



## NATIONAL EMERGENCY COMMITTEE

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*Planning, Mitigation,  
Preparedness, Response  
and Recovery, The  
essential ingredients for  
a successful Disaster  
Management.*

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**June 8, 2020**

### Press Release

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#### **Palau to bring home 58 stranded Palau residents from Guam and Taiwan**

Fifty-eight (58) Palau residents, including a large number of college students from the University of Guam, and medical referral patients from Taiwan will return to Palau on June 10 and 12, respectively. The chartered flights that will bring them have implemented precautionary measures to reduce the risk of infection, including the use of masks, adequate spacing between passengers, and enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures.

Before departing Guam and Taiwan (at least 72 hours prior), each passenger will have to have been tested negative of COVID-19. For those coming home from Guam, they would have finished a 14-day mandatory quarantine, monitored daily for symptoms. The quarantine facility in Guam is also being secured by private security and the National Guard. Taiwan medical referral patients have been in a more controlled environment and do not undergo a 14-day quarantine but they too will be tested 72 hours prior to departure.

All passengers will be transported straight to the airports, where they will board chartered flights to Palau. Their contact with others will be minimal, restricted to only airport personnel. Upon arrival to Palau International Airport, they will be met by health screeners, who will ensure hand hygiene and use of masks are implemented before they screen them for any symptoms of illness. After being screened, they will be escorted by security through immigrations, baggage claim, and customs before they are transported by buses straight to the government-designated quarantine facilities. All workers have been trained in infection control measures, and will be wearing protective gear.

All quarantined individuals will be briefed of the rules that apply to them in quarantine. They will not be allowed outside their rooms for the duration of the quarantine period. All of their needs will be provided by trained workers and monitored twice daily by health care workers, via teleconferencing. Quarantined persons will be tested on day 7 and day 14, and if all have negative results, will be released on day 15. However, they will be told to self-quarantine at home for an additional 14 days, and get tested for the fifth and last time on day 21. If at any time, a quarantined individual is tested positive for COVID-19, that person will be isolated at a designated facility, and quarantine for others is reset to day 1.

Any passenger who violates quarantine rules on Guam will not be allowed to board the flight to Palau. Failure to comply with quarantine and isolation rules and regulations is punishable by law. Ministry of Justice will provide security at the quarantine facilities at all times.

“If we take extra precautionary measures to ensure that repatriated residents do not have contact with the rest of the population, and testing indicates that they do not have COVID-19, we reduce the risk of importation and spread, while we bring home our stranded citizens and residents safely,” says Health Minister, Dr. Emais Roberts.

“We are not helpless against COVID-19. In fact, as a small country with a single primary point of entry, we are uniquely prepared to manage safe travel without importing the coronavirus. Our people have been working toward this day for almost three months, around the clock. They are ready, and we are ready.” President Remengesau says. “COVID-19 presents real risks, but they are manageable risks. It is time to begin managing them. Many countries around the world have implemented repatriation efforts to bring home their residents, and Palau needs to protect its own as well. We have taken extra measures to ensure the safe repatriation of our residents.” President Remengesau adds.

“The government is confident in the procedures that are to be followed to ensure a safe reunion of families without compromising public health. Palau has been preparing for this operation for more than two months, and it goes well beyond established practices in the rest of the world. Our people have the right to come home, and we can now bring them home safely,” says Vice President Raynold B. Oilouch, Chairman of the National Emergency Committee. “We have prepared ourselves, we have what we need, and we will bring our people home safely. We ask the community to support each other, to show kindness, and solidarity.” The Vice President adds.

Based on recent surveys, many people in the community are equipped with the information needed to protect themselves and their families, and understand that we now have a “new normal” where frequent handwashing, respiratory etiquette, constant cleaning and disinfecting, and staying away from others when feeling sick, have become part of our daily lives. Ministry of Health continues to enhance operational readiness and with generous donations, funding, and technical assistance, have prepared quarantine and isolation facilities, alternate care sites, and have increased overall capacity to manage potential COVID-19 cases. And we will continue to prepare.

Although the Republic remains aware of the global situation, the nation has come a long way in preparing for and responding to the pandemic. We have a committed, trained workforce and continue to take measures to reduce to the risk of importation of and transmission of COVID-19.