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Network on Migration  
*Working Better Together*

## IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON MIGRANTS IN THAILAND SITUATION REPORT AUGUST 2022



Completion of a COVID-19 awareness session at the Bangkok Youth Center (Thai – Japanese) vaccination site (© IOM 2022)

### Background

South-East Asia is comprised of source, transit and destination countries and is characterized by migration inflows and outflows. Due to its unparalleled economic growth in the last decade, Thailand is a lucrative destination for labour migrants, mainly from South-East Asia. According to the Thailand Migration Report in 2019, the number of migrants in Thailand reached 4.9 million. The majority of the migrant population are from bordering countries, namely, Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Viet Nam.

Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and containment measures put in place across Thailand, migrant communities have faced an array of challenges. For many, it has resulted in loss of employment, as well as limited access to services and facilities.

### Highlights

- Globally, the World Health Organization reported that number of weekly new COVID-19 cases and deaths decreased during August. At regional level, the number of weekly cases and deaths decreased in all WHO regions. Travel restrictions and national entry requirements also see a downward trend globally.
- In Thailand, the COVID-19 alert level remains at level 2, and it continues with its plans to downgrade the virus from a dangerous communicable disease to a communicable disease under surveillance from 1 October 2022. Measures for quarantine for close contacts and isolation of positive cases have been revised.
- By the end of August, Thailand administered 142,712,391 (+1,138,872) doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, with a second dose coverage of 77.2 per cent and a third dose coverage of 45.6 per cent (the target is 60%).
- On 1 September, Thailand's Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) reported that 5.4 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine had been administered to foreign nationals in Thailand, of which 2.12 million were to Cambodian, Lao and Myanmar (CLM) nationals.

## THAILAND

### COVID-19 SITUATION UPDATES

On 31 August 2022, the CCSA reported that the cumulative number of cases had reached 4,650,919 (60,743) and 32,303 (918) deaths.

Nationally, the daily average of new cases had decreased from 12.0 to 10.7 per million population (with a 14.5% decrease experienced in Bangkok) and 28 daily average deaths (decreasing from 0.45 to 0.35 per million population). The number of severe and ventilated cases had decreased by 12.4 per cent and 15.5 per cent respectively by the end of August.

On 2 September, the CCSA reported that the COVID-19 alert level remained at Level 2 nationwide and people are encouraged to wear face masks in public areas when others are around, and those with chronic diseases are encouraged to be completely vaccinated with the required number of doses as per the vaccine manufacturer.

provinces (76) reported an average rate of less than 50 new cases per million population. Bangkok continues to show the highest average rate at 130 cases per million population. Sixty-nine out of seventy-seven provinces reported an average rate of death of less than 1 case per million population.



### COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT

On 31 August, the CCSA reported that 142.712,391 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine including 60 million (82.3 per cent of population) first doses, 46 million (77.2%) second doses and 40.9 million (45.6%) third doses.

### COVID-19 Vaccination in Thailand



60,034,386

(+116,600)



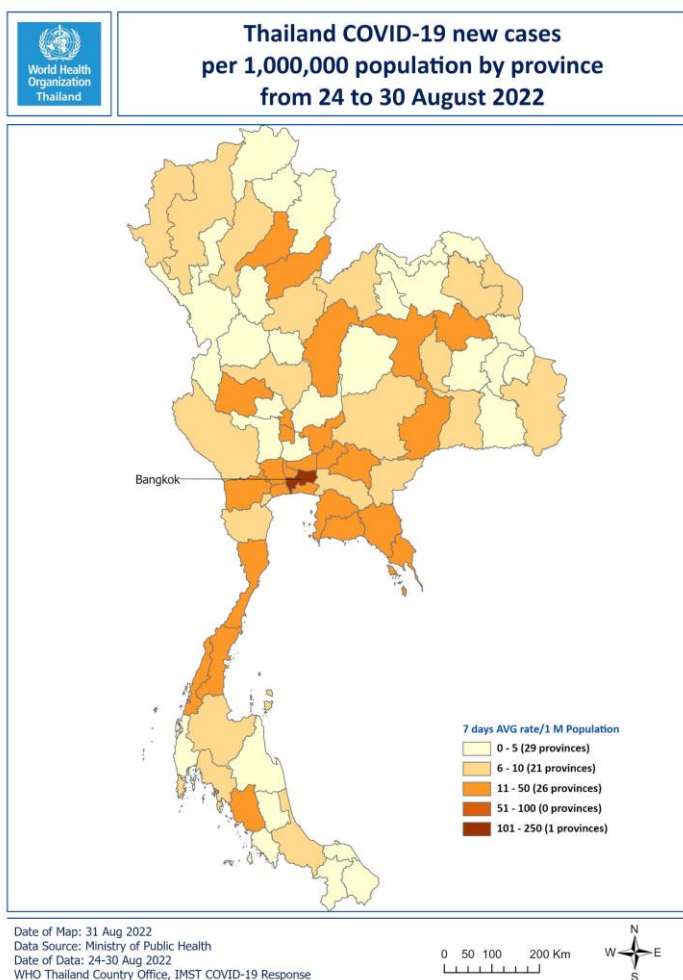
46,071,993

(+215,436)



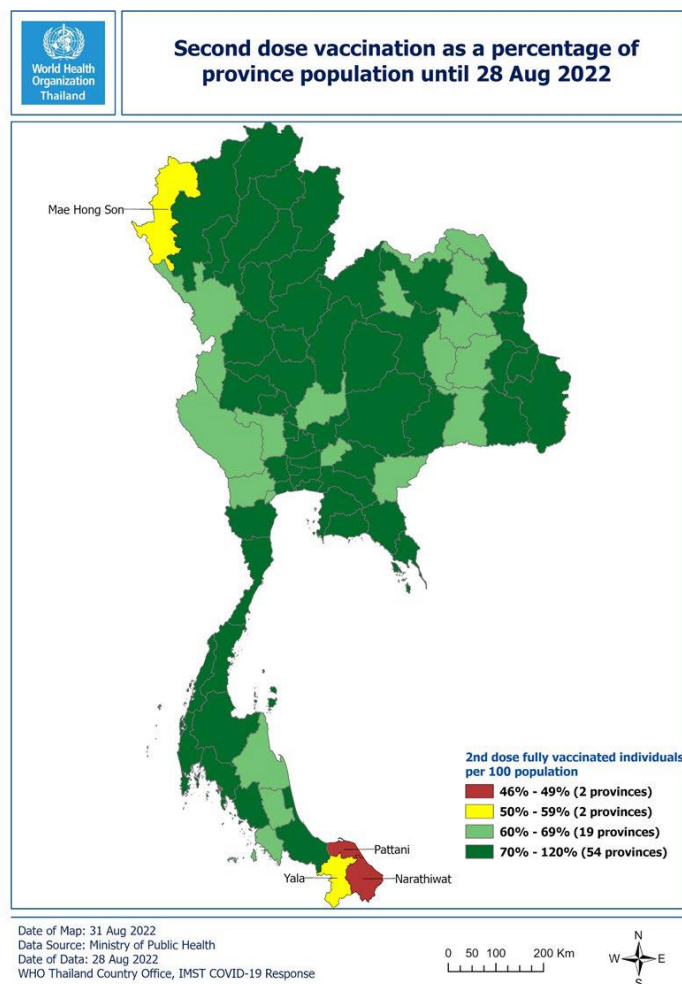
40,900,710

(+806,836)



**Figure 1:** Distribution of new COVID-19 cases per million population by province (WHO)

Nationally, the average number of new cases per million population is slightly decreasing from 12.0 to 10.7. Most

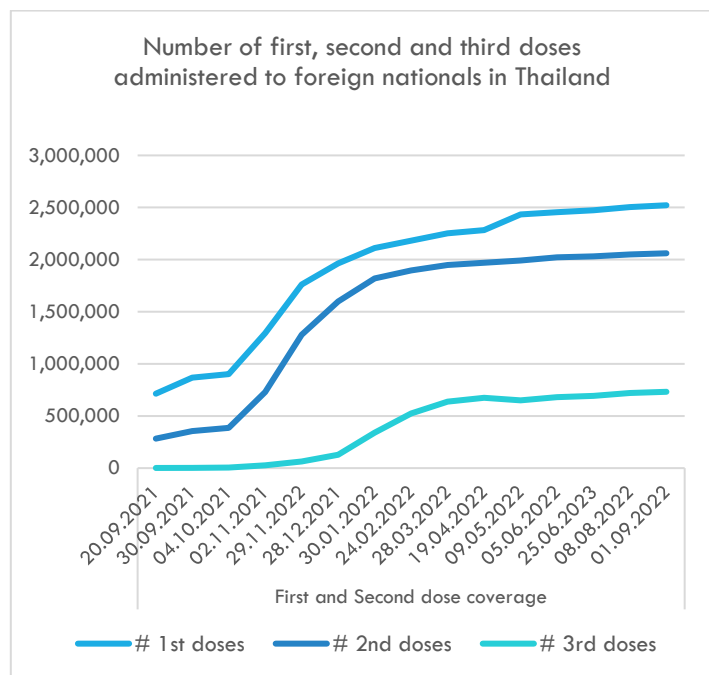


**Figure 2:** Second dose COVID-19 vaccination coverage by province (WHO)




Fifty-three out of seventy-seven provinces in Thailand reported more than 70 per cent second dose vaccination coverage. Narathiwat and Pattani provinces continue to report less than 50 percent second dose coverage (see Figure 2).

### COVID-19 VACCINATION AMONG MIGRANTS

Data released by the MOPH Department of Disease Control (DDC) on 1 September reported that a total of 5,404,306 (+53,048) doses of COVID-19 vaccine had been administered to foreign nationals residing in Thailand.



The latest data also indicates that 2,212,537 (+16,483) doses were to CLM nationals, who continue to represent the top three nationalities, as follows:

	Myanmar	Cambodian	Lao
			
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,540,489</b>	<b>449,810</b>	<b>222,238</b>
Since June	(+14,172)	(+1,508)	(+803)

Data from 1 September for CLM nationals shows that:

- First dose coverage is at 57 per cent (2,212,537)
- Second dose coverage is at 46 per cent (1,808,634)
- Third dose coverage is at 15 per cent (599,834)

Coverage is based on a CLM population denominator of 3.9 million as estimated in the 2019 Thailand Migration Report. The number of additional foreigners vaccinated in August was lower overall compared to the previous month.

### NUMBER OF DOCUMENTED MIGRANT WORKERS

(as of 31 July 2022)

No further data has been released by the Foreign Workers Administration Office of the Department of Employment since its recent update reported in July 2022. The number therefore remains as before: 2,099,097.

#### Myanmar



**1,503,639**  
(+126,015)

#### Cambodian



**382,626**  
(+27,912)

#### Lao



**184,920**  
(+10,236)



### POLICY UPDATE

#### Policy updates: COVID-19

On 19 August, the Ministry of Public Health announced its revisions on *Definitions and Guidelines for Management of Close Contacts of COVID-19 cases*:

- **Quarantine for close contacts** – 10 days of self-monitoring is required for both vaccinated and unvaccinated persons.
- **Isolation for a positive case** – The isolation period for asymptomatic and/or mild cases is 5 days after testing positive. Once this is complete, patients must practice strict COVID-19 preventive measure for at least 5 days.

#### Policy updates: Migrant workers

There were no major policy updates in August 2022. The recent regularization window and procedures remain the same according to the Cabinet Resolution dated 5 July 2022, where the Cabinet approved two groups of workers to temporarily stay and work in Thailand until 13 February 2025:

- 1) A registration window for migrant workers of four nationalities (Cambodian, Lao, Myanmar, and Vietnamese) with irregular status who already have an employer and wish to work in Thailand. To do so, employers have to submit a name list between 1 to 15 August 2022, apply for a work permit for their migrant workers from 16 August – 15 October 2022, and follow other procedures according to the announcements of the Ministry of Labour and Ministry of Interior; and
- 2) A work permit extension for migrant workers with regular status whose work permit will be expired, including migrant workers who have completed the registration window according to the Cabinet Resolutions dated 29 December 2020, 13 July 2021 and 28 September 2021.



The Myanmar Embassy in Thailand will resume its services for passport renewals for all types of passport holders starting from 8 September 2022 onwards, following a temporary suspension of its operations in August 2022 due to system maintenance. However, the services will be resumed only for Myanmar nationals who have already made an appointment and received a confirmation of the appointment for visa renewal between July and August 2022. Those who have not received a confirmation of the appointment may have to apply or re-apply for a passport renewal appointment first.

### Updates on border control measures



#### THAILAND - MYANMAR BORDER

On 2 August 2022, the Sing Khon Pass in Muang District, Prachuap Kiri Khan, reopened for traders for goods transport between Thailand and Myanmar. This was the first day the Point of Entry (POE) permitted trucks to cross the border for trade following the permission of Myanmar to open Maw-duang Pass on the opposite side. However, travelers and private vehicles are still not allowed at the PoE. Border crossing for trade is permitted every Monday to Saturday, from 8.30-16.30.

Province	Point of Entry (PoE)	Status
Tak	Thailand-Myanmar Friendship Bridge I	Closed
	Thailand-Myanmar Friendship Bridge II	Partially open (MoU migrants permitted to enter)
Ranong	Saphan Pla Pier	Open
	Pak Nam Ranong	Open
	Ranong Customs Pier	Open
	Andaman Club Pier	Open
Chiang Rai	Mae Sai Thailand-Myanmar Bridge I	Closed
	Mae Sai Thailand-Myanmar Bridge II:	Partially open
Kanchanaburi	Ban Phu Nam Ron	Open
Prachuap Kiri Khan	Singkhon (temporary checkpoint)	Partially open



#### IMMIGRATION DETENTION CENTERS (IDCs) AND ORGANIZATIONAL QUARANTINES (OQs)

As of 2 August 2022, Border Patrol Police reported that there are 16 Myanmar migrants in the OQ in Mae Sot, Tak (M=11, F=5). This is a significant reduction since June, where there were 83 nationals reported. All tested negative for COVID-19.

## CAMBODIA



### POLICY UPDATE

No changes in policy relating to COVID-19 were reported in August 2022 in Cambodia.

The biggest celebration in Cambodia, Pchum Benh, will take place between 24 to 26 September; it will be the first time since the start of the pandemic where no COVID-19 restrictions have been announced. The celebration marks a period where many Cambodians visit their families in the provinces, thus a high number of people crossing the borders and moving internally is expected.

### Updates on border control measures

On 15 August, the government announced that it held bilateral meetings with Thailand and that they will close unofficial Points of Entry. Not specific date was given.

**\*Update:** On 1 September it was further announced that Ou Beichon POE in Banteay Meanchey has been closed. Thai authorities no longer allow Cambodians to cross, and they are encouraged to go to Poipet, Bong Trekoun POEs. Not much information was released to migrants, thus many are surprised once they arrive at Ou Beichoan POE. However, some migrants have been allowed to cross on a daily basis, and more are trying to cross at night.

Ou Beichoan was one the most active POE during the COVID-19 pandemic, and IOM provided permanent support including installation of shelter, toilets, handwashing, distribution of food and IEC materials. IOM is assessing the situation and planning whether to move its support to other POEs in Banteay Meanchey.

### COVID-19 CASES IN CAMBODIA

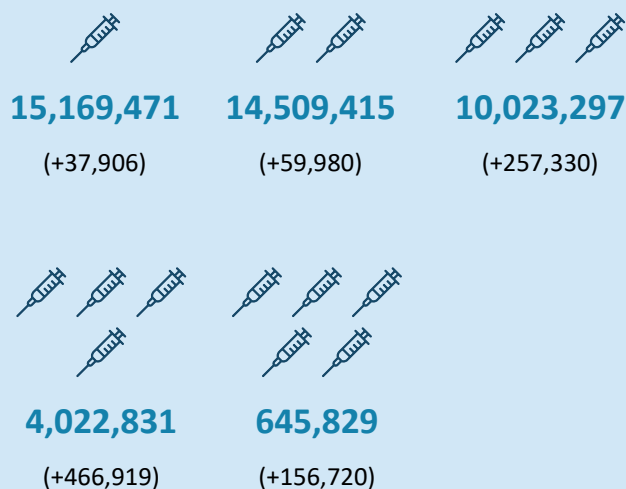
In August, 831 (3 imported) confirmed cases were reported (+321), with no fatalities. These figures bring the cumulative totals to 137,668 cases (21,232 imported) and 3,056 deaths.



### COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT

In August, the Governments of Spain and Australia donated pediatric Pfizer COVID-19 vaccines to the Royal Government of Cambodia (300,000 and 283,000 respectively). By the end of the month, the MOH had reported vaccination coverage as follows:

## COVID-19 Vaccination in Cambodia



There are concerns on the low number of people getting a booster dose, and the government has called on people to get vaccinated when they have the opportunity. IOM has also received requests to support awareness raising campaigns on vaccination and is conducting sessions under its UN/Japan-funded project in Oddor Meanchey and Battambang.



### IMMIGRATION DETENTION CENTERS (IDCs) AND ORGANIZATIONAL QUARANTINES (OQs)

All Quarantine and Treatment Centers in Cambodia have been closed. Home treatment/quarantine is allowed, however some referral hospitals in the provinces are maintaining some beds in case of emergency.

## LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

### COVID-19 CASES IN LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC

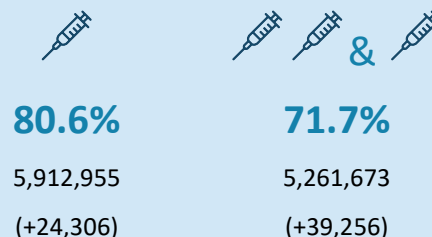
The Lao Ministry of Health reported 2,711 (560) new COVID-19 cases in August, with zero deaths. The cumulative number of cases has reached 24,835, with 664 deaths. Note that the overall number of deaths has been revised from 758 reported previously, due to the identification of incorrectly recorded data in the past. Despite the trend in increasing cases, WHO in Lao PDR has reported that the situation remains stable.



### COVID-19 VACCINE ROLLOUT

The Lao Ministry of Health continues to attain high vaccination coverage in first, second and booster doses among its population from the age of six:

## COVID-19 Vaccination in Lao People's Democratic Republic



## MYANMAR



### POLICY UPDATE

On 1 August 2022, the Ministry of Health (MOH) updated the guideline on COVID-19 control measures for travelers who pass through the border gate. The guideline now states that the number of quarantine days has been increased from five to seven days for unvaccinated returnees.

### COVID-19 CASES IN MYANMAR

In July the Ministry of Health reported 499 confirmed COVID-19 cases and zero deaths, bringing the cumulative totals to 614,092 and 19,434 respectively. Between the first and second quarter of the year, the test positivity rate is 5.0 per cent and 0.2 per cent in Myanmar. According to the MoH, there are total 116 days with no COVID-19 death cases in Myanmar.

According to MOH data, 1,144 confirmed cases were reported (from a sample of 162,749 tests) in August, with 4 deaths. This brings the cumulative totals to 615,221 confirmed cases, and 19,438 deaths, and an increase in the test positivity rate since July.

Omicron variants BA 2.75, and BA 2.76 were detected in Myanmar on 1 August 2022, prompting the Ministry of Health to encourage the public to continue following COVID-19 public health measures and receive COVID-19 booster doses to decrease transmission.

### COVID-19 VACCINATION

As of 30 August 2022, a total of 30,377,985 (+265,078) individuals above the age of 18 have received COVID-19 vaccination. A cumulative total of 6,398,728 under 18-year-olds have been vaccinated in Myanmar since the start of the pandemic.

### MOBILITY MONITORING

For the month of August, an estimated number of 11,000 Myanmar nationals were reported to have crossed the border into Thailand (based on data captured in seven border provinces by IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix).

The provinces where the largest number of migrants were reported entering are Tak and Ranong (7,400 and 2,600 migrants, respectively), while in Mae Hong Son and Kanchanaburi the numbers were lower (600 and 400 migrants, respectively).



**Figure 3:** Relief package distribution at Wat Wang Yai, Thepa Songkhla

## ACTIVITY UPDATES FROM UN NETWORK ON MIGRATION MEMBERS



RESPONSE

IOM

### IOM Thailand

With funds from WHO and the Australian Government, IOM continues its activities with World Vision Foundation of Thailand in four provinces around Bangkok, supporting migrants receive a dose of COVID-19 vaccine, conducting refresher training for 45 Migrant Health Volunteers (MHVs), and increasing their access to the latest information about the virus and its vaccines through the national COVID-19 1422 Hotline.

With funds from PRM, IOM and its partner Stella Maris completed their project in Songkhla and Pattani provinces this month. Activities were similar to those conducted around Bangkok, involving MHV training, awareness raising, and supporting access to the COVID-19 vaccine among migrant communities. By 24 August 2022, a total of six refresher trainings for 30 MHVs in Pattani were conducted in smaller groups at the Stella Maris Office. Within the same timeframe, the needs of migrants affected by the pandemic in both provinces were surveyed and 1,700 households were supported with relief packages (850 packages in Songkhla and 850 in Pattani).

IOM has also completed the second round of the COVID-19 Vaccine Perception Survey, having surveyed nearly 3,000 migrants across Thailand. Findings will complement those reported earlier in the year, and IOM will conduct a third round towards the end of 2022, allowing for an analysis of how perceptions and confidence in the vaccine will have evolved since late 2021. Based on the findings from these two parallel projects, IOM has observed varying levels of willingness to seek booster doses and eagerly awaits the second round of the Vaccine Perception Survey results to shed more light on the trends.

**Since booster doses are not compulsory, migrants appear to be reluctant to forgo a day's wage by taking a day off (or more if side effects are experienced). Employers are encouraged to offer support in facilitating this process.**



In August, IOM worked with 14 members of the Migrant Working Group to support the provision of food and non-food items to vulnerable migrants who continue to feel the impacts of COVID-19. Overall, 4,090 relief packages were distributed, and 7,380 ATK in 12 provinces.

### IOM Cambodia

With the support of the Government of Japan, IOM Cambodia is implementing COVID-19 response activities in three provinces bordering Thailand: Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Oddor Meanchey. This is a joint UN project together with UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO which targets returning migrants and local government at POEs, Quarantine and Treatment Centers and areas of return.

IOM has started the distribution of WASH items to 5 POEs, including waste management and infection, prevention and control (IPC) equipment such as sprayers, alcohol dispensers and waste bins. In August, Choam POE in Oddor Meanchey received IOM support.



**Figure 5:** Distribution of WASH items at Choam, POE in Oddor Meanchey (IOM Cambodia @2022)

As part of the same UN Joint Project, IOM handed over dry food packages, including noodles and drinking water, to 2,579 (F: 828) returnees in August. To date, this project has reached 10,461 (F: 4,677) returnees, including 484 children, in four POEs (Doung, Ou

Beichoan, Osmach and Poipet Transit Center) in three provinces (Battambang, Banteay Meanchey and Oddor Meanchey).



**Figure 6.** IOM Cambodia activities conducted at Osmach POE, Oddor Meanchey Province, including COVID-19 testing, health education and satisfaction surveys (IOM Cambodia @2022)

### IOM Myanmar

In August, IOM Myanmar supported food allowances to a total of 1,950 migrants, including 335 COVID-19 positive returnees during their quarantine days at POEs in Tachilek, Muse, Myawaddy, Kan Paik Ti, Kawthaung, and Yangon.

IOM also provided COVID-19 preventive kits to 1,794 returnees upon their arrival through partner CBO/CSOs. IOM supported 2,144 migrants with COVID-19 testing services this month.

POEs were also supported with handwashing facilities (55 basins with pedal and 20 soap dispensers) on August 22. Additionally, 21 tents were provided at five POEs to facilitate the screening services in designated areas. IOM provided 1,500 surgical gowns (type 2) and 25,000 surgical masks to the screening team.