

REPORT DISEASE AND HEALTH HAZARD NEWS OF INTEREST ALONG THE BORDER

April 27 - May 3, 2023

WEEKLY EVENTS

- On April 30, 2023, the Department of Disease Control, Department of Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health, together with the Air Force, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Immigration Bureau, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Ministry of Labor, and Ministry of Transport, facilitated the return of 135 Thai nationals who were affected by the conflict in the Republic of Sudan, most of whom were from the southern border provinces of Thailand. Upon their return, the Department of Disease Control conducted health screening and found two cases of COVID-19 and nine cases of respiratory tract infections. They provided appropriate advice on health prevention measures, personal hygiene, health care, and adequate rest, to help improve their conditions and recover.
- From May 1-3, 2023, the Division of Epidemiology, DDC organized a practical training to enhance knowledge and strengthen surveillance of important vaccine-preventable diseases. The training was conducted in Bangkok for 200 healthcare personnel. The training objectives were to reinforce knowledge on vaccine-preventable diseases and targets for VPDs including those targeted for eradication and to emphasize strengthening surveillance and vaccine coverage for target populations according to DDC objectives.

CHALLENGE: MAKE THAILAND MALARIA-FREE BY 2024

The Week 17 Disease Surveillance Report (April 24-30, 2023) of the Department of Disease Control, Ministry of Public Health, reported one case of fatal malaria in a 58-year-old man living in Chiang Thong Subdistrict, Wang Chao District, Tak Province. In the past week, another person died of malaria, a 12-year-old girl living in a different district of the same province. The laboratory test results of both patients confirmed *Plasmodium vivax* infection, which has been increasing since 2022 following the increased population movement across the border and the relaxation of COVID-19 restriction measures. In the period since January 2023 there have been 2,594 reported malaria cases, which is three times higher than the same period from the previous year. The provinces with the highest number of cases are Tak, Mae Hong Son, and Kanchanaburi.

On April 25 (World Malaria Day), the Ministry of Public Health announced measures to manage malaria-affected areas, prioritizing provinces that border neighboring countries. These measures include intensive community-based case detection, expansion of diagnosis and treatment services, rapid response and investigation upon case confirmation, mosquito vector control in all areas, monitoring of patient treatment and medication compliance, and routine assessments for continuous implementation evaluation. Additionally, there has been collaboration to prevent, control, and eliminate in Thailand with the Department of National Parks, Wildlife and Plant Conservation, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, with the goal of making Thailand malaria-free by 2024.



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR OFFICIALS

Public health officials should collaborate with related local organizations to promote awareness among the community about the causes, initial symptoms, and proper prevention methods of malaria, especially among those residing in forested areas, people who frequently travel along or across border areas, and students. It is crucial to prioritize testing for the malaria among high-risk groups. If diagnosed, prompt treatment and follow-up are necessary until the patient is treated, before they travel to other areas to prevent the spread to mosquitos and subsequently to humans in other regions. Patients must fully complete their medication course.

INFORMATION COLLECTED AND ANALYZED BY



Multisectoral Capacity Development Program for Public Health Emergency Detection and Response in Border Areas

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Sources

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- https://www.matichon.co.th/local/news_539109
- Information courtesy of: International Communicable Disease Control and Quarantine Division/Risk Communication Bureau, Department of Disease Control, May 1st, 2023.
- Information courtesy of: International Communicable Disease Control and Quarantine Division/Risk Communication Bureau, Department of Disease Control, April 30th, 2023.
- Image courtesy of: <https://odpc10.ddc.moph.go.th/?p=1971>