

COVID-19 Flash Update: Government Guidance Affecting Migrant Workers and their Employers in Thailand and Neighbouring Countries

In this update, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides information for migrant workers and their employers on government decisions relevant to migrant workers in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand in the current context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Important Note: Please note that this is only a summary of the information provided by the above governments. Every effort is made to ensure information is up to date, however, as the situation is changing quickly you are encouraged to seek further information by contacting the Ministry of Labour or respective embassies directly.

Updates and Information from IOM

IOM Thailand has published a Programme Brief on [Supporting Socio-Economic Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic for Migrant Workers in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar, and Thailand](#) under its Poverty Reduction through Safe Migration, Skills Development and Enhanced Job Placement in Cambodia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Myanmar and Thailand (PROMISE) programme.

IOM Lao People's Democratic Republic has published a report on [COVID-19-related Vulnerabilities and Perceptions of Non-Lao Populations in the Lao People's Democratic Republic](#) and [COVID-19 Situation Report #7](#).

IOM Thailand is monitoring border movements and providing assistance to migrants and the Royal Thai Government. For updates and to access IOM tools and guidelines related to COVID-19, please check here: <https://thailand.iom.int/iom-thailand-covid-19-response>

Thailand

State of Emergency extended from 1 December 2020 to 15 January 2021

Reference: [Royal Gazette](#), No. 137, Special Edition 275
Ngog, 24 November 2020

On 24 November 2020, the Thailand Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) and the Cabinet

approved the extension of the State of Emergency Order from 1 December 2020 to 15 January 2021. This extension, the eighth since March 2020, covers a longer period than the usual one-month extension, to allow authorities to enforce mandatory quarantine measures and streamline disease-control plans during the holiday season.

Progress in work permit extensions

As of 25 October 2020, **170,064 migrant workers (including 139,990 MOU workers and 30,074 workers with expired border passes), renewed their work permits** according to Department of Employment (DOE). As summarized in [IOM's Flash Update #17](#), four groups of migrant workers were eligible to register to extend their work permits by the indicated deadline for a maximum period through to 31 March 2022, as part of a registration window from 17 August to 31 October 2020. Eligible groups included MOU workers who have completed four years of employment; MOU workers who have changed or are changing employers; pink card holders who had not yet registered on Name Lists; and cross-border seasonal workers with an expired Border Pass.

As reported in [Flash Update #24](#), **MOU workers based in Thailand who have completed four years of employment and whose work permits expire during the period from 1 November 2020 to 31 December 2021 can extend their**

[Non-LA visa for one year and work permit for two years](#)
30-days in advance of the expiration date, without having to return to their countries of origin.

Myanmar

Update on safe return arrangements for Myanmar migrants in Thailand

Reference: General Administrative Department, Myawaddy and Department of Labour, Tanintharyi region and Shan state

Between 22 March and 15 December 2020, 140,480 Myanmar nationals were safely repatriated from Thailand through safe return arrangements. For more details on these arrangements, see page 2 in [IOM's Flash Update #10](#).

Domestic flights resume from 16 December 2020

Reference: [Official Yangon International Airport Website](#), 14 December 2020 and Ministry of Health and Sports' [official Facebook page](#), 14 December 2020

According to the notification issued by the National Committee on Prevention, Control and Treatment of COVID-19, domestic flights resumed from 16 December 2020. Flights are required to comply with the [Standard Operating Procedures](#) on health and safety for passengers, airline personnel and airport staff issued by the Ministry of Health and Sports.

IOM's COVID-19 response

IOM Myanmar continued to provide humanitarian support for vulnerable returnees from Thailand in a distressed condition, reaching a total of 776 migrants during the period from 20 November to 15 December 2020. IOM supported the cost of onward transportation and meals and provided clothing and medical support, in close collaboration with Kayin State, Rakhine State and Ayeyarwaddy Region authorities.



IOM Myanmar providing humanitarian support to returnee migrant workers at Myawaddy, 12 December 2020.

Cambodia

COVID-19 situation in Cambodia

Reference: Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, [Letter No. 81scn](#), 10 December 2020

On 10 December 2020, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports announced the suspension of education and sports activities following [nine cases of community transmission of COVID-19](#) identified on 28 November 2020. The announcement includes suspension of gatherings, workshops and meetings with participation of more than 20 people; temporary closure of all public and private educational institutions; and suspension of sporting activities.

As of 16 December 2020, Cambodia has reported 362 confirmed COVID-19 cases in total, with no deaths reported. The Ministry of Health encourages people to continue complying with COVID-19 prevention measures. For the latest on the COVID-19 situation in Cambodia, please visit: <http://www.cdcmoh.gov.kh/>

Embassy of Cambodia in Thailand advises Cambodian Migrant Workers to remain vigilant of deceit risks

Reference: The Labour Attaché's Office's [official Facebook page](#), 2 December 2020

On 2 December 2020, the Labour Attaché of the Royal Embassy of Cambodia in Bangkok issued advice to Cambodian workers in Thailand warning them against falling a victim of deceptive brokers engaged to process passport, visa and work permit extensions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Labour Attaché invited Cambodian workers in Thailand to sign a legal contract with brokers at the Embassy to ensure that a legal proof of the agreement between both parties is in place, which can help when holding brokers accountable for their actions.



IOM Cambodia in partnership with the Job Center in Siem Reap conducting a community outreach campaign on safe migration including information on employment opportunities in hospitality, for 170 community members, Angkor Chum district, Siem Reap province, 26 November 2020.

Lao People's Democratic Republic

Domestic travel restrictions introduced in Tonpherng district, Bokeo province and Boten special economic zone, Luangnamtha province

Reference: Lao National COVID-19 Taskforce, [N.3082/Taskforce](#), 5 December 2020

The National COVID-19 Taskforce officially announced local restrictions following the identification of confirmed cases of migrant smuggling from countries affected by COVID-19 in Bokeo and Luangnamtha provinces. Details are listed on the National COVID-19 Taskforce [official website](#). Key restrictions include:

- COVID-19 Taskforce in affected provinces to impose lockdown for 14 days in Tonpherng district, Bokeo province and Boten special economic zone, Luangnamtha province effective from 5 December 2020
- COVID-19 Taskforce in affected provinces to conduct COVID-19 testing among individuals showing symptoms of COVID-19 in Tonpherng district, Bokeo province and Boten special economic zone, Luangnamtha province
- COVID-19 Taskforce in affected provinces to perform urgent COVID-19 testing for individuals who were in contact with the smuggled migrants
- COVID-19 Taskforce in affected provinces to strictly monitor entry to the provinces and compliance with COVID-19 prevention measures.

This COVID-19 Flash Update: Government Guidance Affecting Migrant Workers and their Employers in Thailand and Neighbouring Countries, has been produced by IOM Thailand. For more information, please contact ThailandLHD@iom.int

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