



Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Situation Report

Palau Ministry of Health - External Situation Report

26 March 2020 - 09:00 PWT

GLOBAL SITUATION OVERVIEW

The Ministry of Health (MOH) is closely monitoring an ongoing pandemic of a coronavirus disease which is affecting over 170 countries globally. The World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC) on January 30, 2020, designated its official name as Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) on February 11, 2020, and characterized it as a *pandemic* on March 12, 2020.

As of March 26, 2020:

- At least **467,594*** confirmed cases of COVID-19 reported globally, including **72** cases in **Hawaii**, **37** in **Guam**, **25** in **French Polynesia**, **14** in **New Caledonia**, **5** in **Fiji**, and **1** in **Papua New Guinea**.
- **97,766**** confirmed cases within the **Western Pacific Region**.
- **21,181*** deaths reported globally – **3,518**** deaths in the **Western Pacific Region**, **1*** death reported on **Guam**.
- **113,770*** people have **recovered** from COVID-19 globally.

**Johns Hopkins CSSE COVID-19 Dashboard **WHO COVID-19 Situation Report No. 65*

PALAU READINESS AND RESPONSE

As of March 26, 2020:

- There are **NO SUSPECTED CASES** of COVID-19 in Palau.
- MOH Emergency Operations Center (EOC) activated on Jan. 22, 2020 to implement preparedness and response measures to minimize the risk of importation and potential local transmission of COVID-19 to Palau.
- Belau National Hospital (BNH) now prepared to receive and care for critically ill suspected cases.
- Alternative Care Site (ACS) is currently being prepared to receive and care for critically ill suspected cases.
- **MOH 24-hour Hotline** activated for public inquiries: **+680-488-0555**. Risk communication efforts sustained by MOH to relay credible and timely information to stakeholders and relevant information to the public and will continue to provide updates as they become available.
- **MOH currently working with international partners to establish on-island COVID-19 testing capacity.**
- Health screening for commercial flights at Palau International Airport suspended as of Mar. 26; health screening at Malakal seaport continues for incoming vessels. Screening data:
 - Past 24 hours: **0** flights screened, **0** travelers; **0** vessels screened, **0** travelers; **0*** secondary screening.
 - Since Jan. 23: **167** flights screened, **15,169** travelers; **32** vessels screened, **1,243** travelers; **327** secondary screening.
- **Commercial air travel to Palau is temporary suspended as of Mar. 26 until further notice as airlines temporarily halt services. Air mail and cargo service continues on a weekly basis through chartered services.**
- Executive Order No. 437 signed on Mar. 17, 2020 urging the collaboration of all government agencies in the COVID-19 response and extends existing travel restrictions - temporary ban of direct flights and cruise ships originating from or transiting through mainland China, Hong Kong, or Macau into Palau, as well as temporary ban of entry of foreign travelers from these areas in the past 14 days until April 30, 2020.
- MOH issued a *Certification of an Unavoidable Public Health Emergency* for COVID-19 on Mar. 17, 2020, which mandates the scaling-up of clinical and public health response measures, and calls for a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach to the COVID-19 pandemic threat.
- **All schools remain closed until Apr. 3, 2020 to allow preparations for potential COVID-19 cases.**
- The public is urged not to panic and to continue practicing public health measures to prevent respiratory infections: **Respiratory etiquettes: Cover cough and sneeze with clean tissue or shirt sleeve. Hand hygiene: Frequent handwashing with soap and warm water or hand rub with 70% alcohol-based sanitizer.**

**Referred to secondary screening for self-quarantine advisory.*

More information about the MOH COVID-19 response can be obtained by calling MOH EOC Liaison Gaafar Uherbelau +680 775-1310.