

# *Guayaquil faces drama due to unburied dead*

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Guayaquil, April 2 (RHC)-- COVID-19 is spreading through the province of Guayas, Ecuador, making Guayaquil one of the world's most affected cities by the pandemic so far.

The presence of corpses in residents or on the streets "is related to the poor capacity of funeral homes to provide their mortuary services in connection with the Guayaquil cemeteries," the Joint Task Force (FTC) chief Jorge Wated said.

Existing funeral homes in Ecuador's second largest city are either overworked or refusing to follow procedures for fear of contagion since the causes of death remain unknown in most cases.

In addition, local residents face difficulties in carrying out death-related paperwork since the daily curfew began several days ago. The FTC has promised that it will facilitate these procedures by delivering the documents to the affected families' homes if necessary.

Estimates of the dead number 400 in Guayaquil, Wated told the news agency EFE, adding that on Tuesday alone about 50 people were buried. He noted that the current problem is that many corpses remain inside homes for several days.

Guayaquil Mayor Cynthia Viteri told reporters: "What is happening in the country's public health system? They do not remove the dead from their homes, they leave them on the sidewalks, they fall in front of hospitals and die. No one wants to pick them up."

The "major delay" in the removal of the corpses has forced people to use social media platforms to beg for help. According to the social media, the corpses have remained uncollected for up to "four or five days." In one case, the body of an elderly man who died of natural causes was left on the sidewalk in front of his home because no one would pick him up.

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