

ON CRISIS MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF OTHER NATIONAL RESILIENCE COMPONENTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIA

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The situation with COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak has revealed low preparedness of many countries to respond to the threat of a large-scale pandemic, proved the shortcomings in the national crisis management systems, as well as the existence of significant vulnerabilities in various fields (first of all, health, biosecurity, economy, etc.). Hence the urgency of the national resilience building and its support systems enhancement, bearing in mind that the primary purpose is to shape the ability of society and the State to withstand threats of various origins, to adapt to rapid changes in the security environment and to maintain sustainable functioning, and to recover quickly to a desired equilibrium state from the crisis (at the previous or new level).

Conclusions and recommendations

In a process of building national resilience, it is advisable to take into consideration the Ukraine's and other countries' experience in counteracting the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. Multi-level risk assessment system establishment, improvement of crisis management, strategic planning and analysis as well as local communities and regions resilience capacity development should be particularly noted among Ukrainian priorities in this area.

It is advisable for the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine in particular:

- to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of the preventive measures against the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus epidemic and the possible effects of the prolonged quarantine restrictions on the economy and social stability;
- to evaluate the expedient duration of the emergency and quarantine regime in Ukraine, taking into account all identified risks, and to ensure appropriate adaptation of the crisis response measures;
- to approve the plan of short-term and strategic anti-crisis economic and social measures;
- to identify measures to ensure continuity of governance at the national, regional and local levels in an emergency situation, during a state of emergency and a special period;
- to ensure the smooth functioning of enterprises, institutions, organizations that produce goods and provide services that are critical to the needs of the population and Ukrainian security and defense sector's bodies.

Rationale

Ukraine, like most countries in the world, has faced a number of problems related to the spread of COVID-19 coronavirus, including:

- inability to detect, evaluate and prevent the threat early enough;
- lack of sufficient capabilities, reserves, alternative strategies in the event of a crisis that threatens national security;
- lack or irrelevance of integrated response plans, uniform standards and agreed protocols of action (in particular for the introduction of restrictive measures under quarantine conditions) at national, regional and local levels;
- insufficient level of readiness of medical personnel and law enforcement agencies to act in crisis situations and quarantine restrictions;
- unpreparedness of state bodies, most enterprises and the population to work under quarantine restrictions, including to work remotely;
- slow response by authorized state and local crisis management bodies, low efficiency of coordination at different levels, including due to the shortcomings of the legislation and / or its non-implementation;
- imperfection of the state's strategic planning and analysis system, including in terms of conducting a comprehensive threat and its impact assessment and appropriate response and their influence on different areas of national security, monitoring the effectiveness of response, etc.

These unsolved problems not just reduce the effectiveness of resistance to the spread of the epidemic in the country, but are also capable of generating a number of new threats, including the possibility of a large-scale economic crisis, a significant deterioration of living conditions and crime situation, increasing tension, discontent or disaffection among the population, etc.

The crisis situation, caused by the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus, increases relevance of national resilience building, formation of an appropriate legal and institutional framework, development of their components, including crisis management. This will provide a high level of the state and society readiness to respond to a wide range of threats of different origins, as well as continuity of the main processes in the state.

Experience shows that the development of crisis management is an important but not exclusive element of national resilience building. NATO's seven baseline resilience requirements, which primarily relate to civilian preparedness, includes the ability to deal with mass casualties. However, a number of member states of this organization, with well-developed crisis management systems, has experienced significant difficulties in responding to the COVID-19 coronavirus epidemic, including in providing the treatment and accommodation of a mass of patients, the continuity of supply of essential goods, etc. But the biggest challenge for most countries in the world could be a full-scale economic crisis as a result of the introduction of severe restrictive measures in quarantine and the disruption of the continuity of important business processes.

It should also be noted that estimates of the magnitude of the threat of COVID-19 coronavirus spread and the effects of restrictive quarantine measures vary significantly in different countries, as do the complexes of measures taken. The military has been involved in the implementation of quarantine measures in addition to civilian services, in some countries, which is generally in line with the total defense concept.

An important conclusion from the current situation is that national resilience should be built on a broad-based comprehensive approach, and economic and social resilience, as well as community resilience are important elements of the relevant system, in addition to crisis management. Furthermore, the implementation of anti-crisis measures should take into account all possible consequences, including those that may result from their implementation. Also important is the effective coordination of relevant activities and interaction between central and regional authorities, between public authorities and local self-government bodies.

Based on this, and taking into account the problematic issues that emerged during the implementation of measures to counteract the spread of COVID-19 coronavirus in Ukraine, it seems appropriate to implement a number of urgent and forward-looking measures:

1. **Establishing a multi-level risk assessment system and improving strategic planning and analysis** as important elements of crisis management and national security decision-making.

In particular, the system should cover the following processes: risks and their impact assessment and ranking, scenario forecasts development, capabilities assessment, vulnerabilities identification, visualization and dissemination of results, monitoring and

review of risk assessments. This system should be multilevel, i.e. functioning at both national and regional levels.

The organization of its activity should be entrusted to a specially created Center at the NSDC of Ukraine Office, which will be able to exploit, in particular, the resources of the Main Situational Center of Ukraine, existing state databases, as well as information of authorized state bodies that carry out threats assessment in their areas of competence, concerned scientific institutions and public organizations; will use the latest methods and technologies of threat assessment, crisis forecasting and so forth.

Improvement of strategic planning in Ukraine requires shaping and enactment of specific legislation, as well as (establishment of) a national network of authorized state bodies and scientific institutions related to strategic analysis.

The commencement of such work requires the adoption of an appropriate legal act and it takes some time to organize the activity. At the same time, it is advisable for the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine (CMU) to do some actions **urgently**, namely:

- to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness of the measures taken to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus epidemic and the impact of the continued quarantine restrictive measures on economy and social stability may entail;
- to determine the appropriate duration of the state of emergency and quarantine arrangements in Ukraine taking into account all the identified risks;
- to develop a crisis response plan of economic and social measures.

2. Improving crisis management. Measures to counteract the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus confirmed the NISS's conclusions on the mechanism for ensuring coordination of national resilience building activities in Ukraine, in particular, the leading role of the CMU and the State Commission on Technogenic and Environmental Safety and Emergency Management in Crisis Management. At the same time, following issues remain pertinent: the expediency of extending the powers of the mentioned Commission and strengthening its organizational support; definition at the legislative level of a clear format for the interaction between the CMU and the NSDC of Ukraine; strengthening the role of the CMU Secretariat and the NSDC Office in ensuring coordination of activities in the areas of national security and resilience; the establishment of special units in the structure of these bodies. In particular, in order to ensure the proper functioning of the CMU and the State Commission, it is advisable to set up a separate Government Office within the Secretariat of the CMU. Its powers should include, among other things, development of holistic solutions based on a comprehensive analysis and forecast of the situation evolution.

In order to improve crisis management, including in the context of the implementation of NATO's baseline resilience requirements, the CMU should take the following measures:

- to ensure the uninterrupted activity of enterprises, institutions, organizations that produce goods and provide services critical to the needs of the population and security and defense sector of Ukraine bodies;
- to determine measures to ensure continuity of governance functions at the national, regional and local levels in the event of an emergency situation, under a state of emergency and in a special period including:
 - to create reserve facilities to ensure the continuous operation of the organization, in particular the identification of swing office premises, which can be used if it is impossible to use the main ones, alternative power sources for electrical equipment, the minimum required reserve of means of personnel individual protection, drinking water and food, transportation and logistics facilities, etc.;
 - to create necessary conditions for the staff to work in the remote mode, providing persons, authorized to perform the functions of the State, with means of secure communication and mobile technical equipment, if necessary;
- to draft an action plan to provide the uninterrupted supply of drinking water, food, energy, transport and communications, primary health care and logistical services (in particular, in the event of evacuation or temporary relocation) in an emergency situation, under a state of emergency and in a special period for the population as well as for the state authorities (above all, the security and defense sector) and critical infrastructure.

3. It is necessary to continue to establish regional and local security centers in order **to develop the resilience potential of local communities and regions**. It is also advisable to establish a permanent mechanism for interaction between state and local authorities, non-governmental organizations, private business and international partners in ensuring national resilience (at national and local levels).

Now Ukraine is in the phase of responding to a threat within the resilience cycle. The previous phases, which stipulated threats and vulnerabilities identification and assessment, appropriate plans and capabilities development, as well as response preparedness, have not been implemented well. However, preparations for the next phase – recovery must begin right now. It is obvious that it will not only provide for the rehabilitation of people after illness and formidable psychological stress, but also for responding to new threats caused by the consequences of restrictive measures, including economic and social imbalances. The resulting experience should be studied and taken into account in the development of the draft Concept of National Resilience of Ukraine.