

**COVID-19** and its aftermath has forced lockdowns and curfews in Central America. The restrictions have meant income loss for many poor families, many of who depend on informal markets. There has also been increased violence against women and children.

The governments have not put suitable mechanisms in place to test a lot of people and implement protocols to safeguard people's health and livelihoods. In many cases, hospitals have collapsed. People with COVID symptoms have decided to stay at home instead of going to the hospital.

The four countries in which Christian Aid works in Central America (Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua) reported around 180,525 positive cases by early September. However, due to inadequate testing, cases and deaths could be much higher.

The region has lost more than one million jobs. The fear is that violence and poverty will increase significantly.

In Nicaragua, the government has not been upfront about the number of cases and the real impact on the population. The

authorities have promoted business-as-usual (including public events) – contrary to international standards and protocols.

The government also threatens those who criticise the lack of preventative measures. In the case of health workers, the authorities decided to fire some specialists and nurses for expressing their concerns about the strategy used to manage the pandemic.

Christian Aid partners ORMUSA, ISD, FESPAD, OCDIH, CDH, CONGCOOP and Centro Humboldt are responding to the pandemic by providing biosecurity equipment, psycho-social support and food to the communities. However, visits to the beneficiary communities were suspended for around four months. But our partners used virtual communication to monitor the impact of the pandemic.

Meanwhile, partners as ICEFI and FUNDE have denounced the government corruption which exists in the resources management of funds for medical equipment and medical stock to cope the pandemic. In many cases the resources approved via international loan

or national budgets were mismanaged. This has reduced the governments' capacity to provide adequate health care.

Please, pray for the people who have lost jobs and do not have enough food and medicines. Pray that our work in the region makes a difference to the most vulnerable.



### Global Justice Now (GJN)

Debt is too often a mechanism of control imposed on the poor by the rich. COVID-19 has torn away the claims that the system work for the most vulnerable in the world.

GJN is calling for the immediate [cancellation of huge swathes of debt](#) in the global south, along with a wealth tax to stabilise and improve health services.