



COVID-19 Measures in Effect in Latin America

March 23, 2020

Below is a brief overview, country by country, of some of the measures adopted in response to the COVID-19 virus in Latin America. This is not meant to be an all-encompassing document of every measure taken in each country, but rather a quick snapshot of the situation today. As with everywhere in the world, this is a fluid situation and measures will likely change over the coming days and weeks.

ARGENTINA

The Argentine government announced a total lockdown of the country starting at midnight on March 19 through March 31. Everything will be shut down except for security, health and grocery services. The Argentine President announced that circulation will be restricted both on national routes and within cities across the country. Transfers will only be allowed for exceptional reasons, such as to guarantee essential production, supply, health services and all essential services. Minor pockets of civil unrest have sprouted around the country on this first day of the lockdown.

All inbound and outbound flights are restricted to repatriating Argentine citizens or residents to Argentina, or foreigners in Argentina to their respective countries. All borders are closed to non-Argentine citizens or residents. Returning citizens are subject to a 14-day home quarantine. All shows have been cancelled and no groupings over 50 people are permitted. Schools have been cancelled through the end of March but commerce remains open.

The Minister of Labor has established that employees over the age of 60, pregnant women and individuals with existent threatening conditions such as respiratory or cardiac illnesses should be excused from work. The Minister also recommended working virtually from home to avoid large grouping of people.

The Ministry of Public Works has announced that they will start the construction of eight new hospital modules that will allow the expansion of hospital beds and will provide 24-hour attention to all the individuals that present COVID-19 symptoms.

With the aim of guaranteeing supplies and controlling the abuse regarding the increase of prices during the health emergency, the Ministry of Productive Development ordered that starting March 20 and for the next 30 days, the prices of basic food, beverages, personal hygiene items and cleaning supplies will be maintained, at the price they were being sold on March 6, before the COVID-19 outbreak. This measure will be applied to supermarkets, retail and wholesale supermarkets, mini-markets, warehouses and self-service markets.

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The Argentine government launched an app to conduct a coronavirus self-test based on the answer to some questions. The same self-diagnosis tool is also available through the application and the MiArgentina site. The app is called 'Covid19-Ministerio de Salud' and is accessible through argentina.gob.ar/coronavirus on the web, as well as in its version for mobile devices that can be downloaded from the official Android and iOS application stores.

CHILE

The government of Chile have announced a lock down of the entire population from 22:00 – 05:00 daily starting Sunday March 22.

All land and border crossings have been closed as of March 18 for passengers, but remain open for cargo and for repatriation of Chilean nationals and residents returning to Chile. Schools have been suspended for two weeks and visitation to geriatric facilities has been limited. As of March 18, no public gatherings in excess of 200 people will be permitted. The Chilean government has announced fines and jail sentences as punishments for those who do not comply with the quarantine indications.

Political parties and the Electoral Service agreed on March 19 to postpone the constitutional referendum to October 25 amid the coronavirus pandemic crisis.

All people arriving to Chile from countries classified as High Risk by the World Health Organization will have to be in quarantine for 14 days upon entering the country. There are eight high-risk countries: Iran, China, Germany, France, Spain, Italy, South Korea and Japan. Maritime ports are closed to cruise ships.

All public officials over the age of 75 or who are part of the higher risk group will be allowed to carry out their work from home.

The President of the Republic, Sebastián Piñera, ordered the total closure of the entertainment venues nationwide, which applies to all cinemas, theatres, pubs, restaurants, discos and even independent sporting events, with the sole purpose of preventing the spread of the virus. Authorities have announced that the measure will begin to apply as of this Friday, March 20, 2020, for an unspecified period based on an evaluation of the evolution of the Covid-19 pandemic in Chile.

Those people who arrive in Chile or want to pass through Chile are subject to registration by the Sanitary Customs officials (Seremi).

On March 22, the government announced that it would implement a curfew from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. starting the same evening and running through the end of the month.

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URUGUAY

All international flights originating from Europe will be suspended on March 20. Only Uruguayan citizens or residents will be allowed to enter the country. Flights to the U.S. will be suspended as of Wednesday March 18. Schools have been closed and the government is urging people not to travel and to stay at home. All shopping malls have been ordered closed.

The Uruguayan President asked that those over 65 years stay at home since they are the most exposed to infections. Likewise, he urged employers to search for the possibility of remote work and noted that the government has already adopted measures in this regard.

The Uruguayan Medical Union (SMU) recommended that the government decree a "general quarantine". The idea of the union is that the government decrees a general quarantine that governs in principle until April 12 inclusive, which would limit the movement of people.

Uruguay agreed to close their borders for the next 30 days after 23 new cases were reported in Montevideo. The Social Welfare Bank (El Banco de Prevision BPS) has received more than 40,000 applications for unemployment insurance so far in March due to loss of income from COVID-19.

PARAGUAY

Paraguayan President Mario Abdo Benítez announced last Friday, March 20th, the extension of the coronavirus quarantine until April 12th, as well as a greater time restriction on the movement of people, for a week. The president indicated that the measure of "social isolation", which was limited to night hours, would extend to 24 hours a day from March 21st, until March 28; this implies a minimum circulation on the streets, limited to emergency or need situations such as buying food, going to hospitals or pharmacies, etc.

All of the land and air border crossings have been closed. Schools have been closed as have been all shopping centers.

Last week, the Civil Aeronautics Directorate (DINAC) announced a ban on airlines from boarding foreigners bound for Paraguay, and on Thursday, March 19th, the DINAC warned that all flights would be suspended by March 22.

BOLIVIA

The government of Bolivia has declared a total lockdown for the entire country starting at 00:00 this Sunday, March 22 for a period of 14 days. Government Minister Arturo Murillo ordered that Bolivians remain in their homes for the duration of the total quarantine. The movement of one person per family is only allowed in the morning from 07:00 to 12:00 noon, in order to purchase food or medicine.

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During the weekend of March 20 – 22, 2020, 591 people in the country who were circulating freely during restricted hours have been arrested. Government Minister Arturo Murillo urged the population to stay home so as not to increase the number of patients with Covid-19 and indicated that he will ask the president, Jeanine Áñez, to consider the declaration of a state of siege in situations where the quarantine is not carried out.

The Electoral Tribunal has decided to delay the Presidential elections, originally scheduled for May 3rd, to a later date.

Flights originating from China, Korea, Iran and Europe have been cancelled. Arriving passengers forced to provide medical information and temperature taken. A lockdown of all travel nationally and internationally went into effect as of Friday March 20. No crowds in excess of 100 people permitted. Public transportation is restricted between 18:00 and 05:00 daily. The departments of Potosi, Chuquisaca, Cochabamba and Oruro have decreed a self-quarantine through March 31.

Classes have been suspended across the country starting on Thursday, March 19 through March 31. On March 20, the surveillance and protection of the country's borders will be strengthened by the presence of the Armed Forces. All modes of transportation across the Titicaca River have been closed.

BRAZIL

Brazil closed land borders with Argentina, Bolivia, Colombia, Guyana, French Guayana and Paraguay for individuals for 15 days starting March 19. The borders remain open for commerce. The land border with Uruguay remains open, but could be closed shortly. Air transport restrictions have yet to have been enacted. Brazil has adopted several economic measures to ensure that the country continues to produce.

The State of Rio de Janeiro closed all schools as of March 16th and the State of Sao Paulo will begin shutting schools down gradually. The State of Sao Paulo has also decreed that all state employees over the age of 60, except for those working for public safety or public health, should work from their homes. Sao Paulo also recommended closing museums, libraries, theaters and cultural centers for 30 days, as well as convention centers for 60 days. The state of Brasilia has cancelled all schools and public events as well.

On March 17, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro created a “Crisis Committee” to manage the impact of Covid-19 in Brazil. State-level authorities from several cities and states, including Rio de Janeiro and Paraíba, have declared a state of emergency. Several states have started suspending classes in public schools as a way to prevent the expansion of the virus as well. Brasilia has issued a recommendation that tables be placed a minimum of two meters apart at restaurants. The governor of Rio de Janeiro, Wilson Witzel, had recommended that shopping centers - with the exception of pharmacies and supermarkets - be closed.

On March 18, the governor of São Paulo, João Doria, had announced that all shopping malls in the capital and cities in the metropolitan region should be closed until April 30. The measure does not apply

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to shopping malls in the interior and the coast of São Paulo. The announcement is another measure to try to slow the progress of the coronavirus pandemic.

On March 19, large portions of the Brazilian population began banging on pots and pans within their homes as a means to protest the inaction of the government with regards to the COVIT-19 virus. As of today, over 500 cases have been confirmed in Brazil, with 4 deaths. **No new updates.**

PERU

State of emergency declared. Borders to be closed as of midnight of March 16th. Individuals are required to remain at home for the next 15 days. Supermarkets, pharmacies and banks remain open. Public transportation is limited. Schools are closed and all social events have been cancelled. The Peruvian government has established that only workers in the health system, food supply, those who work in pharmacies and in the financial system are allowed to transit.

The new Minister of Health to Victor Marcial Zamora Mesía, a physician specializing in public health policies, replaced Elizabeth Hinostroza in office and the oath ceremony was held at the Government Palace. The Peruvian government has established that only workers in the health system, food supply, those who work in pharmacies and in the financial system are allowed to move freely.

On March 21, President Martín Vizcarra said that approximately 8,000 people had been arrested for violating the curfew and restriction-of-movement measures. Further, the president stated that the government is in the process of purchasing 1.4 million coronavirus quick test kits.

ECUADOR

The Ecuadorian government has extended its decree allowing only home-based work for the public and private sector through March 31, 2020. All inbound flights cancelled through April 5 except those repatriating Ecuadorian citizens. Restricted movement for the population as of March 17 – can only leave residence to purchase food or medicine, or to go to and from work. Curfew put in place from 9:00 PM – 05:00 AM. Restaurants and cafes to remain open for delivery only.

As of March 20th, Ecuadorian authorities have reported that they will prepare and condition shelters for the homeless to take refuge and be quarantined to prevent the COVID-19 virus from spreading further.

In the economic aspect, loan installments will be deferred and refinanced by the respective entities.

Ecuador authorized its Armed Forces to take control of the province of Guayas, located in the southwest of the country, which is the sector most heavily hit by the coronavirus. The Executive's Emergency Operations Committee (COE) authorized the Armed Forces to manage the province of Guayas as a zone of national security.

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On Monday 23rd, the new Health Minister, Juan Carlos Zevallos, mentioned that the Health Ministry is moving to Guayaquil, one of the cities most affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Public transportation has been suspended in the city of Guayaquil.

During the emergency, the administration is ordering that no one have their utilities cut off for lack of payment. The government is also providing increased internet and cell phone data service, as well as free coronavirus tests for anyone with symptoms.

COLOMBIA

The government of Colombia has ordered a full lockdown starting at 00:00 on Tuesday, March 24 – April 13. Exceptions to the curfew include security services, health professionals, call centers, banks, food and supply chain, fuel and government personnel related to social, health, security and safety tasks. Shopping centers can open but only to supply food or medicine. All land and air borders closed to non-citizens and non-residents through to May 30th. All citizens and residents arriving in Colombia are subject to a 14-day quarantine. Schools are closed through April 20.

On March 21, 23 prisoners were stated to have been killed and 83 injured following a riot in the ‘La Modelo’ prison in Bogota, which started due to fears over the spreading of the Coronavirus. It has been said that prisoners across the country were protesting against overcrowding in prisons, as well as poor health services ever since the outbreak of COVID-19.

VENEZUELA

Travel from Europe, Colombia, Panama and the Dominican Republic suspended. Quarantine in effect for all passengers arriving from Europe. Further quarantine in effect for 7 provinces in Venezuela. All schools and sporting events have been cancelled and public gatherings prohibited. All restaurants are closed except for deliveries.

Starting on March 17th, Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro has imposed a nationwide quarantine for all 23 states and the capital district in Venezuela, including closure of all work except those related to the distribution of food, military and police security, sanitary, health and transport services. The government of Venezuela stated that it would utilize hotel rooms to isolate patients with COVID-19.

The government announced that they have prohibited all job losses until 2021 and suspended the payment of rent for residents and commercial stores, as well as credit card payments for six (6) months.

PANAMA

The Panamanian government announced a lockdown of the population from 9:00 PM to 5:00 AM daily starting on Friday, March 20. Restricted air travel for those coming from Europe and Asia. As of March 16, only Panamanian citizens and legal residents are allowed to enter Panama. All commerce is closed

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except for supermarkets, pharmacies, gas stations and hospitals/clinics. The government has declared national state of emergency.

President Laurentino Cortizo ordered the temporary closure of all stores and businesses around the country for thirty (30) days as of 00.00 AM on Friday March 20, 2020. Exceptions to include producers and suppliers of food, hygiene products, safety equipment, construction materials, agricultural supplies, medical equipment distributors, private security workers, gas distributors and bank employees. In general, any work which is non-essential has been stopped in the country. All international flights to the country have also been suspended.

Schools and universities are now closed nation-wide until April 7. Sporting events, festivals and large gatherings have been banned. As of March 22, 2020, the government suspended ALL international Commercial flights in and out of Panama.

EL SALVADOR

The Salvadorian government announced a total lockdown of the population for 30 days starting at 00:00 on Sunday, March 22. The total lockdown applies to the entire population. The national Army and Police are enforcing these measures across the country.

Borders closed to all non-citizens or non-residents of El Salvador. All citizens/residents arriving in El Salvador must remain in quarantine for 30 days. There is a 21-day national quarantine in effect for the rest of the country. Schools and commerce are closed. Gatherings of more than 200 people have been prohibited. The Salvadorian President has ordered mandatory quarantine of all pregnant women and people over 60, and has also decided to close the national airport for passengers. Hospitals suspend all visitation rights to decrease the spread of COVID-19.

HONDURAS

The government declared a full lockdown from Friday at 6:00 PM through Sunday, March 22 at 3:00 PM. 26 people have been arrested to date for violating this lockdown. Borders closed to all non-citizens or non-residents as of March 16. A 14-day quarantine is in effect for all travelers. Schools are closed through the end of March. All sporting and social events of more than 50 people are prohibited. Visitation rights to prisons have been suspended. State of emergency has been declared. **No new updates.**

GUATEMALA

The government of Guatemala has declared a curfew from 16:00 – 04:00 daily starting on March 22 for a period of 8 days. **On the first day of the curfew, approximately 900 people were arrested for violating the curfew. All shopping centers are closed and transportation services have been suspended.**

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All foreigners are restricted from entering Guatemala for a period of two weeks. Schools are closed for 21 days and all social gatherings of more than 100 persons have been suspended, including religious activities. Guatemala continues with six confirmed cases.

NICARAGUA

No flight restrictions have been implemented. All international arriving passengers subject to a 14-day quarantine. No restrictions of movement or public gatherings implemented. The Ministry of Health has decreed that anybody dying in Nicaragua must be buried immediately, with no wake or funeral to avoid the spread of any infectious disease.

The Nicaraguan government is largely ignoring the coronavirus pandemic and is preparing for Easter with massive social activities and events.

COSTA RICA

As of Monday, March 23rd, after confirming that the COVID-19 virus has spread to all seven of Costa Rica's provinces, President Carlos Alvarado announced the closing of all of the country's beaches, as well as the suspension of all religious services. Further, as of March 24, personal vehicles will be restricted from moving between the hours of 10:00 PM – 05:00 AM. Finally, all foreigners residing in Costa Rica who leave the country will automatically lose their immigration status.

The government also reinforced that elderly adults should remain home and limit contact with others as much as possible. In addition, they asked that everyone limit non-essential use of water to minimize shortages.

State of Emergency declared. All border crossings will be closed from March 18 – April 12. Passengers arriving before March 18 subject to a 14-day quarantine. School has been suspended and the government recommends that people stay at home. Additionally, the government has ordered the closing of bars, casinos and discotheques in the country and established that the local soccer championship be played behind closed doors.

The Costa Rican government has informed that the violation of the health order of not going out constitutes a crime punishable by imprisonment of one to three years or a fine of 50 to 200 days. The Costa Rican Health Minister has indicated that it is necessary for Costa Ricans not to expose themselves to public places, maintain preventive isolation, and follow the preventive hygiene protocol in order to combat COVID-19. The Minister has also heavily encouraged homeworking as a way to prevent the expansion of the virus.

Costa Rica's national emergency commission received a \$1 million aid package from the Central American Bank for economic integration to combat the virus in the country. The government has

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prepared a package with measures that include alleviating loan and social security payments, deferred tax payments, and price controls on certain products to avoid price gouging.

MEXICO

Schools will close from March 20 – April 20. No public events will be permitted from March 23 – April 19. Professional soccer will continue to be played but behind closed doors with no public. People suspected of having been infected with coronavirus will be quarantined for a period of two weeks. Sanitation and hygiene areas have been intensified \ throughout the country, especially in public areas like the Metro Station.

No air restrictions have been enacted by the Mexican government to date. The Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that personnel and policies have been added to Mexican airports to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. The U.S. continues to pressure Mexico to adopt flight restrictions.

On March 20, the United States announced a partial closure of the land borders with Mexico, allowing only essential travel. These restrictions go into effect at 11:59 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on March 20, 2020 and will remain in effect until 11:59 p.m. EDT on April 20, 2020.

As of March 23, 2020, the coronavirus pandemic has spread to 31 states in the country and Tlaxcala is the only state with no confirmed infections. As of March 22, 2020, 316 cases were reported in Mexico.

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