

# *Protests mount in Panama over hunger amid COVID-19 lockdown*

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Panama City, May 1 (RHC)-- Hunger protests in Panama are increasing as despair grips people who do not have access to food distributed by the government, local media reported Wednesday.

The 'stay at home' measures imposed by the government to curb the spread of the coronavirus has led to layoffs in the Central American country plunging thousands of people into dire economic conditions.

Since the beginning of the outbreak, the leftist Communal Movement "Federico Britton," has repeatedly been questioning the lack of aid provided to different sectors and communities. In various areas of the capital, Panama City, vulnerable people and families are being neglected.

Panamanians have thus been forced to take to the streets Wednesday and break their quarantine to demand aid. Police have repressed the protests, Jorge Guzman of the Federico Britton Communal Movement said.

Confirmed cases of coronavirus infection in Panama reached 6,378 Wednesday, a rise of 178 from the previous day, and deaths climbed by two to 178, the country's health ministry said.

Central America reacted to the spread of the virus by implementing strict quarantine and lockdown measures. But in countries where more than 30 percent of the population lives in poverty, desperate citizens have taken to the streets to protest these measures.

A similar situation has been seen in Guatemala as street vendors, laid-off workers, and trash collectors have blocked roads in Honduras to protest a strict curfew that has aggravated conditions for the nearly 50 percent of the population that lives in poverty.

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