

Established in 1951, IOM is the leading **inter-governmental organization** in the field of migration. IOM fights against **exploitation of migrants** in all forms, especially the severe human rights violations suffered by victims of trafficking. IOM seeks to provide protection and empower trafficked women, men, girls and boys; raise awareness and understanding of the issue; and bring justice to survivors of human trafficking.



## Emergency Response for Cambodian Migrants Returning from Thailand

### SUMMARY

An increasing number of Cambodians, the majority of whom are undocumented, have been returning home from Thailand over the past two weeks, prompted by fear of arrest by Thai authorities and uncertain political situation. **IOM Cambodia is providing support to local immigration officials at the Poi Pet border crossing** by facilitating transportation for returning Cambodians to return to their communities of origin. Cambodia's border town of **Poi Pet is in particular experiencing a migration crisis, with more than 200,000 Cambodian migrants having returned since 06 June 2014**. Thousands of migrants are returning en masse, each day, transported on buses and flat-bed trucks, based on a general concern and uncertainty of the political situation in Thailand. Many migrants travelling with families and young children. The number of Cambodian migrants who have returned from Thailand has been rapidly increasing with **more than 40,000 arriving on 14 June 2014 alone**. The most critical needs have been adequate food, water and safe transportation including minimizing travel health risks associated for returnees from the border to their home provinces, particularly for the most vulnerable migrants, such as women children. The increase in numbers of migrants quickly **overwhelmed local authorities and available resources**, such as transportation, and water and food.

The situation was desperate as many of the migrants were separated from their luggage and family during the border crossing and were forced to stay within the crowded and congested checkpoint on the Cambodian side until their belongings and families are transported from Thailand through to the Cambodian side. Migrants stranded overnight were left with no option but to sleep at local markets or wait under open tents provided by local NGOs.



Cambodian Migrants arriving at the Poi Pet border

### EMERGENCY RESPONSE

On June 12<sup>th</sup>, 150 military trucks from the Royal Cambodian Armed Force arrived and continued to transport the bulk of the young adult migrants stranded at the Poi Pet border, but the trucks were not suitable for women with young children, pregnant women, elderly and the disabled. IOM provided additional suitable transportation for vulnerable migrants to ensure their safe and dignified return to home provinces.

During the response, IOM established a **pre-embarkation health screening and transportation system at the border check point**, targeting the most vulnerable migrants. IOM deployed 10 staff, including a medical doctor and also recruited village health workers from the local district. IOM staff and health workers surveyed migrants as they disembark from the Thai transportation trucks, to identify the most vulnerable migrants, women with young children, pregnant women, elderly and/ or those with mental or physical disabilities. **The vulnerable migrants were referred to the IOM tent where they received food and water** provided by NGOs and a health check conducted by IOM doctor and health workers from government health facilities. Once these migrants were rested and fit for travel, IOM staff escorted them to the buses waiting nearby. A final check was conducted before buses departed and additional food and water was provided for the travel to their home provinces.



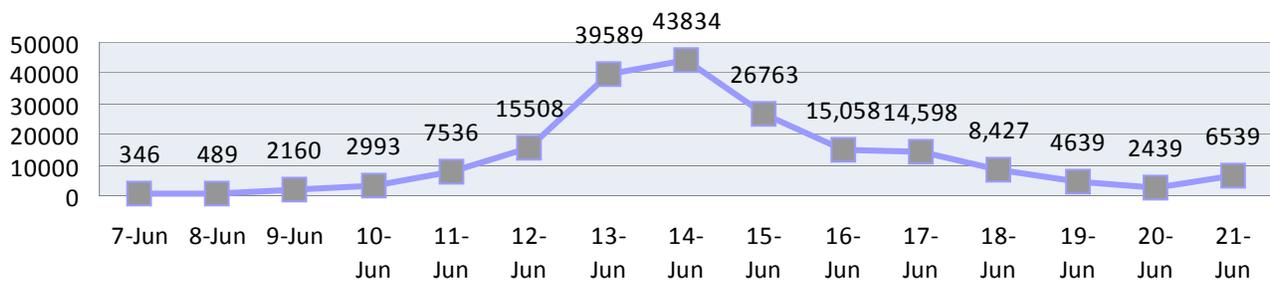
38% of returned migrants were women



IOM provided 137 busses in 11 days which transported 5,887 migrants to their home province

# Emergency Response for Cambodian Migrants Returning from Thailand

Number of Migrants Returned From Thailand to Cambodia Poi Pet Checkpoint  
- June 2014



## PARTNERSHIPS AND COORDINATION

An informal coordination team was set up among IOM, Samaritans Purse, World Vision and Caritas to ensure all interventions, food, water, transport, shelter and post arrival/pre-departure health screening were coordinated in the best interest of the migrants. In addition to interventions at Poi Pet, food and water distributions were also set up at strategic provincial locations, serving migrants along the way as they traveled considerable distances from the border to their home provinces and then onwards to district and remote villages.

IOM's interventions were conducted in close coordination with local NGOs, such as Samaritans Purse and Cambodian Red Cross, who were leading the food distribution at the drop off points, to all migrants, including the most vulnerable migrants referred to IOM transports. Additional food and water was provided by the project through these existing distribution mechanisms at the border.

Local authorities, such as Immigration and border security, provided crowd control and safety in coordination with IOM transport vehicles stationed at the checkpoint. IOM operations staff coordinated with military trucks to ensure vulnerable migrants were referred to IOM for transportation.

### Quick Statistics

**137**– Number of busses/ vans provided by IOM to assist migrants

**5,887**– Number of migrants IOM transported to home provinces

**12,917**– Number of migrant children who returned to Poipet

**62,477**– Number of women migrants

**190,918**– Number of migrants who returned to Poipet  
(IOM Data, collected from 7– 21 June)



Migrants returning to their home province by use of IOM

## FUNDING

The Australian Embassy in Cambodia pledged USD 40,000 to IOM to meet this critical transport assistance to returning migrants. In order to address the growing reintegration needs of returned migrants, IOM requires an additional USD 100,000 to provide the most vulnerable migrants with accommodation, food support, health care and safe migration information.

IOM will conduct soon conduct a needs assessment of returned migrants, and provide estimates of additional funding requirements for other reintegration and essential services.

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