

# HOW COVID-19 IS EXPOSING REPRESSION IN LATIN AMERICA



LATIN AMERICA WORKING GROUP

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COVID-19 has begun to drastically affect life in Latin America. While government restrictions are essential to save lives, measures must protect, not harm, citizens. No one should live in fear of abuse or neglect by their governments, the very institutions sworn to protect them—but this is happening in some Latin American countries.

## El Salvador

The national stay-at-home order in El Salvador is being enforced by the military, and some of those accused of violating it are **arbitrarily detained** and confined in quarantine centers. The Supreme Court declared President Bukele's COVID-19 containment measures to be **unconstitutional**. In spite of this ruling, Bukele ordered security forces to continue arbitrarily detaining anyone violating his lockdown order.

## Honduras

In Honduras, **76%** of the population that work outside of the agricultural industry belong to the informal sector and many can't afford to abide by lockdown measures. Efforts to relieve some of this pressure through handouts of food are undercut by government **corruption**. The Alvarado brothers, for example, defied lockdown measures to sell bread only to be shot by the military police, leaving one of them dead.

## Ecuador

Though one of South America's smallest countries, Ecuador has the fourth **highest** number of COVID-19 deaths in the region. Human rights organizations fear the pandemic will **devastate** Ecuador's indigenous groups, which they say have been neglected by the country's health ministry. Despite confirming cases of COVID-19, indigenous communities been slow to receive tests and medical supplies.

## Brazil

As of June 18, Brazil has reported **46,842** COVID-19 deaths, making it the hardest hit country in the world after the United States. President Bolsonaro fired his health minister over disagreements on the country's coronavirus strategy, and the most recent one quit after four weeks. Bolsonaro has called social distancing **useless** and participated in two "anti-lockdown" protests outside the presidential palace in Brasilia, even as Brazil was predicted to be the new epicenter of the virus.

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