

10,893 migrants returned

from Thailand through border checkpoints from 17 July to 5 August

141,710 migrants returned

through border checkpoints to date



Migrant Resource Centre (MRC) Counsellor, in coordination with the Department of Labour (DOL), distributing humanitarian assistance to returning migrants in Myawaddy, Kayin State. © IOM 2020

SITUATION OVERVIEW

Returns from Thailand continued at a steady pace on the second half of July and the first week of August, with **10,893 (4,520 female, 6,373 male) returns from 17 July to 5 August**. A further 949 Myanmar nationals returned via Myanmar Government Assisted Relief flights between 17 to 26 July, including from Hong Kong, Singapore, Korea, Australia and Jordan, among others. **Since the middle of March, a total of 141,710 migrants have returned to Myanmar via land border checkpoints** from Thailand (97,342), China (44,051) and Lao PDR (317), with an additional 9,492 Myanmar nationals returning via relief flights.

The Myanmar Government extended COVID-19 related restrictions until 15 August. This is the fourth extension and it retains the nationwide 00:00 AM to 4:00 AM curfew, the ban on international commercial flights into Myanmar, the temporary suspension of visas on arrival and e-visas, and the temporary suspensions on overseas employment processes (including MOU recruitment and deployment).

The Thailand Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA) announced plans to permit six new groups of non-Thai nationals to enter Thailand, including MOU migrants from Myanmar, Cambodia and Lao PDR (CLM). Migrants eligible to re-enter Thailand under this new measure include: 1) 69,235 migrants from CLM, with existing work permit and visa obtained under MOUs, and who wish to return to Thailand for employment; and 2) 42,168 migrants undergoing the MOU process in countries of origin, but who have not yet entered

Thailand due to travel restrictions. On 4 August, a Cabinet Resolution approved measures for the extension of stay and re-employment of MOU migrants already in Thailand. **But the deployment of new MOU migrants still awaits Cabinet approval**, and procedures and costs are still being discussed.

The Myanmar Embassy in Thailand is collecting the advance voting list of Myanmar nationals in Thailand, including of MOU migrants, in preparation for the upcoming elections.



Dissemination of COVID-19 health messaging by Government Health Staff at Taung Pyo Village, Maungdaw Township, Rakhine State. © IOM 2020

Note: IOM is coordinating the response of the United Nations to the situation of returning migrants in Myanmar through the UN Core Group on Returning Migrants.

On 27 July, following discussions on assistance for migrants in the Delta, IOM supported the Ayeyarwady Regional Government with COVID-19 relief packages to assist 1,000 returning migrants in quarantine facilities in Patheingyi. IOM also met with the Chief Minister and Minister for Immigration and Manpower after the delivery of this assistance to discuss further support measures for returning migrants in Ayeyarwady.

IOM completed initial analysis of a rapid assessment conducted amongst returning migrants, including 1,312 respondents from Ayeyarwady, Magway, Mandalay, Kayin, Mon and Tanintharyi. Key findings include:

- High proportions of men (50%) and women (42%) returnees reported having lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic, while a further 14 per cent reported having not been paid wages. Returnees from China were significantly more likely to have lost their job and encountered discrimination or rights abuses than returnees from Thailand.
- Socioeconomic impacts are significant, with around 65 per cent of respondents reporting their households are not receiving any remittances, and less than 10 per cent saying they are receiving the same amount as before the pandemic. Around 60 per cent of respondents said they are in debt, two-thirds of whom said their debt has worsened since the pandemic.
- Returnees from China reported significantly greater vulnerabilities than returnees from Thailand, including being significantly more likely to have lost their jobs or have encountered discrimination prior to return, and greater levels of debt resulting from their migration.
- The main additional challenges reported were increased psychological stress (28%) and discrimination/stigma (15%). At the community level, the majority of communities in all states/regions reported not receiving sufficient support, with only a minority reporting no further assistance is needed.
- 62 per cent of respondents reported an intention to re-migrate, with men slightly more likely to be certain of their plans than women. Over 80 per cent of these intend to re-migrate to the same location. Around two-thirds of those intending to re-migrate intend to do so as soon as possible.

- Support required amongst returnees relates primarily to socioeconomic recovery, with the top three needs expressed overall being business start-up support, skills training, and employment support. International returnees indicated significantly more need for support in re-migration and psychological support.

WFP and its partners are providing short-term food assistance, so far supporting 50,800 returning migrants at the border gates with a one-time meal, and 50,800 in government-managed quarantine sites with three meals a day throughout the 21-day quarantine period in Kachin, Kayin, Mon and Shan states; as well as in Ayeyarwady, Bago, Magway, Sagaing, Tanintharyi and Yangon regions.

As of 30 July, ILO supported services have provided a total of 106,177 (women 45,905 and men 60,272) returning migrants, members of migrant-sending communities and frontline service providers with PPE, care packages, food and other necessities. Throughout July, the biggest demand for assistance has been in quarantine facilities in Myawaddy (3,225 migrants in 7 quarantine facilities) and Bago (2,417 migrants). Over this same period, ILO partners in Muse (Northern Shan State Baptist Convention); Kengtung (Mawk Kon Local Development Organisation, MK) and in Kawthaung (Foundation for Education and Development) assisted DOL and the General Administration Department in collecting data on the employment and skills situation of returned migrants.



IOM CSO partner, Nay Wun Ni (NWN), surveying a migrant-sending household in Mawlamyinegyun Township, Ayeyarwady Region, for the rapid assessment on the impacts of COVID-19 on returning migrants. © NWN 2020

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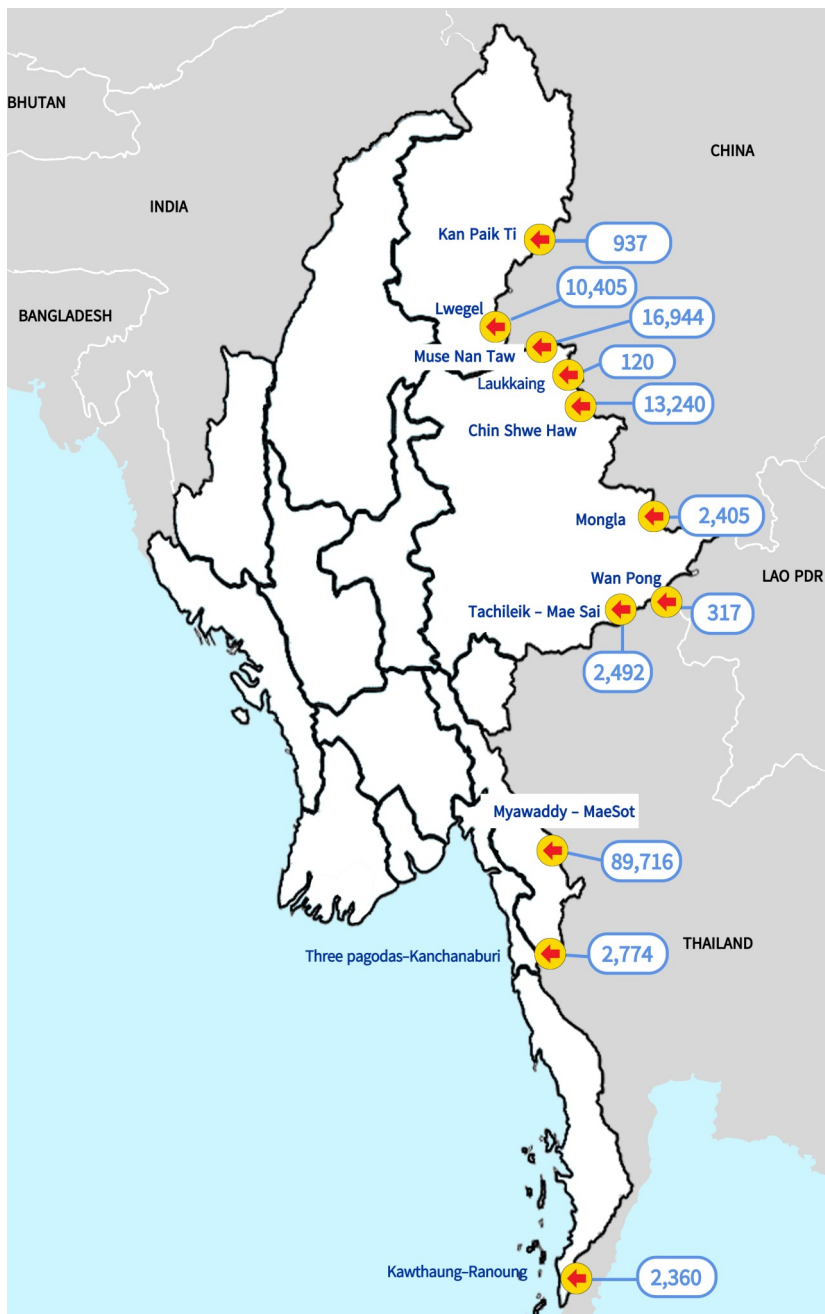
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Returns from China, Thailand and Lao PDR by Points of Entry



Border gate	Male	Female	Total
Returns from China (16 April - 16 July)			
Kan Paik Ti	618	319	937
Lwegel	7,257	3,148	10,405
Muse Nan Taw	11,714	5,230	16,944
Chin Shwe Haw	7,324	5,916	13,240
Laukkaing	75	45	120
Mongla	1,499	906	2,405
Returns from Lao PDR (8 May - 24 June)			
Wan Pong	197	120	317
Returns from Thailand (22 March - 5 August)			
Tachileik - Mae Sai	1,374	1,118	2,492
Myawaddy - Mae Sot	55,418	34,298	89,716
Kawthaung-Ranong	1,292	1,068	2,360
Three Pagodas-Kanchanaburi	1,715	1,059	2,774

Source: Department of Labour