

PAHO calls for international support to combat pandemic in Haiti



Washington, July 15 (RHC)-- The Pan American Health Organization has urged international organizations to provide support to Haiti to face the COVID-19 pandemic, in view of the tense political situation in the country after the assassination of President Jovenel Moïse.

PAHO director, Dr. Carissa Etienne, expressed her special concern for Haiti emphasizing that cooperation is necessary, "thousands of people have been displaced by violence and instability (...) overcrowded shelters could become active foci of COVID-19 transmission," she added.

Etienne pointed out that the risks facing Haiti are "high", due to the reduction in the number of hospital beds available, the presence of two "worrying" variants of the virus (British and Brazilian) and the fact that the Haitian population is ignoring measures to stop contagion.

The high official recalled that PAHO has delivered personal protective equipment to Haiti, and has also contributed to expand the care for patients infected with COVID-19, as well as the proportion of tests and laboratory materials.

Etienne also warned that the pandemic is creating serious social and economic impacts. "Covid-19 has not only wreaked havoc on our healthcare systems, it has fractured social protection programs and destabilized our economies," he said.

PAHO's Incident Manager for COVID-19, Sylvain Aldighieri, said the organization is ready to "closely assist" Haiti's health authorities in implementing the vaccination plan, for which it has agreed to receive AstraZeneca's vaccine, which will arrive through the Covax mechanism.

The latest report by the Haitian Ministry of Public Health and Population put the number of coronavirus infections at almost 20,000 in a region of the Americas with almost 74 million cases and 1.9 million deaths, i.e. more than a third of the cases and more than 40 percent of the deaths reported worldwide.

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