

IMF Rejects Venezuela COVID-19 Emergency Fund Appeal

The Maduro government asked for a \$5 billion loan to tackle the coronavirus pandemic.

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The International Monetary Fund has rejected a Venezuelan appeal for an emergency US \$5 billion loan to face the [coronavirus](#) health crisis.

Foreign Minister Jorge Arreaza revealed on Tuesday afternoon that President Nicolas Maduro had sent a letter to IMF President Kristalina Georgieva requesting funds from the body's Rapid Financing Instrument to "strengthen [Venezuelan] detection and response systems."

The [Associated Press](#) reported on Monday evening that the Fund was not "in a position to consider" Venezuela's request. According to a statement, the IMF does not have "clarity on recognition" of the Maduro government.

Opposition leader Juan Guaido proclaimed himself "[interim president](#)" in January 2019 and was immediately recognized by the US and its allies. With its member states split on recognizing Guaido as the country's legitimate president, the IMF has not taken a position on the matter.

Venezuela's healthcare system has been hard hit by years of economic crisis and US [sanctions](#). Officials have repeatedly denounced obstacles in importing medicines and other equipment. Cooperation with the [Red Cross](#) and [United Nations](#) agencies has increased in recent months in attempts to tend to the most vulnerable sectors.

The Washington-based lending body has allocated \$50 billion in loans to countries struggling to deal with the pandemic. Iran reportedly applied for a \$5 billion loan as well.

The Maduro government's request generated intense debate on social media, with critics pointing towards former President Hugo Chavez's fierce [opposition](#) to the IMF over the body's promotion of neoliberal structural adjustment policies across the continent.

The Venezuelan government has acted swiftly following the confirmation of the first COVID-19 [cases](#) in the country last week, declaring a state of emergency followed by national quarantine [measures](#). Authorities have imposed restrictions on movement and commercial activity, with public transport reserved for workers in the health, food retail, and other priority sectors has been halted while public transport is only available for public workers, health officials and other prioritized sectors.

While health officials have warned that the number of confirmed cases is due to grow in the

coming days, no new confirmed cases have been registered in the past 24 hours.

Vice President Delcy Rodriguez announced on Wednesday evening that the number of confirmed cases remains at 36. She stated that the quarantine is being 90 percent enforced, and lauded the “collective discipline” of the Venezuelan people.

Rodriguez likewise revealed that President Maduro had held a telephone conversation with World Health Organization (WHO) President Tedros Adhanom, who reportedly pledged to support the country with coronavirus test kits, supplies and technical assistance.

On Wednesday evening, Venezuelan authorities announced that a massive testing campaign would be deployed during the weekend, asking Venezuelans to fill out an online survey should they have coronavirus symptoms.

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