

Covid-19 and (Im)Mobility in the Americas

ARGENTINA

October - December 2020

1. **Poverty Rate (defined by unsatisfied basic needs):** 42% of people and 31.6% of households during the second half of 2020¹

2. **Migration Facts**
 - a. Emigration: About one million Argentines, or 2% of the population reside abroad, mainly in Spain (25.6%), the US (21.2%), and Chile (7.2%).
 - b. Immigration: Approximately 2,212,879 immigrants, representing about 5% of the total population, reside in Argentina. Principle countries of origin are Paraguay (31.2%), Bolivia (19.3%), Chile (9.8%); in addition, and as is the case throughout the region in recent years, Argentina has received many Venezuelan migrants (approximately 145,000 people).
 - c. Refugees: More than 6,000 people live in Argentina as asylum seekers or refugees. Principal counties of origin are Syria, Colombia, Ukraine, Ghana, Haiti, Cuba, and Nigeria.²

3. **State Measures**
 - As of October 22nd, 2020, internal flights have resumed after seven months of suspension.
 - As of October 30th 2020, Argentina authorized entry for local and foreign tourists based in bordering nations (Uruguay, Chile, Brazil, Paraguay, and Bolivia). To enter, foreigners must complete an electronic affidavit within 48 hours before travelling, present a negative PCT test, and prove valid medical insurance that covers Covid 19.
 - According to the regulation [disposición] N° 3763/2020, the state authorized entry by foreigners that are direct family members of Argentines.
 - The city of Buenos Aires, principal site of arrival for travelers, opened to tourism and administers a test to those recently arrived. The city does not require mandatory quarantine by those with negative tests.
 - In the final days of November 2020, the Dirección Nacional de Migraciones (DNM) resumed operations around the issuance and renewal of documents in several municipalities.

¹ INDEC, 2020. https://www.indec.gob.ar/uploads/informesdeprensa/eph_pobreza_02_2082FA92E916.pdf

² <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/derechoshumanos/promocion/pluralismo/refugiados>

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- On November 17th, 2020, the government approved an extension for entry permits and active consular visas.³
- The third week of December, due to the outbreak of the new “Great Britain strain,” the Argentine government decided to cancel planned arrivals from that country. Similarly, the possibility of a similar measure was evaluated in relation to Brazil, where contagions also rose exorbitantly.
- Due to the English strain, from the 25th of December forward, the list of countries prohibited from travel to Argentina expanded to Italy, Denmark, Netherlands, and Australia.

4. **Migrant Situation Alerts**

Immigrants: Particularly of Venezuelan origin, but also Bolivian, Haitian, Peruvian, and others.

- 125 [Venezuelans returned to their country](#) through the “Return to Homeland Plan [Plan Vuelta a la Patria]”. Many of these people suffered xenophobia, discrimination, labor exploitation, and evictions throughout the pandemic. According to Venezuelan authorities, a total of 200,000 citizens have returned to the country.
- An [inquiry](#) into perceptions of security among populations along the northern Argentine border, presented by the Ministry of Security and Conicet, showed the effect that closed borders had on the economies of border regions, as well as an increase in “non-authorized” border crossings.
- [The police attack against “crossers” on the border of La Quiaca](#). It is reported that these people had been chased with gunshots, even when they were back on the other side of the border. Amid the chase, police ran over a woman, who died.
- The effect of measures against the pandemic, such as the [implementation of quarantine, have had grave consequences for those people who depend on commerce between Bolivia and Argentina](#). Across more than seven months, they have seen their activities interrupted. At the same time, they suffer constant control efforts from provincial and national policing groups.
- By the beginning of October, at least [80 Uruguay and Argentine couples have been still unable to reunite](#) due to the impediment a closing of borders that require documentation to prove their relationships.
- The public university, UNTREF, [attacks against the rights of foreign students](#). In 2018, it dollarized fees for students with temporary residence, precarious residence, refugee, and asylum seekers, or those with a passport. Based on the economic situation due to Covid 19, debate around this issue continues to intensify.

³ <https://www.boletinoficial.gob.ar/detalleAviso/primera/237430/20201118>

- Since the loosening of quarantine restrictions, [there has been more than 100 detentions of African migrants in the city and province of Buenos Aires](#), signalling a clear criminalization of said group and racism by agents of the state. Senegalese migrants have suffered violent raids, racist insults in public, verbal and physical provocations, and arbitrary detentions in public.
- The first [National Survey of Migrants in Argentina \(ENMA\)](#), comprised of 3,188 responses, reveals some data on the impact of the pandemic among immigrant populations:
 - o The percentage of migrants that were tested and diagnosed with Covid-19 is 5%. However, it is estimated that the true percentage of those infected may be larger. There are significant variations between each group: Peruvians (9.3%), Paraguayans (7.6%), Haitians (7%), Bolivians (6.2%), Colombians (0.5%), Chileans (2%), Senegalese (4.6%) and Venezuelans (5%).
 - o 51% of the migrants surveyed had their source of income interrupted since the health emergency.
 - o Only 20% declared have accessed the Emergency Family Income program (IFE).
 - o On the other hand, only 29% of migrants were working in either hourly or salaried positions before the eruption of Covid-19.

Internal Mobility

- Stranded people are forming encampments while awaiting entry into the Formosa province. [One man drowned](#) while trying to enter the province swimming across the Bermejo River in order to reunite with his daughter. The governor of the locality, Gildo Insfrán has been questioned for his methods of controlling sanitation.
- Desde abril 82 estudiantes formoseños están intentando regresar a sus casas y no han podido hacerlo debido a las restricciones impuestas por el gobierno provincial. El 21 de octubre lograron que la justicia federal ordene al gobierno de Insfrán que dentro de las próximas 48 horas les permita el ingreso.
- Since April, 82 students from Formosa have been trying to return home and have not been able to do so due to restrictions imposed by the provincial government. On October 21st, they managed to get the federal justice to order the Insfrán government to allow them entry within 48 hours.
- Also in Formosa, a family with a four-year-old boy slept for two weeks on the street, near the border between Chaco and Formosa, where they hope to enter.

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5. **Social Responses**

- *Solidarity networks*

- o Senegalese migrants denounce the repression, xenophobia, and arrests by authorities. [In the city of La Plata, they held a press conference at the Provincial Commission for Memory](#) (Human Rights organization) to speak out against the criminal complaint made against them by the city's municipal government.
- o A spokesperson for the Secretary of Migrant Workers and Refugees – UTEP, as well as other sources and migrant activists, say that [the government cannot celebrate the International Day of Migrants while DNU 70/2017 remains in effect](#). The regulation was imposed by the Macri government, which tightened migrant controls, modified Migrant Law 25,871, and accelerated the expulsion of migrants.
- o The first National Survey of Migrants in Argentina (ENMA) was launched as an initiative by academics belonging to CONICET, social organizations, and NGOs. The survey adopts a rights-based approach and aims to better understand the situation of various migrant groups and generate information useful in the design of specific public policies related to work, housing, documentation, and health.

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