

COVID-19 Outbreak Response Coordination Group for the 9 temporary shelters along the Thai-Myanmar border (National Level)

15th Meeting, 29 July 2020

Participants: BPRM (Sarinya Moolma), CDC (Barbara Knust), EU (Khobkun Inieam), IOM (Francesco Supit, Sai Aung Lynn), IRC (Darren Hertz), MI (Lasantha Herath), MoFA (Khun Kiradit), TBC (Sally Thompson), UNHCR (Pia Paguio, Alessandro Nobile, James Ferguson)

1. Situation update

- CDC updated there have been no reports of community transmission for the past 60 days, though there were cases reported in July involving a diplomat and Egyptian military in Bangkok and Rayong, respectively. The remaining reported cases are of Thai repatriates in quarantine facilities.
- CDC updated that the process for entry to the country remains restrictive, particularly through international airports where multiple rounds of testing and quarantine are required. MoFA noted that there are some relaxed restrictions on persons already holding valid work permits and family members of Thai nationals though there continues to be a need for vigilance. MoFA added that relevant offices are preparing for the return of certain categories of migrant workers, but the borders remain closed. IOM also added that the border at Mae Sot remains closed to migrants entering Thailand, including 42,000 persons with employer letters awaiting visas, but migrants have been able to return home.
- CDC also noted there were four new cases reported over the weekend in Danang, Vietnam, despite nearly 100 days free of community transmission. There are questions about how transmission was possible due to the closed borders and it is suspected transmission may be taking place undetected. UNHCR added that as of yesterday there were 14 additional positive cases identified in Vietnam.
- UNHCR noted there are no specific updates for any of the camps or refugee hosting provinces. TBC confirmed that nothing unusual has been observed in any of the camps, while some access restrictions are gradually being lessened to varying degrees; there have not been reports of pressures on refugees to go outside for work or seeking assistance to enter or leave the camps.

2. Surveillance, Case Investigation and Outbreak Rapid Response

- CDC updated that CDC and MoPH Health Administration Division are traveling in Ratchaburi Province and planning to visit THI on Friday, 31 July. The goal is to initially meet with the provincial health officials and go with the district, for which camp passes were approved this morning at the provincial and district levels. Discussions will include general support to the province and district from MoPH and CDC, and talking and learning more about care at the camps. The same group also plans to visit Kanchanaburi Province and BDY during the week of 17 August. CDC would like to also visit Mae Hong Son province with the same team towards the end of the rainy season.
- CDC also updated that testing has started at the Mae Hong Son camps. IRC reported that a total of 21 specimens have been collected and tested starting from 15 July, including 16 at BMN & BMS and additional five (5) from MLA. IRC plans to bring UMP online with collection and testing this week, and NPO next week. MI added that specimen collection at MLO & MRM will start on 30 July for transportation to and testing at Mae Sot.
- IRC also added that across all camps there is a trend of increased movement despite restrictions on movement and access. IRC community health workers encounter resistance from camp residents on reporting themselves. The most concerning issue is the ability to track movements due to increasing

complacency among camp residents, including handwashing and temperature taking on entering camps. MI also added that these trends are observed at MLO & MRM, with higher quarantine figures for MRM. IRC has raised the issues with all CCSDPT directors to request commitment to continued vigilance on COVID-19 and is checking with organizations whether more support is needed.

- IRC noted that Camp Committees' use of facility quarantine has largely lapsed, and camp residents are being asked to home quarantine, though identifying and tracking these cases remains challenging. CDC displayed quarantine figures for the week of 11-17 July, including 234 new cases across 6 camps, the highest being in UMP (161) and MLA (51), while no new cases were reported at BMN, MLO, or BDY.
- IRC added that there has been a significant reduction in the number of Acute Respiratory Infection (ARI) consultations this year compared to last year, though the reasons for this are not yet clear. MI also noted that 175 total ARI cases have been identified at MLO & MRM.

ACTION POINT: 1) IRC and MI will have meetings with camp commanders and camp committees about maintaining vigilance and strong IPC practices. 2) IRC will share a list of talking points with pillar leads to harmonize messaging with stakeholders.

3. Infection Prevention Control (IPC)

- IRC updated about IPC guidelines that CCSDPT members have been asked to commit to since the start of the COVID-19 period, including: 1) screening staff on arrival at work, and sending staff who do not meet screening criteria home or to a medical facility; 2) preventing staff who do not feel well from entering the camps; 3) continue wearing face masks while present in the camps (both for IPC and to set examples for camp residents); 4) set-up and enforce the use of handwashing stations at all facilities; 5) maintaining minimum 2 meters for social distancing (rather than setting fixed limits on numbers of people in gatherings); 6) refrain from entering the homes of individuals during household visits; and 7) any more severe restrictions introduced by camp commanders should be respected. IRC noted these continue to be a minimum commitment as restrictions are gradually relaxed and encourages camp-based staff to also follow the seven guidelines. IRC also requested that information about any persons traveling into the camp be reported to medical teams for follow-up.
- IRC also updated that guidance and technical support for setting up handwashing stations, and cleaning materials for handwashing, is being provided to education sub-committee members. Refresher training continues to take place in all field locations to keep staff sharp and ready in case there are any suspected cases identified in any locations. MI added that handwashing facilities have been supported at all education and religious facilities.
- MI updated that there has been difficulty sourcing medical-grade masks, though factory-grade masks have been identified. MI and IRC confirmed that the second shipment of masks donated by MoPH have been received in field locations, with masks for MLO & MRM still to be collected from Sobmoei Hospital.

ACTION POINT: 3) IRC will share information with MI on procurement of medical-grade masks.

4. Case Management

- MI updated that case management and isolation facilities are in place, though they are currently being shared with IRC-RSC. MI also updated that confirmation from Mae Hong Son Hospital is still pending on whether they will be able to support testing specimens from camp residents.

- IRC shared there are no new updates on infrastructure for confirmed or suspect cases, while efforts continue with testing, refresher training on protocols, and developing case management guidelines in collaboration with CDC. CDC added that comments on the case management guidelines have been received, while MoPH has been asked to conduct additional review; there is a challenge with managing patients on oxygen in field settings due to the lack of experience. CDC also added that with medical examinations by IOM resuming, there is a need to bring IOM into discussions.

5. Risk Communication & Community Engagement (RCCE)

- UNHCR noted earlier comments that there is a need to continue momentum on messaging and to reduce lapses in vigilance in all camp locations (see discussion under the Surveillance Pillar).

6. Food assistance

- TBC updated that all households are receiving full rations in July, while in August there will be 20% who continue to receive full ration and 80% will receive reduced ration that remains above pre-COVID levels.
- TBC also noted kitchens in quarantine facilities are in place and surge capacity is available.

7. Protection / Advocacy

- UNHCR updated that Protection Working Groups (PWG) in all field locations are finalizing protection analyses that consider how the protection environment has been impacted by COVID-19.
- UNHCR also noted that there is starting to be false information spread in some camps that needs to be addressed, related to resettlement and forced returns. In particular, there is a fake news message on social media identified by refugees in MLA that resettlement identification will resume among verified refugees from 1 September, and following the same message that persons who are not identified for resettlement will be required to return to Myanmar.
- TBC updated that basic education schools BMN and BMS opened on 13 July for classes, while all KRC schools opened except in BDY starting from 20 July, with instruction on COVID-19 prevention preceding classes. IPC upgrades are ongoing and alcohol-based hand gel is also being provided. Higher education and nurseries have not opened in any locations, but there are plans to open them shortly. It's anticipated that all schools will remain open until Songkran next year with a reduced (one-week) holiday at Christmas to make up for missed time.

8. AOB

- CDC is soliciting items to provide to NGOs to assist with implementing activities in camps, including IPC items, IEC materials, or other educational materials that can be procured in the next month.
- IRC will chair the 16th meeting on Tuesday, 11 August.

ACTION POINT: 4) CDC will send an email about supporting NGOs with COVID-19 prevention materials.