

Briefing

Indonesia COVID-19 Public Health Risk Assessment – July 2021

Date due to MO: 22 July 2021

Action required by: 22 July 2021

Security level: IN CONFIDENCE

Health Report number: 20211677

To: Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister for COVID-19 Response

Contact for telephone discussion

Name	Position	Telephone
Dr Ashley Bloomfield	Te Tumu Whakarae mō te Hauora Director-General of Health	§ 9(2)(a)
Maree Roberts	Deputy Director General, System Strategy and Policy	§ 9(2)(a)

Minister's office to complete:

- Approved
 Decline
 Noted
 Needs change
 Seen
 Overtaken by events
 See Minister's Notes
 Withdrawn

Comment:

Indonesia COVID-19 Public Health Risk Assessment – July 2021

Security level: IN CONFIDENCE **Date:** 22 July 2021

To: Hon Chris Hipkins, Minister for COVID-19 Response

Purpose of report

1. This report recommends that advice is prepared for the Reconnecting New Zealanders Ministerial Group (RNZMG) on whether Indonesia should be reclassified as a very high risk (VHR) country.

Summary

2. On 5 July 2021, Cabinet agreed to a new risk assessment framework for considering the level of risk countries pose to New Zealand. Under the framework, once a country is identified as being of concern, a detailed public health risk assessment is carried out by public health professionals. If, as a result of the public health assessment, my recommendation is to classify a country as VHR, advice is prepared for the RNZMG to inform a decision on the risk level status of the country and agree to any additional risk mitigation measures.
3. A risk assessment for Indonesia has been undertaken. I believe that travellers from Indonesia pose a very high risk to New Zealand and additional risk mitigation measures are necessary. **I recommend that advice is prepared for the RNZMG to consider whether to classify Indonesia as a VHR country.** That advice will also include additional risk mitigation measures that could be applied to travellers from Indonesia.

Recommendations

We recommend you:

- a) **Note** the country risk assessment framework agreed by Cabinet creates a structured risk assessment and decision-making framework for categorising the risk to New Zealand posed by travellers from different countries Yes/No
- b) **Note** the attached Public Health Assessment of the risk posed by travellers from Indonesia to New Zealand Yes/No
- c) **Agree** that advice is prepared for the Reconnecting New Zealanders Ministerial Group recommending that Indonesia is reclassified as very high risk Yes/No
- d) **Agree** that the advice to the Reconnecting New Zealanders Ministerial Group include options for public health measures to mitigate that risk Yes/No

- e) **Note** that the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet COVID-19 Policy Group will prepare further advice for the Reconnecting New Zealanders Ministerial Group to inform their decision.



Dr Ashley Bloomfield
Te Tumu Whakarae mō te Hauora
Director-General of Health
Date: 21 July 2021



Hon Chris Hipkins
Minister for COVID-19 Response

Date: 22/7/21

PROACTIVELY RELEASED

Indonesia COVID-19 Public Health Risk Assessment – July 2021

Background

4. On 5 July 2021, Cabinet agreed a risk assessment framework for travellers arriving in New Zealand [SWC-21-MIN-0101 refers]. The process involves five stages:
 - i. International surveillance to identify countries of concern
 - ii. A detailed public health assessment
 - iii. An inter-agency process to determine appropriate risk mitigation measures for travellers from countries that pose a very high risk (VHR)
 - iv. A decision on whether to classify a country as very high risk and appropriate risk mitigation measures made by the Reconnecting New Zealanders Ministerial Group (RNZMG)¹
 - v. Implementation of the decision.
5. Under the framework, once a country is identified as being of concern, a detailed public health risk assessment is carried out by public health professionals. This assessment takes into account a wide range of factors, including case rates, testing rates and positivity, the predominant variant circulating, the epidemic curve, the effectiveness of the country's response, the capacity and capability of the country's health system, and our confidence in the data we are accessing.
6. If, as a result of the public health assessment, my recommendation is to classify a country as VHR, advice is prepared for the RNZMG to make a decision on the risk level status of the country and agree to any additional risk mitigation measures.

Indonesia Risk Assessment at 21 July 2021

7. As I consider that Indonesia is potentially a country of very high risk to New Zealand at this time, I have directed the preparation of a public health risk assessment, which is attached as Appendix A. Based on this risk assessment, **I recommend that advice is prepared for the RNZMG to consider whether to classify Indonesia as a VHR country.**
8. s 6(a)
[REDACTED]
9. The maritime border is a complex area and officials are likely to consider new measures in addition to the standard measures applied to travellers from VHR countries at the air border as part of the advice to the RNZMG. If new measures are considered, this will

¹ In addition to yourself, the RNZMG is comprised of the Prime Minister, the Ministers of Finance, Foreign Affairs, Immigration, the Minister for Trade and Export Growth, and the Associate Ministers of Health.

require an assessment of their operational feasibility that may include engaging with the wider sector before advice can be provided to the RNZMG.

Public health risk assessment

10. The purpose of the VHR rating is to enable us to take the measures necessary at our border to manage the risk posed by travellers arriving from countries where the COVID-19 situation is considered very high risk.

11. s 6(a) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

12. s 6(a) [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Fishing vessels

13. Crew from two fishing vessels from the same fishing fleet are currently in a managed isolation and quarantine facility. The crew are primarily from Indonesia and Spain.

14. COVID-19 appears to have been introduced into one vessel via crew travelling by air from Indonesia to New Zealand. Nine crew were tested on arrival in Auckland and then immediately transported to their vessel in New Plymouth. The test results of these arrivals were not returned until after the departure of the vessel from port. Two of the arrivals tested positive. Subsequent testing of the crew detected an additional 16 cases.

15. Crew from another fishing vessel have also tested positive. The source of this infection is not yet known.

Cargo vessel

16. Crew from a cargo vessel that recently docked in Indonesia, Singapore and Australia have tested positive for COVID-19. This vessel is now docked in New Zealand. The source of this infection is unknown. We also have no information on crew movements in Singapore or Indonesia prior to the vessel's arrival in New Zealand.

Surveillance and monitoring update

17. The Ministry continues to monitor the international situation to identify other countries or jurisdictions of concern that may warrant a public health risk assessment.

18. At this time, our weekly surveillance has not identified any other countries or jurisdictions requiring a public health risk assessment. Should this situation change, I will update you as a matter of urgency.

Equity

19. Any changes to our border settings, and the potential impact on the movement of people, will need to consider the impact on human rights, particularly the proportionality of any strengthened or new measures.

20. From a human rights perspective, any limitations on New Zealanders arriving in New Zealand or other public health measures (such as quarantine and testing requirements) must be justified by being proportionate to the level of risk presenting to New Zealand. There is a specific requirement in the COVID-19 Public Health Response Act 2020 that the Minister must be satisfied that any limit an order would impose on rights protected by the New Zealand Bill of Rights (NZBORA) is a justified limit (s9(ba)).
21. The risk assessment framework ensures that risk mitigation measures are proportionate to the severity and nature of the public health risk presented by travellers to New Zealand and, therefore, provides a balanced and equitable approach.
22. Any risk mitigation measures that are imposed on travellers are only intended to be temporary and are reviewed every four weeks to ensure they are still justified. Human rights analysis will inform the advice prepared for the RNZMG to ensure any mitigation measures proposed are consistent with the NZBORA.

Next Steps

23. If you agree with my recommendation that advice is prepared for the RNZMG, the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet's COVID-19 Policy Group will prepare that advice for consideration. This process will ensure that any policy and operational constraints are considered before options are presented to the Reconnecting New Zealanders Ministerial Group, including assessing whether a particular measure is operationally feasible and consistent with the law and existing Government policy.
24. If a decision is made to reclassify Indonesia, an amendment to the COVID-19 Public Health Response (Air Border) Order (No 2) 2020 will be prepared for your signature to add Indonesia to the list of VHR countries.

ENDS.

