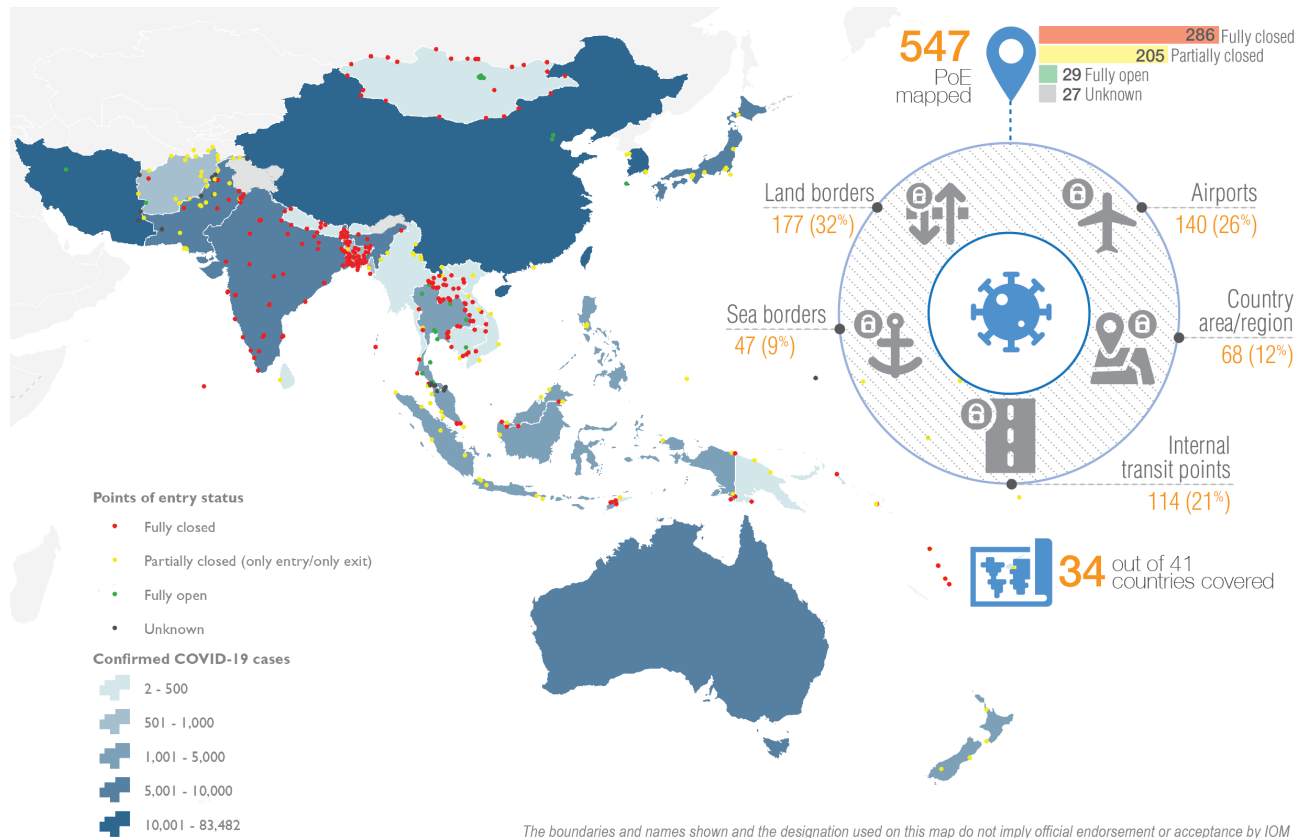


COVID-19: Points of Entry Mapping and Mobility Impact



OVERVIEW

COVID-19 cases in Asia and the Pacific continue to increase at a steady pace with countries augmenting responses as well as maintaining stringent mobility restrictions. As of 19 April, over **247,500 cases** and more than **12,000 deaths** have been reported in the region. Confirmed cases have been reported in **28¹ countries, territories and/or areas**, with new cases reported on a daily basis.

IOM missions in the region are working with governments and partners to ensure that migrants, whether in regular or irregular situations, returnees and forcibly displaced persons are included in efforts to mitigate and combat the illness's impact. There are increasingly serious concerns regarding stranded and vulnerable migrants abroad and their ability to satisfy basic needs. IOM missions are working closely with governments, CSOs and UNCT in host countries to devise context-specific and appropriate responses.

In addition to the immediate health risks of COVID-19, the situation poses significant socio-economic and protection challenges for migrants excluded from or unable to access support mechanisms. There are also increasing reports of stigma and discrimination towards migrants at destination, transit and home locations upon return, due to fears around COVID-19 transmission. Devising adequate responses for migrants, refugees, IDPs, returnees and other vulnerable groups remains the top priority for IOM.

High numbers of COVID-19 cases in Iran (Islamic Republic of) have pushed more than **177,000 Afghans** to return to Afghanistan since the beginning of March. In the Greater Mekong Sub-Region, following the announcement of lockdown measures in Thailand, over **193,000 cross-border migrants** from neighboring countries returned to their home provinces or countries, including Cambodia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic and Myanmar. These kinds of migration movements may have the unintended effect of driving transmission in areas with less capacity to provide testing, isolation and treatment, as well as increase vulnerability for migrants during their journey and in their home communities.

CONTACTS

For more information contact: ROBangkokMigrationHealth@iom.int

¹Afghanistan, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic (the), Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines (the), Republic of Korea (the), Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Timor-Leste and Viet Nam. Source: WHO Coronavirus situation reports: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports/>.

IOM RESPONSE

PILLAR 1 - COORDINATION & PARTNERSHIPS

IOM Afghanistan continues regular contact with health actors – including WHO, the Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), and the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation – and engages in high-level coordination discussions with the Offices of the First Vice Presidents. The mission is also coordinating with civil-military stakeholders to support humanitarian operations in view of rising security incidents across the country.

In **Hong Kong SAR, China**, IOM organized a Working Group to coordinate the development of joint messaging and dissemination strategies for employers of migrant domestic workers. Ten organizations joined - including UN entities, recruitment agencies and NGOs - to discuss how employers can mitigate risks, coordinate opportunities for strengthening decent work, ensure ethical recruitment and reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 containment measures on migrant domestic workers.

IOM Lao People's Democratic Republic continues to coordinate with the UNCT on its response to COVID-19, as well as to advocate for the inclusion of migrants and mobile populations in the response. To address the urgent daily needs of 5 million unemployed migrants in Malaysia, **IOM Malaysia** is leading the UNCT Humanitarian Response, which includes drafting a plan for and leading the UNCT's advocacy efforts, conducting a migrant needs assessment, coordinating with NGOs and developing a fundraising strategy.

IOM Micronesia continues to attend government coordination meetings in the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia. In Chuuk, the IOM team has provided technical review and edits for the COVID-19 response framework.

IOM Palau is working in close coordination with the National Emergency Management Office to identify the Government's needs for capacity building and support. **IOM Philippines** remains active in the HCT and the Mindanao HCT, in addition to leading the CCCM cluster with a specific focus on locations of displacement in Mindanao.

IOM Timor-Leste is continuing to support the Ministry of Health (MoH) and key line ministries to increase the effectiveness of COVID-19 response for migrant returnees and their communities, as well as providing support to strengthen the MoH's efforts to engage all stakeholders in COVID-19 prevention activities.

IOM Sri Lanka staff are in active communication with all relevant ministries, UN Agencies and other partners in response to COVID-19. The mission is coordinating with Sri Lankan airport and seaport authorities to strengthen mechanisms at points of entry (POE). The Migration Health Assessment Centre is coordinating with the Ministry of Health on COVID-19 response activities.



Returnee family from Iran at IOM's transit center in Herat, Afghanistan.

PILLAR 2 - RISK COMMUNICATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

IOM Afghanistan is an active member of the RCCE Core Group and is engaged in finalizing rumor busting messages for wide-scale dissemination at the community level through IOM field teams. In **Fiji, Solomon Islands** and **Tonga**, IOM is supporting public health authorities to implement both COVID-19 communication strategies and preparedness and response activities. In coordination with the RCCE working group, **IOM Marshall Islands** is placing 15 large community billboards across the Islands of Majuro with COVID-19 messaging for communities.

IOM Micronesia is translating scripts for Q&A videos on WASH and safe hygiene practices in Chuuk and is supporting the development of a video for the hearing impaired in Pohnpei. IOM in Yap participated in the Department of Health Services' training on raising community awareness on COVID-19, which included demonstration of proper handwashing techniques and hygiene practices. In addition, IOM has partnered with the Departments of Health Services and Education, as well as UN partners, to provide handwashing trainings to 12 community groups comprising 285 persons, as well as school principals on Weno, Chuuk and Lagoon islands. **IOM Palau** is working with the Ministry of Justice Anti-Human Trafficking Office on the printing of RCCE materials in languages appropriate for foreign-migrant workers.

IOM Sri Lanka is supporting refugees and asylum seekers in coordination with UNHCR through a 24-hour hotline, reaching 1,300 refugees and asylum seekers to date. The hotline provides support with COVID-19 symptoms identification, contact screening and guidance on where to seek medical treatment. The mission is also distributing COVID-19 specific advice for refugee and asylum seekers in their local language, including through social media messaging. Furthermore, COVID-19 information dissemination activities were organized at the outbound Migration Health Assessment Centre, reaching approximately 3,300 people.

IOM RESPONSE

PILLAR 2 - RISK COMMUNICATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

IOM Thailand has completed the first phase of its nationwide survey to understand existing challenges, needs and concerns for migrant populations in Thailand. The survey revealed misconceptions among migrant communities about effective ways to prevent the spread and treatment of COVID-19. Thus, the mission is developing IEC materials that will specifically address these misconceptions and re-enforce scientifically proven advice for preventing transmission and safeguarding against the virus. The mission has also been working closely with the UNCT Communications Team to develop a campaign called “Solidarity Against COVID-19,” which will be rolled out this week on social media platforms. The campaign is targeted at the general Thai public, policymakers, the private sector and vulnerable populations via SMS, print and mainstream media and through partnerships with popular platforms, such as LINE and Twitter.

IOM Timor-Leste is supporting the MoH to increase community awareness and disseminate basic information on COVID-19 prevention to migrants, mobile populations and border communities. IOM is currently distributing 400 IEC materials translated into the local dialects of border communities. In **Viet Nam**, IOM is disseminating public health messages and travel advisories to migrants and their families through existing programmes and social media platforms.

PILLAR 3 - SURVEILLANCE

In close coordination with the MOPH, **IOM Afghanistan** is initiating large-scale recruitment of screeners, testing teams and social mobilizers in four border provinces with Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Pakistan.

In **Lao People’s Democratic Republic**, IOM and the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare jointly reviewed and revised the rapid assessment monitoring tool for returning migrants to Lao PDR. This tool will cover 18 provinces of Lao PDR in coordination with government counterparts.



Rohingya refugees continue to aid the efforts of frontline workers through the production of cloth masks in Cox’s Bazar, Bangladesh.

PILLAR 4 - POINT OF ENTRY

IOM Afghanistan is coordinating with UNHCR, WHO and other partners to strengthen logistics, health screening, surveillance and monitoring assistance in border areas in support of the Government.

IOM Micronesia installed two group handwashing stations at the airport and seaport in Pohnpei. **IOM Sri Lanka** is the mandated UN agency for POE and is involved in the strategic preparedness and response plan at the airport and seaports.

IOM Viet Nam donated thermometers, hand-sanitizers, gloves, gowns and masks to frontline immigration officers working at the two biggest airports - Ha Noi Noi Bai International Airport and Ho Chi Minh City Tan Son Nhat Airport. PPEs will be used by immigration and health officers who are involved in screening procedures and working in isolation rooms on suspected cases. Additionally, a training of trainers was delivered for counterparts on infection prevention and control and migrant protection during the pandemic.

PILLAR 5 - NATIONAL LABORATORY SYSTEMS

IOM Afghanistan is in discussions with the Public Provincial Health Directorates in Kandahar and Herat provinces to assist with the setup of an online system to record and track COVID-19 test samples and patient records, including deployment of technical staff and donation of IT equipment and other resources.

PILLAR 6 - INFECTION PREVENTION & CONTROL

IOM Afghanistan staff have trained more than 100 community health supervisors and health workers in Nimroz and Herat provinces on infection prevention and control.

In **Marshall Islands (the)**, IOM is providing technical guidance and support to the Gender and Protection Cluster on IPC for vulnerable populations and working with groups, such as Women United Together Marshall Islands, to promote effective hygiene practices for women.

In Yap, **IOM Micronesia** installed two group WASH stations at schools and has been building on average 12 WASH stations a week in Chuuk. In Kosrae, the mission constructed 25 individual WASH Stations and distributed more than 1,200 bars of soap.

IOM’s revised Global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan for the Coronavirus Disease 2019 was released on April 15. The geographic prioritization of the appeal is based on existing national and IOM capacities. The document can be found at the following [link](#).

IOM RESPONSE

PILLAR 7 - CASE MANAGEMENT

In **Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh**, IOM identified a new site in Camp 20E and drafted layout plans for a 100-bed isolation and treatment centre. Triage and separate consultation spaces have been established at IOM health posts in Camps 15 and 18. IOM continues to coordinate with the DGHS, Civil Surgeon's Office and World Bank to support government isolation centres in Chakaria and Ramu Upazilas in Cox's Bazar. IOM has extended its support to Cox's Bazar Sadar Hospital with 10 medical officers, 1 radiologist, 1 radiographer, 1 sanitation officer and 15 cleaners. The mission also provided building materials to Save the Children for the construction of an isolation centre in Camp 21.

PILLAR 8 - LOGISTICS, PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

IOM Afghanistan is receiving national and provincial-level requests for PPE from MOPH, the Ministry of Refugees, the Afghan Border Police and their provincial-level affiliates. Procurement through local vendors is underway, however, some supplies are facing shortages and price hikes.

IOM Myanmar, in line with national preparedness plans and support from the Myanmar Humanitarian Fund and Access to Health, is supporting the MOHS in the logistics and procurement of supplies for COVID-19 response.



Training for school principals in Chuuk, FSM.



Health staff continue to provide essential medical services at IOM-supported primary health care centers in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh

PILLAR 9 - PROTECTION

IOM Afghanistan, as an active member of the Afghanistan Protection Cluster, is supporting the collection of protection monitoring data through its network of social protection workers.

In **Hong Kong SAR, China**, IOM developed Standard Operating Procedures specific to implementation of its Victim Assistance Fund during the time of COVID-19 in order to resume screening of potential victims of human trafficking and provision of emergency support, while mitigating risks to both IOM staff and beneficiaries.

In **Fiji, Solomon Islands and Tonga**, IOM is assisting migrants to access services and is advocating for inclusion of migrants in ongoing preparedness and response plans to reduce stigmatization. In Fiji, IOM is also promoting RCCE activities through communication with communities with a focus on cross-border and vulnerable travelers, contextualizing material for each state with the appropriate language.

IOM Lao People's Democratic Republic provided support to the Lao Women's Union Counselling and the Protection Centre for Women and Children in Luang Namtha Province, which currently has 15 female victims of trafficking under the age of 18 who returned from China and are receiving counselling support. At the request of Lao Women's Union, IOM provided PPE equipment to strengthen the protection and prevention of COVID-19.

IOM Marshall Islands has been working closely with the Shelter and Gender & Protection clusters to update and develop new preparedness and response activities and finalize means of identifying the most vulnerable households in Majuro and Ebeye. IOM has also developed local and contextualized MHPSS materials for community outreach and is helping to coordinate the development of a rapid vulnerability assessment.

IOM Thailand is creating and disseminating weekly updates for private sector actors to communicate government announcements and the impacts of policy measures on migrant workers. These updates have encouraged large corporations to reach out to IOM for further information on how to ensure that the rights of migrant workers in their supply chains are being protected, in accordance with the government's policy decisions.

In **Viet Nam**, IOM's Corporate Responsibility in Eliminating Slavery and Trafficking in Asia team offers ongoing advisory for the business community and partner companies on how to address migrant worker protection during COVID-19.

IOM'S global, online interactive platform shows the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on human mobility at the global, regional and country levels, The platform can be accessed at the following [link](#).

IOM RESPONSE

PILLAR 10 - CAMP COORDINATION & CAMP MANAGEMENT

IOM Afghanistan's network of transit facilities on major border crossings with Iran (Islamic Republic of) continues to receive and host returning undocumented migrants, including over 15,000 undocumented Afghans that returned in the last week. IOM assisted 23% of returnees with post-arrival humanitarian assistance, including overnight accommodation, basic medical screening and referrals for advanced care, multi-purpose cash grants and food packages. The mission's CCCM and Migration Health programs are also providing COVID-19 awareness raising sessions for returning Afghans in the transit facilities. Furthermore, the mission is providing ambulances to transfer symptomatic cases, and IOM's migration health staff are actively delivering Outpatient Department consultations and screening for TB and COVID-19.

IOM Fiji is providing ongoing sub-regional guidance and support to governments and partners regarding CCCM activities in COVID-19 settings.

IOM Philippines completed eight WASH and COVID-19 preparedness facilities within the Makaila displacement site, bringing the total number of displacement sites with COVID-19 preparedness facilities to six. There are ongoing construction works in a further nine displacement sites across North Cotabato. Furthermore, to ensure the protection of Internally Displaced Persons in Mindanao, IOM is issuing localized CCCM operational guidance to aid field staff, camp managers, Local Government Units and humanitarian organizations in their COVID-19 preparedness and response.

IOM Solomon Islands is providing the CCCM Sector Committee with guidance and technical support for IDPs in COVID-19 settings

PILLAR 11 - DISPLACEMENT TRACKING MATRIX

IOM Afghanistan's DTM teams are presently engaged in Mobility Mapping Assessments in 25 provinces and have completed data collection through focus group discussions (FGDs) in 1,775 settlements across 11 provinces. FGDs also provide a forum for COVID-19 hygiene and awareness sessions and distributions of IEC materials.

DTM staff from **IOM Fiji** are providing ongoing support to the NDMO in Vanuatu on the planning and implementation of DTM in a COVID-19 setting in response to the recent Tropical Cyclone Harold.

IOM Viet Nam is participating in a global mapping exercise coordinated by the IOM DTM team in consultation with the Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Health to map the public health situation, as well as restrictions of movements and goods.

PILLAR 12 - ADDRESSING SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

IOM Fiji is providing technical advice and guidance to the sub-regional Early Recovery Cluster on conducting a socio-economic assessment.

IOM Sri Lanka's Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration and Counter Trafficking units undertook a virtual rapid assessment, interviewing returnees, stranded migrants, local NGOs and government stakeholders on the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on migrants and returnees. The assessment addressed employment, mobility restrictions, access to social protection schemes and health care, remittances, challenges faced by undocumented migrants, stigma, human trafficking risks and re-integration.

INNOVATIVE RESPONSES

IOM Marshall Islands is drafting a contextualized workplace toolkit to support local businesses to prepare for COVID-19 and potential lockdown situations. The mission is also launching a nation-wide competition (via local papers, education networks and social media) for households to share stories and drawings of how they are preparing for COVID-19, with prizes for entries.

FURTHER RESOURCES

IOM has produced:

- [Multilingual Information on COVID-19 for Migrant Communities](#) in 26 local languages.

IOM has contributed to:

- [COVID-19 Explained: No Isolation without Consultation](#), which focuses on perspectives on isolation in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, and
- [Identifying & Mitigating Gender-based Violence Risks within the COVID-19 Response](#).



Hand washing station installed in Chuuk, FSM.