

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

The COVID-19 situation is evolving rapidly. 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 Thailand, Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar.

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 Thailand

IOM Thailand's Chief of Mission, Dana Graber Ladek, [wrote in the Bangkok Post about](#) the impacts of COVID-19 on migrant workers in Thailand:

*"Migrants are an essential part of the Thai economy, driving growth and productivity in many of Thailand's key sectors including construction, manufacturing and hospitality. Supporting these sectors – and protecting the migrants they employ – will be critical to Thailand's resilience and recovery."*

IOM has completed a [Rapid Needs Assessment on COVID-19 Related Vulnerabilities and Perceptions of Non-Thai Population in Thailand](#):

*"27 per cent of respondents indicated that over three quarters of non-Thai nationals in their communities have experienced a reduction in their daily income due to COVID-19. Moreover, 10 per cent of respondents reported that over three quarters of non-Thai nationals in their communities have lost all sources of daily income due to COVID-19."*

IOM Thailand is now able to receive **individual donations** through the global website:

<https://thailand.iom.int/donate>

- Individual donations received through this channel will all be used for direct assistance to

meet the needs of migrants who are affected by COVID-19 (e.g. food and hygiene items).

- With small-scale funding already received, IOM Thailand has already reached a number of migrants on the ground. With your additional support, we can reach out more of those migrants most at risk.

**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

**Extension of stay for non-Thai nationals with temporary stay status until 31 July**

Reference: [The Secretariat of the Cabinet](#)

On 21 April, the Cabinet approved a second automatic visa extension for those holding temporary stay status. This decision allows all non-Thai nationals holding all visa types\* to stay in the Kingdom of Thailand until 31 July. The 90-days reporting requirement is also suspended until 31 July. This order also applies to:

- MOU workers who have completed four years of employment and would otherwise have been required to leave the country; and
- Migrants not yet registered on Name Lists.\*

However, this automatic visa extension does not extend work permits, thus eligible non-Thai nationals under this scheme can NOT work in the country.

*\*Migrant workers on registered Name Lists are still permitted to stay and work in Thailand without any financial penalty until 30 November, as per the [Cabinet Resolution dated 15 April](#). More details are summarized on page 1 in IOM's [COVID-19 Flash Update #5](#).*

### New countries on the national COVID-19 Pandemic-Affected Countries list

Reference: [Ministry of Public Health Regulation No.2 \(B.E.2563\) on the COVID-19 Pandemic-Affected Countries list](#)

The Ministry of Public Health has added five more countries to the "COVID-19 Pandemic-Affected Countries list", including Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia and Myanmar. This is in addition to China (including Macau and Hong Kong SAR), South Korea, Italy and Iran, which were placed on the above list in March by the [Ministry of Public Health Regulation No.1 \(B.E.2563\)](#). The Ministry is yet to issue any longer-term advisories specifically on migrant workers from the above-listed countries. This order is effective from 22 April until further notice.

### Seven-day closure of the Sadao permanent border crossing point between Thailand and Malaysia

Reference: [Sor Kor 0018.1/7887](#)

On 22 April, the Songkhla Governor issued a closure order of the Sadao permanent border crossing point between Thailand and Malaysia, effective from 22 to 28 April. The closure aims to sanitize the Immigration Bureau office and border gate area, due to two confirmed COVID-19 cases recorded in the above locations. No exemptions were indicated. Those who plan to cross to Malaysia during this period can use the Padang Besar permanent border crossing point in Sadao district, Songkhla province.

### Tak Province ban on migrant travel until 30 April

Reference: [Tak Communication Disease Committee Order No 15/2563](#)

On 16 April, the Governor of Tak Province banned all public and private travel for migrants into and out of the province, as well as within Tak borders. Non-compliance with the above order will result in a fine of up to THB 100,000 and/or imprisonment for up to one year. This ban is effective from 17 to 30 April.

### Tak Governor tightens quarantine measures for suspicious cases

Reference: [Tak Communication Disease Committee Order No. 16/2563](#)

On 17 April, the Governor of Tak Province gave local officials the authority to impose necessary measures to manage suspected COVID-19 cases. The order allows local officials to require people suspected of having COVID-19 to undergo quarantine in government facilities or self-quarantine in their private residences.

Travelers who entered the province before 17 April (prior to the introduction of the above quarantine requirements), should expect to be contacted by officials for monitoring purposes. Non-compliance with the order will result in a fine of up to THB 40,000 and/or imprisonment of up to two years. The order is effective from 17 April until further notice.

The Governor also recommended all Tak residents (Thai and non-Thai nationals) to wear surgical or fabric masks outside of their residences. This is an advisory and not a mandatory measure, therefore non-compliance penalties do not apply.

## Myanmar

### Stay at Home order in seven townships in Yangon

Reference: [Ministry of Health and Sports official Facebook page](#)

The Ministry of Health and Sports imposed a stay-at-home order in seven townships in Yangon with higher

rates of COVID-19 infections, namely: South Okkalapa Township, Pabedan Township, Bahan Township, Mayangone Township, Insein Township, Shwe Pyi Thar Township, Hlaing Thar Yar Township. Only civil servants, corporate employees, workers in delivery businesses and medical personnel are allowed to leave their homes. In addition:

- For grocery shopping, only one person per household can leave their home at one time
- For health emergencies, only two persons per household can leave their home at one time

If exceeding the stipulated number of persons, permission from ward authorities is required. This order is effective from 18 April.

### Nighttime Curfew order in Yangon

Reference: Yangon Region Government, Letter No: 4/8-2(15)/(lu mhu), 17 April 2020

Yangon Region Government imposed a night-time curfew between 10:00 PM and 04:00 AM local time, for all townships in Yangon except Cocokyun Township, effective from 18 April 2020 until further notice. No exemptions were stated in the announcement.



IOM Myanmar project partner, Chin Human Rights Organization, installing a community hand washing station in Falam, Chin State, 14 April 2020.

## Cambodia

### New order to manage businesses and employees under mandatory quarantine

Reference: 046/20 K.B, 17 April 2020

The Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training ordered all factory owners in the country to list employees who took leave and traveled between provinces during the domestic travel ban from 9 and 16 April. The Ministry stated that employees who failed to comply with the travel ban could be fired without receiving any compensation from their employers.

This order applies to all businesses in Cambodia. The Ministry exempted employers from their responsibility to pay for mandatory quarantine of workers who took unauthorized leave. However, if the employees obtained prior permission to take leave during the above-mentioned period, they are entitled to receive payments for the duration of the mandatory quarantine period equivalent to seven days' wages. The Ministry further stated that any workers who violate quarantine measures, and who cause fear among other workers, can be forced to resign without receiving any payment of benefits from the employer.

The local authorities confirmed that there were approximately 15,000 employees across the country who tool annual leave during Khmer New Year.

### National consultation meeting on short, medium and long-term needs of returning migrant workers

Date: 22 April 2020

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Ministry of Interior (MOI), Samdech Krolahom Sar Kheng, together with the UN Country Team in Cambodia, led the *Consultation Meeting for the Possibility of Monitoring on Responding to the Short, Medium and Long-term Needs of Migrant Workers (Returnees) during the COVID-19 Pandemic.*

MOI announced a ban on all Cambodians who returned home from their countries of employment and who are now considering traveling back to their countries of

employment during the pandemic. The MOI encouraged returnees to look for jobs in Cambodia to support their families during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Government of Cambodia has established two working groups: the Working Group for Fighting COVID-19, and the Working Group for Food Security, to work side-by-side on developing policy and a national plan to combat the challenges of COVID-19 in the long-term.

IOM continues working with the Government and advocating for migrants to be considered in policy-making process.

### Lao People's Democratic Republic

#### National Social Security Fund to compensate unemployed Lao workers in May and June

Reference: [Report from Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Welfare](#)

On 20 April, Deputy Minister of Labour and Social Welfare, Mr. Padeumphone Sonthany, reported during the National Task Force Committee meeting, that Lao workers who became unemployed due to the national lockdown should be eligible for a compensation of 500,000 kip per month for a two month period, in May and June. The compensation will be provided by the National Social Security Fund, managed by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MoLSW). This applies domestically to Lao workers in all sectors, including garment factories, construction material manufacturers, restaurants and shops, as well as businesses in Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

On 24 April, the MoLSW updated on the [official Facebook Page](#), that the 500,000 kip compensation plan will be

made eligible to those Lao returning migrant workers who have registered under the Business Social Insurance.

IOM will closely monitor the follow-up announcements including further detail on eligible groups, payment process and channels, and effective dates.

#### Employers from all businesses should fully pay employees during Pi Mai break

Reference: 1114/MoLSW, 11 April 2020

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare announced that all businesses should pay their employees at their full rate during the Lao New Year (*Pi Mai*) break observed between 13 and 19 April.



IOM Cambodia team distributing the MRC hotline number, leaflets and food packages to Cambodian returnees at Poipet Border, 9 April 2020

*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](mailto:ThailandLHD@iom.int)*

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