

COVID-19 pandemic is not the next plague – expert warns

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The COVID-19 global pandemic will have long-lasting societal and economic impacts, but cannot begin to compare to the immense changes caused by more historical pandemics, claims Uli Schamiloglu, Professor from the School of Sciences and Humanities at Nazarbayev University (https://nu.edu.kz/?utm_source=bluesky).

The Plague in the Time of Justinian (6th – 8th centuries), also called the First Pandemic, is considered to have emptied out parts of Europe, the Middle East, and Central Asia.

The Second Pandemic, or better known as the Black Death, is also believed to have led to the collapse of the Mongol Empire, the second largest empire in history, with estimates that the Black Death may have led to Europe losing 60% of its entire population.

Global pandemics can lead to profound civilisational changes, Schamiloglu states. Massive depopulation is the first result, which leads to political disruption, increased religiosity, collapse of urban centres, scarcity of labour, inflation, and unharvested crops.

Professor Schamiloglu says,

“Until a vaccine is developed for COVID-19, self-isolation and social distancing will remain an incredibly important norm. This will be a moment in history of social and economic transformation, but perhaps not civilisational change as pandemics have caused in the past. The rate of mortality cannot even begin to compare to these ancient plagues, which led states to collapse, civilisations to change, and even transformations in written language. Since we understand diseases so much better today, and as long as we follow best practices and advice, we can avoid illness. This is something people in the past could not do as they simply did not have the knowledge.

“In medieval times, land-based and maritime trade routes helped diseases spread globally. Today, it is aeroplanes that are the leading mechanisms for the transportation of viruses over long distances in a very short period of time. The COVID-19 pandemic is a reminder of how fragile life is and how we need to be better prepared for dealing with pandemics in the future.”

If you would like to speak with Prof. Uli Schamiloglu, please contact Kyle Grizzell from BlueSky PR at kyle@bluesky-pr.com or on 07904706136