

COVID-19 RESPONSE IN BRAZIL AND SOUTHERN CONE COUNTRIES

BRASILIA REGIONAL DELEGATION / MARCH-MAY 2020



In light of the pandemic, the **ICRC Regional Delegation** adapted its *modus operandi* by incorporating new activities into its neutral, impartial and independent humanitarian work in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay.

We work with authorities, partners and affected populations to prevent and mitigate the effects of the pandemic. Our main activities include supporting the region's prisons, National Societies, and migrants (through communication services that enable them to get in touch with their families). We also promote the adapted application of Safer Access methodology, which includes self-protection measures for key workers who are on the front line during this humanitarian crisis.

HIGHLIGHTS

Donations include 53 items from 8 categories:

- ✓ **37,500** Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) items
- ✓ **60** industrial sewing machines
- ✓ **42** cleaning machines
- ✓ **8,800** metres of non-woven fabric for making face masks
- ✓ **28,000** personal hygiene products
- ✓ **5,130** body bags

- ✓ **32,800** communication services for migrants

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

SUPPORTING PRISONS

Once the virus enters a prison, it is difficult to stop it from spreading. With the objective of supporting prisons, the ICRC helps fight COVID-19 on two fronts: firstly, by promoting dialogue and exchanging best practices among prison authorities in the region, offering advice and recommendations tailored to the specific needs of each country. Secondly, by donating resources and equipment to help prevent the spread of the virus in detention facilities, whilst at the same time ensuring the sustainability of donations in the future, once the pandemic is over.

The ICRC donated **60 garment manufacturing machines and material for producing personal protective equipment (PPE)**, including more than 200,000 masks, for detention facilities in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. In addition, 42 machines were donated to help keep detention facilities clean. See below for a more detailed breakdown:



Donation of machinery for the production of protective, cleaning and hygiene materials, including a reactor for the production of detergent and **4 sewing machines** for making masks, **benefiting 13,000 people deprived of their liberty in Argentina.**



30 sewing and sealing machines and other material for producing PPE were donated in Brazil. This will enable 78,000 masks to be manufactured in detention facilities in Ceará; 40,000 in Rio de Janeiro; 100,000 in Roraima, in addition to 6,000 protective aprons. Ten high-pressure cleaners and 12 spraying machines were donated to improve the cleanliness of Ceará's prison system.



6,000 litres of disinfectant donated for the Hygiene and Disinfection Project designed to tackle COVID-19 in Chile, benefiting 40,000 people deprived of their liberty.



26 sewing machines and other material for manufacturing masks were donated for the use of detainees in Paraguay, benefiting 15,000 people.



25 water heaters and 20 cleaning machines were donated in Uruguay to improve hygiene amongst the prison population in order to prevent infection and the spread of the virus in the country's prisons, which house 12,000 detainees.

SUPPORTING NATIONAL SOCIETIES

The ICRC, in cooperation with the International Federation of Red Cross, offers technical advice and financial support to the National Societies of the five countries. National Societies are very active and are on the front line, implement diverse prevention, assistance and health measures to respond to the pandemic in cooperation with public authorities. The work carried out by each National Society is outlined below:



The **Argentine Red Cross** assists the public health system, provides remote psychosocial support to 50,000 people, restores contact between people separated by the pandemic, and provides training for health personnel.



The **Brazilian Red Cross** distributes food and prevention kits, helps to clean and disinfect public area, supports vaccination campaigns and offers psychosocial support.



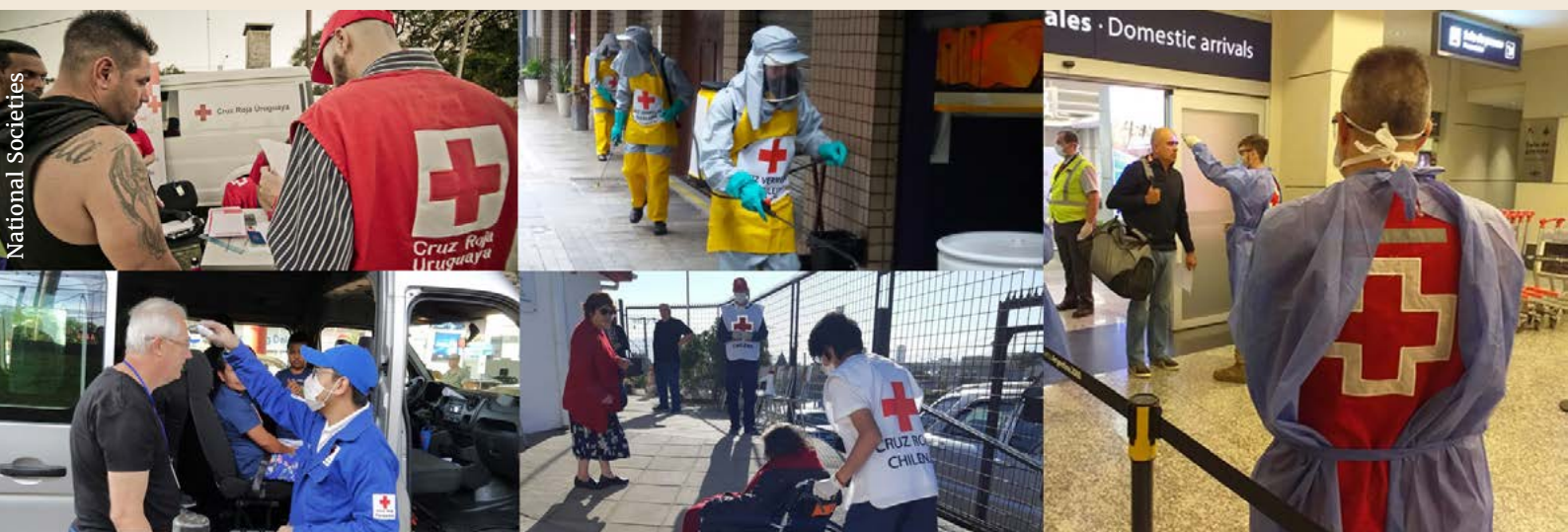
The **Chilean Red Cross** supports local governments with human resources and materials for vaccination campaigns, assistance to migrants and distribution of PPE to the population.



The **Paraguayan Red Cross** provides support for the distribution of sanitizing, protection and food kits in schools in vulnerable areas and detention facilities, and provides health-care services and infrastructure (shelters) for people in quarantine.



The **Uruguayan Red Cross** provides people with remote assistance and distributes sanitizing, protection and food kits for the elderly, vulnerable communities, young detainees, and migrants. It also offers remote companionship for the elderly and runs online courses on first aid and coronavirus.



COMMUNICATION SERVICE FOR MIGRANTS



Adaptation of the Restoring Family Links (RFL) programme by National Societies to keep it active during the pandemic by offering migrants the possibility of communicating with their families. The ICRC provides technical guidance and supports the coordination of National Societies in the Family Links Network for migrants and those separated from loved ones as a result of the pandemic.



32,800 communication services provided by ICRC teams in Brazil – including phone calls, free internet access and battery charging – for migrants in Pacaraima and Boa Vista (Roraima state), on the border between Brazil and Venezuela, and in Manaus (Amazonas state), thereby continuing efforts to restore contact between family members.

SUPPORTING POLICE, SECURITY AND ARMED FORCES



Practical recommendations related to COVID-19 shared with Police and Security Forces from all five countries, with information on self-protection and protection of troops; the relationship with National Societies and health professionals; use of force during disasters based on international human rights standards relevant to the work of police and security forces.



Recommendations made for military commanders from all five countries, containing information on health precautions and the use of force during Guarantee of Law and Order (GLO) operations, which could involve the Armed Forces.

PROMOTING IHL



Support for remote teaching of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) in cooperation with universities in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay. The initiative includes tools such as IHL at your fingertips, fact sheets on applying IHL to COVID-19 and contemporary challenges in this field.

SUPPORT IN RELATION TO MANAGEMENT OF THE DEAD AND PREVENTING DEATHS



Exchange of recommendations and educational resources with authorities of the five countries, as well as general guidelines for the political-administrative authorities of Brazil to ensure protection, dignity and respect in the management of dead bodies and in preventing deaths in the context of COVID-19.

Donations of 5,130 body bags in Brazil, distributed to public institutions in Amazonas, Ceará, Rio de Janeiro, Roraima and São Paulo, since these are the states most affected (in terms of number of deaths) by the pandemic or in which the ICRC has a physical presence.



Provision of technical assistance to national and local authorities in Brazil regarding: centralizing data related to unidentified or unaccompanied persons, maintaining contact between patients and their families, and the importance of mourning rituals for relatives of the deceased.



ACTIVITIES IN BRAZIL

STRENGTHENING RESPECT FOR ESSENTIAL PUBLIC SERVICE PROFESSIONALS

Action taken to strengthen respect, appreciation and care for the physical and mental health of social care workers, health and education professionals in the six Brazilian cities that partner with us to implement the Safer Access (SAF) methodology developed by the ICRC.





Recommendations on Safer Behaviours and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support in light of the COVID-19 pandemic designed for essential public service authorities who partner with us to implement SAF.



PPE and hygiene products donated to six Brazilian municipalities: Florianópolis (Santa Catarina), Duque de Caxias (Rio de Janeiro), Fortaleza (Ceará), Porto Alegre (Rio Grande do Sul), Rio de Janeiro (Rio de Janeiro) and Vila Velha (Espírito Santo). Donations included: More than 3,000 70% alcohol hand sanitizer gels, 650 litres of 70% alcohol solution, 1,500 disposable surgical aprons and more than 11,000 three-layer face masks.



DONATIONS FOR COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY VIOLENCE

-  **550 kits containing bleach, soap powder and soaps donated** for communities in need affected by violence in Fortaleza, with the objective of preventing the spread of COVID-19.
-  **Transfer of three-month emergency funds for 33 displaced families in Fortaleza**, who are considered to be vulnerable by the Ceará State Ombudsman's Office. These families previously participated in a pilot project between the Ombudsman's Office and the ICRC.

SUPPORT FOR FAMILY MEMBERS OF MISSING PERSONS

Relatives of people who went missing before COVID-19 are in an extremely vulnerable situation, given that their physical and mental health was already fragile before the pandemic. The ICRC is responsible for:



Direct follow up of over 40 families in San Pablo and Ceará of people missing for various reasons through both personal communication and remote educational and psychosocial group activities. This work is led by a multidisciplinary team that implements diverse, creative methodologies via audio and video conferencing. The activities break up the isolation, foster mutual support between family members and build them up. They also help prevent these families from taking risks, becoming paralyzed or getting ill as a result of the uncertainty surrounding their relative's disappearance and the ramifications of the pandemic.



Transfer of emergency funds and donation of basic food baskets (the latter in cooperation with the Brazilian Red Cross) to families in vulnerable economic situations.



Technical support for competent authorities to strengthen their response capacity to the specific needs of the relatives of missing persons in São Paulo, Ceará and Rio de Janeiro.

WATER AND SANITATION FOR MIGRANTS AND BENEFICIARY POPULATIONS



Improvement of water supply and hygiene conditions in different places and communities of Pacaraima, in Roraima, benefiting more than 8,000 people daily, helping to fight COVID-19 in an appropriate fashion. The ICRC continues to work remotely to improve water supply in schools in Pacaraima, a project that will benefit more than 2,400 students and education professionals.

SUPPORT FOR THE WELCOME OPERATION



Three-month supply of 70% alcohol solution, bleach, detergent and other cleaning products donated to the Manaus Transit Shelter (Amazonas), to be used to sanitize the area for migrants, humanitarian workers and authorities who work there.



70% alcohol solution and 18,000 pairs of gloves donated for medical procedures for the Hospital de Campanha da Área de Proteção e Cuidados (Protection and Care Field Hospital - APC) in Boa Vista, which provides medical care for residents of inland municipalities and migrants in the state of Roraima.



Support for drafting protocols to tackle COVID-19 and for managing the Boa Vista Field Hospital (APC).

