



PRESS STATEMENT
UPDATES ON THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 (COVID-19)
SITUATION IN MALAYSIA

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER OF MALAYSIA
DATO' SERI DR WAN AZIZAH DR WAN ISMAIL
CHAIRPERSON
CENTRAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE
(JAWATANKUASA PENGURUSAN BENCANA PUSAT – JPBP)

16 February 2020, Putrajaya – the Ministry of Health (MOH) would like to inform that one (1) COVID-19 case has fully recovered and discharged well yesterday, 15 February 2020. She is Case 15, a female Chinese national who was treated at Permai Hospital, Johor Bahru.

No new COVID-19 case was reported to the National Crisis Preparedness and Response Centre (CPRC) today. In total, **14 cases** are still receiving treatment in hospitals and **eight (8) cases** have been discharged well.

For the eight (8) cases that were discharged, they underwent repeated COVID-19 tests, and found to be negative on two consecutive repeated tests.

Westerdam Cruise Ship

This morning I met with the Prime Minister, together with the Minister of Health, Director General of Health, Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Secretary General of Home Affairs, Secretary General of Ministry of Transport, Director General of the Immigration Department, the National Security Council and the National Disaster Management Agency (NADMA).

Subsequently, I chaired a meeting will all of the above ministries and agencies together with Malaysia Airlines Berhad (MAS) to discuss the current status of COVID-19 cluster and related issues.

With regards to the Westerdam cruise ship that was carrying 2,257 people (1,455 passengers and 802 crews):

- This ship had docked in Hong Kong for one day before commencing their 14-day cruise on 1 February 2020 (East Asia cruise).
- It was not allowed to dock in several countries before receiving permission to dock in Sihanoukville, Cambodia on 13 February 2020.
- The Holland America Line, operator of the Westerdam Cruise, had arranged with MAS for special charter flights to transport some of these passengers from Sihanouk International Airport to various final destinations through Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA).
- Based on their original planning, MAS will arrange for four special charter flights from 14 February until 16 February 2020.
- As of today, only one special charter flight (MH8763) carrying 145 passengers has landed in KLIA on 14 February 2020, 7 pm.
- All 145 passengers underwent health screening upon disembarkation and two (2) passengers (US nationals; husband and wife) were found to be symptomatic. They were brought to Sungai Buloh Hospital for further investigation.
- Subsequent test results confirmed COVID-19 for the 83 year-old female on 15 February 2020. The patient suffered from a cough but no fever or difficulty breathing. Her chest X-ray showed signs of pneumonia.
- The test results for her husband is negative for COVID-19. He is receiving treatment and being monitored in Sungai Buloh Hospital for his symptoms.
- MOH has informed MAS on this confirmed COVID-19 case (Case 22).
- As a result, all passengers on that flight was considered as close contact. Based on this latest development, MAS has made the decision to cancel the remaining special charter flights.

- Repeated COVID-19 tests were conducted on the elderly couple late last night and similar results were obtained, positive for the wife and negative for her husband.
- Of the remaining 143 passengers of the flight who passed the thermal screening and were asymptomatic, 137 have continued their journey with outbound flights, while 6 are still awaiting their outbound flights.

Latest Policy Decision

As of today, the Government of Malaysia has made the following decisions:

- We will not allow any cruise ships originating or transiting through any seaports in China from entering Malaysia.
- All Westerdam cruise ship passengers still remaining in Cambodia will not be allowed entry into Malaysia, taking into account that they are close contacts with a confirmed COVID-19 case (Case 22).
- The six (6) remaining passengers who were awaiting their outbound flight, will undergo COVID-29 testing. If the results are negative, they will be allowed for their outward journey. However, if found to be positive, they will be brought to the hospital for further management.

International Contact Tracing activities

Following the confirmed one (1) COVID-19 case amongst the passengers of Westerdam cruise ship that docked in Cambodia on 13 February 2020, and subsequent flight arrival in KLIA on 14 February 2020, contact tracing for close contacts activities were conducted immediately.

This included formal communications between the Malaysian International Health Regulations (IHR) Focal Point with counterparts from all countries involved. Through these communications, information of each passenger was conveyed to the National IHR Focal Points of each respective country. This information will be used by the Ministries of Health of these countries to follow-up and trace these passengers once they arrive at their final destinations.

In particular, communications with the National IHR Focal Point of Cambodia was also conducted. This is to enable more effective management and prevention activities be implemented at their level – being the country where the cruise ship had docked.

The Government of Malaysia will continue to strengthen preparedness and response activities in managing the COVID-19 infection in Malaysia. In addition, MOH will monitor the latest development of this disease through various official channels and sources. The Malaysian public will be provided with the latest updates in a timely manner. MOH will also ensure that appropriate prevention and control activities are implemented effectively.

The National Disaster Management Agency

16 February 2020

Additional Information

About Case 22

She is an 83 year-old female US national. She was a passenger on a leisure cruise ship that docked in Cambodia on 13 February 2020. The Cambodian government had allowed all passengers and crews to disembark and return home following a health screening.

A total of 145 passengers of this cruise ship took a special charter flight to Malaysia on 14 February 2020. Amongst these passengers, Case 22 and her husband were detected with symptoms upon landing at Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), and were referred to Sungai Buloh Hospital for further investigations. Subsequent test results conducted by the Institute for Medical Research (IMR) confirmed COVID-19 on 15 February 2020. She is currently admitted to the isolation ward and in a stable condition. The test results for her husband was negative and he is still receiving treatment and being monitored in Sungai Buloh Hospital for his symptoms.

Capacity of the Institute for Medical Research for detecting COVID-19

IMR is a referral laboratory recognised by the World Health Organization (WHO) for polio and influenza. IMR was also the first medical laboratory to be directly involved with diagnostic testing for COVID-19 infection in Malaysia. Preparedness for the possibility of COVID-19 infection in Malaysia was initiated in 3 January 2020, when the reagents for conventional RT-PCR to detect coronavirus were prepared. When scientists from China shared the COVID-19 genetic information on 11 January 2020, the Virology Unit of IMR had created the reagent sequence “primers and probes specific for COVID-19” on the same day. The testing protocol used by IMR is in-line with the protocol of real time RT-PCR COVID-19 issued by the WHO (based on Corman *et al.* 2020).

Current Status in Malaysia

As of 16 February 2020, 10 am, **no new** COVID-19 case was reported to the National Crisis Preparedness and Response Centre (CPRC). The total cumulative confirmed COVID-19 cases in Malaysia remains at **22 cases**:

- **Twelve (12)** from amongst Patient-Under-Investigation (PUI);
- **Eight (8)** from amongst close contacts; and
- **Two (2)** amongst Malaysians evacuated through the HADR from Wuhan.

Out of these, 15 were Chinese nationals, six (6) were Malaysians, and one (1) US national.

Contact tracing activities are still ongoing to identify close contacts to cases. Cumulatively, 310 close contacts have been identified, and these numbers are expected to increase until investigations are completed.