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IFRC COVID-19 Emergency Decree Pro Bono Research: Cambodia

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1. Is there coordination between state and non-state actors, e.g. through a national emergency response mechanism?

Coordination with non-state actors is primarily with the World Health Organization (WHO). On Thursday, March 5, 2020, the Ministry of Economy and Finance of Cambodia announced that it had prepared emergency funds of USD \$30 million to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other viruses for six months.¹ According to the KHMER Times, the Ministry of Economy and Finance is working closely with the Ministry of Health and also partnering with WHO.² WHO has also stated that it is partnering with the Ministry of Health to update Cambodia's national preparedness and response plan as well as to identify gaps for priority preparedness actions.³ The priority areas for community transmission include:

- Incident management, planning and multisectoral coordination
- Surveillance and risk assessment
- Laboratory
- Clinical management and health care services
- Infection prevention and control
- Non-pharmaceutical public health measures
- Risk communication
- Points of entry
- Operational logistics⁴

2. Is there mention of the role of Red Cross (RC) or humanitarian actors? In what areas/sectors? What responsibilities are ascribed to RC?

There has been no mention of the RC in the current response. However, Cambodia has partnered with WHO (as described above), and the Emergency Reserve Fund for Contagious Infectious Diseases at the U.S. Agency for International Development has committed USD \$37 million to help address the threat of COVID-19 in certain identified high-priority countries, including Cambodia.⁵

¹ Khmer Times, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50699008/cambodia-creates-30-million-emergency-fund-to-fight-covid-19-outbreak/>. This link and all other links referred to in this memo were last accessed on 25 March 2020.

² *Ibid.*

³ Responding to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Cambodia, [https://www.who.int/cambodia/news/detail/19-02-2020-responding-to-the-coronavirus-disease-2019-\(covid-19\)-in-cambodia](https://www.who.int/cambodia/news/detail/19-02-2020-responding-to-the-coronavirus-disease-2019-(covid-19)-in-cambodia).

⁴ *Ibid.*

3. Are there exceptions to travel restrictions that will facilitate the movement of RC/humanitarian relief teams and/or aid across borders? What (if any) quarantine requirements or other conditions are attached?

Cambodia has implemented restrictions on travel from Italy, Germany, Spain, France, Iran, Vietnam, Thailand and Laos. There are no apparent exceptions for humanitarian relief teams⁶.

Specifically, on March 14, 2020, the Ministry of Health announced a 30-day ban on foreigners from Italy, Germany, Spain, France and the United States, effective March 17, 2020.⁷ Cambodia has also banned Iranians from entering, effective March 18, 2020,⁸ and Cambodia's Primer Minister Hun Sen has ordered Cambodian citizens not to travel to Europe, the United States and Iran.⁹ The Cambodia-Vietnam, Cambodia-Thailand and Cambodia-Laos land borders are also closed, and cruise ships and riverboats are not permitted to enter.¹⁰

4. Are there exceptions to quarantines, curfews and other restrictions on movement that allow RC/humanitarian organizations access to vulnerable populations (including for psychosocial or non-medical aid)?

As at the time of writing, there do not appear to be express exceptions for humanitarian relief teams.

5. Have any special legal facilities or exemptions been put in place for the importation of medical aid or other relief items or personnel (International Disaster Response Law)? What (if any) quarantine requirements or other conditions are attached?

As at the time of writing, there do not appear to be facilities or exemptions. The Ministry of Health is working with China though, and on March 23, 2020, seven Chinese medical experts arrived in Cambodia to provide assistance.¹¹ China has also provided Cambodia with medical supplies.¹²

6. Is the RC (or humanitarian organizations) categorized as 'essential' or 'emergency' services, for the purposes of exemptions to restrictions on business operations and opening hours?

⁵ Statement by USAID administrator Mark Green on the commitment of \$37 million in assistance to respond to novel coronavirus COVID-19, <https://www.usaid.gov/news-information/press-releases/mar-2-2020-administrator-green-37-million-assistance-novel-coronavirus-covid-19>.

⁶ Our responses are based on English language sources only. It is possible that such exceptions exist in the Khmer language government documents which are not available in English.

⁷ Cambodia bars entry from five countries as coronavirus cases increase, <https://www.thestar.com.my/news/world/2020/03/14/cambodia-bars-entry-from-five-countries-as-coronavirus-cases-increase>.

⁸ BREAKING NEWS: Cambodia Bans Entries of Iranians for 30 Days to Prevent Covid-19, <http://m.en.freshnewsasia.com/index.php/en/localnews/17282-2020-03-15-01-24-24.html>.

⁹ French infant among four new coronavirus cases in Cambodia, <https://nationalpost.com/pmn/health-pmn/french-infant-among-four-new-coronavirus-cases-in-cambodia>.

¹⁰ Foreign travel advice, <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/cambodia>; Social distancing: A responsibility in fighting COVID-19, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50704520/social-distancing-a-responsibility-in-fighting-covid-19/>; and Cambodia almost sealed off after borders close, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50704526/cambodia-almost-sealed-off-after-borders-close/>.

¹¹ Chinese medical experts arrive in Cambodia to help fight Coronavirus, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50704825/chinese-medical-experts-arrive-in-cambodia-to-help-fight-coronavirus/>.

¹² COVID-19: China medical supplies for Cambodia arrive, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50703027/covid-19-china-medical-supplies-for-cambodia-arrive/>.

As at the time of writing, there do not appear to be any such categorizations. The current restrictions include a ban on all religious gatherings on March 17, 2020,¹³ the temporary closure of schools and major events in Siem Reap, and an early break for public and private schools in Siem Reap and Phnom Penh.¹⁴

7. What other measures are provided in the emergency decrees? (for governmental actors, for communities, for health workers, etc)?

The Ministry of Labour and Vocational Training has circulated instruction on preventative measures against COVID-19 at factories, enterprises and establishments.¹⁵

8. Have restrictions been adopted or put in place that ban the export of protective medical equipment?

As at the time of writing, it would appear that there are no such restrictions.

¹³ Religious gatherings banned after COVID-19 infection surges, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50702722/pm-bans-all-religious-gatherings-in-wake-of-covid-19-pandemic/>.

¹⁴ Social distancing: A responsibility in fighting COVID-19, <https://www.khmertimeskh.com/50704520/social-distancing-a-responsibility-in-fighting-covid-19/>.

¹⁵ Instruction On Preventative Measures Against Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) at Factories, Enterprises, Establishments, https://www.gmac-cambodia.org/regulation_pdf_en/1581315580.pdf.