



WHITE & CASE

IFRC COVID-19 Emergency Decree Pro Bono Research: Suriname

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- **Questions to be answered by close of business Friday, 27 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?

In January the Ministry of Health put in place “Plan van Anpak” to limit the spread of Covid-19 (the “**Action Plan**”). It was drawn up after consulting with the WHO, the Pan-American Health Organization, various health experts, NGOs and a variety of other state and non-state actors. Under the plan, arrangements have been made to guarantee efficient co-operation with regards to i) the reporting of (suspected) Covid-19 cases, ii) isolation procedures, iii) possible treatments and iv) the education of the public. Furthermore, it includes an agreements with a variety of airlines, that from February onwards passengers arriving from high risk areas will be screened upon arrival. The implementation of the action plan is administered by the National Public Health Response Team, which is made up of government officials, doctors and epidemiologist.

In addition, on the 8th of April, the National Assembly adopted a piece of legislation implementing Article 72 of the Constitution declaring a state of “Civil Emergency” (the “**Covid-19 Exceptional Status Act**”). Under Article 2 of the Covid-19 Exceptional Status Act, the so called Covid-19 Crisis Management Team will be set up. It will have a wide range of exceptional powers and will include representatives from non-state actors.

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

The Red Cross is not expressly mentioned as a direct partner under the Action Plan, the Covid-19 Exceptional Status Act or documents incidental thereto. It is also not part of the Covid-19 Crisis Management Team or the National Public Health Response Team.

However, there is wide mention of the Dutch as well as Suriname Red Cross and their efforts to support SU4SU. SU4SU is an initiative of three local companies aiming to gather funds to purchase medical equipment and material (such as masks, protective gear and ventilators) abroad. Furthermore, there are reports of the ICRC supporting the United Nations distributing tents, masks, gloves and other protective gear in Suriname via a collection center set up in Panama.

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?

Pursuant to the Covid-19 Exceptional Status Act the government has closed all land borders as well as seaports. All inbound and outbound international flights have been suspended until further notice. No guidelines with regards to exceptions to the border closure or to quarantine requirements (if the border is passed) have been provided.

Consequently, it seems that the only feasible option to enter Suriname at present, is by private air charter after having secured express permission by the government of Suriname. To secure such permission support of local embassies as well as of foreign governments is likely to be required. Based on the approach taken with regards to repatriation flights from the Netherlands to Suriname, it is likely that all persons crossing the border will be required to undergo 14 days of quarantine at an official government facility. Although this might be subject to waivers obtained from the government of Suriname.

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)?

Pursuant to Article 4 of the Covid-19 Exceptional Status Act, the government has been given wide ranging powers to restrict the freedom of movement and other civil liberties within Suriname by presidential decree. Such restrictions were put in place on the 28th of March in the form of a partial lock down and as of today continue to be in effect. Under the partial lock down people are no longer allowed to leave their house from 8pm until 6am the next morning. Gatherings are also limited to a maximum of 10 people. However, an exception under the partial lock down applies to health and care services. For organizations providing such services (e.g. the Red Cross) it is possible to obtain an "exemption letter" to operate during the time of the lockdown. An application can be made online (please see www.covid-19.sr).

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?

The Covid-19 Exceptional Status Act does not stipulate any rules to facilitate the importation of medical aid or other relief items. There are also no announcements or measures by the Ministry of Trade or any other governmental official which suggest that such measures have been taken.

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?

The exemptions to the lock down are formulated broadly. They cover all types of organizations providing health and care services. The Red Cross is not expressly mentioned. However, it is expected that they will be able to receive an exemption letter.

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

In addition to the above, the Covid-19 Exceptional Status Act provides the government with powers to:

- enact rules on how the lock down should be enforced;
- regulate the publication of information with regard to Covid-19;
- establish an emergency fund to finance measure to combat Covid-19; and
- establish an emergency fund to provided subsidies to businesses.

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

The Covid-19 Exceptional Status Act does not stipulate any rules to this effect. There are also no announcement or measures by the Ministry of Trade or any other governmental official which suggest that such measures have been taken.

