

MAY 6

National Responses to Covid-19 in Southeast Asia

Indonesia:

Indonesia's confirmed Covid-19 cases are rising extremely rapidly, and it now tops the region in terms of deaths from the virus. Indonesia's response has been slow and rather piecemeal, with announcements of lockdowns in Jakarta and other metropolitan areas. Inconsistent guidelines, the lack of enforcement for self-quarantines, and the weakness of the national government's communication strategy have meant that public awareness of social distancing remains a problem.

- **Border closures and entry bans:** On March 31, the Indonesian government announced a temporary ban on all foreign visitors. Land borders with Timor-Leste and all sea and land ports in Papua province have been closed. Passengers with urgent business or health reasons and lawmakers or officials on duty will be [permitted to travel](#) beginning May 7.
- **Quarantine or lockdown:** On March 31, the government declared a "[public health emergency](#)," allowing regional administrations to impose social restrictions like closing schools, workplaces, and limiting religious and public gatherings. Indonesia has declared the Covid-19 outbreak a "[non-natural national disaster](#)," but the implementation of quarantines and lockdowns have varied significantly by location. On May 4, President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo announced a [five-point plan](#) to anticipate the second wave of the outbreak: (1) an evaluation of "large scale social restrictions," or PSBB; (2) testing, contact tracing, and isolation goals for provinces under PSBB; (3) stricter monitoring of migrant workers; (4) a stronger social safety net for low-income families; and (5) a hotline for feedback on the government's handling of the pandemic. Jakarta also [extended](#) its initial two-week PSBB measures until May 22.
- An April 28 [Reuters study](#) of data from 34 provinces showed that more than 2,200 people had died from Covid-19-like symptoms that were not reported as such. This indicates the number of victims in Indonesia is likely far higher than the official death toll of 895.
- **Economic stimulus:** The government announced a [stimulus package](#) worth \$725 million in February 2020, which provides fiscal incentives to support the country's tourism, aviation, and property industries. The package also allocated \$324 million for low-income households.
- On March 13, the Indonesian government issued its second emergency stimulus package worth \$8.1 billion, which included exempting some workers in manufacturing from income tax and giving manufacturing companies a discount on corporate tax payments.
- On March 31, President Jokowi introduced Indonesia's [third stimulus package](#) worth nearly \$24.6 billion for health care spending, social protection, and tax incentives.
- The [International Monetary Fund](#) (IMF) lowered Indonesia's GDP growth projections for 2020 to 0.5 percent from 5.0 percent in 2019.

Philippines:

The Philippines has among the highest number of new confirmed cases per day in the region. Under President Rodrigo Duterte, the Philippine government veered from dismissing the threat and refusing to restrict travel from China to imposing an abrupt lockdown of the entire island of

Luzon, including Metro Manila, enforced by the military and the police. The Congress granted Duterte “special temporary power,” which allows him to implement draconian measures which are hitting vulnerable populations, especially the urban poor, especially hard.

- **Border closures and entry bans:** All inbound and outbound commercial flights have been suspended to [ease congestion at quarantine facilities](#). Foreigners are banned from entry, with exceptions for foreign spouses and children of repatriating overseas Filipino workers.
- **Quarantine or lockdown:** President Duterte [imposed](#) an Enhanced Community Quarantine, or ECQ, on the main island of Luzon as well as cities in the Visayas and Mindanao until May 15. The rest of the country is under a less restrictive General Community Quarantine, or GCQ, until May 15.
- On April 1, Duterte [ordered](#) the police and the military to shoot protesters violating these measures. [The first case of police shooting](#) a civilian for refusing to follow quarantine restrictions was reported on April 4. Since then, Human Rights Watch [has reported](#) other instances of law enforcement abuse during the implementation of these public health measures. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights [called out](#) the Philippines’ “highly militarized response” during the lockdown, which has led to the arrest of 120,000 people for violating curfew.
- **Economic stimulus:** On March 17, the Philippines government announced the entire country would be placed under a “state of calamity” for six months, enabling national and local governments to quickly access relief funds.
- On March 24, President Duterte signed into law [Republic Act No.11469](#), granting him “special temporary power” for three months with a possible extension. Although he failed to get congressional approval to take over private companies and utilities, Duterte can now direct the operations of private hospital and ships, reapportion the Executive Department’s budget, and access \$5.36 billion from various government agencies to mitigate the potential economic fallout of the pandemic. Duterte is required to report to Congress weekly about actions performed under the law.
- On March 30, the government [approved](#) a \$3.9 billion social protection program for low-income families and health workers.
- On April 7, the Duterte administration announced a \$610 million "[Bayanihan Grant to Cities and Municipalities](#)" to assist local governments. On April 13, the government [approved](#) a \$1 billion wage subsidy package intended to support about 3.4 million small business workers. Workers qualifying for the financial assistance will receive about \$340 for two months.
- The [IMF](#) lowered the Philippines’s GDP growth projections for 2020 to 0.6 percent from 5.9 percent in 2019. JPMorgan [downgraded](#) the Philippines’ growth forecast to 0.9.

Vietnam:

Despite limited resources and a bustling border with China, Vietnam has managed to effectively contain the pandemic. It has done so with a prompt and aggressive response, starting with travel restrictions in late January and a local quarantine in mid-February. The Communist Party of Vietnam has shown its ability to mobilize society, enact aggressive containment and monitoring strategies, and communicate effectively with citizens, underpinned by its network of informants

who surveil the populace and help enforce government restrictions. Vietnam is the first ASEAN country to incrementally lift lockdown measures.

- **Border closure and entry bans:** All foreign visitors are banned, including all overseas Vietnamese. Vietnam [banned](#) all flights to and from China on February 1.
- **Quarantine or lockdown:** A national lockdown began April 1. Social isolation measures were [lifted in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi](#) on April 23 with some restrictions remaining for hospitality and entertainment businesses. Schools have started operating again in Ho Chi Minh City. “Unnecessary major events” remain banned, and non-essential public services are suspended.
- With the issuance of Decree No. 19 on April 25, centrally-directed areas [can now lift Covid-19 restrictions](#) if the disease is contained and controlled.
- **Other responses:** A decree preventing the spread of “[fake news](#)” was set in motion on April 15. Violators may be fined between \$426 and \$853.
- **Economic stimulus:** On March 3, Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc [announced](#) a \$1.16 billion fiscal stimulus package from the government’s contingency budget. The package includes tax breaks, delayed tax payments, and government spending on infrastructure in an effort to maintain a 6.8 percent growth target, according to state media. Vietnam stopped exporting rice on March 24 to ensure national food security.
- In early April, the government announced plans for a [\\$2.6 billion](#) fiscal package to support those most affected by the pandemic. Under the new package, those displaced from their jobs will receive about \$76 per month through June, low-income households will collect about \$42 per month, and those who “rendered services to the state during the revolution” will be sent about \$22 a month. The government will [also delay](#) collecting and estimated \$7.6 billion in value-added tax, corporate income tax, and land rent from various businesses and households for five months starting from April.
- The [IMF](#) lowered Vietnam’s GDP growth projections for 2020 to 2.7 percent from 7.0 percent in 2019.

Thailand:

The Covid-19 pandemic presents Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha with a new crisis at a time when Thailand was returning to a semblance of normalcy after five years of junta rule. Inconsistent policies about travel and quarantine, poor communication, and supply shortages have highlighted the government’s inability to promptly and adequately respond to the surge of Covid-19 cases. This has led to widespread criticism and frustration on social media. Prayuth has responded with a clamp down on the press and social media reporting.

- **Border closures and entry bans:** All borders were closed on March 22, and foreign visitors to Thailand were banned. On April 20, the country reopened five gates along its border with Malaysia. The ban on incoming flights [has been extended](#) from April 30 to May 31.
- **Quarantine or lockdown:** On April 15, Prime Minister Prayuth announced plans to gradually ease Covid-19 restrictions at the end of April due to a decline in new confirmed cases. Thailand began to [ease restrictions on business operations](#) on May 3 and will allow certain businesses to reopen, including retail stores, food services, and markets.

- Since April 3, Thailand has been under a national [curfew](#) prohibiting people from leaving their houses from 10 p.m. to 4 a.m., with exemptions for essential services. The army is helping enforce the curfew. This followed a [State of Emergency](#) decree issued by Prayuth on March 26, which [has been extended](#) to May 31. The decree grants the government sweeping powers to restrict domestic travel, ban social gatherings, and [censor the media](#).
- Schools will [remain closed](#) until July 1.
- [Economic stimulus](#): On April 7, the government unveiled plans for a new stimulus package worth \$58 billion—10 percent of GDP. Of this, \$18 billion will be used for financial aid to workers, \$12 billion for infrastructure and job investments, \$15 billion for soft loans to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and \$12 billion for a Corporate Bond Liquidity Stabilization Fund. The government had approved an earlier stimulus package on March 10 that was expected to inject \$12.7 billion into the economy on March 10. Ninety-two public-private partnership projects worth \$3.3 trillion are currently [being planned](#) to stimulate the economy. On April 28, the cabinet approved monthly payments of \$154 for three months to the 8.4 million households registered as farmers.
- On April 14, the [IMF](#) lowered Thailand's GDP growth projections for 2020 to -6.7 percent from 2.4 percent in 2019.

Myanmar:

Myanmar did not report its first case until March 23. But considering its long, porous border with China, Myanmar's paucity of Covid-19 cases likely results more from the lack of testing than from the absence of the virus. The country's underdeveloped health care system and the government's failure to act decisively underscore Myanmar's unpreparedness to cope with the pandemic. The national government has not yet declared a state of emergency or instituted any nationwide lockdown.

- [Border closures and entry bans](#): Borders with China and India are closed. Border crossings with Bangladesh are restricted to trade flows.
- [Quarantine or lockdown](#): On May 4, the Ministry of Immigration, Labor and Population released a [list of essential businesses](#) that will be prioritized when resuming operations. These include state-owned factories, water and electricity plants, clinics and hospitals, construction, and information and communications technology companies.
- Starting April 19, Yangon imposed a 10 p.m. to 4 a.m. [curfew](#) and a supplementary [stay-at-home order on seven Yangon townships until June 18](#), excluding essential workers. Shan, Karen, and Kachin states and Mandalay, Sagaing, Ayeyarwaddy, and Bago regions have also [adopted](#) curfews. Gatherings of more than five people are banned, with exceptions for public servants, factory workers, and corporate employees. Schools nationwide are set to resume on June 1.
- In mid-March, the government formed a Covid-19 committee led by State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi to oversee the crisis response. On March 31, however, Myanmar's military set up a [separate task force](#) led by the military-appointed vice president, U Myint Swe. The task force includes other military-appointed members of the cabinet as well as the joint chief of staff of the defense forces and five civilian cabinet members. This military-led task force [does not report to](#) Aung San Suu Kyi and has taken upon itself broad powers to investigate Covid-19 cases, conduct contact tracing, and clamp down on the press and social media.

- **Other responses:** Rights groups have reported that the military is [escalating offensives](#) against ethnic armed groups in Shan, Kachin, Chin, and Rakhine states. On April 21, after an [attack](#) on a World Health Organization team, the United Nations called for an urgent cease-fire. UN Special Rapporteur Yanghee Lee [said](#) the military was conducting “war crimes” against minorities, emboldened by the significant political role it was granted to fight the pandemic. On April 28, the government and ethnic armed organizations [established a coordinating committee](#) to jointly fight Covid-19.
- **Economic stimulus:** On April 27, the government released a comprehensive economic [relief plan](#) outlining, among other things, new monetary policy, measures to boost private businesses and trade, and efforts to mitigate the economic impacts for workers and households. As of April 28, Myanmar is [reportedly](#) close to releasing a \$2-3 billion stimulus package. A fund of nearly \$70 million was previously established at the Myanmar Economic Bank to provide soft loans to affected business (particularly the garment and tourism sectors and SMEs). The Ministry of Health will receive \$200,000 to buy laboratory equipment and medical supplies.

Malaysia:

Malaysia’s initial response to the outbreak was nonchalant and complicated by an abrupt change in government. But in mid-March, the country closed its borders and shut down non-essential businesses, schools, and religious services. The armed forces have been deployed to enforce a partial lockdown and the government is increasing testing capacity and contact tracing as confirmed Covid-19 cases continue to rise.

- **Border closures and entry bans:** Malaysia [shut](#) its borders on March 16, banning all visitors and barring residents from travel overseas. Starting April 14, Malaysians in Singapore have been allowed to return if they are tested and placed in quarantine facilities. One checkpoint in Songkhalah on the Thailand-Malaysia border reopened on April 26.
- On April 16, Malaysia [denied](#) entry to a boat carrying 200 Rohingya refugees, saying it feared they might spread the virus. [Human Rights Watch](#) has called on Malaysia to better protect its human rights obligations while adopting public health measures.
- **Quarantine or lockdown:** Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin enacted a “Movement Control Order,” or MCO, on March 18. The order has been extended three times, most recently to [May 12](#). On May 1, Muhyiddin announced that a Conditional Movement Control Order, or CMCO, would take effect three days later, allowing private tertiary institutions (but not entertainment businesses, hospitality venues, schools, or religious gatherings) to operate under strict conditions. Bazaars will remain closed for the holy month of Ramadan, which began April 23, , and there will be no public prayers in mosques. Travel permits for the annual *balik kampung*, during which millions of people return to their home villages at the end of Ramadan, remain [suspended](#).
- The Malaysian Armed Forces, using personnel and drones, have [been mobilized](#) for detection and enforcement, resulting in the [arrest](#) of hundreds of MCO violators.
- **Economic stimulus:** Three economic stimulus packages have been unveiled. Interim prime minister Mahathir Mohamad launched the first, worth \$4.6 billion, on Feb 27 to cushion the blow of Covid-19 for the tourism sector and other industries. This included

nationwide electricity discounts of 2 percent for industrial, commercial, and domestic users, as well as a monetary assistance scheme for employees.

- Newly-installed prime minister Muhyiddin unveiled the second package, estimated at \$53 billion, on March 26. It includes \$23.1 billion for businesses and \$2.3 billion in direct cash payments for 4 million low-income households. The combined value of the first two packages equaled 15.5 percent of Malaysia's GDP and 84.2 percent of the federal government's original 2020 budget.
- The government announced a [third stimulus package](#), worth \$2.2 billion, on April 6. It includes wage subsidies, grants and loans for SMEs, and tax deductions.
- On April 14, the [IMF](#) lowered Malaysia's GDP growth projections for 2020 to -1.7 percent from 4.3 percent in 2019.

Cambodia:

After downplaying the risks of the crisis and refusing to shut the country's borders for several weeks, Prime Minister Hun Sen declared a state of emergency on March 31 and put forward a draft emergency law granting the government unfettered powers. This prompted an outcry from human rights groups. Hun Sen's reluctance to act earlier likely stemmed from his desire to maintain a close relationship with China.

- **Border closures and entry bans:** All visa exemptions, visas on arrival, and e-visas are suspended until April 30. On March 17, Hun Sen [banned arrivals](#) from Italy, Germany, Spain, France, the United States, and Iran until further notice.
- **Quarantine or lockdown:** All persons entering the country are being placed under quarantine for 14 days.
- **Other responses:** On April 10, the Cambodian National Assembly passed a [state of emergency](#) law granting Prime Minister Hun Sen greater powers to combat the Covid-19 pandemic. A royal decree announced the promulgation of the law on April 29. It grants the government the power to monitor communications and social media and restrict the distribution of information. The government [has arrested](#) at least 30 people since January on charges of spreading "fake news" related to the outbreak. Twelve of them were linked to the dissolved Cambodian National Rescue Party—. This has raised concerns about human rights violations and the martial power granted to Hun Sen without oversight.
- **Economic stimulus:** As of March 30, the Cambodian government was expected to approve around \$70 million in additional resources for the health sector. On March 9, Hun Sen announced the government had allocated between \$800 million and \$2 billion to address the economic impacts of Covid-19. Only "[legally registered and formally verified](#)" SMEs will receive benefits. This would exclude the 95 percent of Cambodian SMEs that are informal businesses.

Laos:

Laos, the most rural country in Southeast Asia, was also the last to report its first Covid-19 infection. The country's governance and almost non-existent health care system will be tested as case numbers rise in the coming weeks. This will only be partially offset by the significant assistance it has received from China since early March.

- **Border closures and entry bans:** On March 30, the government shut down all international border checkpoints until May 3. Returning Lao citizens are required to undergo a mandatory 14-day self-quarantine [monitored](#) by local officials.
- **Quarantine or lockdown:** On March 30, Laos issued a [national stay-at-home order](#) except for essential outings. On May 4, restaurants and malls were allowed to reopen. Offices are permitted to reopen if they adopt rotating shifts. But entertainment and retail venues remain closed.
- **Economic stimulus:** On March 20, the Lao cabinet approved a preliminary 13-part stimulus package during its monthly meeting. Only about \$11 million has been allocated to Covid-19 prevention and control.

Singapore:

Singapore had been hailed as a global public-health model due to its early and aggressive response to Covid-19. It initially managed to contain the virus through widespread testing, comprehensive contact tracing, and mandatory, well-enforced quarantines for those testing positive, their contacts, and all returning travelers. Singapore developed its own test kits as early as January and is now distributing them to countries in the region. But despite its early success, Singapore has had the highest number of confirmed cases in Southeast Asia since April 20 following an explosion of infections linked to [foreign workers dormitories](#).

- **Border closure:** On March 22, the city-state barred all short-term visitors from entering Singapore. Singapore, Australia, New Zealand, South Korean, and Canada have agreed to [resume cross-border](#) travel to maintain supply chains. Malaysians with a Singapore work permit will continue to be allowed to [work](#) in the country. The only other non-nationals allowed entry are work permit holders in "essential sectors" such as health care. Singapore [banned the entry](#) of all travelers from China on January 31.
- **Quarantine or lockdown:** On April 21, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Long [announced](#) that the stay at home order, which the government has dubbed a "circuit breaker," would be extended until June 1. Work permit holders were placed under a mandatory stay-at-home notice until May 18 because of the rise in the number of infections in the community. On May 1, Prime Minister Lee announced the eventual "step-by-step" reopening of the economy. Singapore has since decided to allow [certain sectors](#), including home-based businesses and selected food retail and manufacturing firms, to begin reopening on May 12.
- On April 5, Singapore [imposed a quarantine](#) on dormitories housing 20,000 migrant workers, most of whom are manual laborers from South Asia living in cramped conditions. A task force lead by the Ministries of Health and Manpower [has deployed](#) special teams to bring supplies, food, and medical assistance to quarantined foreign workers.
- **Economic stimulus:** On March 26, Singapore unveiled a second stimulus plan, the "Resilience Budget," worth [\\$33 billion](#). The package is designed to assist hard-hit sectors and self-employed individuals and provide cash payouts to citizens depending on income. Singapore had first announced \$4.4 billion of relief funding, dubbed the "Unity Budget," on February 18 to co-fund of business costs and provide tax relief for workers.
- On April 6, Finance Minister Heng Swee Keat announced an unprecedented third round of support measures called the "Solidarity Budget." This includes one-off payments to

citizens, wage subsidies, and self-employed relief schemes. Singaporeans over the age of 21 began receive \$424 each on April 14. Altogether, the government has earmarked \$41.6 billion, about 12 percent of GDP, to respond to Covid-19. This is the largest, most aggressive stimulus package in Asia.

- On April 14, the [IMF](#) lowered Singapore's GDP growth projections for 2020 to -3.5 percent from 0.7 percent last October.

Brunei:

The sultanate has implemented drastic measures to clamp down on travel, impose strict quarantine rules, and conduct extensive testing. Most cases in Brunei can be linked back to a large-scale religious event in Malaysia at the end of February.

- **Border closures and entry bans:** All foreign visitors have been banned since March 24. On March 16, citizens, foreign residents, and green card holders in the country were barred from leaving without permission from the Prime Minister's Office. Malaysia has closed its land border with Brunei.
- **Quarantine or lockdown:** Brunei reported a new Covid-19 case on April 18, its first since April 10. The government has [prohibited](#) mass gatherings, weddings, and sporting events. Schools are to reopen on June 2. Brunei issued iMSafe [tracking bracelets](#) on April 30 to all Covid-19 patients currently under home quarantine and those already recovered .
- **Economic stimulus:** On March 19, the Brunei Darussalam Monetary Authority announced measures to alleviate the financial burden on sectors hit hard by the pandemic.
- On April 1, the Ministry of Finance and Economy [announced](#) additional steps in aiding SMEs and individuals affected by the pandemic, amounting to about \$1.7 million in the form of deferment of principal or loan repayment and exemptions from fees and charges.
- On April 13, Brunei announced a special \$400 monthly allowance for health care workers, including doctors, nurses, volunteers, hospital cleaners, and security guards.

ASEAN Response to Covid-19:

While ASEAN has convened a series of meetings on how to deal with the pandemic, including with external partners such as the United States, China, and the European Union, there has been very little collective action to date. Diplomatically, the crisis has threatened ASEAN's centrality in regional affairs, with the crisis causing the cancellation of several key ASEAN meetings, including the ASEAN-U.S. summit scheduled for March 14 in Las Vegas and the 36th ASEAN Summit scheduled for April 6-9 in Vietnam. The latter has been [rescheduled](#) for late June.

- The [29th Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership \(RCEP\) Trade Negotiating Committee Meeting](#) was held April 20-24. The representatives from the 17 signatories to the agreement reaffirmed their commitment to sign the agreement into law in 2020, their continued interest in engaging with India to bring it back into the fold, and the importance of RCEP in jump starting the global economy in response to Covid-19.
- ASEAN foreign ministers participated in an ASEAN-U.S. special foreign ministers' meeting with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and ASEAN Secretary General Lim Jock Hoi on April 23. In addition to discussing coordination on Covid-19, Pompeo raised Washington's

concerns about China's damming of the Mekong River and its continued assertiveness in the South China Sea despite the ongoing pandemic.

- Vietnam organized an ASEAN Plus Three [special video conference](#) summit on April 14 involving leaders from China, Japan, and South Korea. Among other things, they [agreed](#) to strengthen the region's early warning system for pandemics, explore the establishment of a Covid-19 ASEAN Response Fund, and enhance cooperation around regional food security, including through utilizing the ASEAN Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve.
- On February 20, the foreign ministers of ASEAN and China [met](#) in Vientiane, Laos, to discuss ways to tackle the public health and economic implications of the global pandemic. The 10 ASEAN countries and China agreed to step up cooperation in sharing medical and health information and best practices to enhance emergency preparedness and response, with the communiqué praising China's response to the pandemic.

International Assistance to Southeast Asia: *updated Friday, May 6*

China's "Mask Diplomacy"

With Covid-19 largely contained domestically, the Chinese government has pivoted to providing assistance internationally, with Southeast Asian countries being a particular focus. Unlike in Europe, where China's so-called "mask diplomacy" has generated criticism due to some [faulty equipment](#) and [skepticism](#) about China's [geopolitical intentions](#), China's emergency medical assistance has been welcomed by the governments of several hard-hit countries in Southeast Asia. Chinese aid typically consists of shipments of surgical masks, test kits, and other medical equipment, as well as dispatching medical experts. Handovers of equipment typically take place with great fanfare. In addition to the Chinese government, foundations linked to billionaire Jack Ma and state-owned enterprises have also engaged in large donations of medical supplies.

Assistance to Southeast Asia to date has included the following:

- **ASEAN:** China on April 21 donated 75,000 surgical masks, 300 bottles of hand sanitizers, and 35 infrared thermometers to the [ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta](#).
- **Malaysia:** Malaysia has been a particular focus for Chinese aid. The largest shipment of medical supplies arrived on March 28 and was received by Foreign Minister Hishammuddin Hussein. This donation followed three earlier installments of relief packages from the Chinese government and other Chinese entities, beginning on March 19, delivered by the Chinese embassy in Malaysia to medical personnel at [Sungai Buloh Hospital](#). Despite this close engagement, Malaysian officials have expressed [doubts about Chinese-made test kits](#). The accuracy of the first batch of Chinese-donated test kits has been questioned by Malaysian officials, and Malaysian hospitals are now considering test kits from Singapore and South Korea.
- **Philippines:** China's first shipment of medical supply donations to the Philippines [arrived](#) on March 21. China sent a team of medical experts and a second batch of medical supply donations to the Philippines on April 5 followed by another one on April 27. Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin said "[China] is a model for what the rest of the world should

be doing. Instead of blaming each other for what's happening, we should all start working together to help each other."

- **Indonesia:** On March 20, Indonesia [sent](#) a military aircraft to Shanghai to pick up 9 tons of medical supplies, and a consortium of Chinese institutions and ministries [sent](#) 40 tons of Covid-19 test kits and other medical supplies one week later. On April 4, President Xi Jinping committed to helping Indonesia fight the outbreak during a phone call with President Jokowi, reportedly [saying](#) that "we believe that with your perseverance, Indonesia will be able to defeat this [Covid-19] pandemic." Indonesia's Covid-19 taskforce [obtained](#) RNA isolation kits, PCR test kits, and a viral transport medium kit on April 26.
- **Laos:** From April 10-11, a team of Chinese medical experts [shared](#) anti-epidemic experiences and held training courses throughout Laos. The team provided 10,000 PCR kits, 10,000 KN95 masks, and 30,000 masks.
- **Cambodia:** On March 23, a Chinese medical team from Guangxi province delivered medical supplies including ventilators, medical masks, and test kits to Phnom Penh. On March 18, China [sent](#) medical supplies including detection kits, ventilators, PPE, and masks. China [shared another shipment](#) of "urgently needed" Covid-19 supplies, including testing kits and protective gowns, on April 26 at the request of Cambodia.
- **Myanmar:** On April 22, China [provided](#) 20 ventilators reportedly worth \$400,000. Another 15 machines are due to arrive in the near future. On April 8, a 12-person Chinese medical team from Yunnan province [arrived](#) in Yangon for a 14-day visit, followed by another visit on April 24.
- **Brunei:** On April 23, China [provided](#) Brunei with medical supplies, including 100,000 N95 respirators and 1,000 surgical gowns. The Chinese Embassy in Brunei also donated \$42,158 (BND 60,000) to Brunei's Covid-19 Relief Fund.

Non-government Chinese aid:

Chinese non-government entities have also been active, most notably the Alibaba and Jack Ma foundations. On March 19, the two foundations announced they would send 2,000,000 masks, 150,000 test kits, 20,000 sets of PPE, and 20,000 face shields to Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Myanmar, and Thailand. On April 9, the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China [donated](#) medical equipment worth \$117,500, including 150,000 face masks to Laos.

Assistance from the United States:

On April 7, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced an additional [\\$225 million](#) in assistance for response efforts to Covid-19, in addition to the \$274 million announced in late March. So far, \$18.3 million in new funding will go to countries in Southeast Asia. However, unlike China's "mask diplomacy," Pompeo made clear that due to the urgent domestic need presented by the Covid-19 outbreak in the United States, shipments of critical medical supplies such as protective

gear will not included in this assistance. Instead, the funding will be used to train medical workers, boost screening capabilities, and bolster national health systems. When making these new pledges, the State Department has emphasized the United States' long-standing leadership on global health, citing the approximately \$3.5 billion in assistance over the past two decades, far exceeding that of other any other donor.

Pledges have included:

- **Philippines**: \$8.8 million for Covid-19 aid, building on more than \$582 million in health assistance and nearly \$4.5 billion in total assistance over the past 20 years. During an April 19 phone call, President Trump and President Duterte **discussed** cooperation between the United States and the Philippines against the outbreak.
- **Indonesia**: \$5 million for Covid-19 aid, covering testing and visits by technical experts, building on more than \$1 billion in health assistance and more than \$5 billion in total U.S. assistance over the past 20 years. On April 24, President Trump **promised** President Jokowi an unknown number of ventilators during a phone conversation between the two leaders.
- **Thailand**: Approximately \$2.7 million for Covid-19 aid, including testing and medical supplies, building on more than \$213 million in health assistance and more than \$1 billion in total U.S. assistance over the past 20 years.
- **Laos**: Approximately \$3.5 million for Covid-19 aid for testing and supplies, plus deliveries of protective equipment and visits of technical experts. This builds on nearly \$92 million in health assistance and more than \$348 million in total U.S. assistance over the past 20 years. Medical equipment provided by the U.S. government thus far includes 440 protective goggles, 1,500 surgical gowns, 220 face shields, disposable biohazard bags, aprons, N95 masks, gloves, and sanitizer.
- **Cambodia**: Approximately \$4 million for Covid-19 aid, encompassing risk communication, community engagement, and laboratory support in response to the pandemic. This builds on more than \$730 million in health assistance and more than \$1.6 billion in total U.S. assistance over the past 20 years.
- **Myanmar**: Approximately \$7 million in Covid-19 aid for testing and medical supplies, plus deliveries of protective equipment and visits of technical experts. This builds on more than \$176 million in health assistance and more than \$1.3 billion in total U.S. assistance over the past 20 years.
- **Vietnam**: **\$9.5 million**, including the previously announced \$4.5 million, for Covid-19 aid, testing, and visits by technical experts. This builds on more than \$706 million in health assistance and more than \$1.8 billion in total U.S. assistance over the past 20 years.

- Malaysia: \$200,000 for Covid-19-related humanitarian and health assistance as of April 20.

Singapore's "Test-kit Diplomacy":

Singapore, partly through the Temasek Foundation, was the first Southeast Asian country with excess capacity and ability to deliver aid to neighbors. "From a foreign policy point of view, we now have test kit diplomacy. What we need to do as a world is to share best practices, to rapidly develop test kits, vaccines, antivirals," [said](#) Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan on March 10.

- Malaysia: On April 1, Singapore [donated](#) 5,000 Universal Transport Medium swabs, a critical component in fast acting test kits, to Malaysia.
- Philippines: On April 1, the Temasek Foundation [donated](#) 40,000 test kits and 2 ventilators to the Philippines. On March 25, Singapore [sent](#) 3,000 test kits and a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) machine for processing tests to the Philippines.
- Vietnam: On March 30, the Temasek Foundation [presented](#) 10 ventilators to Vietnam to support the country's treatment of Covid-19 patients. The foundation said it will supply 10 oxygen generators to Ha Noi and 10 to Ho Chi Minh City in the near future.
- Brunei: Singapore [sent](#) 3,000 test kits and a PCR machine for processing tests on March 25.
- Indonesia: On April 2, Singapore [sent](#) medical supplies to Indonesia, including 30,000 test kits, 5 PCR machines, and more than 1,000 sets of PPE. On March 13, Singapore [donated](#) 50 sets of PPE and 2 ventilators to Batam. On April 8, an Indonesian navy vessel was sent to Singapore to collect supplies to manufacture 210,000 liters of hand sanitizer for use in the city.
- Myanmar: On March 4, Singapore [sent](#) 3,000 diagnostic tests and 2 PCR machines to test for Covid-19 to Myanmar.

Assistance from Vietnam:

Vietnam has extended aid to regional and international partners since early April after ramping up its domestic production of medical supplies. On April 30, Vietnam [started exporting](#) domestically made and WHO-approved Covid-19 test kits. Having already received orders from 20 countries, Vietnam is reportedly one of five nations with ready-to-export kit. The government [suspended](#) the export of drugs used to treat the virus to ensure sufficient preventive and curative supplies for Vietnam.

- Laos: On April 3, Vietnam sent nearly 5 tons of Covid-19 related medical equipment worth \$304,000 to Laos, including test kits, 340,000 face masks, and PPE.

- Cambodia: On April 7, Region 7 of the Vietnam People's Army [provided](#) medical supplies and equipment, including 50,000 face mask, 1,000 sets of PPE, and 1,000 liters of hand sanitizer to units of the Cambodian Royal Army. The group also provided 30,000 face masks and \$21,450 in assistance to Vietnamese Cambodians in the area. On April 3, Vietnam donated 390,000 face masks.
- Indonesia: On April 5, Vietnam's Ministry of Science and Technology [sent](#) 500 diagnostic test kits to Indonesia.
- Myanmar: On April 10, Vietnam [presented](#) \$50,000 as a symbolic gift of support during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- United States: On April 8, Vietnam [donated](#) 450,000 protective suits to the United States, with 450,000 more suits to follow in the near future. The delivery drew praise from President Trump on [Twitter](#), who expressed thanks to "our friends in Vietnam." On April 16, Vietnam [announced](#) it is [donating](#) 250,000 made-in-Vietnam face masks, including 50,000 sent directly for use at the White House, reportedly worth at least \$100,000. Vietnam, on April 29, presented [420,000 medical masks](#) to the U.S. ambassador to Vietnam, Daniel Kritenbrink, on behalf of the American Red Cross.
- China: On February 8, Vietnam's Ha Giang province border guards [donated](#) 1,000 face masks and 20 sanitizer containers to the Yunan Border Guards as a symbolic gesture. Two weeks later, the Department of Military Medicine within Vietnam's Ministry of National Defence supplied unspecified "medical equipment" to China's Ministry of Defence in a more formal ceremony. On March 8, border guards at Dien Bien province gifted 10,000 face masks to their Chinese counterparts.
- Europe: Vietnam on April 7 [donated 550,000 masks](#) to France, Germany, Italy, Spain and Britain.
- Russia: On April 13, Vietnam [donated](#) 150,000 made-in-Vietnam antimicrobial face masks. On March 27, Vietnam's Department of Military Medicine [gifted](#) unspecified military medicine to the minister counsellor of the Russian Embassy.
- Japan: Japan [received](#) made-in-Vietnam face masks reportedly worth \$100,000.
- Sweden: Vietnam [gifted](#) more than 100,000 face masks to Sweden on April 21.

Assistance from Japan:

Japan, traditionally a major donor in Southeast Asia, has been slower than China to respond to Covid-19 with new funding so far.

- On February 14, the government of Japan announced it would donate 222,000 sets of PPE to Cambodia, the Philippines, Laos, and Mongolia. The equipment was drawn from a stockpile by the Asia-Europe Foundation financed by Japan's contribution.

- Japanese foreign minister Toshimitsu Motegi on April 1 [pledged to provide at least \\$1.8 million](#) (200 million yen) in aid to Vietnam to combat the virus. Japan gifted 4,680 isolation gowns, 6,100 gloves, 6,000 N95 face masks, 13,200 surgical gowns, 27 goggles, and 240 bottles of hand-rub alcohol to Laos and [donated](#) \$20 million to Cambodia’s Covid-19 response.
- The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) on [February 7 announced](#) it was providing Covid-19 testing reagents to the National Institute of Hygiene and Epidemiology of Vietnam, equivalent to approximately 14 million yen in total. JICA [announced on February 25](#) it would send Covid-19 primer and testing reagents to the National Health Laboratory of Myanmar, worth approximately 400,000 yen in total.

Assistance from South Korea:

South Korea has begun to pivot toward international assistance with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs [announcing on March 27](#) that the United States, the United Arab Emirates, and Indonesia were “on its priority list for exporting quarantine supplies, such as coronavirus test kits.” As of April 7, [126 countries have issued requests](#) for the import of South Korean-made Covid-19 tests.

- On April 8, South Korea committed to provide \$500,000 in “varied forms of assistance” to Indonesia. On April 19, Indonesia received [50,000 test kit reagents](#) with an additional 495,000 reagents expected in the coming weeks. South Korean conglomerates [pledged](#) to donate 50,000 sets of PPE and PCR test kits each. CJ Corporation [donated](#) \$255,000 worth of rapid test kits and hand sanitizers to medical facilities and ride hailing workers. The Philippines received over 50,000 test kits from South Korea between March and April.

Assistance from Taiwan

- Taiwan’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs [on April 14 announced](#) that it was sending 1.6 million surgical masks to New Southbound Policy countries, including Australia, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, [the Philippines](#), Singapore and Vietnam. Taiwan donated [70,000 surgical masks](#) to Myanmar with more expected to arrive in May, over [300,000 face masks](#) to the Philippines, [200,000 face masks](#) and 15,000 PPE to Thailand, [and 100,000 face masks](#) to the Singapore Red Cross. Taiwan on May 6 announced another wave of humanitarian assistance, with [1.8 million face masks](#) to be delivered to New Southbound Policy countries.

Assistance from India

- India [provided Myanmar](#) with Covid-19 supplies, include 200,000 hydroxychloroquine tablets, gloves, body bags, and thermometers on May 6.

Assistance from the European Union

- [ASEAN](#): The European Union on April 27 [announced the mobilization of \\$378 million \(€350 million\)](#) in funds to ASEAN countries in support of pandemic response efforts.

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Assistance from France

- The French Development Bank [provided](#) \$2.19 million to the Pasteur Institute of Cambodia and Myanmar, Laos, the Philippines, and Vietnam.

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Multilateral Assistance:

- **World Bank:** In early April, the World Bank approved \$20 million in credit to support Cambodia's pandemic response, \$18 million in assistance to Laos to help the country strengthen its health system and response capacity, [\\$7 billion](#) in loans to Indonesia in partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, a [\\$50 million](#) emergency loan for hospital improvements and public health emergency preparedness to Myanmar, and a \$500 million loan [to support](#) the Philippines' Covid-19 response and recovery.
- **Asian Development Bank:** In mid April, the ADB [approved a \\$1.5 billion loan](#) to support Indonesia's response to the Covid-19 pandemic and a [\\$200 million loan](#) to assist the Philippine government in providing cash subsidies to households affected by the pandemic.

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