such as: Epidemic updates; Personal assessment code; COVID-19 Self-assessment tool; Friday Prayers Code; COVID-19 knowledge; FAQ's on COVID-19; Nearby; Scan QR Code; Online visit Appointment; Online Personal Health Records; Online Video Consulting; etc.
- Read al-Qur'an, *Yasiin*, *tahlil*, prayer *hajat*, every day both individually and in congregation, and prayer *qunūt nāzilah* nationally every *maktubah* prayer in the last *raka'at* after *i'tidāl*.
- The process corresponds to the de-escalation phase.
- It is mandatory to scan the barcode every time you enter buildings, malls, shops, mosques, surau, campuses, schools, and all offices and public service places.

¹⁵Author's affirmation. Read the second KDYMM Special Mission Order in full at the link:<http://www.jpm.gov.bn/Lists/TITAH/NewDispform.aspx?ID=354&Source=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Ejpm%2Egov%2Ebn%2FLists%2FTITAH%2FAllItems%2Easpx&ContentTypeld=0829x0100AF422E117CCE3408FF422E117CCE34>

- Mandatory to install barcodes and provide hand sanitation in all public places.
- Mandatory quarantine for everyone entering NBD from outside the country.
- Mass free COVID-19 vaccination.

2.5. Empirical impact

Related to the exposure and analysis of the empirical impact of protecting the health of citizens in Brunei Darussalam, the author relies more on direct observation according to what is known, seen, experienced and felt directly both by himself and the people around him consisting of colleagues on campus, academic and administrative staff, students, neighbors, and the wider community.

To obtain more valid data, of course, a more in-depth study is needed. However, if the general phenomenon that occurs in society can be used as a standard and barometer of the success of a policy, then it can be said that thanks to the leadership of the KDYMM who was very wise, wise and firm in carrying out the mandate of the NBD Constitution, all levels of society in this country felt the tremendous positive impact that was given to the community. can "envy" other nations. Especially in the face of the onslaught of the epidemic during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the annual report, "Country Fact Sheet - Public Health Data at a Glance: Brunei Darussalam 2020" (A report published by WHO Representative Office for Malaysia, Brunei Darussalam and Singapore, and the Ministry of Health, Brunei Darussalam), on page 11 it is stated : "Brunei Darussalam has achieved most of the health-related targets set in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs),..." (Brunei Darussalam has achieved most of the health-related targets specified in the sustainable development goals (SDGs)...).¹⁶Of course, these achievements are judged in accordance with WHO standards which are tangible. The author fully believes that the intangible achievements that deal more with the spiritual/inner and spiritual aspects of society are far greater.

Especially with regard to the impact of the Brunei government's policies in handling the COVID-19 pandemic, in general it can be conveyed that the empirical facts of the daily life activities of the people of this country which have almost returned to normal are real evidence that cannot be denied by anyone and anything. Especially in the last month when the countries of Indonesia and Malaysia, two close neighboring countries, have experienced a very powerful COVID-19 pandemic storm which has paralyzed all aspects of the lives of its people, the State of Brunei Darussalam thanks to the help of Allah SWT on the one hand, and thanks to the efforts of being born and On the other hand, his mind and the policy of its leaders by implementing a strict lockdown system from the start, on the other hand, succeeded in controlling the COVID-19 pandemic as well as possible, namely reducing the number of deaths and cases of transmission to a minimum. In accordance with the Press Statement issued by the Ministry of Health of Brunei which was updated in the *Bruhealth* smart application today, Sunday 01 *Zulhijjah* 1442H/12 July 2021, that the total number of positive cases of COVID-19 since the first outbreak on March 9, 2020 is 277 cases (active: 18; died: 3;

¹⁶ The report can be accessed via the link: https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/wpro---documents/countries/brunei-darussalam/fact-sheet-brunei-darussalam.pdf?sfvrsn=b91eddf4_5

and recovered: 256). Of this number, 136 cases were imported from outside the country (imported) by foreign nationals visiting Brunei or Brunei citizens returning from abroad, so they had to undergo mandatory isolation at the National Isolation Center, Tutong, until they arrived. They were actually declared cured and negative for COVID-19. Meanwhile, pure local cases have been reduced to 0 (zero) since 06 May 2020 (432 days ago). Subhan Allah! It's a very extraordinary achievement.

Therefore, since June 2020, the phase-by-phase de-escalation of the COVID-19 pandemic has been introduced, gradually easing; offices, schools, college campuses, shops and shopping centers began to reopen with the provisions of certain health protocol. And now NBD is in phase V of the COVID-19 pandemic de-escalation, where all school activities, lectures, offices, worshippers five times a day and Fridays at the mosque, etc. It's almost normal as ever.

3. Closing

The government in the State of Brunei Darussalam is Islamic, because the Constitution states that Islam is the official religion of the state in managing all national and state affairs. Good governance in the context of the Islamic State of Brunei Darussalam is Maqāṣid-driven governance, namely government based on and guided by the goals of Islamic Shari'ah, which always makes *al-darūrāt al-khams* as the compass, breath and spirit that animates all SOP (Standard Operating Procedure) in achieving the ideals of a state of justice and prosperity. In the health protection sector, this good governance is translated by the NBD kingdom through various policies that combine physical and non-physical, conventional and non-conventional, with implementation (enforcement) that is strictly guarded. This also applies consistently in dealing with storms and the COVID-19 pandemic, which relies on total lockdown policies and protocols as mandated by the Prophet Muhammad: "If you hear that there is an outbreak of plague (*ṭā'ūn*) in one place, then don't go there; And if you are in a place where there is an epidemic, then do not go out of it." (Narrated by Bukhari). It is now evident that after a year and a half of the COVID-19 pandemic storms indiscriminately pounding the forts of all countries in the world, the defense of NBD is strong enough to protect all its people, and is among the very few countries that have succeeded in achieving such glorious success. Once again, Islamic governance in this modern age has been empirically proven to be successful in protecting the health of citizens, and building a good country that always gets the protection of the forgiveness of the Most Forgiving God (*Baladatun Thayyibatun wa Rabbun Ghafūrun*).

4. References

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