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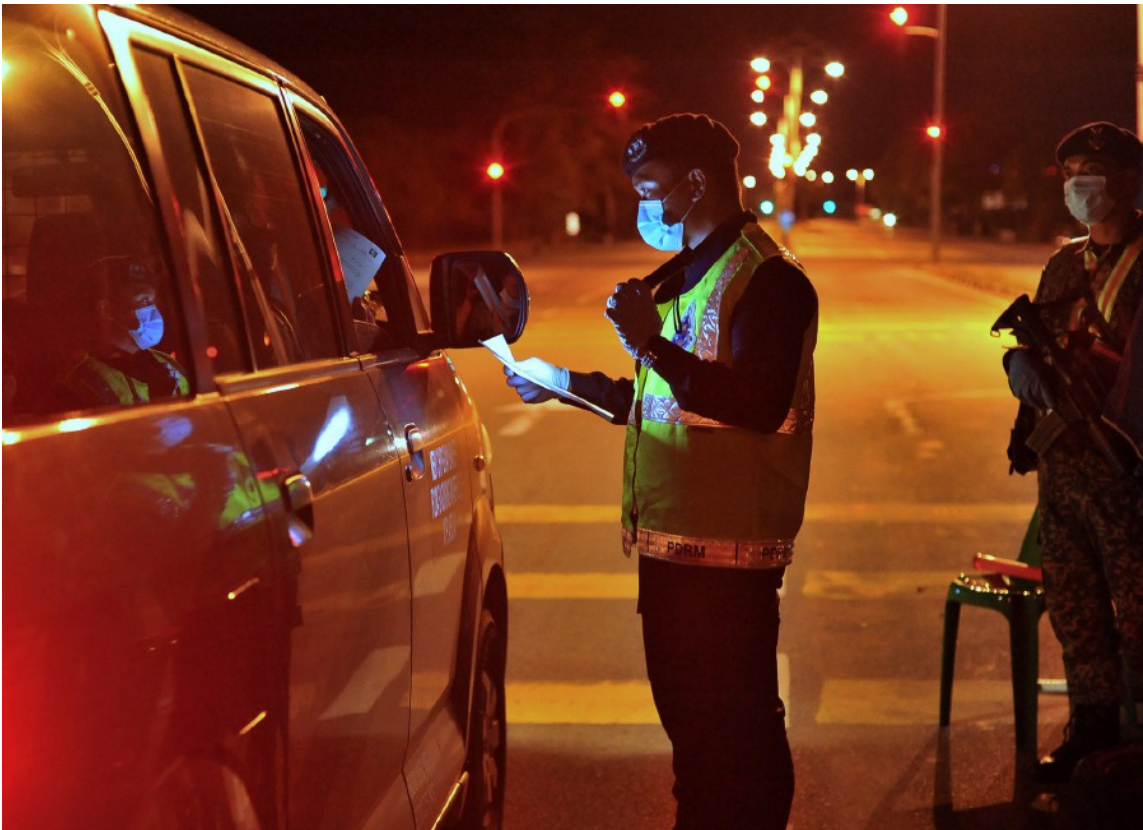


Getting wiser under the extended MCO

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By [Dzulrifli Abdul Razak](#) - April 18, 2020 @ 12:01am



A police officer and a soldier manning a road block at Jalan Tun Mustapha in Labuan. - BERNAMA pic

AS we get over the second phase of the Movement Control Order (MCO) and enter the next wave, we should be better and wiser in managing ourselves, if not the MCO itself.

The former is somehow linked to the latter in the use of some words and terms so as to positively influence the desired behaviours.

For instance, what was fashionably referred to as “social distancing” has now given way to “physical distancing”. The latter is more to the point in describing how far one must stay away from the next person. One metre is the physical measure for us. Two metres in the United Kingdom, just like the US (which doesn’t use the metric system) is 6ft, which is slightly less than 2m.

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connected. During social distancing (read, isolation) one could end up being lonely, anxious and even suicidal. In some instances, aggression and violence can come into play as manifested by the increasing trend of domestic violence, as well as bullying, as the case may be.

What is desperately needed is social solidarity and socio-emotional resiliency as a matter of priority. Still there is another “distancing” that is relevant to the situation at hand. “Political” distancing! While the notion of social distancing arguably is vital in mitigating the spread of the

coronavirus, it can be at the expense of “political” beliefs. In other words, political slants and biases can have a significant impact on the effectiveness of the MCO to restrict or control mobility at various levels.

Indeed, this is apparent in the (ill-) practice of social distancing to date leading to another form of distancing politically speaking. Reportedly, some research has indicated that when there is a “conflict” in political beliefs, there is a tendency to be less compliant with the “stay at home” order, for example, relative to those who are more in “agreement” politically.

Meaning to say, unless there is a cohesive bipartisan support and rapport, chances are the effectiveness of distancing rules could be jeopardised. This is more demonstrative in cases where the outbreak is “politicised” even at the global level as it unfolds today, undermining the very international effort to forge a lasting social solidarity globally.

That said, there is yet another issue when it comes to the use of the word “movement” as something to be controlled or restricted. It conveys the meaning that one can perform on-the-spot movement. Running on a treadmill describes such a movement. Thus, it can be deemed “wrong” under the MCO since it does involve movement. Implying, it is not just to “stay at home”, rather “stay still at home”.

Contrast this with the word “mobility”, which is a better choice because it is much more definitive in that the person actually moves from one location to another. He has to literally jog a physical distance and not just “move” on the same spot, be it on a treadmill or on other devices. Indeed, this is what the authorities are up against in trying to control “mobility” and not just “movement” per se.

Add this to the arguments made on physical, social and political distancing, it can create much ambiguity, particularly when this is all “new” to be put into practice and enforced for the first time. One suspects it all started with the word “pergerakan” in Bahasa Malaysia, as rendered by “PKP”.

In summary, we must be more careful in the choice and use of the most preferred terms or phrases to nurture the needed behavioural change for good. Then there would be no need to resort to unwarranted “demands”, which may take a huge toll on the all important aspect of building a genuine social solidarity and residency. Let us be wiser in navigating the third phase of the MCO.



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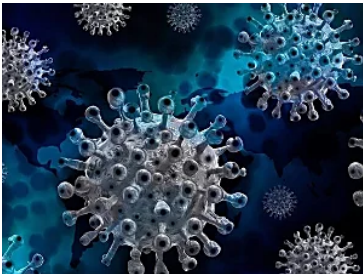
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