



*International Medical Corps' shipment of personal protective equipment (PPE) and medical supplies arrives as part of a humanitarian aid shipment, supported by the United Nations and Switzerland, in Venezuela on June 20. PPE and supplies will be distributed in Táchira, Miranda and Bolívar states.*

## SITUATION UPDATE

Venezuela continues to face some of the most dire political and economic crises in its history. The country's healthcare, local-market, employment and food systems have collapsed; the situation has been compounded by political violence and hyperinflation over the past several months. In February, the World Food Program (WFP) released an assessment indicating that approximately 2.3 million Venezuelans were severely food-insecure and required emergency food assistance, while an additional 7 million were experiencing moderate food insecurity.

These crises have been worsened by the COVID-19 pandemic. The country's first case was confirmed on March 13, leading the government to declare a state of emergency and impose a nationwide quarantine—suspending schools, and all commercial activities except those related to basic services, food and healthcare operations. Though necessary to curb the spread, the quarantine measures further exacerbated needs, particularly among the most vulnerable and those with limited livelihood opportunities, including those who depend on the informal economy and those who engage in cross-border economic activities. Since the beginning of quarantine, more than 80,000 Venezuelans have returned to the country, including some 40,000 who returned in mid-March following the closure of the Colombian border.

The country is currently under lockdown restrictions, with almost 4,000 COVID-19 cases recorded and 33 deaths attributed to the disease. More than 500 of these cases were reported from returnees who arrived in the country between April 6 and May 21. International organizations have expressed concerns that these numbers may be significantly higher, due to the limitations of testing and reporting. As the country begins to loosen restrictions, health experts are advising caution. Venezuela's collapsed health system—where some hospitals lack such basics as running water—will be unable to handle a significant increase in severely sick patients. The government has warned that, in the event of a new outbreak, it will take drastic and radical measures to tighten restrictions. The majority of cases are

## FAST FACTS

- 3,917 COVID-19 cases have been reported, along with 33 deaths. Experts are concerned that this may be an underestimate, due to limited testing and reporting.
- There is a high risk that the country's health system will be overwhelmed by even a moderate increase in COVID-19 cases.
- More than 7 million people need humanitarian assistance.

## SITUATION AT A GLANCE

- The most urgent needs include staffing, medical supplies and equipment for health facilities; WASH; and mental health and psychosocial support services.

currently in Nueva Esparta, in the northeast; Miranda and Táchira, in the southwest; Bolivar, in the southeast; and the Capital District, located in the north.

In addition to COVID-19, the region is experiencing an increase in malaria cases. This situation is especially troubling in areas where indigenous communities live, in cities in the Amazon region of Brazil and Peru, and in areas along the Pacific region in Colombia. The pandemic is expected to further exacerbate the malaria outbreak in the regions, given the need of healthcare professionals and systems to focus efforts on monitoring, containing and treating COVID-19. The need to restrict movement, ration medical supplies and safeguard health professionals may prevent individuals who are suspected of having malaria to seek care in health facilities. Additionally, many areas have had to reduce the number of dedicated malaria personnel to concentrate more heavily on COVID-19. As a result, case detection activities have fallen to the wayside, and many rapid response teams and COVID-specific health areas are limited in their ability to identify and confirm suspected malaria patients.

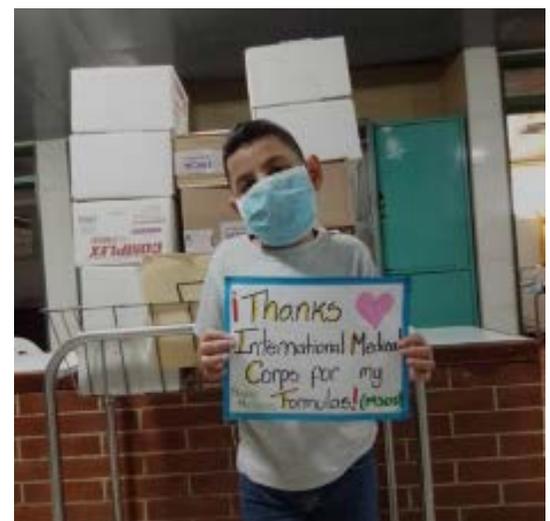
## INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS RESPONSE

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International Medical Corps is one of only a few international non-governmental organizations to receive import licensing to support healthcare facilities in Venezuela. As concerns around COVID-19 have continued to grow, International Medical Corps' team is participating in coordination meetings with UN agencies, INGOs, key health officials and mayors of municipalities, has been coordinating with directors of health facilities in Miranda state and will be meeting with officials in Táchira and Bolivar states. To meet the growing needs, International Medical Corps has imported personal protective equipment (PPE)—including gloves and masks—and inter-agency emergency health kits that include basic medicines, equipment and supplies to provide lifesaving services to 10,000 people for approximately three months. The supplies arrived on June 21 and will be distributed to health facilities. Later this month, International Medical Corps will distribute nearly 50,000 gloves and more than 20,000 KN95 masks to hospitals in Miranda and Táchira, two states with the highest number of confirmed COVID-19 cases.

Along with addressing immediate needs brought on by COVID-19, International Medical Corps is also focusing on providing support to households and indigenous communities that have been greatly affected by the socioeconomic and political crises. The team will distribute household hygiene kits to communities in Bolivar and Miranda, along with wound-care kits to 25 rural indigenous communities in Bolivar. These kits will include basic hygiene items—such as soap, towels and toothpaste—that are difficult to obtain in the local market due to hyperinflation.

In late May, with backing from IMRES, International Medical Corps imported metabolic formulas to support Hospital Materno Infantil Caricuao in the Capital District. This support comes at a crucial time; because of the economic crisis, these formulas are not available in-country. International Medical Corps is also working with local partners FUDEP and Fundación Nativo to conduct medical outreach activities in indigenous communities in Bolivar state. These activities will focus on providing health services, through mobile medical units (MMUs), to vulnerable populations throughout the region. The MMUs will be staffed by a team of clinical specialists with the appropriate background and training to support the specific needs of the community. Critical medical



*A patient at Hospital Materno Infantil Caricuao, where International Medical Corps delivered metabolic formulas, thanks us for our help.*



*International Medical Corps staff meet with the mayor of one of the municipalities of Miranda state, which has been heavily affected by COVID-19.*

needs will be based on a preliminary assessments, which will provide further background on what essential services will be required. Additionally, the mobile medical units will be stocked with medicines that will be provided to beneficiaries at no-charge. Moving forward, International Medical Corps will continue to collaborate with local health facilities to provide medicines, supplies and equipment to support critically-needed health activities.