






IOM staff delivers health education session at Mae La, Thailand. © IOM 2022

BACKGROUND

Tuberculosis (TB) continues to be an important public health concern in Thailand. In 2016, Thailand was classified by the World Health Organization (WHO) as one of the 22 countries in the world with the highest TB burden, with an expectation that there are 120,000 TB incidences per year, 12,000 cases of which would result in mortality. In 2015, 66,179 TB cases were reported. Moreover, multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) has been increasing over the past 10 years at the rate of approximately 2,200 cases per year.

In June 2021, WHO released its new global lists of high-burden countries for TB, HIV-associated TB and drug-resistant TB, and Thailand had successfully transitioned off this list, however maintained its position in the list of the 30 high TB burden and 30 high TB/HIV burden countries. The Department of Disease Control, under the Ministry of Public Health, through the Division of Tuberculosis, continues its commitment to achieve the third Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), which leads to End TB targets¹ by the year 2035 and a sustained “TB-free Thailand”.

Despite continued efforts on prevention, structural shifts in the population structure, namely an aging society and increased labour mobility, have resulted in a higher prevalence of TB. Surveys in the past have also suggested that more than half of TB cases do not exhibit any symptoms or do so only minimally, resulting in challenges in detection. Moreover, TB is

 LOCATION Tak Province, Thailand	 DURATION 1 January – 31 December 2023
DONOR 	

more prevalent, and presents a higher risk to the elderly population.

Globally, TB incidence is falling at about 2 per cent per year and between 2015 and 2020 the cumulative reduction was 11 per cent (WHO 2021). In 2020, the incidence of tuberculosis in Thailand was 150 cases per 100,000 people, and had reduced from 245/100,000 population in 2001 and 181/100,000 in 2010. In the Thailand Operational Plan to End Tuberculosis (2017 - 2021), it reported that diagnosis stood at only 59% of the expected total number of cases. This reflects partly a delay in or lack of access to treatment that leads to transmission in the community. As a result, projections of TB cases only reduce slowly. To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the End TB Plan, Thailand must delve in a new direction that can end TB once and for all before the situation worsens to a point that standard treatment renders ineffective.

¹ The End TB Strategy aims to reduce TB incidence to 20 and 10/100,000 population in 2020 and 2025, respectively.

IOM'S RESPONSE

As part of the Global Fund TEAM2 Grant, IOM Thailand is contributing to address the TB burden among Mobile and Migrant Populations (MMP) through active case finding in Mae La temporary shelter (refugee camp) in Tak Province on the Thai-Myanmar border. Active TB screening will target 8,750 beneficiaries aged 15 and above over a two-year period (5,250 in 2022 and 3,500 in 2023). During these activities, Community Health Workers support with outreach and health education activities.

IOM conducts TB screening activities and notifies the National TB Center of any positive cases identified. Patients are then referred to the camp healthcare provider for treatment, and monitoring of their response to the medication. IOM will follow up with chest X-rays and sputum tests during the treatment period where appropriate. A summary of the IOM interventions and targets by module have been included below.

As of 20 October 2022, IOM has completed 3,136 chest x-rays (1,435 males and 1,701 females) and identified 312 abnormal results requiring further testing. 210 sputum tests have so far been completed, identifying 13 patients with confirmed TB (12 males and 1 female).

In parallel, under its Health Assessment activities under the Resettlement Programme, IOM has identified a TB prevalence in refugees of 324 per 100,000 population and an incidence rate of 0.32% (48 out of 14,836).

MAE LA

According to figures from UNHCR (August 2022)², the population in Mae La camp is 34,164, the largest among the nine camps along the Myanmar border. Mae Sot General Hospital conducted similar screening activities in Mae La camp during the TEAM1 Grant. It had completed verbal screening for 8,262 persons, with 5,000 chest X-rays.

Map of IOM Office locations and temporary shelters in Thailand

Total Verified Refugee Population*

* Verification Exercise conducted from Jan-Apr 2015 and subsequent data changes to-date. Under reverification

 91,145

Registered population

44,398

Unregistered population

46,747

	REG	URG	Total
Ban Mai Nai Soi	5,668	2,416	8,084
Ban Mae Surin	463	1,463	1,926
Mae Ra Ma Luang	4,015	5,820	9,835
Mae La Oon	4,846	4,094	8,940
Mae La	15,761	18,403	34,164
Umpiem	4,944	5,695	10,639
Nu Po	4,494	4,892	9,386
Ban Don Yang	1,489	948	2,437
Tham Hin	2,718	3,016	5,734

LEGEND



Temporary shelter



IOM offices - Country office, Sub-offices and Field offices

Source: Data from UNHCR as of August 2022

² Thailand Border Operation: RTG/MOI-UNHCR Verified Refugee Population. UNHCR 2022

