

Covid-19, Civil Society in Thailand's Deep South and the Weak State

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Abstract

During a COVID-19 epidemic crisis, there is a window of opportunity for building peace in the Deep South of Thailand which the rival parties are the Thai government and BRN. On April 3, 2020, BRN-coordinate issued a statement ending violence in order to open the space for helping people who needed medical assistance with only one condition that the Thai state would not start military operations again.

This paper examines the roles of government and civil society organizations in responding to people living in the area of Deep South Thailand that faced difficulties during Covid-19 pandemic. It discusses challenges and possibilities of state's capabilities to handle internal violence and distribute political goods to their citizens. It argues against the way Thai state handle the epidemic disaster in authoritarian manners such as collecting ordinary people's DNA secretly during a critical situation with COVID-19 as an un-acceptable methods and creates mistrust in the area. In comparison, the study also looks at the main objectives of the Civil Society Council of the Southernmost Thailand and their implemented activities in providing a platform for all public sectors regarding the enhancement of civil society, determining for resolving violent conflict, developing sustainable southern border provinces, communicating and creating public spaces for everyone.