

State of Calamity as a preventive measure for COVID -19

Newsletter # 63 / March 2020

On March 6, 2020, **Government Decree 5-2020** was published in the Official Gazette. Such Decree contains the State of Calamity declaration as a result of the statement by the World Health Organization regarding the Coronavirus (COVID -19) epidemic as a public health emergency.

The purpose of declaring this state of emergency is to determine measures tending to safeguard the lives of Guatemalans, against the worldwide recent and rapid spread of Coronavirus.

The State of Calamity was decreed for a period of 30 days, having already been ratified by the Congress of the Republic of Guatemala.¹

A series of measures were set forth in the Decree, in order to prevent the arrival and, if the case may be, the propagation of COVID -19 in the country. These are some of the decreed measures:

- a. The Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance is responsible for complying with the **Plan for the Prevention, Containment and Response to Coronavirus Cases in Guatemala**.
As one of the first measures, the Ministry of Public Health has already issued official communications in which it mandates those interested in celebrating public events with more than 150 attendees, to give prior notice to the authorities of said Ministry.
- b. Limitation of the right of movement, of changing or maintaining the residence of people in the affected places; even limitation of the movement of vehicles or all types of transportation, as well as the prevention of the exit or entry of people in the affected zones.
- c. Limitation of people gatherings and prohibition and suspension of all kinds of public shows and any kind of meetings or events that represent a risk to the health of the inhabitants;
- d. Order to the Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance to carry out the medical evacuation of national, foreign, resident persons or persons in transit with suspicion, symptoms or statement of being COVID - 19 carriers.

Two hundred and thirty million quetzales (Q.230,000,000.00) were assigned to form the emerging fund to mitigate the damages that may be caused by the control and treatment of the coronavirus.

To this date no case of COVID-19 has been reported in Guatemala, neither has any public event been officially cancelled.

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¹ According to Section 138 of the Political Constitution of the Republic of Guatemala, and Section 10 of Decree 5-2020.