

FOCUS LATIN AMERICA

Virus Spreads Fear Through Latin America's Unruly Prisons



ASSOCIATED PRESS

Any efforts at reducing contact were blown away in El Salvador over the weekend when authorities crammed prisoners — albeit wearing masks — tightly together in prison yards while searching their cells.

by Eva Vergara and Maria Verza

The spreading specter of the new coronavirus is shaking Latin America's notoriously overcrowded, unruly prisons, threatening to turn them into infernos.

The Puente Alto prison in downtown Santiago, Chile, had the largest of Latin America's prison virus outbreaks so far, with more than 300 reported cases. The prison's 1,100 inmates are terrified. Social distancing is hard to practice in jail.

"They are all in contact with each other," said prison nurse Ximena Graniffo.

Any efforts at reducing contact were blown away in El Salvador over the weekend when authorities crammed prisoners — albeit wearing masks — tightly together in prison yards while searching their cells. President Nayib Bukele ordered the crackdown after more than 20 people were murdered in the country Friday and intelligence suggested the orders came from imprisoned gang leaders.

Latin America's prisons hold 1.5 million inmates, and the facilities are often quasi-ruled by prisoners themselves because of corruption, intimidation and inadequate guard staffs. Low budgets also create ideal conditions for the virus to spread: There is often little soap and water and cell blocks are crowded.

So far, national officials have reported close to 1,400 confirmed cases of COVID-19 among inmates and prison staff. The worst hit has been Peru, with 613 cases and at least 13 deaths, though the extent of testing to determine the full scale of infections differs from country to country. When the Dominican Republic tested more than 5,500 inmates at the La Victoria prison, which has been producing protective face masks for the public, officials reported at least 239 tested positive.

Perhaps the most complete testing appears to be taking place in Puerto Rico, where the Department of Corrections said Friday it will test all the nearly 9,000 inmates being held across the U.S. territory, as well as 6,000 employees, including prison guards.

Fear of the virus itself already has proved deadly. There have been 23 deaths in prison riots in Colombia since the pan-

demic started. More than 1,300 inmates have escaped prisons in Brazil after a temporary release program was canceled due to the outbreak, and more than 1,000 have been on hunger strikes in Argentina.

All over the region, the demands are the same: protection against contagion. With most family visits cancelled, inmates feel exposed, vulnerable, alone — and exploited.

Inmates report that prices at informal and formal prison stores have increased during the pandemic, and relatives can no longer bring them food and hygiene items from the outside.

"Right now, a bag of soap powder costs 29 pesos [\$1.20], when before it was 20 [80 cents]," said a prisoner in Mexico who lives in a 12-foot-by-12-foot cell with a dozen others. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was using a banned cellphone.

Human Rights Watch says conditions are even worse in countries such as Haiti, Bolivia or Guatemala.

U.N. Human Rights High Commissioner Michelle Bachelet, the former president of Chile, has called sanitary conditions in the region "deplorable" and called for releases of less dangerous inmates.

Countries such as Chile and Colombia have already released about 7,500 inmates and Mexico's Senate last week approved a measure to free thousands, though Brazil has not yet acted.

Regional security analyst Lucía Dammert says releasing a few thousand inmates won't significantly reduce the threat of contagion, however, and some urge more sweeping releases.

"Prisoners have been sentenced to loss of liberty, not to death, and the state has to take measures at its disposal," said José Miguel Vivanco, Americas director for Human Rights Watch. And in many countries, such as Bolivia, most of those behind bars have not yet been sentenced or are awaiting trial.

In Chile, the head of the prison guard system, Cristián Alveal, said the prisoners' fears "are totally reasonable," and he said officials are working "to minimize the worries of the inmates."

Eva Vergara and Maria Verza report for the Associated Press.



CITY OF DORAL NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

All residents, property owners and other interested parties are hereby notified of a **VIRTUAL LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY MEETING** on **Wednesday, May 13, 2020 beginning at 11:00 AM**, to consider the following text amendment to the City of Doral's Land Development Code. The meeting will be held with the elected officials, administration and City staff participating via video conferencing.

Governor DeSantis' Executive Order Number 20-69 suspended the requirements of Section 112.286, Florida Statutes and the Florida Sunshine Law, that a quorum to be present in person, and that a local government body meet at a specific public place. The Executive Order also allows local government bodies to utilize communications media technology, such as telephonic and video conferencing for local government body meetings.

Public Comment: members of the public that wish to provide comments may do so by emailing the City Clerk at cityclerk@cityofdoral.com. Comments must be submitted with your name and full address by **Tuesday, May 12, 2020**. The comments will be circulated to the elected officials and administration, as well as remain as a part of the record for the meeting.

The meeting will be broadcasted live for members of the public to view on the City of Doral's website (<https://www.cityofdoral.com/government/city-clerk/council-meetings>) as well as Channel 77 and Facebook Live.

The City of Doral proposes to adopt the following Resolution:

RESOLUTION No. 20-

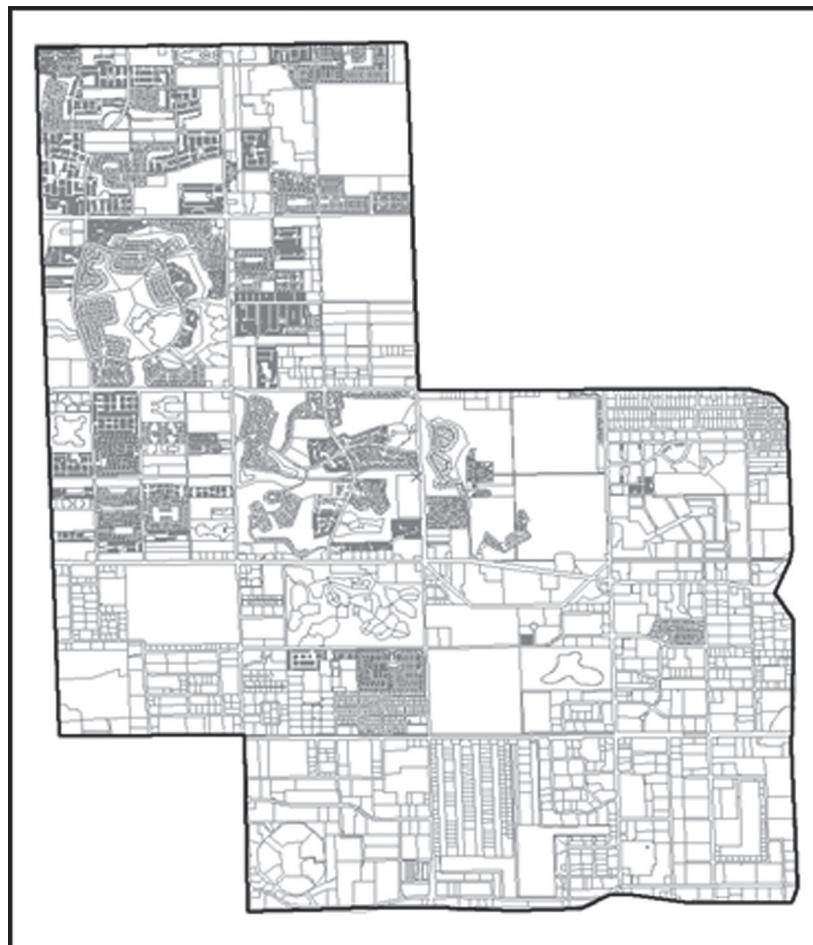
A RESOLUTION OF THE MAYOR AND THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF DORAL, FLORIDA, SITTING AS THE LOCAL PLANNING AGENCY, RECOMMENDING APPROVAL / DENIAL OF, OR GOING FORWARD WITHOUT A RECOMMENDATION, TO TRANSMIT TO THE LOCAL GOVERNING BODY A TEXT AMENDMENT TO THE CITY OF DORAL LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE, AMENDING CHAPTER 83 OF THE CITY'S CODE OF ORDINANCES, ENTITLED "SUBDIVISIONS"; PROVIDING CLARIFICATION FOR CITYWIDE PLATTING PROCESSES AND REQUIREMENTS; PROVIDING A REVISION TO THE LANGUAGE CONFORMING TO THE CITY PROCESSES AND A REVISION TO THE APPROVAL PROCESS; PROVIDING FOR SEVERABILITY; PROVIDING FOR CONFLICTS; AND PROVIDING FOR AN EFFECTIVE DATE

HEARING NO.: 20-05-DOR-06

APPLICANT: City of Doral

REQUEST: Text amendments to the City of Doral Land Development Code, Chapter 83 – "Subdivisions".

Location Map



Inquiries regarding the item may be directed to the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL.

Pursuant to Section 286.0105, Florida Statutes If a person decides to appeal any decisions made by the City Council with respect to any matter considered at such meeting or hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings and, for such purpose, may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based. This notice does not constitute consent by the City for introduction or admission of otherwise inadmissible or irrelevant evidence, nor does it authorize challenges or appeals not otherwise allowed by law. In accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, any person who are disabled and who need special accommodations to participate in this meeting because of that disability should contact the Planning and Zoning Department at 305-59-DORAL no later than three (3) business days prior to the proceeding.

Connie Diaz, MMC
City Clerk
City of Doral