



WHITE & CASE

IFRC COVID-19 Emergency Decree Pro Bono Research: French Guiana

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- **Questions to be answered by close of business Friday, 24 March are listed below.**
- **Please be sure to include English translations of relevant text where possible.**

1. Is there coordination between state and non-state actors, e.g. through a national emergency response mechanism?

French Guiana is a fully integrated, overseas department of the Republic of France. The President of France appoints a Prefect to lead the local government in French Guiana.¹

France began a coronavirus plan in late January 2020, when the first confirmed cases of coronavirus were reported in the country.² The current measures provided by the French government to combat the spread of coronavirus are in place until May 11, 2020.³ In addition, the Emergency Law to Deal with the COVID-19 Epidemic was passed on March 22, 2020 to empower local authorities to do what is necessary in their own localities.⁴

On April 9, 2020, the European Union announced a grant of €8 million (approximately US\$8.6 million), which will be implemented by the Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), for the fight against the coronavirus. French Guiana is one of the 24 members of the CARPHA.⁵ Through the National Center for Distance Education (CNED), France has developed a strategy to provide distance learning for students from kindergarten to university, which is also applicable in French Guiana.⁶

¹ Prefect of the Guyanese Region, <http://www.guyane.gouv.fr/>, accessed April 23, 2020.

² "Coronavirus Information – Chronology," French Government <<https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

³ "Coronavirus COVID-19 Government Measures," French Government <<https://www.gouvernement.fr/en/coronavirus-covid-19>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

⁴ "Loi d'urgence pour faire face à l'épidémie de covid-19 : les dispositions qui concernent les collectivités territoriales (Emergency Law to Deal with the COVID-19 Epidemic: provisions concerning local authorities)," Ministère de la Cohésion des Territoires et des Relations avec les Collectivités Territoriales, March 23, 2020 <<https://www.cohesion-territoires.gouv.fr/loi-durgence-pour-faire-face-lepidemie-de-covid-19-les-dispositions-qui-concernent-les>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

⁵ "EU provides US\$8.6M grant to combat COVID-19," Kaieteur News, April 9, 2020 <<https://www.kaieteurnewsonline.com/2020/04/09/eu-provides-us8-6m-grant-for-cbean-to-combat-covid-19/>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

⁶ "Coronavirus Information – For schooling," French Government <<https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

Action in French Guiana in terms of food aid is based on two pillars: 1) the food platform of the French Red Cross, and 2) the distribution of service vouchers.⁷

Through the Centers for Social Action (CCAS) and other associations, the French Red Cross food platform has distributed more than 17 tons of food aid since the start of containment, an increase of 40% compared to the same period last year. This platform is managed by the French Red Cross and more than 80% of its funding comes from the French government.⁸

The Prefecture of French Guiana has also set up a service voucher system to facilitate in-store purchase of food and hygiene products.⁹ These service vouchers will be distributed by the Red Cross and SAMU Social¹⁰ to people who live on the streets, in informal settlements, and in emergency accommodations. More than 60,000 service vouchers will be distributed in French Guiana by the end of April 2020.¹¹ In addition to these service vouchers, the French Government has also allocated exceptional funding for food aid in French Guiana in the amount of €1.2 million (approximately US\$1.2 million).¹²

To protect its borders, French Guiana has implemented mandatory medical checks at its largest airport,¹³ and local authorities are working with their Suriname counterparts to have a daily presence on the Maroni River, the border between Suriname and French Guiana.¹⁴ With the aid of Guyanese Association for Aid to Victims, Women and Families, local law firms, and a female-entrepreneurs incubator, French Guiana also opened a new support center for victims of domestic violence suffering during confinement.¹⁵

2. Is there mention of the role of Red Cross (RC) or humanitarian actors? In what areas/sectors? What responsibilities are ascribed to RC?

While the French plan does not mention the role of the Red Cross or other humanitarian actors, in French Guiana concerted efforts between the Red Cross, other humanitarian actors, and the local authorities have already taken place, particularly in the area of food distribution, and healthcare access.

- On April 16, 2020, FA-KIAO, a Chinese expat, nonprofit association, donated 10,000 masks and Movement of the Enterprises of France (MEDEF) Guyane donated visors for medical staff on the field.¹⁶

⁷ "Soutien alimentaire pour les plus fragiles en Guyane (Food support for the most fragile in Guiana)," Préfet de la région Guyane, April 15, 2020 <<https://www.facebook.com/notes/pr%C3%A9fet-de-la-r%C3%A9gion-guyane/soutien-alimentaire-pour-les-plus-fragiles-en-guyane/2771279449607730/>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ "Des chèques-services pour les personnes sans ressources en Guyane (Service vouchers for people without resources in Guiana)," Outremers360, April 11, 2020 <<http://outremers360.com/societe/des-cheques-services-pour-les-personnes-sans-ressources-en-guyane/?fbclid=IwAR30cBS8P-dKLI1QYSQJfCilhp6sl9aHAXajmGqRvOCf2BXho4Fx58yylnl>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

¹⁰ A municipal humanitarian emergency service agency. <http://www.samu-social-international.com/site/>

¹¹ "Soutien alimentaire pour les plus fragiles en Guyane (Food support for the most fragile in Guiana)," Préfet de la région Guyane, April 15, 2020 <<https://www.facebook.com/notes/pr%C3%A9fet-de-la-r%C3%A9gion-guyane/soutien-alimentaire-pour-les-plus-fragiles-en-guyane/2771279449607730/>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ "Coronavirus: contrôle médical obligatoire à l'aéroport Felix Eboué (Coronavirus: compulsory medical check-up at Felix Eboué airport)," Guyane la 1ère, April 7, 2020 <<https://www.facebook.com/plugins/video.php?href=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fguyanela1ere%2Fvideos%2F1312755728909975%2F>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

¹⁴ "Préfet de la région Guyane," Twitter, April 11, 2020 <<https://twitter.com/Prefet973/status/1248988034709798918>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

¹⁵ "Secrétariat d'État chargé de l'Égalité," Twitter, April 10, 2020 <https://twitter.com/Egal_FH/status/1248552553140424704>, accessed April 23, 2020.

¹⁶ "Préfet de la région Guyane," Twitter, April 16, 2020 <<https://twitter.com/Prefet973/status/1250910615314415617>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

- On April 17, 2020, in Saint-Laurent du Maroni, the second most populous city in French Guiana, a large-scale food aid distribution started. This operation was carried out by the state services in French Guiana, the French Guiana Territorial Community (CTG), the city of Saint-Laurent du Maroni, the Armed Forces of French Guiana, the CCAS, the Red Cross, the West French Guiana Lions Club, and nonprofits like Mama Mobi and AKATIJ.¹⁷
- On April 22, 2020, there was distribution of food packages financed by the State under the coordination of the Red Cross and the RSMA.¹⁸
- On April 23, 2020, the first departure of food aid to Amerindian villages left with the help of the CTG, RSMA, and the sub-prefecture of St-Laurent du Maroni.¹⁹

Médecins du Monde (Doctors of the World) and the DAAC²⁰ have also supported healthcare and food access actions.²¹

On March 25, 2020, the French President announced the launch of the military operation “Resilience,” to provide aid and support to the population but also to public services in terms of health, logistics and protection in mainland France and in the Overseas Territories. In April 2020, the Diksmuide helicopter carrier has been deployed in the Antilles-Guiana region.²²

3. Are there exceptions to travel restrictions that will facilitate the movement of RC/humanitarian relief teams and/or aid across borders? What (if any) quarantine requirements or other conditions are attached?

On April 15, 2020, the French government extended travel, movement, and business restrictions through May 11, 2020.²³ This is also applicable to French Guiana.

In French Guiana, only flights from France and French Caribbean territories continue to operate, and only those with a compelling family or personal reason, medical emergencies, or essential professional tasks²⁴ are allowed to travel.²⁵

¹⁷ “Soutien alimentaire pour les plus fragiles en Guyane (Food support for the most fragile in Guiana),” Préfet de la région Guyane, April 15, 2020 <<https://www.facebook.com/notes/pr%C3%A9fet-de-la-r%C3%A9gion-guyane/soutien-alimentaire-pour-les-plus-fragiles-en-guyane/2771279449607730/>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

¹⁸ “Préfet de la région Guyane,” Twitter, April 22, 2020 <<https://twitter.com/Prefet973/status/1253030996129218562>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

¹⁹ “Préfet de la région Guyane,” Twitter, April 23, 2020 <<https://twitter.com/Prefet973/status/1253362792800948229>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

²⁰ A French non-profit aiding in malaria research. <https://www.malakit-project.org/meeting-between-dpac-and-daac/>

²¹ “Préfet de la région Guyane,” Twitter, April 22, 2020 <<https://twitter.com/Prefet973/status/1253026225171374082>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

²² “France’s Macron launches army operation to win war against COVID-19,” Xinhua, March 26, 2020 <http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2020-03/26/c_138917182.htm>, accessed April 24, 2020.

²³ Residents are only be allowed to leave their homes to obtain basic goods, to attend a medical issue that cannot be solved remotely, to assist a family member in need, and to perform physical activity individually within one km (0.6 miles) from their home and for a maximum of one hour a day. “COVID-19 Alert: French Guiana Extends Travel, Movement & Business Restrictions Through May 11,” WorldAware, April 15, 2020 <<https://www.worldaware.com/covid-19-alert-french-guiana-extends-travel-movement-business-restrictions-through-may-11>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

²⁴ Among these, doctors, nurses, cleaners, cashiers, bakers, trash collectors, and truckers. “Coronavirus: France’s frontline workers,” France24, April 10, 2020 <<https://www.france24.com/en/france/20200410-france-focus-coronavirus-france-s-frontline-workers>>, accessed April 23, 2020. For a full list, see “Coronavirus Information – Closed establishments: Which establishments are authorized to receive the public?,” French Government <<https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

²⁵ “COVID-19 Alert: French Guiana Extends Travel, Movement & Business Restrictions Through May 11,” WorldAware, April 15, 2020 <<https://www.worldaware.com/covid-19-alert-french-guiana-extends-travel-movement-business-restrictions-through-may-11>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

To enter French Guiana, individuals will need to complete a travel certificate.²⁶ The document must indicate the reason for the trip and it must be presented to carriers before boarding as well as during arrival checks.²⁷ Anyone entering French Guiana will be taken to a quarantine facility and must remain there for at least 14 days.²⁸ Cargo flights and vessels are exempted.²⁹ In addition, individuals travelling within or transiting through French Guiana will need to carry an attestation certifying the reason for travel.³⁰

4. Are there exceptions to quarantines, curfews and other restrictions on movement that allow RC/ humanitarian organizations access to vulnerable populations (including for psychosocial or non-medical aid)?

French Guiana is currently in a State of Emergency until May 11, 2020. Travel is prohibited, except in certain cases and only on condition that they have a certificate to: purchase groceries, professional activity, outdoor exercise, trips relating to receiving social benefits, and essential work with authorization.

Travel is permitted for those assisting patients with long-term health conditions, with compelling family reasons, and helping vulnerable people and/or providing childcare³¹. Furthermore, travel restrictions do not seem to apply to those who are health care workers, health researchers, care professionals, and humanitarian aid workers insofar as they are performing official duties.

Any form of entrance from Brazil, French Guiana's neighbor to the south, is prohibited, and French services prohibit any movement of canoes from one bank to another on the Oyapock River. Medical Emergencies may be exempt with authorization from Franco-Brazilian Health Cooperation³².

5. Have any special legal facilities or exemptions been put in place for the importation of medical aid or other relief items or personnel (International Disaster Response Law)? What (if any) quarantine requirements or other conditions are attached?

There does not appear to be any special legal facilities or exemptions in place for the importation of medical aid, relief items, and/or personnel.

The binational bridge between French Guiana and Brazil is designated and authorized as a single crossing point for merchandise exchanges³³.

²⁶ Foreign travel advice: French Guiana," Gov.uk, April 11, 2020 <<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/french-guiana>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

²⁷ "Coronavirus Information – For your travels," French Government <<https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

²⁸ "Coronavirus: contrôle médical obligatoire à l'aéroport Felix Eboué (Coronavirus: compulsory medical check-up at Felix Eboué airport)," Guyane la 1ère, April 7, 2020 <<https://www.facebook.com/plugins/video.php?href=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2Fguyanela1ere%2Fvideos%2F1312755728909975%2F>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

²⁹ "COVID-19 Alert: French Guiana Extends Travel, Movement & Business Restrictions Through May 11," WorldAware, April 15, 2020 <<https://www.worldaware.com/covid-19-alert-french-guiana-extends-travel-movement-business-restrictions-through-may-11>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

³⁰ "Foreign travel advice: French Guiana," Gov.uk, April 11, 2020 <<https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/french-guiana>>, accessed April 23, 2020.

³¹ "Coronavirus Information – Chronology," French Government <<https://www.gouvernement.fr/info-coronavirus>>, accessed April 24, 2020.

³² "Réunion bilatérale transfrontalière: Contrôle de mesures dans la frontière franco-brésilienne (Bilateral cross-border meeting: Control of measures on the Franco-Brazilian border)," Préfet de la Région Guyane, April 24, 2020, <<https://www.facebook.com/notes/pr%C3%A9fet-de-la-r%C3%A9gion-guyane/re%CC%81union-bilate%CC%81rale-transfrontalie%CC%80re-contr%C3%B4le-de-mesures-dans-la-fronti%C3%A8re-fra/2709593859109623/>>, accessed April 24, 2020.

6. Is the RC (or humanitarian organizations) categorized as 'essential' or 'emergency' services, for the purposes of exemptions to restrictions on business operations and opening hours?

There does not appear to be any such categorization.

7. What other measures are provided in the emergency decrees? (for governmental actors, for communities, for health workers, etc).

The Guiana Regional Health Agency (ARS) appears to be closely monitoring its healthcare workers and working to ensure that healthcare workers have access to personal protective equipment. The ARS has required the use of masks by health care workers.³⁴ The ARS makes weekly deliveries of masks to health departments.³⁵ On April 15, 2020, following a positive test for COVID-19 of several members of the Emergency Response Service, the ARS implemented a special health screening of all critical care services personnel.³⁶ This was a precautionary effort to map infections and reduce possible contagion.³⁷

The ARS also appears to have placed a focus on protecting isolated and indigenous communities. The quarantine guidelines provide that persons must first observe a 14-day quarantine before reentering isolated communities.³⁸

8. Have restrictions been adopted or put in place that ban the export of protective medical equipment?

There appears to be no specific active ban on the export of protective medical equipment in French Guiana.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ "Covid-19: la Guyane entre désormais en stade 2 de l'épidémie (Covid-19: Guiana is now entering stage 2 of the epidemic)," Agence Régionale de Santé Guyane, April 4, 2020 <https://www.guyane.ars.sante.fr/system/files/2020-04/2020_04_04_Covid19_Passage%20au%20stade%202.pdf>, accessed April 24, 2020.

³⁵ "Covid-19: opération exceptionnelle de dépistage de l'ensemble des personnels des services de soins critiques du CHC Andrée Rosemon (Covid-19: exceptional screening operation for all the personnel of the critical care services of the CHC Andrée Rosemon)," Agence Régionale de Santé Guyane, April 15, 2020 <<https://www.guyane.ars.sante.fr/covid-19-operation-exceptionnelle-de-depistage-aux-urgence-du-chc>>, accessed April 24, 2020.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ "Covid-19: la Guyane entre désormais en stade 2 de l'épidémie (Covid-19: Guiana is now entering stage 2 of the epidemic)," Agence Régionale de Santé Guyane, April 4, 2020 <https://www.guyane.ars.sante.fr/system/files/2020-04/2020_04_04_Covid19_Passage%20au%20stade%202.pdf>, accessed April 24, 2020.