

COVID-19 Fact Sheet: Latin America and the Caribbean – April 17 2020

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Overview

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) continues to spread rapidly across Latin America and the Caribbean. Patients have tested positive for the disease in all countries and territories throughout the region except for the small Dutch island of Bonaire. As of this writing, the region-wide caseload stands at 82,521. This amounts to an increase of roughly 77 percent from last week, which is slightly lower than the increases observed in previous weeks. This likely signifies that the various quarantines, curfews, and other movement restrictions that have been enacted by most governments in the region are in fact helping to slow the spread. Still, it is widely believed that such figures are likely much lower than the actual number of COVID-19 cases. Many governments continue to grapple with deficient testing capabilities. Mexico has adopted an approach to disease surveillance that ascribes priority to monitoring broad trends in transmission, and knowingly undercounts individual cases. Additionally, the relatively low figures that have been released by Venezuela and Nicaragua have been met with skepticism, as their authoritarian governments are known to regularly disseminate false information. The region-wide death toll has climbed to 3,711.

The number of new COVID-19 cases is not expected to peak before May in most countries throughout the region. Apart from several localized quarantines that have been lifted in Chile, there have been no broad efforts to rescind movement restrictions or reopen non-essential businesses at this time. The majority of governments have continued to extend lockdown measures beyond their initial timeframes. Recent economic projections released by both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) predict that almost all countries throughout Latin America and the Caribbean will experience a significant contraction in gross domestic product (GDP) throughout 2020.



**Latin America and
the Caribbean**

4/17/2020

COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean

(Chart One of Two)

Country/Territory	Total Confirmed Cases	Total Confirmed Deaths	WHO Transmission Classification
Brazil	29,015	1,760	Community transmission
Peru	12,491	274	Community transmission
Chile	8,273	94	Community transmission
Ecuador	7,858	388	Community transmission
Mexico	5,847	449	Community transmission
Panama	3,751	103	Community transmission
Dominican Republic	3,614	189	Community transmission
Colombia	3,105	131	Community transmission
Argentina	2,571	115	Community transmission
Puerto Rico	1,043		Clusters of cases
Cuba	814	24	Clusters of cases
Costa Rica	626	4	Clusters of cases
Uruguay	493	9	Clusters of cases
Bolivia	441	29	Clusters of cases
Honduras	426	35	Clusters of cases
Venezuela	197	9	Clusters of cases
Guatemala	196	5	Clusters of cases
Paraguay	174	8	Community transmission
El Salvador	164	6	Clusters of cases
Martinique	158	8	Clusters of cases
Guadeloupe	145	8	Clusters of cases
Jamaica	125	5	Clusters of cases
Trinidad and Tobago	114	8	Sporadic cases
Aruba	93	1	Clusters of cases
French Guiana	86	0	Clusters of cases
Bermuda	81	5	Clusters of cases
Barbados	75	5	Clusters of cases
Cayman Islands	60	1	Clusters of cases

COVID-19 in Latin America and the Caribbean

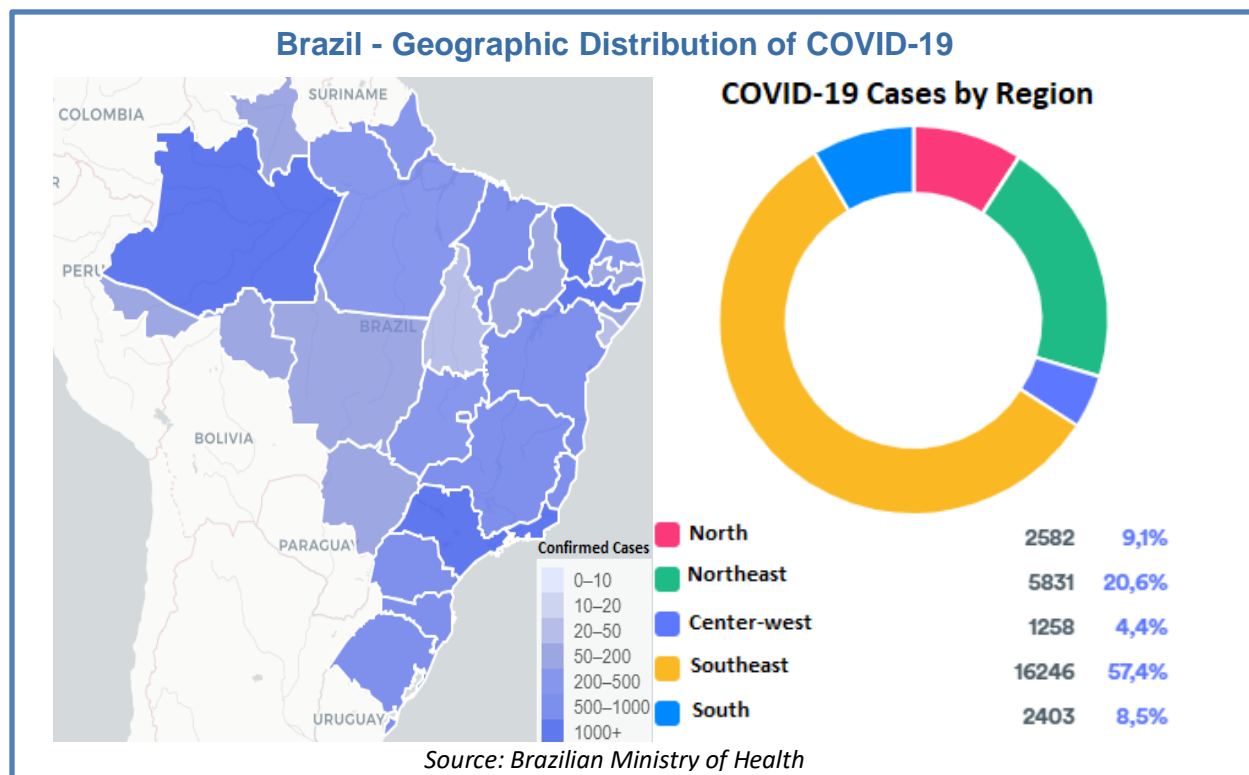
(Chart Two of Two)

Country/Territory	Total Confirmed Cases	Total Confirmed Deaths	WHO Transmission Classification
Sint Maarten	57	9	Sporadic cases
Guyana	55	6	Clusters of cases
The Bahamas	53	8	Clusters of cases
U.S. Virgin Islands	51	1	Clusters of cases
Haiti	41	3	Clusters of cases
Saint Martin	35	2	Sporadic cases
Antigua and Barbuda	23	3	Clusters of cases
Belize	18	2	Sporadic cases
Dominica	16	0	Clusters of cases
Saint Lucia	15	0	Sporadic cases
Curaçao	14	1	Sporadic cases
Grenada	14	0	Clusters of cases
Saint Kitts and Nevis	14	0	Sporadic cases
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines	12	0	Sporadic cases
Montserrat	11	0	Sporadic cases
Falkland Islands (Islas Malvinas)	11	0	Clusters of cases
Suriname	10	1	Sporadic cases
Turks and Caicos Islands	10	1	Sporadic cases
Nicaragua	9	1	Pending
Saint Barthélemy	6	0	Sporadic cases
Anguilla	3	0	Sporadic cases
British Virgin Islands	3	0	Sporadic cases
Saba	2	0	Sporadic cases
Sint Eustatius	2	0	Sporadic cases
Bonaire	0	0	N/A
Total	82,521	3,711	

Latest Updates in Worst-Affected Countries

Brazil

- Brazil accounts for over one-third of all COVID-19 cases in Latin America and the Caribbean. This can be largely attributed to President Jair Bolsonaro's continued downplaying of the pandemic, and his repeated calls for governors and mayors to lift travel restrictions so that citizens may return to work.
- As is depicted in the graph below, more than half of the country's cases are concentrated in the southeastern region. The cities with the highest caseloads are São Paulo (7,764 cases), Rio de Janeiro (2,519), Fortaleza (2,031), Manaus (1,350), and Recife (869).
- Cases have doubled over the last 7.9 days, and deaths have doubled over the last 6.3 days.
- The lethality rate of COVID-19 in Brazil stands at 6.13 percent.
- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) predicts that Brazil's GDP will fall by 5.3 percent in 2020.
- Pro-Bolsonaro activists have repeatedly gathered to hold public protests in São Paulo and Brasília in recent weeks, demanding that state-mandated lockdown measures be rescinded.
- On April 16th, Bolsonaro sacked Health Minister Luiz Henrique Mandetta. The president had previously banned Mandetta from participating in government meetings due to an interview he gave last week, in which he criticized Bolsonaro's response to the pandemic. Recent polls have shown that Mandetta had the highest public approval ratings of any of Bolsonaro's cabinet ministers, and the move could potentially cost the president further political support.
- In an effort to mitigate the potential for disruptions to overland freight transport, the Brazilian Ministry of Infrastructure temporarily suspended document renewal requirements for truck drivers. Additionally, as many auto repair shops and roadside restaurants have shut down, the ministry published a map with 130 support stations that remain open along federal highways. Still, members of Brazil's largest truck driving union sent a letter to President Bolsonaro in early April, calling on the government to take greater measures to protect truck drivers from COVID-19.



Peru

- The Lima Department and the adjacent department of Callao have the highest COVID-19 caseloads in Peru, at 9,107 and 1,008 cases, respectively. Together, these two departments account for over 80 percent of all cases in the country. The next highest caseloads have been reported in the departments of Lambayeque (571), Loreto (412), and Piura (233).
- Confirmed cases have doubled over the last 5.3 days, and deaths have doubled over the last 6.5 days.
- The lethality rate of COVID-19 in Peru is currently 2.21 percent.
- The IMF predicts that Peru's GDP will contract by 4.5 percent in 2020.
- While the total number of confirmed cases has risen sharply in recent days, President Martín Vizcarra contends that the uptick can primarily be attributed to an increase in testing. He notes that the number of hospitalizations are slowing, which signifies that the lockdown measures are working.
- The president announced that the nationwide quarantine and curfew could potentially begin to be eased in May. Recent polls indicate the Vizcarra enjoys high approval ratings in his handling of the COVID-19 crisis thus far.

Peru - Distribution of COVID-19 Cases by Department

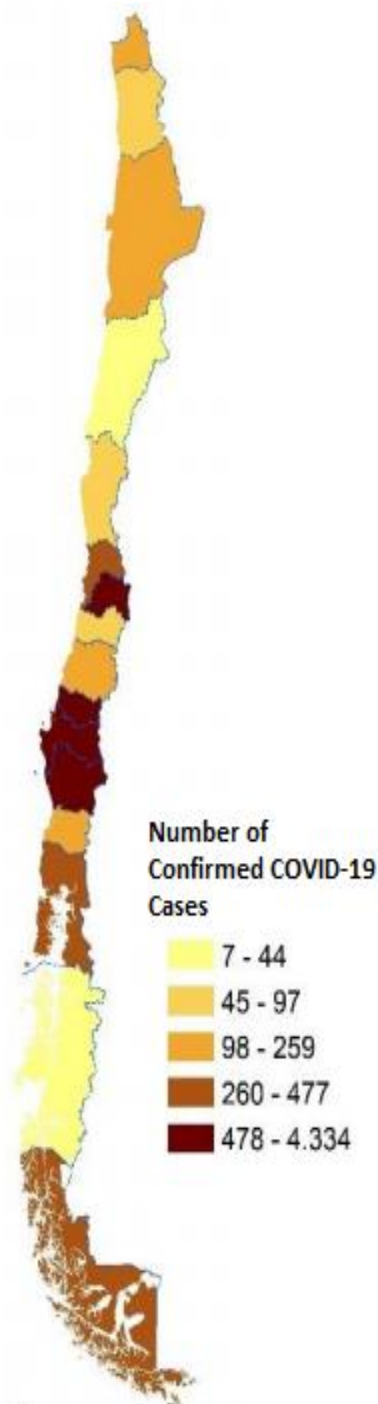


Source: Peruvian Ministry of Health

Chile

- The Santiago Metropolitan Region remains the epicenter of the outbreak in Chile, with its 4,682 cases amounting to 53 percent of the country's entire caseload. The regions with the next highest caseloads are Araucanía (882), Ñuble (639), Bío Bío (559), and Magallanes (467).
- Cases have doubled over the last 10.5 days, and deaths have doubled over the last 7.1 days.
- The COVID-19 lethality rate in Chile currently stands at 1.14 percent, which is among the lowest in Latin America. However, some medical workers have voiced concern that this figure might rise sharply in the coming weeks. Most of the of the initial cases in Chile were detected among wealthy individuals who returned to the country after contracting the disease on business trips or vacations in Europe. While such groups generally have access to high-quality private healthcare, there is concern that the mortality rate could rise sharply as the disease spreads to other social strata.
- The most recent IMF projections hold that Chile's GDP will fall by 4.5 percent in 2020.
- On April 16th, the government allowed quarantine measures to expire in five municipalities. However, new quarantines were implemented in eight new districts on the same date. Chilean authorities have called such approach a "strategic and dynamic quarantine," which is expected to be subject to further adjustments as the contours of the pandemic shift. The Chilean Ministry of Health maintains an interactive map of all municipalities that are presently under quarantine orders at this [link](#) (click "Ver zonas en cuarentena" on the left-hand side). The curfew of 10:00 PM to 5:00 AM local time remains in place nationwide.

Chile - Distribution of COVID-19 Cases by Region

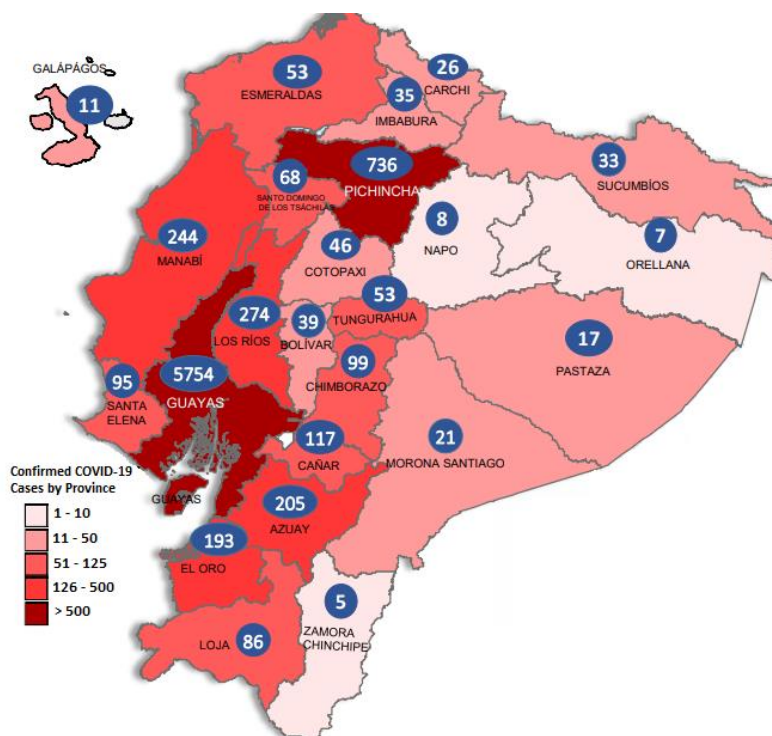


Source: Chilean Ministry of Health

Ecuador

- The province of Guayas accounts for 70 percent of all COVID-19 cases in Ecuador, with its capital city of Guayaquil reporting a caseload of 4,353. The city of Quito has the second-highest number of cases at 682, followed by Samborondón (360), Duale (266), and Milagro (263).
- Cases have doubled over the last 8.4 days, and deaths have doubled over the last 8.8 days.
- COVID-19's mortality rate in Ecuador stands at 4.94 percent.
- It is widely believed that the actual number of COVID-19 cases and related deaths far exceeds the number on record, owing to inadequate testing capabilities. Ecuadorian authorities report that some 6,700 deaths were registered in Guayaquil alone in the first two weeks of April, whereas the city typically records an average of 1,000 over a fortnight. Still, only 388 deaths have been deemed COVID-19 fatalities nationwide.
- Authorities have begun to distribute thousands of cardboard coffins in Guayaquil, as funeral homes and emergency responders have been overwhelmed by the high number of dead. Some families have claimed that they have had to wait up to five days for the bodies of their deceased relatives to be removed, and there have been anecdotal accounts of corpses being abandoned in the streets.
- The IMF predicts that Ecuador's GDP will contract by 6.3 percent in 2020, more so than any other country in Latin America except for Mexico and Venezuela.
- In addition to the major economic disruptions caused by the suspension of non-essential businesses, the Ecuadorian economy has suffered from the recent slump in petroleum prices. Furthermore, operations had to be suspended at two crude oil pipelines in the country's Amazon region last week, after being damaged in landslides.

Ecuador – Distribution of COVID-19 Cases by Province

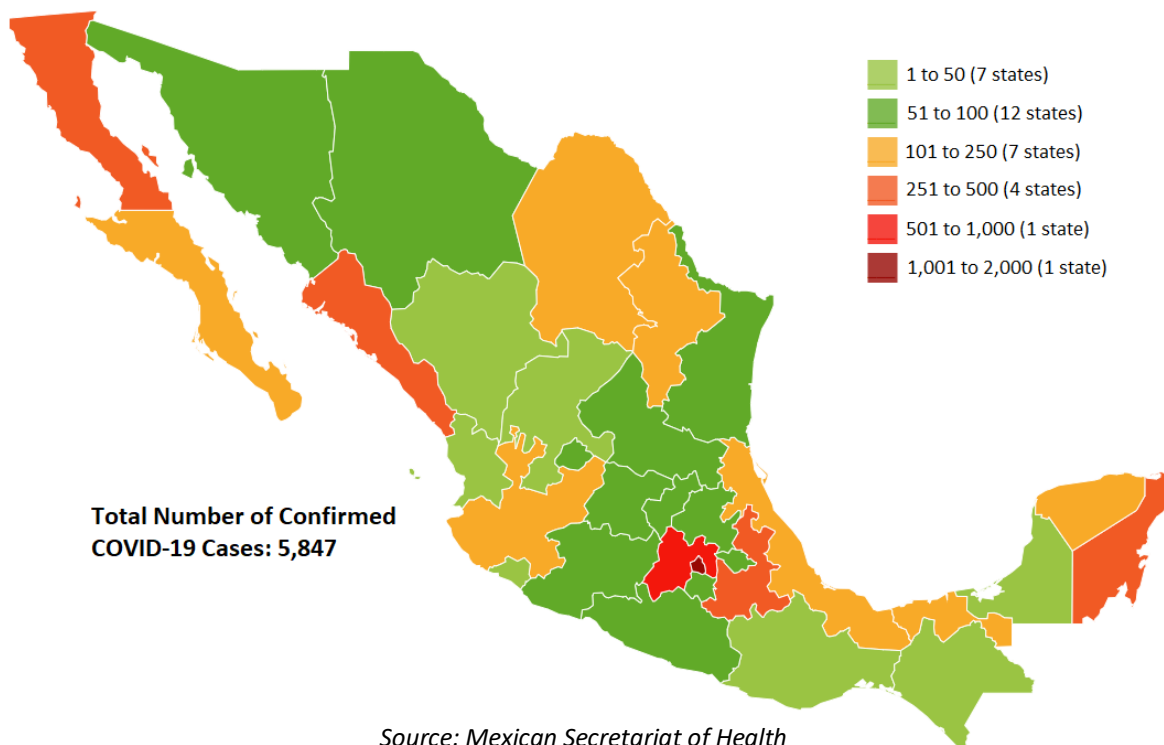


Source: Ecuadorian Ministry of Health

Mexico

- Mexico City and the surrounding state of Estado de México have the highest caseloads in the country, at 1,686 and 659, respectively. The state of Baja California has the third-highest caseload at 464, followed by Sinaloa (292), Puebla (291), and Quintana Roo (269).
- COVID-19 cases in Mexico have doubled over the last 6.5 days, and deaths have doubled over the last five days.
- The mortality rate for the disease in Mexico stands at 8.41 percent.
- The IMF predicts that Mexico's GDP will shrink by 6.6 percent in 2020, a steeper decline than any other country in the region apart from Venezuela.
- Over the last two weeks, sporadic protests have cropped up at multiple *maquiladoras* (assembly plants) along Mexico's northern border, in cities including Tijuana, Mexicali, Ciudad Juárez, Matamoros, and Reynosa. Disputes have emerged as to what types of factories fall under the "essential business" designation and can thereby continue operating. "Non-essential" businesses have been required to shut down and provide workers with pay. At least four Mexican employees of U.S.-owned plants have died of COVID-19, and some workers have argued that certain factories that have been deemed "essential" should close as well.
- A dispute was recently resolved between the state government of Baja California and the Anglo-American firm Smiths Medical. The governor had ordered one of the company's *maquiladoras* to shut down, because although it produced ventilators, none of the machines were being sold to Mexican hospitals and were instead all being exported to the United States. Mexican authorities argued that this rendered the business "non-essential." The firm has since agreed to sell an unspecified quantity of ventilators to local healthcare facilities, and the *maquiladora* has been allowed to reopen.

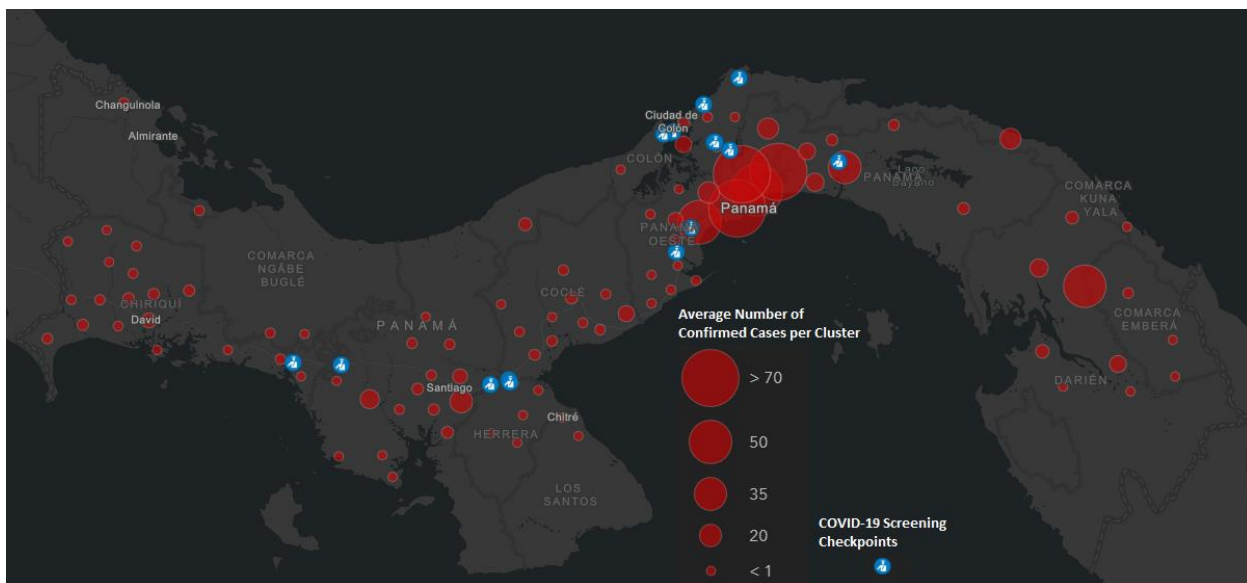
Mexico – Distribution of COVID-19 Cases by State



Panama

- Although COVID-19 cases have been documented widely across Panama, the majority of cases have been recorded in the capital. Within the Panama City metropolitan area, the districts with the highest caseloads are Arraiján (187), Tocumen (153), San Francisco (150), Juan Díaz (140), and Vista Alegre (116).
- Cases have doubled over the last 10.4 days, and deaths have doubled over the last 9.5 days.
- The mortality rate for COVID-19 in Panama presently stands at 2.75 percent.
- The latest IMF projections hold that Panama's GDP will decrease by two percent in 2020.
- Panama was among the first countries in the region to enact strict lockdown measures and substantially boost testing. Additionally, Panamanian authorities have maintained "sanitary fences" around districts with high infection rates. Motorists must stop at health screening checkpoints and submit to temperature checks and other examinations before being authorized to pass. Such efforts have been widely credited for staving off an exponential growth phase of new cases.

Panama - Distribution of COVID-19 Cases by District



Source: Panamanian Ministry of Health

Assessment

Recent economic projections released by both the IMF and the World Bank predict that almost all of Latin America and the Caribbean will continue to experience a sharp economic downturn throughout 2020. The economies of the region are uniquely vulnerable to the types of impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has had thus far, namely lower commodity prices, drops in exports amid waning demand, declining remittances, and the sharp plunge in tourism. The IMF predicts that GDPs across Latin America and the Caribbean (excluding Venezuela, which will fare worse due to chronic hyperinflation and other longstanding issues) will contract by an average of 5.2 percent this year. The only countries that are predicted to escape the regional recession are the Dominican Republic and Guyana. The former is expected to end the year with flat growth of zero, and the latter is projected to grow substantially (51.7 percent) due to a nascent oil boom.

About the Author

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