

FSM Information Services

Press Release

42 Stranded FSM Citizens Enter Pohnpei State Quarantine; May 31st Scheduled for Repatriation from the Republic of the Marshall Islands

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—On May 13th and May 14th, 2021, a total of forty-two (42) citizens of the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) entered into a designated quarantine site in Pohnpei State. The 42 citizens spent seven (7) days at a designated pre-quarantine site in the U.S. Territory of Guam prior to their repatriation into the Nation. They will spend another seven (7) days in quarantine in Pohnpei State prior to their entry into the broader community.

The repatriating citizens include stranded medical patients and their respective attendants, students, and essential personnel. With some limited exceptions, the citizens involved in the May 13th and 14th repatriation effort are the same citizens originally scheduled to return on December 5th, 2020.

To enter into pre-quarantine on Guam, all repatriating persons, with limited exceptions (e.g. minors, pregnant women), demonstrated possession of documentary evidence showing they have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19, as well as the completion of a PCR-based COVID-19 test indicating that they are negative for the virus. All repatriating persons were tested again prior to their departure from Guam.

All repatriating persons were tested again upon arrival in the FSM. All repatriating persons will be tested once more prior to the completion of their in-country quarantine period.

All individuals the repatriating persons encountered when they left the pre-quarantine site in Guam to the aircraft, including inside the aircraft itself, wore personal protection equipment (PPE) such as masks and gloves. All members of the crew for the United States Armed Forces asset were vaccinated. After the first flight on May 13th, the crew were quarantined in Guam prior to the flight on May 14th. All members of the crew were also tested, multiple times, prior to the flights.

All vaccinated repatriating citizens who arrived on May 13th and May 14th will undergo an additional seven (7) days of quarantine at the Pohnpei State quarantine facility in Dekehtik; the citizens who arrived unvaccinated will stay a total of fourteen (14) days. All repatriating persons underwent testing upon arrival into Pohnpei and will again prior to exiting the quarantine facility.

All repatriating persons will undergo the same COVID-19 testing and security protection regimes. All preventative and protective measures necessary to effectively complete this repatriation effort

successfully are being implemented and put into effect both in Guam and in the FSM. Access and visitation to designated pre-quarantine and quarantine facilities is restricted.

The FSM National Government extends its sincere appreciation to the People and Government of the United States of America, with whom the FSM shares an Enduring Partnership, for their offer for the May 13th and May 14th humanitarian flights. The FSM National Government congratulates its partners at the Pohnpei State Government for their collaboration, cooperation, and professionalism in ensuring the repatriation effort's success.

The FSM National Government also extends its sincere appreciation to the United States Coast Guard for its assistance in this humanitarian operation. "On behalf of the People and Government of the FSM," His Excellency David W. Panuelo said in a statement, "I thank Pilot and Commander James Morrow, Co-Pilot and Lieutenant Adam Mayernick, First Class Petty Officer Ross Shafer, Second Class Petty Officer Jonathan McKinney, Second Class Petty Officer Ethan Trolinder, and Third Class Petty Officer John Walker for your compassionate act of service to our Nation. You are the ones who executed our Nation's first successful repatriation effort, and you have done so flawlessly. You have the appreciation of our Government and our People. Our FSM-U.S. Enduring Partnership exists because of acts of service like yours, and it is acts of service like yours that continue to strengthen our close bonds."

The FSM National Government further extends its sincere appreciation to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, both for their contemporary and historical assistance to the FSM and, more specifically as it relates to the May 13th and May 14th repatriation effort, for temporarily lending the service of Dr. Thane Hancock to the FSM. It is the intention of the FSM National Government to maximize Dr. Hancock's knowledge of COVID-19 to strengthen the Nation's capacity in tackling the Pandemic.

Due to the necessity of minimizing contact between citizens engaged in repatriation-related quarantine efforts and the broader community, the photos included in this release have been kindly provided by the Pohnpei Surf Club, the FSM Consulate in Guam, and repatriating citizens themselves. The Division of Public Information expresses its sincerest appreciation to those who have helped provide photographic documentary evidence of the repatriation effort.

Upon the successful conclusion of the first repatriation effort, it is the intention of the FSM National Government to repatriate FSM citizens stranded in the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The scheduled date for this repatriation effort is May 31st, 2021. More information will become available to the public on the repatriation effort from the Republic of the Marshall Islands in the coming days and weeks.

“My dear fellow citizens of the FSM who have been repatriated yesterday and today,” President Panuelo said in a statement, “Welcome home! We have missed you and look forward to seeing you reconnect with your family and loved ones once you complete your mandatory quarantine period.”

“To my dear fellow citizens still stranded abroad—please know that your Government has not forgotten you, and is committed to getting you home,” President Panuelo continued. “After the repatriation effort for the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the next effort will continue to focus on stranded citizens in COVID-19 affected jurisdictions. Consider the success of May 13th and May 14th as evidence of our sincerity; you will come home where you belong and where you are wanted and loved.”

“And, finally, to my dear fellow citizens here in the FSM—I encourage you to embrace our stranded citizens with the love they deserve. The return of our stranded citizens is a blessing, an objectively good thing to happen for all of us; let us greet them all with the warmth and respect our Micronesian cultures are famous for.”

“Welcome home, my fellow citizens.”



Pictured Above: A U.S. Armed Forces asset repatriates stranded FSM citizens (*Photo Courtesy of the Pohnpei Surf Club—For More Information, Visit <http://pohnpeisurfclub.com/>*)



Pictured Above: A U.S. Armed Forces asset is filled with luggage several hours prior to repatriating citizens entry onto the aircraft



Pictured Above: Sanitized school buses, under escort, safely bring the stranded citizens to the aircraft



Pictured Above: Repatriating citizens enter the aircraft



Pictured Above: FSM citizens prepare for their flight home after being stranded abroad for an average period of approximately fourteen months