

Southeast Asia Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

# REGIONAL COMMUNITY SAFETY AND RESILIENCE FORUM

Monthly Updates – February 2020



*The Indonesian Red Cross Society (Palang Merah Indonesia- PMI) conducted education and health promotion sessions in February among communities of Natuna Island - the place where the Indonesian government quarantined 238 citizens who were evacuated from the epicenter of COVID-19 outbreak in Wuhan, China.*

Welcome to our newsletter providing updates of Southeast Asia for the months of February 2020. All photos used in this publication are from the respective Red Cross Red Crescent National Society or IFRC unless mentioned otherwise. In addition to these monthly updates we send every month, you can also find Southeast Asia Red Cross Red Crescent's resources, tools, events and updates at the Resilience Library at <http://www.rcrc-resilience-southeastasia.org>.

## Thematic Updates from Southeast Asia At Regional Level: The RCRC Response to COVID-19



*Photo credit: Indonesian Red Cross Society (PMI)*

As the coronavirus continues to spread to more regions around the world, RCRC National Societies across Southeast Asia have implemented response plans aimed at ensuring preparedness and containment of the spread of the virus. Preparedness activities help communities not yet affected to prepare for rapid response should a case be detected; secondly, once a case has been detected in a new country or community, containment activities—for example contact tracing, point of entry or point of control screening, enhanced surveillance, and quarantine—aim to stop transmission of the virus into the general population or to contain it within a known group of people, by rapidly detecting and isolating cases. Here is a glimpse of some of the Preparedness and Containment activities implemented by some National Societies in Southeast Asia:

**Indonesia:** The Indonesian Red Cross (PMI) has been conducting education and health promotion activities regarding COVID-19 from the time since WHO declared it as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020. In early February, PMI conducted these activities among communities at Natuna Island, of Riau Province – the location where the Indonesian government had quarantined 238 Indonesians who had been from Wuhan, China. “We had to address bias, stigma and misinformation among the panicking residents who believed that COVID-19 is transmitted through air. This caused 93 locals who lived close to the quarantine center to flee to other villages”, said Ms. Aulia Arriani-Head of PMI’s Public Relations. To ensure that correct information regarding COVID-19 is easily available, PMI has activated its Call Center with the numbers: 021-7992325 Ext. 411 or 021-7992322. If there are questions that PMI cannot answer, PMI will immediately refer them to the government hotline operated by the Ministry of Health. PMI’s awareness information on its social media channels have reached nearly 25 million people. Currently, PMI is preparing to conduct awareness raising



activities in 10 Provinces and 15 Districts which are the main entry points to Indonesia. PMI has also developed a contingency plan for emergency situations and future developments.



**Myanmar:** Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS), in close coordination with the Ministry of Health and Sports (MoHS), mobilized a large number of Red Cross volunteers to support the MoHS activities to prevent COVID-19. MRCS’s activities focus on awareness raising, information sharing, health education, risk communications, and psychosocial support at the community level. MRCS has also been supporting MoHS in screening people at entry & exit points as well as through community-based surveillance measures. MRCS has distributed sanitizers and procured personal protective equipment (PPE) to prepare for a possible outbreak in Myanmar, which has not reported any cases of COVID-19 so far. MRCS continues to lead the Red Cross & Red Crescent Movement Task Force which convenes once a

week to the evolving situation. On 13<sup>th</sup> February, MRCS launched an emergency plan of action (amounting to CHF 1,226,730). With support from the Danish Red Cross, MRCS volunteers are assisting the MoHS in surveillance at the border gates of Kanpaiti, Loiye, and Pangwa in Kachin state bordering China. To learn more about MRCS’s activities on COVID-19, please see the [COVID-19 weekly information updates](#) by MRCS and RCRC Movement Partners in Myanmar and Red Cross or MRCS social media ([Facebook](#)/[Twitter](#)).

**Singapore:** Singapore Red Cross (SRC) has ramped up the frequency of befriending calls on 119 for isolated seniors, from fortnightly to weekly, to allay their concerns on the coronavirus outbreak. SRC volunteers continue with regular [home visits](#) to 94 seniors identified as high-risk clients, who live alone at home with little to low contact with the community. SRC’s TransportAid drivers and Medical Chaperones have been equipped with [masks and gloves](#), hand sanitizers, and drivers conduct daily disinfection of all vehicles to safeguard our beneficiaries, as well as volunteers and employees while working. The Singapore Red Cross Academy has also increased [cleaning and disinfection](#) of surfaces and touchpoints (mannequins and training- Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) to protect learners).



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**Thailand:** As part of prevention and preparedness efforts, Thai Red Cross Society (TRCS) has been enforcing preventive measures and precautions for TRCS staff, patients, blood donors and visitors, and at patient screening areas within TRCS hospitals. Through publications and online communication, TRCS has been continuing to provide advice to the general public on how to protect themselves from COVID-19. TRCS with the support of volunteers from 76 provinces of Thailand have produced face masks to alleviate the shortage of face masks. IFRC’s guidance and tools have been shared, including the Community-Based Health and First Aid (CBHFA), Epidemic Control for Volunteers (ECV) adaptation and use for COVID-19, Psychological First Aid (PFA) in epidemics, risk communications,

and community messaging, and guidance on including migrants and displaced people in preparedness and response activities.

TRCS has supported Red Cross Society of China (RCSC) with a donation of USD 50,000 and has started receiving public donations on behalf of RCSC under “Humanitarian and Medical Support for Chinese people against the spread of COVID-19 Pneumonia in Wuhan, Hubei province and other areas of the People’s

Republic of China”. TRCS has also attended a Rapid Response Center Meeting with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Public Health, and other related organizations to draft a response plan for Thais at-risk from aboard (i.e. from Wuhan; Republic of Korea; or from the Diamond Princess cruise ship).

**Viet Nam:** Viet Nam Red Cross (VNRC) has developed an action plan and guidelines for COVID-19 prevention, control, and response activities throughout the Red Cross system, targeting up to nine provinces and cities that have been assessed as high risk and that are densely populated. On 7<sup>th</sup> February, VNRC NHQ launched a campaign against COVID-19 awareness and prevention. The launch was organized in three places in Ha Noi reaching thousands of people in the capital city. Nearly 10,000 masks and 300 bottles of handwash were distributed among the public. As of 28<sup>th</sup> February, a total of 63,172 bars/ bottles of soaps and 122,500 masks have been distributed. 7,244 communication sessions on prevention and control of COVID-19 have been organized reaching 404,991 people (along with provision of free soaps and masks and / or voluntary blood donation) with key messages on protecting oneself from the virus.



## Highlight Updates from National Societies

### Cambodia

#### Cambodian Red Cross’s Visioning for 2030

The leadership and management of Cambodian Red Cross (CRC) gathered in Phnom Penh from 19-20<sup>th</sup> February, to visualize the CRC’s future directions. Members from the CRC headquarters as well as 25 branches participated in the workshop, where they tried to visualize a CRC that is attuned to current times and is built on the experience and knowledge gained over the years. During the 2-day visioning process, models of sustainability and institutional strengthening were defined. The visioning exercise was facilitated by IFRC CCST Bangkok.



### Laos

#### Public Awareness and Public Education (PAPE) training in Attapeu



The Lao Red Cross (LRC) conducted Public Awareness and Public Education (PAPE) for Disaster Risk Reduction training from 25-27<sup>th</sup> February for 24 (10 female) RC Youth volunteers and four teachers from Sompoy and Chantrara high schools in Attapeu province. The training aimed to increase their knowledge on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Climate Change and Health in Emergencies; and improve communication skills of volunteers. By the end of the three-day training, participants were able to design campaigns and key messages for three hazards – Flood, Fire and Drought, and they developed IEC materials for awareness raising among communities

## Myanmar

### Cash for Seeds: Revitalizing Winter Vegetable Cropping in Rakhine State

The Myanmar Red Cross Society (MRCS) has been providing humanitarian services to affected populations in various parts of Rakhine state since 2012. A new case study called “Cash for Seeds: Revitalizing Winter Vegetable Cropping in Rakhine State” was recently published. This case study captures MRCS’s humanitarian interventions in Rakhine related to addressing basic needs of violence affected communities by provision of direct cash transfers for agriculture, in collaboration with IFRC and Danish Red Cross. The case study can be accessed [here](#).



## Timor Leste

### Gender Equality Assessment and Training

Timor-Leste Red Cross (Cruz Vermelha de Timor-Leste (CVTL) conducted a gender equality assessment and training for 25 members (11 female) of program staff, officers and managers. The feedback from the participants was diverse. Some female participants said it gave them a new level of confidence when approaching issues of gender in their day-to-day work and personal lives. One of them said - “It was thought-provoking looking at Power dynamics and how we can break them into four categories 1) Power over, 2) Power with, 3) Power to, and 4) Power within. The discussion about Gender based violence was really interesting and it was good to learn how to refer victims of Domestic Violence and what laws we have in Timor-Leste.” From the men, the feedback was different. They appreciated the opportunity for open and honest discussions about the issues of gender.



“It was great to talk together about the roles we have at home, and how important it is to share tasks. The session on Domestic Violence, made us look at how we deal with our children and wives – and how there should never be violence to try and fix a problem. I understand much more about Gender now and I loved how interactive the training was-” was the reaction from one male participant. Another participant said, “I feel I am a much better person after attending the gender training. I understand the difference between sex and gender. But as a program person at CVTL, I learnt a lot more about engaging women in the work that we do; not just as participants but being part of the solution, women being leaders and decision makers. Through our program development we need to introduce indicators about women’s engagement and not just attending training.” Before the training, CVTL worked with CARE International and conducted a Gender Assessment among CVTL staff for two days. This was followed up by the Gender Equality Training for two days. The training was funded by the Australian Red Cross.

## Thailand

### GIS project Kick-Off and Training of Trainers in 5 pilot provinces



Throughout February, TRCS conducted GIS project Kick-Off ceremonies and Training of Trainers in five pilot provinces of Chiang Rai, Udon Thani, Surat Thani, Lampang and Songkhla. The Governor of each province presided over the Kick-Off ceremony and encouraged all officials to use “Phonphai” application to monitor, respond and report on any disaster occurring in their area. “Phonphai” can be downloaded from the App Store and Play Store. The application was developed to allow users to report disaster occurrences, call for assistance in emergency situations and serve as a tool for disaster response. Almost 300 officials from the local administration offices, department of disaster prevention and mitigation as well as staff from TRCS provincial Health Stations attended the training. They will be able to train and promote the utilization of this innovative tool among their colleagues and community members

## Viet Nam

### Viet Nam Red Cross responds to severe drought in Mekong River Delta

Drought and saltwater intrusion have affected 10 of 13 provinces (74/137 districts) of Vietnam, in the Mekong River Delta severely disrupting the livelihoods and access to basic services for 685,000 people in the region. It has affected agricultural production in the main rice growing regions of the country, with an estimated loss of production from about 460,000 hectares. Access to safe water has been severely affected for 200,000 households, who do not have regular and sufficient access to water for drinking and other domestic purposes. These conditions have resulted in a water shortage and significant damage to crops, threatening agricultural production, livelihoods, and access to safe water. The Ministry of Agricultural and Rural Development (MARD), Government of Viet Nam appealed for support to counter this adverse impact in the Mekong River Delta provinces of Viet Nam which is home to 19 million people, and accounts for 21 per cent of the country’s population. The Viet Nam Red Cross (VNRC) launched an immediate response with funding support of CHF 131,000 released from IFRC’s Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF). The interventions focus on:



• Conducting intensive need assessment in three provinces, for Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), Food Security and Livelihoods that inform the next steps for interventions.

- Deployment of pre-positioned water filtration units to provide safe water to vulnerable people (as shown in the picture above). The brackish-water machines are being deployed to remote and hard-hit villages/communes to help the communities to meet their urgent needs.
- Distribution of safe drinking water to households, who are severely affected. Each targeted household received two 20-liter jerry cans of water to meet their consumption needs.
- Improving WASH in the community through WASH trainings, hygiene and health promotion (including education on prevention of disease carrying vectors like mosquitoes, flies etc) and promotion of handwashing, targeting local families.

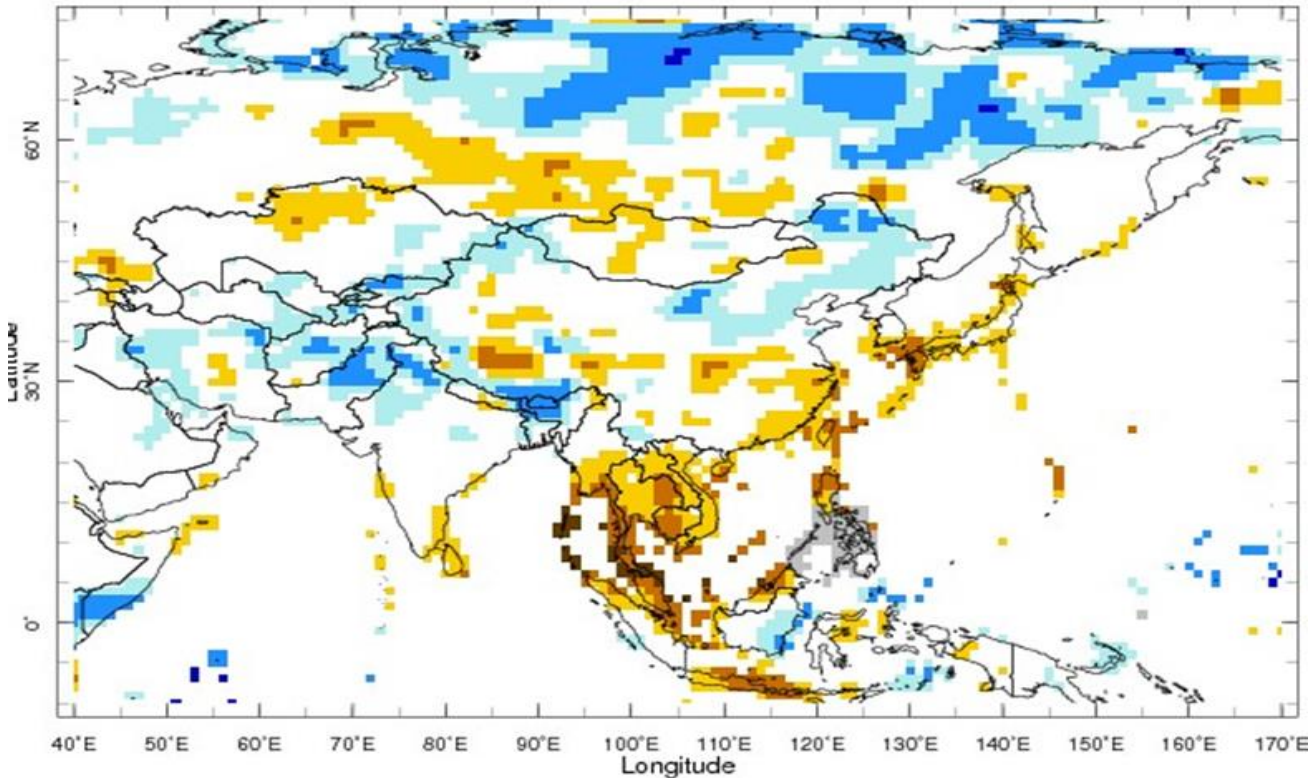
## Upcoming Events

Events for March 2020			
March	02-06	Lao RC's workshop to finalize the two decrees	Vientiane, Laos
	03-04	Field visit by Cartier Philanthropy to WASH Project has been cancelled due to COVID-19 prevention control measures.	Svay Rieng, Cambodia
	04	International Humanitarian Service Award 2019 conferred upon MRCS, by the American Red Cross for outstanding humanitarian services in Myanmar. Read more <a href="#">here</a> .	Washington DC, USA
	9-13	Consultative meeting for LRC's law - Cancelled	Vientiane, Laos
	12-13	Annual Pre-Disaster meeting to increase awareness among RCRC partners in Myanmar about upcoming draught and monsoon seasons, and to enhance preparedness for effective response.	Yangon, Myanmar
	15-25	YABC and YSS training organised by Lao Red Cross, IFRC and ASEAN Senior Official Meeting on Youth (SOMY) - Cancelled due to COVID-19 prevention control measures.	Vientiane, Laos
	17-20	2nd NDRT Training on WASH	Ayuthaya, Thailand
	18-20	Workshop on "Learning from Rakhine and other regional contexts: Working together towards principled and effective programming in fragile contexts" - Cancelled due to COVID-19 prevention control measures.	Yangon, Myanmar
	29	The running event called "Run Phon Phai" to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Relief and Community Health Bureau (RCHB) in December 2020 has been postponed until further notice, due to COVID-19 prevention control measures.	Samut Prakan, Thailand

# Seasonal Forecast

## March to May 2020

Forecast for Mar-May 2020, Forecast Issued Feb 2020



Will this season will be unusually wet?

Will this season will be unusually dry?

Wet: **Highly increased chance** (55% or greater)

Wet: **Moderately increased chance** (45-50%)

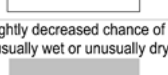
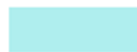
Wet: **Slightly increased chance** (35-40%)

No new information

Dry: **Slightly increased chance** (35-40%)

Dry: **Moderately increased chance** (45-50%)

Dry: **Highly increased chance** (55% or greater)



**For the interactive map from IFRC IRI, click [here](#)**

Meteorological agency in the respective Southeast Asian countries:

[Brunei Darussalam](#) | [Cambodia](#) | [Indonesia](#) | [Laos](#) | [Malaysia](#) | [Myanmar](#) | [Philippines](#) | [Singapore](#) | [Thailand](#) | [Timor-Leste](#) | [Vietnam](#)