

Where Is the Coronavirus in Latin America?



A worker produces hand sanitizer in Brazil. (AP)

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The coronavirus landed in Latin America on February 26, bringing with it health and economic risks. See what countries so far have confirmed cases and how governments are responding.

What's the answer to the question in the title? Everywhere.

The coronavirus landed in Latin America on February 26, when Brazil confirmed a case in São Paulo. Since then, governments across the region have taken an array of actions to protect their citizens and contain COVID-19's spread.

Aside from the health risks, there will be an economic impact as well. On March 2, the [OECD decreased global GDP growth expectations](#) for the year by half a point to 2.4 percent. Prior to the epidemic, the IMF predicted 1.6 percent GDP growth for the region for 2020. In a perfect storm for economies, [dropping oil prices](#) have resulted in plunging Latin American markets and currencies.

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- [LatAm in Focus: Dr. Julio Frenk on the Coronavirus Pandemic in an Age of Populism](#)
 - [Video: The Impact of the Coronavirus on Latin America and the Caribbean](#)
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Below, AS/COA Online takes a look at measures taken and economic impact felt in Latin America.

In other parts of the Americas, as of March 30, [cases had been confirmed](#) in Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, the Bahamas, Barbados, British Virgin Islands, Belize, Cayman Islands, Canada, Curacao, Dominica,

French Guiana, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Guyana, Jamaica, Martinique, Montserrat, Saint Barthelemy, Saint Vincent and Grenadines, St. George's, St. Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, St. Marteen, St. Martin, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Turks and Caicos Islands, Virgin Islands, and the United States.

<u>Argentina</u>	<u>Dominican Republic</u>	<u>Panama</u>
<u>Bolivia</u>	<u>Ecuador</u>	<u>Paraguay</u>
<u>Brazil</u>	<u>El Salvador</u>	<u>Peru</u>
<u>Chile</u>	<u>Guatemala</u>	<u>Puerto Rico</u>
<u>Colombia</u>	<u>Honduras</u>	<u>Uruguay</u>
<u>Costa Rica</u>	<u>Mexico</u>	<u>Venezuela</u>
<u>Cuba</u>	<u>Nicaragua</u>	

This article was originally published on March 5 and has been updated with new information.

Where is COVID-19 in Latin America?

AS/COA Online tracks how many confirmed cases of COVID-19 there are in Latin America. ***Hover over a country to see the number of cumulative confirmed cases and coronavirus deaths through March 31.***

Growth after the 100th case

Below we chart the progression of confirmed cases in countries with at least 100 cases.

Sources: The Center for Systems Science and Engineering at Johns Hopkins University. Additional source links in confirmed counts in country sections of as-coa.org/covid19.

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Argentina

Spread

- March 31: [1,054 confirmed cases](#), 27 deaths
- March 24: [387 confirmed cases](#), 6 deaths
- March 17: [79 confirmed cases](#), 2 deaths
- March 10: 19 confirmed cases, 1 death
- March 7: First death
- March 3: First confirmed case

- On March 7, Argentina became [the first country in Latin America to announce a death](#) related to the virus after a 64-year-old man died in Buenos Aires.
- The first case was confirmed on March 3, involving a [43-year-old Argentine man](#) who returned home from a two-week trip to Milan, Italy.

Government response

- On March 29, the government [extended the quarantine](#) until April 12, the end of Easter week.
- On March 26, the government announced the [total closing of borders](#)—including ports, airports, and land borders—until March 31. The measure includes Argentine citizens and residents who are abroad.
- On March 19, the government announced [obligatory quarantine](#) from March 20 through March 31. During this time, all Argentines must stay in their homes and may only leave when necessary for necessities such as going to stores or pharmacies, or to buy gas. The president said that authorities would patrol the streets to make sure citizens comply.
- President of the Chamber of Deputies [Sergio Massa announced](#) on March 19 that he will meet every 15 days with members of the opposition to jointly analyze government responses in face of the pandemic.
- On March 18, President **Alberto Fernández** promised to build [eight emergency hospitals](#) to combat the virus. After a meeting with cabinet ministers on March 17, the government announced [more measures](#), such as extending leaves of absence for workers above 65 years of age, flexibilizing remote work, and fiscal measures such as minimizing individual and corporate taxes. The Commerce Ministry will tighten price controls and supply, and the Central Bank will loosen monetary policy.
- On March 15, Fernández [announced](#) the suspension of public and private school classes from preschool through high school, and the closing of borders until March 31. The president also asked citizens to stay home as much as possible. On March 17, Fernández also widened permissions for public workers to work remotely, and emphasized that this measure should be taken up by the private sector as well.
- On March 12, Fernández announced new measures via a “[Necessity and Urgency Decree](#)” including canceling all incoming flights from China, Europe, Iran, Japan, South Korea, and the United States for 30 days. On March 11, Fernández had announced that all travelers from China, Japan, Iran, South Korea, the United States, and the entire European continent must [self-quarantine for 14 days](#) upon arrival.

Economic impact and measures

- Fernández [decreed on April 1](#) that firing employees during this time without just cause or for cutbacks is prohibited for 60 days. On the same day, the government announced the [Emergency Employment and Production Assistance Program](#), which includes postponing or reducing up to 95 percent of employer payments to the Argentine social security agency, as well as a compensatory salary for workers in companies of up to 100 employees who meet conditions such as being in obligatory quarantine or at high health risk, or whose commission-based productivity has been highly affected.
- On March 29, the government [announced a suspension of evictions](#) for those who can't pay their rent, as well as a rent freeze based on March rent rates until September 30, after which rent increases would be paid in three monthly payments without interest. Fernández also announced the [freezing of mortgage loan rates](#) until September 30.
- During a March 26 G20 videoconference, [Fernández called for the creation of a global humanitarian emergency fund](#) to combat the pandemic.
- On March 25, the World Bank announced it will [lend Argentina \\$300 million](#) in emergency funds, totaling \$165 million in 2020 and \$135 in 2021. The Economy Minister Martín Guzmán and Labor Minister Claudio Moroni [announced](#) on March 23 the implementation of a [family emergency income](#) of nearly \$157 for the month April, subject to extension. This measure targets self-employed and informal workers between ages 18 and 65 who have lost all forms of income since the coronavirus outbreak. The government also announced it will [raise salaries by roughly \\$470 for medical workers](#) at public and private hospitals as an incentive to reduce rising absences since the viral outbreak.
- China is Argentina's second-biggest export destination and the outbreak is already hitting trade. For example, [75 percent of Argentina's beef exports](#) go to the Asian country, and the value of these exports to China dropped 33.4 percent from December to January.

Bolivia

Spread

- March 31: [115 confirmed cases, 7 deaths](#)
- March 29: First death
- March 24: [32 confirmed cases](#)
- March 17: 12 confirmed cases
- March 10: First two confirmed cases
- Health Minister **Aníbal Cruz** [confirmed the first two cases](#) on March 10. Both involved women in their 60s who had traveled to Italy.
- Cruz confirmed the country's first COVID-19 death, [of a 78-year-old woman](#), on March 29.

Government response

- On March 25, Interim President **Jeanine Añez** [extended the health emergency](#) and full border closure another two weeks, through April 15. On March 30, the government said it was no [longer going to try and repatriate 150 Bolivians](#) in a Chilean border town looking to return. The government further tightened the window for movements, with just one person per household to go out between [7 a.m. and 12 noon on weekdays](#).
- On March 21, the interim government declared [a national quarantine](#) to start March 22 and end April 4. Markets will be open during this period until midday and one person per family will be allowed to leave home and make purchases. Factories, banks, and centers for production of basic goods will continue to operate normally. Cuts to internet service are prohibited.
- Also on March 21, the country's electoral tribunal declared that the special election for president, slated for May 3, [would be postponed](#). No new date was set.
- In the afternoon of March 17, Añez announced that she was [closing all of Bolivia's land borders except to returning citizens and residents](#) and suspending international flights, effective March 19. Domestically, the government mandated that the work day be reduced to five hours, that markets close at 3 p.m., and that public transport stop at 4 p.m. each day. These measures will be in effect through at least March 31.
- On March 15, Añez announced that, effective March 16, most social [activities would be banned](#), including in bars, event spaces, movie theaters, and gyms. She reduced the limit of people at public gatherings to 100. She also announced that, as of March 18, no visitors from Europe or Iran would be allowed into the country, and that Bolivian nationals returning from those places would need to submit themselves to World Health Organization (WHO) isolation protocols.
- On March 12, Bolivia's education minister announced the [suspension of all classes through March 31](#).
- Añez declared a national state of emergency on March 11.

Economic impact and measures

- On March 17, the Bolivian Senate [passed a bill](#) that would allow for a “financial pause” on all payments for loans under roughly \$10,000, flexibilization for loans over \$10,000, and a restructuring once the health crisis is over. On March 18, Añez also announced that utility services can't be suspended, some corporate taxes will be deferred, and [families will receive a \\$75 credit](#) in April for each public-school student in the home.

Brazil

Spread

- March 31: [5,717 confirmed cases, 201 deaths](#)
- March 24: [2,201 confirmed cases](#), 46 deaths
- March 17: [291 confirmed cases](#), first death
- March 10: 34 confirmed cases
- February 26: First confirmed case

- [Brazil confirmed Latin America's first case](#) on February 26: a 61-year-old man who had recently [returned to São Paulo](#) from a business trip to northern Italy.
- On March 17, Brazil confirmed its [first death](#) from the virus involving a 62-year-old man in São Paulo.

Government response

- On April 1, Congress [reduced the deadline for voting](#) on provisional measures related to the pandemic from 120 to 16 days.
- On March 31, President **Jair Bolsonaro** [changed his tone in a televised address](#) from trivializing of the pandemic to calling for a “national pact” to save lives and protect jobs in fighting the “greatest challenge of our generation.” The same day, however, Bolsonaro took WHO health recommendations out of context, saying that some people must return to work and break quarantine. Health Minister **Luiz Henrique Mandetta** [corrected the president](#), emphasizing social distancing and the continuing of quarantines. On March 30, the Health Ministry finished distributing [40 million units of protective equipment](#) to health personnel across the country. The government also began distributing [500,000 testing kits](#) to states, part of the 5 million purchased and donated by mining giant Vale.
- On March 30, the opposition filed a [request before the Supreme Court to remove Bolsonaro](#) from office, saying his neglect of attending to the outbreak put Brazilians in danger. Justice **Marco Aurélio Mello** [forwarded the request to the Attorney General's office](#).
- On March 30, [Facebook deleted](#) a post from Bolsonaro in which he claimed that the hydroxychloroquine drug was working to fight the virus, despite this advice not being cleared by health authorities. This was the second instance in which a social media platform removed the president's content; on March 29, he [visited retailers in Brasília](#) and posted videos on his Twitter, which [took down the posts](#) as part of its new management of content that contradicts public health advice.
- On March 30, the Supreme Court announced it will [bar any measures that conflict with health authorities' recommendations](#) in a move that could prevent the president from ending health-related restrictions.
- On March 27, the government announced the [closing of borders via air](#) to all foreigners for 30 days, with commerce continuing as normal.
- Bolsonaro said on March 27 that mayors and governors will need to offer [severance pay](#) to workers affected by business closings. On March 26, the government launched an [anti-social distancing campaign](#) to encourage the reopening of businesses, kick-started by Bolsonaro's oldest son, Rio de Janeiro Senator Flávio Bolsonaro.
- On March 25, Bolsonaro gave a [controversial televised address](#) in which he criticized the media for creating “hysteria” and said regional governments were implementing “scorched earth” quarantine policies. But Vice President **Hamilton Mourão** [defends quarantine](#). A March 20 Datafolha poll showed that approval of Bolsonaro's handling of the pandemic [stood at just 35 percent](#).
- The Chamber of Deputies [began working remotely on March 25](#).
- On March 24, Mandetta announced the government would start to roll out a plan that will distribute [2.3 million testing kits](#) to states across Brazil. The Ministry also plans to import over 1 million rapid tests from the United States in April.
- On March 21, the governor of the state of São Paulo [announced a 15-day quarantine](#) to run from March 24 to April 7, during which time only essential services will remain operational. On the same day, the [state of Rio de Janeiro closed all beaches](#), bars and restaurants for 15 days. The largest number of cases are in these two states.
- On March 20, the Brazilian Senate passed a so-called [state of calamity](#) measure, where additional federal funds can be used to combat the pandemic and a newly formed commission of deputies and senators will meet every two months with the economy minister to monitor the situation.
- On March 19, the government [restricted entry to foreigners at all land borders](#)—excluding permanent residents, diplomats, or international organization officials—for 15 days. The transportation of goods will not be restricted.
- On March 12, the Health Ministry opened [5,000 vacancies for doctors to fight coronavirus](#) through the *Mais Medicos* program and announced the creation of [2,000 new ICU beds](#). The [Ministry recommends](#) that people with symptoms or who have been in contact with confirmed cases quarantine themselves for 14 days.

- The Ministry recommends that people with symptoms or who have been in contact with confirmed cases quarantine themselves for 14 days.
- Bolsonaro [tested negative for coronavirus](#) on March 13. [Twenty-four people](#) tested positive among those who joined a delegation to Florida where Bolsonaro met with U.S. President **Donald Trump** during the weekend of March 7. Reports indicate Bolsonaro will [likely be retested](#). On March 17, Bolsonaro tweeted that his [second](#) test also was negative.
- The state of São Paulo and cities such as Brasília, Recife, and Rio de Janeiro [have taken measures](#) like canceling events with more than 500 people, holding sports events without audiences, and closing public schools.

Economic impact and measures

- On April 1, Guedes announced that the government needs 15 days—despite pressure to speed up the process—to implement the [emergency universal income plan](#) for the most economically vulnerable, which was approved by the Senate on March 30 and signed by the president March 31. The measure to transfer \$117 monthly to people waiting for social security payments, such as the elderly, the informally employed, and the disabled. It was approved by the Chamber of Deputies on March 26.
- On March 30, development bank [BNDES announced roughly \\$388 million](#) in credit to the health sector to help increase the number of ICU beds and medical equipment.
- The federal government announced on March 27 it [will pay the equivalent of two monthly salaries](#) for workers employed by small- and medium-sized businesses. Companies need to have annual earnings between \$70,500 and \$1.9 million to receive the funds. Salaries paid will not exceed minimum wage.
- On March 26, the Health Ministry estimated the pandemic would cost the healthcare system roughly [\\$82 billion](#), but on March 26 corrected this number to just under [\\$2 billion](#), and the government is asking the World Bank for a [\\$100 billion loan](#).
- On March 25, [26 governors signed a letter to the Federal Government](#) asking for a 12-month suspension of state debt to major financial institutions, both domestic and international.
- On the same day, the Health Ministry announced the [freeing up of roughly \\$119 million](#) to be distributed to states. These funds come in addition to the previous \$79.2 million distributed earlier in March.
- Guedes announced a [stimulus measure](#) on March 16, with a package of over \$29 billion to accelerate social assistance payments, defer corporate taxes, and ease workers' access to severance funds. On March 11, Brazil's federal government agreed to dedicate at least \$1 billion of a budget bill to the Health Ministry. The Ministry determined that around \$185 million will be transferred to states and municipalities [to cover extended hours](#) in public health facilities, distributed [according to state population](#).
- The Brazilian stock market tumbled 7 percent on news of the first case, amounting to the biggest depreciation since May 2017. The Central Bank announced its revised growth projections on March 26 to [0 percent in 2020 from a previous 2.2 percent](#).

Chile

Spread

- March 31: [3,031 confirmed cases](#), 16 deaths
- March 24: [1,142 confirmed cases](#), 3 deaths
- March 21: First death
- March 17: [238 confirmed cases](#)
- March 10: 17 confirmed cases
- March 3: First confirmed case
- Chile confirmed its first case on March 3, which involved a [33-year-old](#) male doctor who had travelled to Asia.
- The health minister announced the [first death](#) from the virus on March 21, involving an 83-year-old woman.



Government response

- On March 31, Undersecretary of Public Health **Paula Daza** [announced that lockdown will continue for six municipalities](#) in Santiago for another seven days, with exception of Independencia, whose quarantine will end on April 2 at 10 p.m. The island of Rapa Nui's quarantine will continue for two more weeks.
- On March 25, the government declared a [seven-day quarantine, subject to renewal, for seven](#) heavily affected municipalities starting March 26 at 10 p.m. It will also create health checkpoints in Santiago to enforce quarantine rules.
- On March 25, the government announced that schools will remain closed past the two-week period announced on March 16 and until [April 24 at the earliest](#).
- On March 24, President Sebastián Piñera announced a [new labor law](#) regulating and facilitating remote work, including mandatory requirements that stipulate work vs. personal time. In addition, the government established a [maximum cost of \\$30](#) for the COVID-19 test in private healthcare facilities.
- On the same day, Daza announced a curfew from 2 p.m to 5 a.m. on [Easter Island](#) after confirming a first case in the territory.
- On March 22, the government announced that it would [implement a curfew](#) from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m. starting the same evening.
- Political parties and the Electoral Service agreed on March 19 to [postpone the constitutional referendum](#) to October 25 amid the coronavirus pandemic crisis.
- On March 18, **Piñera** declared a nationwide [state of catastrophe](#) as of March 19 for 90 days, following the government's [Action Plan](#). This includes banning gatherings in public spaces, controlling the distribution of basic necessities, establishing a quarantine and curfew, and limiting people's movement across cities and the country, all with the help of the Armed Forces.
- On March 16, the government said the country entered the [most complex phase of risk \(phase 4\)](#), and that it would be closing all borders as of March 18, allowing only Chilean citizens to reenter the country with an obligatory two-week quarantine.
- On March 14, the country expanded the list of countries from which arriving travelers would be placed in quarantine to include China, France, Germany, Iran, Japan, and South Korea.

Economic impact and measures

- On April 1, the Central Bank announced said [GDP will contract between 1.5 and 2.5 percent](#) in 2020, down from a December 2019 projection of between 0.5 and 1.5 percent.
- On March 31, Congress approved an [Employment Protection](#) measure to secure jobs for over 4.7 million workers as part of an economic package of roughly \$12 billion.
- On March 31, seven private health insurance companies, known as ISAPREs, announced they will [raise insurance plan costs](#) starting July 2020, despite the public health crisis.
- On March 28, the government approved the new [COVID-19 Bond](#), which is part of [an economic plan allowing](#) low-income families to delay debt payments without having utilities cut off, providing \$60 per dependent to each of these families, and passing job protection legislation for those who can't work during quarantine.
- On March 27, the government announced [economic relief to small- and medium-sized companies](#) by suspending stamp taxes—imposed on documents that show money lending operations—for six months and extending a credit line to public bank BancoEstado worth \$500 million for emergency loans. On March 23, the government announced it would [delay a 2020 bond issue of up to \\$8.7 billion](#) in 2020 to help finance the previously announced emergency package to protect jobs amid the coronavirus crisis.
- The president announced an [economic aid plan](#) of \$11.7 billion using a special constitutional clause to free funds without congressional approval. Piñera said the package will equal roughly [4.7 percent of annual GDP](#).

Colombia

Spread

- March 31: [906 confirmed cases, 16 deaths](#)
- March 24: [378 confirmed cases, 3 deaths](#)
- March 21: First death
- March 17: 75 confirmed cases
- March 10: 3 confirmed cases
- March 6: First confirmed case
- Colombia's [Health Ministry confirmed the country's first case](#) on March 6, involving a 19-year-old woman who returned to Bogotá from [Milan](#).
- The country [reported its first death](#) from the virus on March 21. The 58-year-old taxi driver in Cartagena was believed to have contracted the disease from Italian tourists who were his passengers on March 4.
- President **Iván Duque** was tested for the virus after possible exposure on March 2 during a trip to Washington DC, where he participated in an event also attended by people who had been exposed to a carrier of the virus. The president tested [negative](#).

Government response

- In a bit of political sparring between Bogotá's left-wing mayor and the conservative president, **Claudia López** announced that the [city government is preparing for a three-month-long quarantine](#), while the Duque administration is reportedly considering [an "accordion-style" quarantine strategy](#) with seven, 10-week periods oscillating between expanded and lighter restrictions.
- On March 20, **Duque** announced that, starting on the night of March 24, the country [will begin a nationwide quarantine](#) that will last through April 13. Inbound international commercial flights are suspended starting March 23 for 30 days, and Colombian citizens traveling abroad were [urged to return](#) by the evening of March 22. On March 21, the Duque [appointed](#) former Commerce Minister **Luis Guillermo Plata** to lead [coordination](#) of the country's coronavirus response.
- On March 17, Duque [declared a state of emergency](#) and announced that people 70 years old and older are obligated to stay in their homes and isolate themselves through May. As of March 17, [19 Colombian departments had declared nighttime curfews](#).
- On March 16, Duque announced the closing of all of Colombia's borders and ports as of March 17 at midnight [through May 30](#), with only certain import shipments allowed in. The measure applies equally to citizens as well as foreigners. Within the country's borders, Duque also mandated the [closing of all bars and nightlife spaces](#) and no social gatherings of more than 50 people.
- On March 15, Duque announced that, as of March 16, [Colombian schools will suspend in-person classes through April 20](#) and will transition students to online learning. He also announced that entry into the country for all foreigners and non-residents will be restricted, and that all nationals and permanent residents arriving in the country will be required to go under [self-quarantine for 14 days](#) upon return.
- On March 13, Duque stepped up prevention measures including shutting down the border with Venezuela starting 5 a.m. on March 14. Between [20,000 and 50,000](#) people cross the Colombian-Venezuelan border per day, many of whom are Venezuelans seeking basic foodstuffs, supplies, and medical treatment as their country endures a prolonged economic crisis.

Economic impact and measures

- On March 27, S&P [downgraded](#) Colombia's credit rating from stable to negative, warning that the country could lose its investment grade status in the next 12 to 18 months.
- Duque announced [a new set of economic measures](#) on March 24 as the national quarantine went into effect, including disbursements of about \$40 to 3 million low income families, the virtual deployment of about 2,500 mental health professionals, the distribution of 23 tons of food and 96 million gallons of water to vulnerable populations, and easing some conditions for student loan repayments.
- In conjunction with the national quarantine, Duque announced a series of economic relief measures, including accelerated tax refunds, the elimination of import taxes on medical supplies and technology, reinstatement of water services, a grace period on mortgage and loan payments for small- and medium-sized enterprises, and special lines of credit for the agriculture, tourism, and aviation sectors.

Costa Rica

Spread

- March 31: [347 confirmed cases](#), 2 deaths
- March 24: [177 confirmed cases](#), 2 deaths
- March 18: First death
- March 17: [50 confirmed cases](#).
- March 10: 13 confirmed cases
- March 6: First confirmed case
- [On March 6, Costa Rica became the first Central American country to confirm a case](#), involving a 49-year-old tourist visiting from the United States. Alvarado [announced the confirmed case on Twitter](#) and said Costa Rica had been preparing for the virus' arrival since January.
- On March 18, the country announced its [first coronavirus-related death](#) when an 87-year-old man passed away.

Government response

- On March 31, the government announced [plans to reform transit laws](#) in public roads, including stricter vehicle restrictions to help both the Health and public Security Ministries better fulfill their roles in cases of national emergency.
- On March 28, the Health Ministry announced that all establishments open to the public [must close at 8 p.m.](#) each night starting on March 29. Exceptions are in place for pharmacies and food businesses.
- During the evening of March 24, Costa Rican authorities began [transferring some 2,600 migrants](#)—mostly from Africa, Asia, and Haiti—from the country's southern border with Panama to its northern border with Nicaragua, citing containment efforts. Nicaragua subsequently [closed unauthorized entry points](#) on the shared border.
- On March 24, President **Carlos Alvarado** requested that WHO create a [repository of information](#) available to all member countries that includes patents of diagnostic tests and practices, medication, and vaccines. Alvarado also requested that the organization develop a procedure for the implementation of this information-sharing initiative with financial support from both the public and private sectors as well as other international organizations.
- On March 23, Alvarado [instituted four new measures](#) to go into effect March 24: closing all beaches and religious centers across the country, instituting a nationwide car restriction that prohibits most people from driving between 10 p.m. and 5 a.m., and requiring that all foreign residents who leave the country [automatically lose their immigration status](#). On March 28, the government [expanded](#) restrictions for cars so that they cannot circulate between 8 p.m. and 5 a.m. on weekend nights.
- Alvarado [declared a state of emergency](#) on March 16, announcing that the country would close its borders to foreigners and non-residents starting just before midnight on March 18 through at least April 12. Citizens and residents of the country will be required to undergo a two-week quarantine. Travelers with layovers will be able to transit the country.
- On March 15, [Health Minister Daniel Salas announced](#) all bars, casinos, and nightclubs will close. Regarding restaurants, he said they will be closed for 30 days in cases where they do not meet the rule of staying below the 50 percent capacity limit.
- On March 12, [the government announced](#) it would issue preventative school closings in cases of high risk factors to start the week of March 16, that public spaces should operate at 50 percent capacity, and that international travel for public-sector workers has been cancelled. Large gatherings were also suspended. The Health Ministry announced that [it will no longer report suspected cases in the country as of March 11](#), though Health Minister Daniel Salas acknowledged that the country's [number of suspected cases exceeds the testing capacity](#) of Costa Rica's national lab.

Economic impact and measures

- On March 30, the Costa Rican Restaurants Chamber reported that [7,980 restaurants closed](#) in March leading to 109,440 layoffs.
- On March 19, Alvarado signed into law [tax relief legislation](#) that effectively places a moratorium on four types of taxes from April through June: the Value-Added Tax, profit taxes, selective consumption taxes, and [tariffs](#) on imported merchandise.
- 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 pandemic will have a significant impact, [given the importance of tourism](#) to Costa Rica's economy, with 3.1 million people visiting in 2019 and 220,000 people employed in the industry. Tourism accounts for 8.2 percent of the country's GDP.

Cuba

Spread

- March 31: [212 confirmed cases](#), 6 deaths
- March 24: [57 confirmed cases](#), 1 death
- March 18: First death
- March 17: [7 confirmed cases](#)
- March 12: 3 confirmed cases
- March 11: First confirmed cases
- Official Cuban broadcast media confirmed the island's first three cases on March 11. The three Italian tourists traveled to Havana on March 9.
- Cuba experienced its [first coronavirus-related death](#) on March 18 when a 69-year-old Italian man passed away.

Government response

- On March 31, the government announced the [suspension of all commercial and charter flights](#) to the island starting April 2, prohibiting also all foreign sea traffic in Cuban waters.
- On March 23, Cuban Prime Minister **Manuel Marrero** announced the [closure of schools and universities](#) until April 20, subject to extension. The government also [suspended cross-island travel](#), and tourism is officially shut down indefinitely.
- As of March 24, [foreigners and Cubans living abroad](#) may not enter the island, and Cuban residents returning must be quarantined for two weeks.
- Over the weekend of March 21, the Cuban government announced it would [send a brigade of 52 doctors](#) to Italy to support efforts to contain the virus there.
- On March 16, [Cuba's Health Ministry](#) announced it will allow the British cruise ship MS Braemar to dock, following a UK request. The ship has several confirmed infected passengers. The Cuban government will give medical attention to all those onboard and coordinate repatriation via air.
- On March 14, the Cuban government announced [that it would remain open to visitors](#), saying those who arrived would be welcomed.

Economic impact and measures

- On March 26, the government announced the temporary suspension of more than [16,000 work licenses](#) for entrepreneurs, including landlords, contract workers, restaurant workers, and craftsmen.
- The Cuban government has [enlisted the country's textile industry](#) to fabricate cloth masks while urging the population to make washable masks at home using fabrics on hand. Officials have also heightened [control and surveillance measures at points of entry](#). On March 9, Cuba's Public Health Minister José Angel Portal announced that the government would [allocate resources](#) to combat the country's shortage of medicines and medical equipment in the case that the virus begins to spread locally.

Dominican Republic

Spread

- March 31: [1,284 confirmed cases](#), 57 deaths
- March 24: [392 confirmed cases](#), 10 deaths
- March 17: [21 confirmed cases](#), 1 death
- March 16: First death
- March 10: 5 confirmed cases
- March 3: 1 confirmed case
- March 1: First confirmed case
- The Dominican Republic's first confirmed case was reported on March 1 and involved a 62-year-old Italian tourist.
- The country reported its [first death](#) from the virus on March 16, involving an HIV-positive woman, 47, who also had tuberculosis and had traveled to Spain recently.

Government response

- On March 26, the government announced a [curfew expansion](#) from 5 p.m. to 6 a.m. . The prior curfew, announced on March 20 by President **Danilo Medina**, decreed a nationwide curfew between the hours of 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. until April 3.
- On March 20, Medina decreed a [nationwide curfew](#) between the hours of 8 p.m. and 6 a.m. until April 3. Medical personnel, journalists, and people with medical emergencies are exempt from the curfew. The announcement came after Medina declared a [national state of emergency](#) across the country on March 17, which went into effect on March 19. Under the state of emergency declaration, Medina announced that the country would close all of its borders for the next 15 days and called for the suspension of most commercial activities and cultural activities. Grocery stores, gas stations, pharmacies, and markets will remain open.
- As of March 16 through the end of the month, all incoming flights from Europe, China, and Iran will be [suspended](#). Before the first case was officially confirmed, Dominican authorities on February 28 had ordered the [suspension of all flights originating from Milan](#) for the next 30 days. Health Minister Rafael Sánchez Cárdenas added that all travelers coming from Italy, regardless of their nationalities, will be subject to [epidemiological testing](#) upon arrival at Dominican airports.

Economic impact and measures

- On March 26 the [Central Bank approved](#) roughly \$1.5 billion for banks to have available for clients, and \$622.4 million in credit for export industries.
- On March 25, Medina announced an [economic package worth](#) \$591,200 to alleviate salary losses and food insecurity. The measures include a three-month moratorium on monthly minimum payments on credit cards as well as waivers of late fees. Starting on April 1 until May 31, the 811,000 families already subscribed to the country's social welfare program Tarjeta de Solidaridad will receive a monthly payment ranging from \$27 to \$130 for foodstuffs and first aid products. The president added that 690,000 other families outside the social welfare program will also receive this assistance.
- On March 18, the country's Central Bank announced [a stimulus package](#) for homes, small businesses, and the tourism and export sectors.

Ecuador

Spread

- March 31: [2,302 confirmed cases](#), [79 deaths](#)
- March 24: [1,082 confirmed cases](#), [27 deaths](#)
- March 17: [111 confirmed cases](#), [2 deaths](#)
- March 13: First death
- March 10: 15 confirmed cases
- March 3: 7 confirmed cases

- February 29: First confirmed case
- Ecuador's Health Minister **Catalina Andramuño Zeballos** [confirmed the country's first case on February 29](#).
- Ecuador confirmed the [first death](#) from the virus on March 13. The woman who died, a 71-year-old woman who lived in Spain and traveled to Ecuador on February 14, was also the country's first case.

Government response

- On March 16, President **Lenín Moreno** said the country would enter a [state of exception](#) during which there would be a nightly curfew from 9 p.m. to 5 a.m., as well as limits on the circulation of cars determined by license plate number. He also announced the suspension of transport between provinces and of domestic flights starting in the evening of March 17 for 14 days.
- On the evening of March 15, Moreno announced a [series of measures](#), including the suspension of citizens' movements within the country except to buy food, medicine, and basic goods. Also banned are all non-essential commercial activities and social gatherings of more than 30 people. 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.
- Ecuador [confirmed the first death](#) from the virus on March 13. The woman who died, a 71-year-old woman who lived in Spain and traveled to Ecuador on February 14, was also the country's first case.
- On March 14, the vice president [announced a series of strict measures](#): Foreigners would no longer be able to enter the country starting March 15, the prohibition of entry of Ecuadoran nationals and residents starting March 16, suspension of major events including religious ones, restrictions on activities involving more than 30 people, and land border crossings limited to six entry points.
- Moreno [declared a national health emergency](#) on March 11, requiring that all who travel to Ecuador from countries that have confirmed cases [be placed under home quarantine](#). On March 12, authorities announced the [suspension of all classes in educational institutions](#) starting March 13. In addition, meetings of more than 1,000 people have been prohibited, as is taking masks, soap, and hand sanitizer out of the country. The government also [prohibited mass gatherings in Guayaquil and Babahoyo](#), the two places visited by the first confirmed carrier.

Economic impact and measures

- On March 27, Moreno announced a [series of measures for the Galápagos Islands](#), among them extensions on tax payments for the tourism and agriculture industries, as well as small businesses.
- Also on the same day, Moreno instituted a [12-month deferment](#) with no surcharges aimed at farmers, small merchants, and artisans who can't pay their water and electricity bills between April and June.
- On March 25, the government [announced](#) that the country will receive a total of \$2 billion in emergency funds from three international agencies in the coming weeks: \$500 million from the International Monetary Fund, \$500 million from the World Bank, and \$1 billion from bilateral debt, primarily from China.
- On March 25, S&P Global downgraded [Ecuador's long- and short-term credit ratings](#), with default a possibility in the coming months.
- On March 17, Moreno [announced steps to alleviate economic challenges](#) battering the country. Under the new measures, social security payments will be postponed for 90 days while taxes will be deferred for the tourism and export sectors for the months of April, May, and June, as well as for small businesses.

El Salvador

Spread

- March 31: [32 confirmed cases, first death](#)
- March 25: [13 confirmed cases](#)
- March 24: [9 confirmed cases](#)
- March 18: First confirmed case

- The country—one of the last Latin American countries to confirm a case—[announced its first one on March 18](#). President **Nayib Bukele** revealed the case involved a person who had traveled to Italy and whose return was not documented.
- El Salvador [experienced its first death](#)—a 60-year-old woman who had returned from the United States—on March 31.

Government response

- On March 30, [unrest broke out in the capital](#) after an online system to disburse \$300 subsidies (see economic measures) repeatedly crashed over the weekend. The government opened offices for people to get the subsidies in person, then closed them after crowds lined up and created a hazardous contagion situation.
- On March 29, legislators [extended the state of exception](#), previously set to expire the same day, for another two weeks. Legal experts have warned that the extension runs the risk of allowing for an indefinite [state of exception](#).
- On March 24, Puerto Rican rapper René Perez, better known as **Residente**, interviewed Bukele live on Instagram about the president's pandemic response. During the conversation, Bukele suggested medical students [could skip completing their theses in order to start supporting medical efforts](#).
- On March 22, the government announced a [30-day quarantine measure](#) requiring people to stay at home.
- **Bukele** said on March 19 that the government is making plans to provide attention to as many as 12,800 infected people and is [taking measures](#) such as converting hotels to hospitals.
- On March 18, the government announced it was [suspending deportation flights](#) from Mexico and the United States. However, El Salvador lifted the U.S. ban and [received a flight of deportees](#) on March 24, likely due to [pressure from the U.S. government](#).
- The president [shut down the runway](#) at the country's main international airport just outside San Salvador on March 16, [leading to a Twitter spat](#) with Mexico's foreign minister about an incoming flight Bukele alleged was carrying 12 people with confirmed cases.
- Bukele [placed the country under quarantine](#) on March 11. The quarantine will last for 21 days, during which all schools will remain closed and large gatherings prohibited. All foreign travel into the country [has been banned](#), except for residents and diplomats, and Salvadorans returning to El Salvador will be isolated for 30 days. In addition, the president declared a red alert on March 13 and the Legislative Assembly approved a state of emergency on March 14, [when Bukele also closed bars and nightclubs for 14 days](#).

Economic impact and measures

- On March 21, in conjunction with imposing quarantine, the president announced a subsidy of roughly \$300 per house for about 75 percent of Salvadoran households. He also threatened against corruption related to economic relief measures, saying 60 auditors would be reviewing disbursement and that "[I will make a prisoner of anyone who touches even a cent](#)." In addition, he has frozen the prices of basic goods and warned against price gouging.
- On March 18, [Bukele announced a plan](#) suspending utility, phone, and internet bills for three months to be paid back over the course of the subsequent two years. The president also froze payments on items such as mortgages, cars and motorcycles, and credit cards.

Guatemala

Spread

- March 31: [39 confirmed cases, 1 death](#)
- March 24: [21 confirmed cases, 1 death](#)
- March 17: [6 confirmed cases, 1 death](#)
- March 15: First death
- March 13: First confirmed case

- President **Alejandro Giammattei** confirmed the country's first case, [involving a man who had returned from northern Italy](#).
- On March 15, the Health Ministry confirmed the [country's first death](#) from the virus.

Government response

- On March 29, [the government extended its curfew to April 12](#). On the same day, the Health Ministry revealed that a Guatemalan man deported from the United States on March 26 [had tested positive](#) for COVID-19.
- On March 21, Giammattei [announced](#) an eight-day curfew [from March 22 to March 29](#) that will run each evening from 4 p.m. to 4 a.m.
- Starting March 17, the [Guatemalan government closed all forms of borders](#) and prohibited entry by foreigners, suspended all forms of work, prohibited events of any size, stopped all public transport, ended all visits to institutions for senior citizens, closed all shopping malls, prohibited drinking after 5 p.m. hoarding of goods, and suspended visits to prisons. All shops must close from 9 p.m. to 4 a.m. except in the case of pharmacies and essential basic services. Guatemalans can reenter the country, while residents and members of the diplomatic corps must undergo quarantine when returning to the country.
- On March 17, the foreign minister [said](#) it would [block deportation flights from the United States](#), making it the first Central American country to do so. Then, on March 19, [it announced it would resume them](#).
- On March 15, the Health Ministry [banned the entry of European foreign nationals](#) to Guatemala and recommended that the private sector allow all people above the age of 70 or with grave health to work from homes.
- On March 14, the Health Ministry [announced the following measures](#): prohibiting religious events, suspending all school for three weeks, prohibiting gatherings of more than 100 people, suspending Easter celebrations, and holding sporting events with no public attendance.
- On March 13, Giammattei announced that he would expand a previously instituted travel ban [so that it would include the United States and Canada](#). The ban involved any country [where transmission has occurred domestically](#) rather than cases brought in from international travel. The Health Ministry said [Guatemalan nationals would be allowed to enter](#) from countries on the travel prohibition list, but would be required to quarantine themselves in their homes. His government had already [imposed travel restrictions](#) on people returning from China as early as January. On March 11, the Health Ministry also indefinitely banned incoming flights from China, France, Germany, Iran, Italy, South and North Korea, and Spain. Travelers arriving from Europe in countries not in this list [must be quarantined for at least one week](#).

Economic impact and measures

- The president announced on March 29 that it will [tap a \\$26 million emergency fund](#) to help families in need during the epidemic, giving \$129 to those who meet the requirements to cover costs for electricity, water, and supplies.
- On March 25, the [Guatemalan Congress approved](#) an emergency bill named the "Emergency Law to Protect Guatemalans from the impact of CORONAVIRUS COVID-19 pandemic" with a fund of roughly \$480 million to cover elderly, health, employment, security, and economic programs during the emergency.
- On March 9, the head of the Bank of Guatemala estimated between a 0.1 and 0.2 percent [decrease in GDP for 2020](#) as a result of the coronavirus. On March 12, Congress [approved the president's proposed state of emergency bill](#) with a fund of roughly \$30 million for prevention and containment.
- On March 20, the government said that it would [increase its health budget to cover costs](#) of medicine and equipment and suggested more funds could be made available depending on the impact of the pandemic in Guatemala.

Honduras

Spread

- March 31: [172 confirmed cases, 10 deaths](#)

- March 26: First death
- March 24: [36 confirmed cases](#)
- March 17: [9 confirmed cases](#)
- March 11: First 2 confirmed cases
- The country's first cases involve [two women who traveled to Europe](#): a 42-year-old who arrived from Spain and a 37-year-old who returned from Switzerland.
- Honduras [confirmed its first death](#) on March 26, involving a 60-year-old man who died the prior evening.

Government response

- On March 29, the curfew was [extended until April 12](#). The government also announced new transit restrictions to go into effect March 31, largely limiting movement to Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays based on the last digits of each individual's identification card, passport, and/or driver's license.
- Starting on March 23, all markets across the country were [ordered to close to the public](#). That night, President **Juan Orlando Hernández** [launched Honduras Solidaria](#), a state-run program aimed at giving 800,000 families foodstuff and hygiene products every two weeks for the next 30 days.
- On March 16, the government announced a [national-level curfew](#) starting at 10 p.m. that evening, as well as a state of exception that allows for the [suspension of constitutional rights](#) for seven days.
- Hernández [announced](#) the closing of all borders as of 11:59 p.m. on March 15 with the exception of Honduran nationals and permanent residents. The country's national risk management agency also announced the suspension of all commercial and work activities, any events regardless of number of people, and public transportation, and reminded people that failure to comply could result in criminal charges. That said, there are a host of [exemptions](#), for everyone from public-sector and health service workers to drive-through restaurants.
- On March 14, Honduras announced a [two-week long national red alert](#) that would restrict gatherings of more than 50 people and create specialized health units. On March 12, the country announced that all public and private schools [would be closed for two weeks starting March 13](#).
- On March 10, the government [suspended deportation flights from Mexico](#).

Economic impact and measures

- On March 30, the president announced that the government will [delay](#) income tax payments until June 30 for micro, small, and medium-size business employees, which account for 70 percent of the workforce in the country.
- On March 16, [the government announced measures](#) such as injecting funds into the construction sector, extending credit lines to ensure access to food, and financial support for small business owners.

Mexico

Spread

- March 31: [1,215 confirmed cases, 29 deaths](#)
- March 24: [405 confirmed cases, 5 deaths](#)
- March 18: First death
- March 17: [93 confirmed cases](#)
- March 10: 7 confirmed cases
- March 3: 5 confirmed cases
- February 28: First confirmed case
- The country confirmed its first case, involving a [35-year-old man](#) in Mexico City who was placed in quarantine, on February 28.
- Mexico's first death, involving a 41-year-old man with diabetes, [was confirmed on March 18](#).
- Confirmed case and death counts are shared during a nightly 7 p.m. press conference that is typically led by Health Undersecretary **Hugo López-Gatell**.

Government response

- On the evening of March 30, Foreign Secretary Marcelo Ebrard declared [a national health emergency](#). This came as López-Gatell announced a series of measures to be followed through April 30, including suspension [of all non-essential activities](#), no gatherings of more than 50 people in the case of essential sectors, and strict self-quarantine for people over 60 and at-risk health populations. He also repeated throughout the press conference that people should stay at home. Ebrard clarified that the emergency measure is [not a state of exception](#) involving armed authorities and that companies that avoided paying workers or defied rules [could face sanctions](#). [With close to 50 percent of the population living in poverty](#) and a significant portion of Mexicans employed in the informal sector, concerns persist about whether people will self-quarantine. On the morning of March 31, López-Gatell shared a [list of essential services](#), which range from tax collection to elderly care centers to supermarkets.
- On March 30, Governor of Querétaro Francisco Domínguez [became the third Mexican governor in as many days](#) to confirm he had tested positive for COVID-19.
- Since becoming president in December of 2018, **Andrés Manuel López Obrador** has not traveled out of Mexico and, therefore, has not attended international summits. But on March 26, [he joined a virtual G20 summit](#), during which he urged for the UN to control the sale of medicines and equipment and cautioned leaders against shutting down borders.
- On March 25, López-Gatell said the [federal government would stop all non-essential operations](#).
- A March 24 *Reforma* poll found that [44 percent of Mexicans disapprove](#) of López Obrador's handling of the pandemic, compared to 37 percent who back it. Some 82 percent said he should cancel his large events and tours. He has spent weekends traveling through Mexico, [sharing videos](#) on [social media](#) in which he could be seen making physical contact with supporters. He subsequently changed his tone, [releasing a video on March 27 encouraging people to stay home](#) to flatten the curve. But he continued his travels over the March 28 weekend, which included a stop to meet—and shake hands—with the mother of U.S.-imprisoned drug cartel leader Joaquín “El Chapo” Guzman.
- On March 24, the government declared that the country [had entered phase two](#) of the epidemic after the WHO a day earlier categorized it among countries with community transmission. The government said it will suspend all public and private gatherings of [100 people or more](#) for the coming month. In addition, the finance ministry [will provide roughly \\$180 million](#) to the defense ministry and navy for measures such as expanding hospitalization capacity, coordinating with states and municipalities, and deploying thousands of health professionals to combat the virus.
- With March 23 marking the start of the country's month of social distancing, on March 22 Mexico City Mayor **Claudia Sheinbaum** [announced the closing](#), until April 19, of spaces where groups larger than 50 people tend to convene. On March 20, Governor Enrique Alfaro of Jalisco [announced a five-day quarantine](#) in his state.
- On March 20, the U.S. and Mexican governments announced that they [will restrict nonessential travel across their shared border](#) starting on March 22, although commerce will continue.
- Also on March 20, the Health Secretariat revealed a new character, [Susana Distancia](#), to illustrate how far apart people should stay from each other. Her name is a play on words: *su sana distancia*, or “your healthy distance.”
- On March 14, the Health Secretariat [announced that schools will be closed](#) from March 20 through April 20. López-Gatell said that, from March 23 through April 19, the country would [enter a period of "safe distance"](#) in which people should work remotely and events of 5,000 people or more should be suspended.

Economic impact and measures

- A March survey by Banco de México found analysts foresee a [3.99 percent GDP contraction](#) for the country. On March 26, S&P Global Ratings downgraded its [credit rating](#) for both Mexico and state oil firm Pemex. On the same day, JPMorgan adjusted its growth forecast, saying the Mexican economy [will contract by 7 percent in 2020](#), down from a previous prediction of a 1.8 percent contraction. On March 17, Credit Suisse [changed its forecast to a 4 percent GDP contraction](#) for the year, down from 0.7 percent growth.
- López-Gatell confirmed on March 31 that the health emergency declared a day earlier required the [closure of Mexico's beaches](#). Tourism accounts for [8.7 percent of Mexico's total GDP](#). NPR reported on April 1

that in March a group of roughly 70 college students from University of Texas, Austin, chartered a flight to Los Cabos for Spring Break and 28 of them subsequently tested positive for COVID-19.

- On March 24, López Obrador announced plans [to extend 1 million no- or low-interest loans](#) to small businesses to support them through the crisis.
- On March 23, the president said that companies should not be [waiting for bailouts or tax breaks](#).
- On March 20, Banca de México [cut its benchmark interest rate](#) by 50 basis points to 6.50 percent.
- On March 18, López Obrador said senior citizens [would get an advance](#) on their next pension deposits, receiving two payments instead of one.

Nicaragua

Spread

- March 31: [5 confirmed cases, 1 death](#)
- March 26: First death
- March 24: [2 confirmed cases](#)
- March 18: First confirmed case
- Vice President **Rosario Murillo**, who is the wife of President **Daniel Ortega**, [confirmed on March 18 the country's first case](#), involving a 40-year-old Nicaraguan man who had traveled to Panama City.

Government response

- Before authorities confirmed the country's first case, Ortega's administration [announced](#) that it would ban wakes and funerals for those who die of the virus.
- As of the time of the confirmation from Murillo, the government had not implemented quarantines, school suspensions, or travel restrictions, nor did she indicate if or that it would. A number of local businesses, including bars and restaurants, decided to [close down](#) to protect their staff and clients.

Panama

Spread

- March 31: [1,181 confirmed cases](#), 30 deaths
- March 24: [443 confirmed cases](#), 8 deaths
- March 17: [86 confirmed cases](#), 1 death
- March 10: 8 confirmed cases, first death
- March 9: First confirmed case
- A 40-year-old Panamanian woman who had traveled to Spain [became the country's first confirmed case](#) of coronavirus.
- On March 10, Panama became the second country in Latin America and the first Central America to confirm a coronavirus-related death.

Government response

- On March 30, President **Laurentino Cortizo** [announced](#) that the government would further limit movement within the country by designating Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays as days for women to circulate while men can go outside on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. Everyone must [remain at home](#) on Sundays.
- On March 28, the Panama Canal Authority (ACP) [allowed the passage](#) of two Florida-bound Holland America cruise ships "under extraordinary conditions and for humanitarian reasons," after previously stating it [would not allow the passage of one of the ships](#) because of positive cases onboard. The decision came after the ACP announced on March 25 that ships attempting to cross through the Canal had to meet a number of safety requirements, including that [all aboard each ship be healthy](#).

- On March 25, the country's armed forces [closed down](#) all unofficial entry points across Nicaragua's southern border with Costa Rica, reports La Prensa. The move followed a [March 21 meeting](#) between Costa Rican and Nicaraguan officials in which the two countries agreed to collaborate in sharing health information but did not commit to closing their shared border.
- On March 24, Cortizo declared a national quarantine to begin at 5:01 a.m. on March 25. Citizens will be allowed to leave their homes to buy medicine or food on a [schedule according to the last digit on a citizen's national identity card](#) or a foreigner's passport.
- On March 23, the government [instituted a curfew](#) starting March 24 that will run nightly from 5 p.m. to 5 a.m, expanding a previous curfew announced on March 19 that ran from [9 p.m. to 5 a.m.](#)
- On March 22, the government [announced a system](#) to be put in place when/if total quarantine is mandated, restricting people to leave their homes only to buy medicine or food on a schedule according to their national identification card or passport numbers, and people will only be able to be out of the house for up to two hours.
- On March 19, the government announced that [all incoming international flights will be suspended](#) as of March 22 for 30 days.
- On March 17, Panama held the [first virtual Cabinet Council](#) meeting in Central America, where the president and cabinet ministers discussed the government agenda following the Health Ministry's recommendations to avoid group gatherings.
- As of 11:59 p.m. March 16, only nationals and foreign residents will be [allowed entry](#), with mandatory quarantine for 14 days. In a press conference, Security Minister Juan Pino announced that [public spaces](#) such as nightclubs, bars, and casinos will close, and that all shops barring supermarkets, pharmacies and medical centers will also close. The Health Ministry also announced the suspension of non-essential surgeries and hospital visits.
- On March 14, [flights from Asia were suspended](#). On March 13, the country suspended [events of more than 50 people](#) and had already [prohibited flights arriving from Europe](#). On March 12, Cortizo [announced a state of emergency](#), and presented to the government a national decree for necessary resources to mitigate the outbreak's effects. The government had announced further preventive measures after the country's first death, including [suspending](#) private- and public-school classes in central and northern Panama until April 7.

Economic impact and measures

- On March 25, [Cortizo announced](#) that banks are [postponing](#) mortgage and loan payments until December 31, and on [March 24 he said](#) that people who have lost their jobs will not pay utilities or face internet cuts for the next three months.
- On March 23, Panama City's Mayor José Luis Fábrega announced that each of the capital's 23 community councils will get [\\$25,000](#) in emergency funds.
- Given that 6 percent of global trade passes through the Canal, financial analysts [warn](#) that Panama will feel the impact as the virus continues to affect trade.

Paraguay

Spread

- March 31: [69 confirmed cases, 3 deaths](#)
- March 24: [37 confirmed cases, 3 deaths](#)
- March 20: First death
- March 17: [11 confirmed cases](#)
- March 10: 1 confirmed case
- March 7: First confirmed case
- Paraguay's Health Ministry [confirmed the country's first case on March 7](#). The 32-year-old man, who was [quarantined in his home](#), had [traveled to Ecuador](#) for business.
- The country's first death [was confirmed](#) on March 20 and involved a 69-year-old doctor.

Government response

- On March 28, the government announced it would [extend its nationwide quarantine](#) until April 12, during which time Paraguayans can only leave home for [food or medicine](#).
- On March 24, the aviation authority [suspended all incoming flights](#)—both commercial and private—into the country through April 12.
- On March 17, the Health Ministry [announced via Twitter](#) a mandatory curfew between the hours 8 p.m. and 4 a.m. through March 24.
- On March 16, the presidency declared a [health emergency](#) in the entire country under Decree 3456. Also on March 16, Paraguay's Health Ministry announced that only [30 percent of borders crossing points will be operational](#) for the next 15 days to reduce entry to the country, and [will prohibit entry](#) for non-citizens for the same amount of time. Those who enter must remain in quarantine for two weeks.
- On March 10, the government announced it will suspend [public events or large gatherings](#) such as concerts, as well as classes in schools, for at least 15 days.
- On March 9, Paraguay's Clinics Hospital, a research facility within the National University of Asunción located in the capital, [began preparing a special block within the hospital](#) to deal with coronavirus cases.

Economic impact and measures

- On March 31, the Health Ministry announced it will make available [\\$100 million for medical equipment and ICU beds](#), as part of an emergency package of \$500 million.
- On March 30, President **Mario Abdo Benítez** announced a [reduction of state salaries](#) to save roughly \$52 million. The measure decrees that no official salary should exceed \$5,635 monthly—the [presidential salary](#).
- On March 26, the government announced a health emergency law allowing for the allocation of up to [\\$1.6 billion in loans](#) from international organizations. Of this sum, the government will put [\\$514 million toward public health services](#) and \$408 million for job protection.
- On March 24, Benítez announced the government will spend \$800,000 to build [two new hospitals](#), adding 200 beds to the country's capacity.
- On March 13, Benítez [announced economic measures](#), such as allocating roughly \$81 million for health measures and a reduction in interest rates reduced to 3.75 percent from 4 percent.
- The government [shared a number to call](#) for people who traveled to countries where COVID-19 is present and who have symptoms. It also announced it will [suspend for at least 15 days](#) public events or large gatherings such as concerts, as well as classes in schools.
- Paraguay's Clinics Hospital, a research facility within the National University of Asunción located in the capital, is prepping a [special block within the hospital to deal with coronavirus](#) cases.

Peru

Spread

- March 31: [1,065 confirmed cases, 30 deaths](#)
- March 24: [416 confirmed cases, 7 deaths](#)
- March 19: First three deaths
- March 17: 117 confirmed cases
- March 10: 11 confirmed cases
- March 6: First case
- Peru's [first case involved a 25-year-old man](#) who had recently returned from a trip that took him to Spain, France, and the Czech Republic.
- [Peru confirmed its first case](#) on March 6. The 25-year-old man had recently returned from a trip that took him to Spain, France, and the Czech Republic.
- The country's health ministry [announced the first four deaths from the virus on March 19](#).

Government response

- On March 25, President **Martín Vizcarra** announced he was extending the state of emergency and nationwide quarantine an additional 13 days, [through April 12](#).
- Peruvians overwhelmingly support Vizcarra's handling of the crisis. An Ipsos poll released March 22 found that his approval rating jumped 35 points in one week to 87 percent. [Some 96 percent approve](#) of the curfew and 95 percent support the national quarantine.
- On March 21, Vizcarra said that some 8,000 people [had been arrested](#) for violating the curfew and restriction-of-movement measures.
- Vizcarra said on March 19 that the government is in the process of purchasing [1.4 million coronavirus quick test kits](#).
- Vizcarra announced a [nationwide curfew](#) from 8 p.m. to 5 a.m. and banned all private vehicles from the roads. Both measures [go into effect on March 19](#). Additionally, some [3 million low-income households will receive payments of about \\$100](#), meant to cover two weeks' worth of basic goods, that people can pick up on March 19.
- On March 15, Vizcarra declared a state of national emergency, lasting 15 days, that puts [strict controls](#) on people's movement within the country. The decree requires all of Peru's [borders closed as of 11:59 p.m. March 16](#), as well as prohibiting domestic travel between Peru's 196 provinces. Peruvians are required to stay in their homes, unless they are going to buy food or pick up medicine. Workers in several critical sectors, however, such as health, finance, communication, and supermarkets, are allowed to commute.
- On March 11, the [government ordered](#) that travelers coming from China, France, Italy, and Spain be quarantined at home for 14 days. The administration also announced that school classes are suspended until March 30.

Economic impact and measures

- Peruvians who've made contributions to private retirement funds will be able to make [penalty-free withdrawals of about \\$300](#) in April and May, the government announced on March 30. Economy Minister María Antonieta Alva says the measure would [allow up to 3.7 percent](#) of all the monies currently held in private funds to be withdrawn, worth about \$1.5 billion; the Peruvian Congress is considering a [proposal to free up up to 25 percent](#), or about \$11 billion. Peru's Central Bank and Economy Ministry, meanwhile, have submitted a proposal to [inject \\$30 billion into local businesses](#), an amount equal to roughly 14 percent of annual GDP, to the president's cabinet for review.
- The March 15 national emergency shut down Machu Picchu, where site administrators expect economic [losses of up to \\$100 million due to the two-week closure](#), with some of the 2,500 tourists currently stuck in Cusco demanding refunds.
- China is Peru's top trading partner, with [30 percent of its exports](#) destined for the Asian country. Goldman Sachs says [Peru, along with Chile, counts as Latin America's most exposed economy](#) due to coronavirus.

Puerto Rico

Spread

- March 31: [239 confirmed cases, 8 deaths](#)
- March 24: [39 confirmed cases, 2 deaths](#)
- March 21: First death
- March 17: [5 confirmed cases](#)
- March 13: 3 confirmed cases
- Governor **Wanda Vázquez** [confirmed the U.S. territory's first three cases](#) on March 13.
- Puerto Rico confirmed the island's first death on March 21, [involving a 68-year-old Italian tourist](#).

Government response

- On March 26, Vázquez [extended the curfew](#) until April 12 and changed the daily start time to 7 p.m. instead of 9 p.m. as of March 31. The governor also announced that transit would be limited according to license plate numbers. No transit would be allowed on Sundays, except for emergencies.

- On March 23, Vázquez [ordered](#) all travelers arriving in Puerto Rico, regardless of nationality, to undergo a 14-day quarantine. The announcement came after the U.S. Federal Aviation Agency limited all Puerto Rico-bound commercial flights to the San Juan international airport. The agency acted in response to the governor's March 18 request to [restrict flights to and the use of airports in Puerto Rico](#) to stop tourists from going there and bringing more cases. In addition, the island's legislature [postponed the Democratic presidential primary](#), scheduled to take place on March 29 to April 26.
- On March 16, Puerto Rico's government announced it will only hold [online press conferences](#), the first to do so among U.S. territories and states.
- In a televised address on March 15, Vázquez announced an islandwide [curfew](#) between 9 p.m. and 5 a.m., and nonessential businesses to close until March 30. Supermarkets, pharmacies, medical equipment stores, gas stations and banks are [among the essential services](#) that are to remain open.
- In a press conference, Vázquez announced that public schools would be closed for 14 days starting March 16 and the suspension of cruises entering ports. In addition, she said that [she had accepted the resignation](#) of Puerto Rico's health minister. The governor had already declared an [island-wide state of emergency](#) on March 12.

Economic impact and measures

- The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development assigned the U.S. territory [\\$51 million](#) in federal funds of which \$33.6 million will be distributed to the island's 78 municipalities.
- On March 23, Vázquez announced a [\\$787 million financial package](#) to address the economic fallout the virus would have on the island. The package, which at the time of its announcement was the largest one presented by U.S. states and territories, includes a 90-day moratorium on a payments for mortgages, cars, and personal and commercial loans. The local government will also give [\\$1,500 to businesses with 50 employees or fewer](#) that have had to close and don't qualify for federal aid. More than [170,000](#) self-employed workers are eligible to receive up to \$500.

Uruguay

Spread

- March 31: [338 confirmed cases, 2 deaths](#)
- March 28: First death
- March 24: [189 confirmed cases](#)
- March 17: [50 confirmed cases](#)
- March 13: First 4 confirmed cases
- Uruguay's Ministry of Health [confirmed the country's first four cases on March 13](#). The first cases were all people who had traveled to Milan and entered Uruguay between March 3 and 6.
- The government confirmed its first virus-related death on March 28, involving Rodolfo González Rissotto, a 71-year-old man who previously served on the country's [Electoral Court](#).

Government response

- On March 30, Interior Minister **Jorge Larrañaga** announced that [police will be posted along national highways](#) starting March 31 to ensure people are not traveling for nonessential purposes.
- On March 28, the government announced [measures to stop the rise of gender violence](#) during social distancing, including an awareness campaign on social and mainstream media, a hotline for emergencies, and a protocol created alongside the Health Ministry for personnel to detect possible instances of domestic violence.
- On March 27, the Social Development Ministry announced it will distribute food baskets to roughly [157,000 informal workers](#) and those without social security in April and May.
- On March 22, Uruguay and Brazil agreed to [close their shared borders fo 30 days for all foreigners entering Brazil](#), and the measure is subject to extension.
- On March 18, the government announced the closing of large commercial spaces such as [shopping malls](#).

- President **Luis Lacalle Pou** announced the border with Argentina would [close as of midnight on March 17](#). The decision was made in unison with Argentine President Fernández.
- Classes in all public and private schools are [suspended through at least Easter](#), April 12.
- The government announced on March 15 [new measures](#) to prevent the spread of the virus, including suspending incoming flights from the United States on American Airlines starting March 18, barring all flights from Europe, launching a mobile application to know where there are cases in the country and the [coronavirus.uy](#) website, and Lacalle Pou to communicate with regional counterparts to coordinate prevention measures.
- Upon confirming the first cases, [Lacalle Pou's government announced](#) a health emergency, including the partial closing of borders, obligatory quarantine of patients coming from at-risk countries (China, France, Germany, Iran, Japan, Singapore, South Korea, and Spain), prohibition of stops for cruises, suspension of major public events, and no required attendance in public and private schools of all levels.

Economic impact and measures

- On March 26, the government declared the creation of a [Coronavirus Fund](#), drawn from the salaries of public workers who make over \$1,800 monthly, and Lacalle Pou along with ministers and legislators will also give [20 percent from their own salaries](#). The contributions will be periodic for two months, and the measure is subject to extension.
- On March 24, the government announced it will [disburse funds to 55,000 workers over 65 years old](#) in both the public and private sectors as a way to make sure they stay at home.
- On March 19, the government announced the Social Development Ministry would receive [\\$22 million](#) to reinforce social programs, such as building refuge centers and extending salaries on the Social Uruguay Card, a government-funded resource for the most disadvantaged to access food and basic need products.
- On March 19, the government announced it will [extend tax payment deadlines](#) to the Uruguayan internal revenue and social security agencies, and the Uruguayan Central Bank will provide [credit lines](#) to companies of around \$50 million, while working with multilateral organizations to augment this sum to up to \$125 million.
- China is Uruguay's main export market. The Southern Cone country [saw exports drop 20 percent year-on-year in February 2020](#).

Venezuela

Spread

- March 31: [143 confirmed cases, 3 deaths](#)
- March 26: First death
- March 24: [91 confirmed cases](#)
- March 17: 33 confirmed cases
- March 13: First two confirmed cases
- The country confirmed its [first two cases](#) on March 13, from two Venezuelans who'd traveled from Spain the week before.
- Vice President **Delcy Rodríguez** [confirmed the country's first death](#) on March 26: a 47-year-old man who passed away in an area outside Caracas.
- Interim President **Juan Guaidó** says that de facto President **Nicolás Maduro** is [hiding coronavirus numbers](#), and the real number of confirmed cases is about three times higher than reported.

Government response

- While concerns abound that [Maduro will use the health crisis to increase state repression](#), Washington, in turn, upped its pressure on Maduro to step down by unveiling a [Democratic Transition Framework](#) for Venezuela on March 31. The plan's goal is "to help Venezuelans escape the national crisis that falling oil prices and the coronavirus have now deepened," wrote U.S. special envoy Elliott Abrams in a [Wall Street Journal op-ed](#). Among other things, the plan calls for the National Assembly's powers to be restored and new members be installed on the Supreme Court and National Electoral Council to pave the way for free

and fair presidential elections to take place. Arguably the [biggest carrot in the plan would be the dropping of all U.S. sanctions](#) if the framework is adopted.

- Guaidó announced on March 30 the creation of a multi-partisan Council of State to serve as a transitional government that can manage both the health emergency and new elections. The council seeks to include chavistas in the process, excluding those facing drug-trafficking or corruption charges. This condition [would bar Maduro](#) as he's newly under U.S. indictments on narco-terrorism charges.
- Maduro appears to have been an early victim of [a new policy by Twitter](#) to mitigate the spread false information about COVID-19. He complained in a March 23 national address [that the platform deleted tweets](#) he'd sent promoting a man's claims to have concocted a plant-based cure for the virus.
- Guaidó is working with the Inter-American Development Bank and PAHO to [secure humanitarian](#) aid and he's made renewed calls to the country's armed forces to let the aid enter. The military [blocked a high-profile effort](#) to bring aid into the country with lethal force in February 2019. Maduro, meanwhile, is [appealing to China](#) for aid.
- On March 19, Rodríguez announced the creation of [an airlift campaign that will bring medical supplies from China](#), the first country to contain the virus, to Venezuela, one of the most poorly equipped countries in the world to handle it. Beijing is one of Maduro's biggest supporters, and Caracas owes Beijing billions in oil payments.
- On March 16, Maduro expanded a [social quarantine](#), where businesses must close and residents remain in their homes, to the [whole country](#), after [initially implementing one in six states and the capital](#), Caracas. Exceptions will be granted for transportation, health, and food delivery services. Authorities also require facemasks for anyone entering public transportation.
- The Guaidó administration distributed [3,500 safety kits to medical professionals](#). Of note, with close to three dozen of its members in exile due to political persecution, the Venezuelan National Assembly passed a measure in December 2019 that [allows its members to vote when not physically present](#) for a session.
- Rodríguez announced that [schools would also be closed indefinitely](#), starting March 16. The day before, President **Nicolás Maduro** announced that all flights from Europe and Colombia into Venezuela were [suspended for a month](#). Local media reported there were at the time 300 test kits in the country of 30 million, and [30 percent](#) of hospitals in Venezuela's collapsed health system had none.

Economic impact and measures

- On March 24, **Michelle Bachelet**, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and former president of Chile, [called for an easing of global sanctions](#) against a handful of countries, including Venezuela and Cuba, to allow for these countries to receive humanitarian and medical supplies. [Speaking on a March 26 AS/COA panel](#), Carrie Filipetti of the U.S. State Department noted that Washington's sanctions on Caracas do in fact include "carve-outs" for humanitarian assistance.
- On March 22, Maduro announced that layoffs are prohibited through December 31, all residential and commercial rent payments will be suspended for six months, effective immediately, and that the [government would help](#) small- and medium-sized businesses make their payrolls. He also mentioned that [interest payments on loans would be suspended](#) for six months as well.
- On March 17, the International Monetary Fund [denied a request by the Maduro government for a \\$5 billion emergency loan](#) over the virus because there was "no clarity" as to who the country's leader is— Maduro or Guaidó. The ask was a shift for Maduro, who derided the institution as recently as February.
- As global oil markets tank, state-owned oil company PDVSA is [offering steep discounts](#) on oil exports, netting the state-owned oil company barely \$5 per barrel as it tries to stave off a complete collapse of its oil sector. Over [95 percent of Venezuelan exports come from oil production](#), which is [down about 75 percent from its peak](#) at the turn of the century.

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