

QUARANTINE SITUATION AT PORTS-OF-ENTRY IN MANILA

SITUATION REPORT #2 (25 MAY-03 JUN 2020)

OVERVIEW

On 25 May 2020, President Rodrigo Duterte ordered the government agencies to rush the release of the COVID-19 test results of the 24,000 Overseas Filipino Workers (OFWs) remaining in the quarantine facilities, waiting to be cleared to return home to their families. In order to make this happen, the Sub-Task Group (STG) for the Repatriation of OFWs mobilized government funds to transport OFWs to their respective hometowns. The *Hatid Probinsya para sa mga OFWs Program* operations for Luzon-bound repatriates were centered at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange (PITX) while the operations for Visayas- and Mindanao-bound repatriates were split among the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and various seaports nearby.

As a result of the large mobilization, the STG had to adjust their operational procedures. The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) deployed trained medical staff to the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) laboratory to assist with processing the backlog of tests. This effort addressed the backlog and enabled the laboratory to release results faster. The PCG also had to shift from processing the results and certificates at their Headquarters, to releasing the test results online and handing out the certificates at the ports of departure.

The Locally Stranded Individuals (LSIs) are also starting to be noticed. LSIs are mostly made up of Filipinos who were flown to Manila by their recruitment agencies pending their application for work abroad, and were later abandoned following the lockdown. Many of these LSIs came from Mindanao, hoping to find domestic work in the Middle East. LSIs also include workers and students who are unable to go back to their homes in the provinces after the lockdown. Some LGUs have initiated efforts to bring home these LSIs and the STG is also considering to include LSIs in their *Hatid Probinsya* program.

This massive operation of the STG for the Repatriation of OFWs, including the operations for LSIs, were recognized by the Inter-Agency Task Force. The STG is now planned to be elevated to a Task Group which will then be headed by Usec. Cesar Yano of the Department of National Defense.



KEY FIGURES AND IOM RESPONSE

¹From 09 Feb to 03 Jun 2020



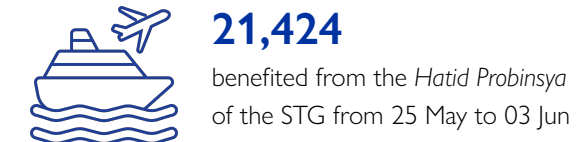
13,149
repatriates are land-based

37,018
repatriates are sea-based



7,000
remain in quarantine facilities in Metro Manila

2%
of the returnees tested positive for COVID-19



5,829
returned by land

11,340
returned by air

4,255
returned by sea

500,000
more are expected to return by year end



IOM provided 35 buses to support the STG operations

- 30 buses to OWVA for their *Hatid Probinsya* operations from May 29 to 31 in shuttling OFWs from their quarantine facilities to ports, and for onward transportation of OFWs to other provinces in Luzon.



IOM provided 32 printers and 10 laptops to support the STG operations

- 10 printers and laptops to OWVA for departure operations at the ports for home-bound OFWs.

- 5 buses to PCG for their *Hatid Probinsya* operations on May 31 in in shuttling OFWs from their quarantine facilities to ports, and deploying swabbing teams to quarantine facilities

- 22 printers and 10 laptops to PCG for arrival operations and printing of clearance lists and certificates.

ASSESSMENT AND IDENTIFIED CHALLENGES



TESTING

The efforts of the PCG to augment the manpower at the laboratories significantly helped with releasing of results. However, one of the key challenges is the unstable supply of COVID-19 testing kits which has, at times, impacted on the processing of arriving OFWs.



ACCOMMODATION OR QUARANTINE FACILITIES

The *Hatid Probinsya* operations successfully decongested most of the quarantine facilities in Metro Manila. However, since flight restrictions all around the world are slowly being eased, the government is expecting up to 500,000 more Filipinos to return by the end of the year. There is a high probability that the quarantine facilities would return to full capacity once the returns increase.



ONWARD TRANSPORTATION

The *Hatid Probinsya* operations were significantly reduced by 01 Jun after Metro Manila was placed under Modified General Community Quarantine. Access to public transportation has now deemed the operation at PITX to focus on providing transportation to more distant provinces like Regions 1, 2, and 5. However, flights and ferries are still limited.



DATA COLLECTION AND MANAGEMENT

Although they have adjusted their operations, the PCG's data collection and management system can be improved. During operations from 25 to 31 May, it became more evident that better data management system is required to increase efficiency in processing OFWs.



PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

There have been consistent reports of OFWs complaining of mental health issues in the quarantine facilities—one case had to be transported to the National Center for Mental Health for immediate attention. It was identified that OWVA house parents and the PCG frontliners are best placed to benefit from a Psychological First Aid training, as part of a larger MHPSS effort for OFWs, which has been identified as one of the prioritized need. The training will roll-out on 15 Jun, in coordination with WHO and PRC's MHPSS activities. House parents and frontliners would provide PFA to OFWs after their training, however the current referral mechanism need to be expanded for more specialized individual psychosocial support.

NEXT STEPS

After establishing the partnership with OWVA and the PCG, IOM is seeking to:

- 1 Continue to assist in data collection and management by providing IT support and proposing software solutions, and donate more equipment as needed.
- 2 Identify donors or partners to continue to provide means of transportation for the *Hatid Probinsya* program.
- 3 Collate relevant statistics of the repatriated OFWs from OWVA and open the discussion on reintegration plans in the context of COVID-19

