

## Parliamentary Responses to COVID-19

Week of 20 - 27 March

<b>Countries (A to Z)</b>	Parliamentary Responses to COVID-19	Relevant Links*
<b>Afghanistan</b>	Lower house holding a general session weekly instead of daily MPs over 65 or pregnant will not sit for one month.	
<b>Albania</b>	Committees to review laws facilitating the fight against the crisis  The Parliament signed the regional initiative – Appeal for Assistance to the Region of the Western Balkans in Combating the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19). This letter, addressed to the President of the European Parliament and the President of the European Commission, and sent by the presidents of parliaments of Montenegro, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Northern Macedonia and Serbia; states that the Western Balkans should be exempted from the decision to restrict the export of medical equipment from the European Union.	
<b>Algeria</b>	A Constitutional initiative, one of the top priorities of the new government elected in December, has been paused indefinitely.	<a href="https://www.jeuneafrique.com/915472/politique/mar-oc-tunisie-algerie-le-coronavirus-bouscule-lagenda-politique-et-legislatif/">https://www.jeuneafrique.com/915472/politique/mar-oc-tunisie-algerie-le-coronavirus-bouscule-lagenda-politique-et-legislatif/</a> <a href="https://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/874997/politique/algerie-les-priorites-du-nouveau-president-abdelmadjid-tebboune/">https://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/874997/politique/algerie-les-priorites-du-nouveau-president-abdelmadjid-tebboune/</a>
<b>Angola</b>	State of emergency declared and goes into effect March 27	

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<b>Argentina</b>	All parliamentary sessions suspended with ongoing debate about whether to retake parliamentary activities remotely.	<a href="https://www.clarin.com/politica/coronavirus-argentina-oposicion-diputados-pone-condiciones-sesionar-medio-cuarentena_0_vd4x5qV0L.html">https://www.clarin.com/politica/coronavirus-argentina-oposicion-diputados-pone-condiciones-sesionar-medio-cuarentena_0_vd4x5qV0L.html</a>
<b>Armenia</b>	Legislation passed to penalize and punish individuals who do not adhere to the government restrictions imposed to fight Covid-19	
<b>Australia</b>	Parliament shut down until August but can still function virtually.  \$84 billion package approved March 23 for workers, students and businesses affected by the outbreak.	
<b>Austria</b>	Several federal laws form the Covid-19 Act, which includes a crisis management fund	
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	On March 23, The leadership of the Azerbaijani parliament, the committees of the parliament and the staff of the Office and the Department of Affairs of the parliament decided to transfer a certain part of the monthly salary to the national Fund to Support Fight against Coronavirus.  Three groups of online information exchange were created to allow legislative activities to continue virtually.	
<b>Belgium</b>	10 political parties agreed to give the PM special powers to fight the spread of the disease.	<a href="https://www.lavoixdunord.fr/728397/article/2020-03-18/coronavirus-et-la-belgique-redevint-un-pays">https://www.lavoixdunord.fr/728397/article/2020-03-18/coronavirus-et-la-belgique-redevint-un-pays</a>
<b>Benin</b>	A surveillance committee was created to propose measures for parliamentary action against COVID-19.  All events and parliamentary visits suspended until further notice, including opening ceremony for the first	

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	parliamentary session replaced with simple plenary session.	
<b>Bhutan</b>	A Parliamentary Committee on COVID19 Preparedness and Response was formed and has discussed repatriation of nationals; disinfection of public places; lockdown of country.	
<b>Bosnia and Herzegovina</b>	Western Balkans appeal - see Albania	
<b>Bulgaria</b>	Parliament allowed use of military force to curb movement of people and extended tax deadlines.  Parliament canceled parts of a state of emergency law after Presidential veto	<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/bulgaria-military-allowed-force-coronavirus-curbs-200320160712198.html">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/bulgaria-military-allowed-force-coronavirus-curbs-200320160712198.html</a>
<b>Canada</b>	Parliament approved the PM's financial aid package according the government billions to help individuals, businesses and change tax rates without parliamentary approval.	<a href="https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bld=r6521">https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Bills_Legislation/Bills_Search_Results/Result?bld=r6521</a>
<b>Central African Republic</b>	Parliament banned visits to the National Assembly and non-essential travel for MPs.  MPs will divide into two groups and hold sessions in rotation.	
<b>Chad</b>	MPs who traveled abroad before March 21 are dispensed from duties for 15 days	
<b>Chile</b>	Parliament voted a project allowing them to meet remotely.	<a href="https://actualidad.rt.com/actualidad/347327-diputados-chile-aprobar-proyecto-congreso-telematica">https://actualidad.rt.com/actualidad/347327-diputados-chile-aprobar-proyecto-congreso-telematica</a>
<b>China</b>	Congress passed 4 laws relating to the economy, protection of medical staff, stronger quarantine measures and	<a href="http://www.npc.gov.cn/npc">http://www.npc.gov.cn/npc</a>

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	amendments to the Wildlife Protection Law for public health.	<a href="#">/lfgzlist/lfgzlist.shtml</a>
<b>Colombia</b>	<p>Congress asked the President to impose compulsory quarantine in the country</p> <p>Congress will meet remotely.</p> <p>Some MPs will donate money to the most vulnerable during the crisis.</p>	<p><a href="https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/coronavirus-en-colombia-sesiones-del-congreso-y-altas-cortes-seran-virtuales-475760">https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/gobierno/coronavirus-en-colombia-sesiones-del-congreso-y-altas-cortes-seran-virtuales-475760</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.lafm.com.co/politica/decretar-cuarentena-obligatoria-la-peticion-del-congreso-duque">https://www.lafm.com.co/politica/decretar-cuarentena-obligatoria-la-peticion-del-congreso-duque</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/congreso/coronavirus-congresistas-donan-parte-de-su-salario-para-atender-la-emergencia-475856">https://www.eltiempo.com/politica/congreso/coronavirus-congresistas-donan-parte-de-su-salario-para-atender-la-emergencia-475856</a></p>
<b>Czech Republic</b>	Parliament reviewing draft amendment to the State Budget Act	
<b>Democratic Republic of Congo</b>	The President announced a state of emergency on March 24 after the insistence of four parliamentarians	
<b>Cote d'Ivoire</b>	The President of the National Assembly donated 30 million FCFA (US \$50,330) in the name of all parliamentarians to the Ministry of Health and Public Hygiene.	
<b>Denmark</b>	Parliament reviewing second emergency coronavirus law, toughening punishments for coronavirus-related crimes, allowing police to ban places they deem an infection risk, and facilitating the reduction of group sizes.	<a href="https://www.thelocal.dk/20200325/denmark-to-">https://www.thelocal.dk/20200325/denmark-to-</a>

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		<a href="#">toughen-sanctions-on-coronavirus-crimes</a>
<b>Ecuador</b>	Parliament asked the Constitutional Court to postpone elections to 2021.	<a href="https://mundo.sputniknews.com/america-latina/202003231090877593-la-presidenta-del-consejo-electoral-de-ecuador-pide-que-se-aplacen-las-elecciones-de-2021/">https://mundo.sputniknews.com/america-latina/202003231090877593-la-presidenta-del-consejo-electoral-de-ecuador-pide-que-se-aplacen-las-elecciones-de-2021/</a>
<b>Egypt</b>	All parliamentary sessions postponed until April 12.  A partial curfew was imposed at the request of parliament.	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-egypt-parliament/egyptian-parliament-postpones-sessions-till-april-12-over-coronavirus-mena-idUSL8N2BG7PX">https://www.reuters.com/article/health-coronavirus-egypt-parliament/egyptian-parliament-postpones-sessions-till-april-12-over-coronavirus-mena-idUSL8N2BG7PX</a>
<b>El Salvador</b>	Parliament reviewing measures to fight the spread of Covid-19 and maintain economic stability.	<a href="https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-52013943">https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-america-latina-52013943</a>
<b>Estonia</b>	Committees are allowed to telework.  The Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee appealed to the Foreign Affairs Committees of parliaments across the European Union, calling for solidarity, support and operational information exchange.	<a href="https://m.riigikogu.ee/en/">https://m.riigikogu.ee/en/</a>

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<b>European Parliament</b>	<p>Restrictions on exports of medical equipment imposed</p> <p>Parliament approved €40 million for intensive care medical equipment and personal protective equipment.</p> <p>Plenaries postponed and MEPs working remotely.</p> <p>€37 billion from EU structural funds made available to EU countries and three measures approved: the Corona Response Investment Initiative, the extension of the EU solidarity Fund and temporary suspension EU rules on aviation</p>	<a href="https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/priorities/eu-response-to-coronavirus">https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/headlines/priorities/eu-response-to-coronavirus</a>
<b>Finland</b>	<p>Parliament reviewed the Emergency Powers Act, enabling the central government to make decisions more effectively.</p> <p>Parliament reviewing supplementary budget to cover expenses from COVID-19 and to help companies.</p> <p>MPs can work remotely using digital tools</p>	<a href="https://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-and-news/domestic/17445-finland-declares-emergency-conditions-over-coronavirus-daily-lives-of-all-to-change.html">https://www.helsinkitimes.fi/finland/finland-and-news/domestic/17445-finland-declares-emergency-conditions-over-coronavirus-daily-lives-of-all-to-change.html</a>
<b>France</b>	<p>National Assembly approved a State of Health Emergency, expected to be in place for two months.</p>	<a href="https://www.ouest-france.fr/sante/virus/coronavirus/coronavirus-le-parlement-adopte-le-projet-de-loi-d-urgence-sanitaire-6788752">https://www.ouest-france.fr/sante/virus/coronavirus/coronavirus-le-parlement-adopte-le-projet-de-loi-d-urgence-sanitaire-6788752</a>
<b>Georgia</b>	<p>On March 21, Georgia's Parliament declared a state of emergency.</p>	
<b>Germany</b>	<p>Lower house approved €750 billion aid package by suspending the country's debt brake.</p>	<a href="https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-german-parliament-passes-">https://www.dw.com/en/coronavirus-german-parliament-passes-</a>

\*Links and sources: Most parliamentary responses can be found on individual parliamentary websites.

		<a href="https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/news/german-parliament-suspends-debt-brake-to-fight-coronavirus-outbreak/">historic-aid-package/a-52908339 https://www.euractiv.com/section/economy-jobs/news/german-parliament-suspends-debt-brake-to-fight-coronavirus-outbreak/</a>
<b>Ghana</b>	Parliament temporarily relocating to a large conference center to remain in session with social distancing measures.	
<b>Guatemala</b>	<p>Congress approved 30-day extension of the state of emergency and urged for support to the health sector.</p> <p>Congress approved \$450 million loan, \$200 of which comes from the World Bank, with the rest from the Interamerican Development Bank to face the Covid-19 crisis.</p>	<a href="https://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/politica/coronavirus-congreso-ratifica-toque-de-queda-y-ampliacion-de-estado-de-calamidad-ultima-hora/">https://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/politica/coronavirus-congreso-ratifica-toque-de-queda-y-ampliacion-de-estado-de-calamidad-ultima-hora/</a> <a href="https://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/politica/coronavirus-congreso-aprueba-prestamo-por-us200-millones-ultima-hora/">https://www.prensalibre.com/guatemala/politica/coronavirus-congreso-aprueba-prestamo-por-us200-millones-ultima-hora/</a>
<b>India</b>	<p>Both houses of parliament, adjourned sine die</p> <p>Finance Bill passed without discussion that includes a raise on the excise duty (duty on manufactured goods that is levied at the moment of manufacture rather than at sale) on gas and diesel to contribute to a financial package to fight the impact of the pandemic.</p>	<a href="#">Finance Bill</a>

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<b>Indonesia</b>	Budget Committee recommended raising the state budget deficit limit from 3% to 5% of GDP to provide allowances towards fighting the coronavirus. \$3.78 billion already directed towards the epidemic.	<a href="https://business.financialpost.com/pmnl/business-pmn/indonesia-parliament-suggests-higher-deficit-limit-to-fight-virus">https://business.financialpost.com/pmnl/business-pmn/indonesia-parliament-suggests-higher-deficit-limit-to-fight-virus</a>
<b>Italy</b>	Parliament reviewing at least 10 decrees from the PM.  Opposition pushback on some decrees complicating crisis management.	<a href="https://www.publico.es/politica/italia-fractura-gobierno-oposicion-complicacion-crisis-coronavirus-italia.html">https://www.publico.es/politica/italia-fractura-gobierno-oposicion-complicacion-crisis-coronavirus-italia.html</a>
<b>Jordan</b>	Parliament asked PM to issue package of immediate decisions to diminish the impact of the crisis on the vital economic sectors.	
<b>Kenya</b>	Speakers of both houses of parliament announced 30% voluntary pay cut for three months to fight coronavirus.	
<b>Kosovo</b>	No-confidence vote in PM issued by Parliament March 25 created political turmoil.  Snap elections unlikely due to Covid-19	<a href="https://www.france24.com/en/20200325-kosovo-prime-minister-albin-kurti-no-confidence-vote-parliament-government-dissolved-coronavirus">https://www.france24.com/en/20200325-kosovo-prime-minister-albin-kurti-no-confidence-vote-parliament-government-dissolved-coronavirus</a>
<b>Latvia</b>	Special law on measures to prevent and cope with threat and consequences of COVID-19 passed in extraordinary session	
<b>Lebanon</b>	Parliament meeting online.  Speaker of Parliament asked Prime Minister to impose state	<a href="https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/2">https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/2</a>

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	of emergency.	<a href="https://www.0200325-lebanon-parliament-goes-online-as-pm-warns-state-struggling-to-contain-coronavirus/">0200325-lebanon-parliament-goes-online-as-pm-warns-state-struggling-to-contain-coronavirus/</a>
<b>Mali</b>	<p>Parliamentary elections 29 March to be maintained respecting sanitary precautions.</p> <p>Elections held in the context of opposition leader Soumaila Cisse being kidnapped with six others. Responsibility suspected to be linked to al-Qaeda and ISIL.</p>	<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/mali-opposition-leader-soumaila-cisse-missing-party-200326085857266.html">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/mali-opposition-leader-soumaila-cisse-missing-party-200326085857266.html</a>
<b>Mexico</b>	<p>Both Chambers of Congress suspended sessions and will continue activities virtually.</p> <p>US \$7 billion dollars fund approved for Executive to access in case of need.</p>	<a href="https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2020/03/25/senado-suspendio-sesiones-por-coronavirus-se-sumo-a-la-camara-de-diputados-y-al-poder-judicial/">https://www.infobae.com/america/mexico/2020/03/25/senado-suspendio-sesiones-por-coronavirus-se-sumo-a-la-camara-de-diputados-y-al-poder-judicial/</a>
<b>Mongolia</b>	<p>Plenaries will be held via VC commencing April 6.</p> <p>No more than 20 MPs can work in parliament at once.</p> <p>Parliament discussing amending procedures to ensure remote voting.</p>	
<b>Montenegro</b>	Western Balkans appeal - see Albania	
<b>Morocco</b>	<p>Revision allows legislation to be done mostly by Presidential decree with an immediate effect</p> <p>Meetings postponed to April 20.</p>	<a href="https://www.jeuneafrique.com/915472/politique/maroc-tunisie-algerie-le-">https://www.jeuneafrique.com/915472/politique/maroc-tunisie-algerie-le-</a>

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		<a href="#">coronavirus-bouscule-legenda-politique-et-legislatif/</a>
<b>Mozambique</b>	National Assembly debating extraordinary measures	
<b>Namibia</b>	Parliament suspended until 14 April.	
<b>North Macedonia</b>	Western Balkans appeal - see Albania	
<b>New Zealand</b>	Epidemic Notice being discussed to enable special powers to the government, including emergency changes in tax, welfare and immigration, powers to medical officers, and use of alternative voting.  House will be adjourned five weeks following the vote.	
<b>Nigeria</b>	President of the Senate called on the Government to provide relief to the poor.  Senate President reiterated oversight role regarding spending of 6.5 billion Naira (US \$16.8 million) to be released to the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control.	
<b>Norway</b>	Parliament approved the Corona Act granting emergency powers to the government for one month.	<a href="#">The Corona Act</a>
<b>Pakistan</b>	Both houses discussed constitution of parliamentary committee on coronavirus and its impact on the economy, via video link.	
<b>Papua New Guinea</b>	Parliament demanding recall of government-declared state of emergency as accompanying legislation has yet to be voted.	
<b>Paraguay</b>	Congress shut until April 12  Approved credit line of \$160 million for government to face crisis.	<a href="https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2020/03/25/alerta-correx-congreso-de-paraguay-aprueba-leyes-economicas-contr-el-coronavirus/">https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2020/03/25/alerta-correx-congreso-de-paraguay-aprueba-leyes-economicas-contr-el-coronavirus/</a> <a href="https://larep">https://larep</a>

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		<a href="https://publica.pe/mundo/2020/03/26/paraguay-congreso-suspende-actividades-hasta-el-12-de-abril-por-coronavirus/">ublica.pe/mundo/2020/03/26/paraguay-congreso-suspende-actividades-hasta-el-12-de-abril-por-coronavirus/</a>
<b>Peru</b>	Congress discussing virtual sessions and considering giving more power to the Permanent Commission to enable them to legislate.	<a href="https://larepublica.pe/politica/2020/03/24/congreso-coronavirus-pleno-daria-facultades-a-comision-permanente-para-legislar-covid-19/">https://larepublica.pe/politica/2020/03/24/congreso-coronavirus-pleno-daria-facultades-a-comision-permanente-para-legislar-covid-19/</a>
<b>Philippines</b>	President requested legislative approval of a national state of emergency as well as a bill to temporarily control operations of private businesses.	
<b>Poland</b>	Lower House considering electronic voting.	
<b>Portugal</b>	Parliament discussed 29 draft resolutions, two proposed laws and passed six bills relating to emergency response and financial support for local authorities; setting price limits on goods to combat the epidemic; ensuring adequate medical material; and employment security.	
<b>Republic of Congo</b>	Senate questioned the government's capacity to detect and treat COVID19; insisted on quality of medical equipment and structures in preparation for the epidemic.	
<b>Senegal</b>	President submitting a bill to National Assembly to pass state of emergency for three months to meet "budgetary, economic, social, health and security requirements of the fight against Covid-19".	
<b>Serbia</b>	Western Balkans appeal - see Albania	
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	Bill presented to parliament declaring a state of emergency for one year.	

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<b>Singapore</b>	\$11.78 billion relief package, in addition to \$4.4 billion announced last month.	
<b>Slovakia</b>	Law passed allowing state to use data from telecoms companies to track movements of people suffering from coronavirus to ensure that they are abiding by quarantine.	
<b>South Africa</b>	Chairperson of the Select Committee on Health and Social Services urged government to ensure protection for vulnerable communities, such as farm, factory, and waste removal workers.	<a href="https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/south-africans-brace-21-day-lockdown-virus-cases-rise-200324073801136.html">https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2020/03/south-africans-brace-21-day-lockdown-virus-cases-rise-200324073801136.html</a>
<b>South Sudan</b>	Parliament called for suspension of UN and international flights entering the country.	
<b>Spain</b>	Extension of the state of emergency bill approved for two more weeks to 12 April. five royal decrees validated relating to employment protection, urgent measures on agriculture and food provision, and mobilizing €1.8 million for health sector and affected industries.	<a href="#">Extension of State of Emergency</a>
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	Parliamentary elections delayed indefinitely and parliament dissolved since March 3.	<a href="#">Postponement of parliamentary polls</a>
<b>Switzerland</b>	Finance Committee approved 30,7 billion Swiss francs (US \$31.8 billion) package including financial aid for unemployment insurance, financial enterprises, sport and culture industries, as well as additional sanitary equipment.  Parliament holding extraordinary session early May to approve urgent credits a posteriori.	<a href="#">Coronavirus Package</a>
<b>Timor-Leste</b>	Approved state of emergency unanimously as of 28 March for a month.	
<b>Tunisia</b>	Parliamentary activities exclusively consecrated to subjects concerning the crisis.	<a href="https://www.jeuneafrique.com/915472/">https://www.jeuneafrique.com/915472/</a>

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	Ongoing debate regarding establishment of complementary budget for government use in the fight against COVID-19.	<a href="#">politique/maroc-tunisie-algerie-le-coronavirus-bouscule-lagenda-politique-et-legislatif/</a>
<b>Uganda</b>	Parliament suspended a week until March 31.	
<b>United Kingdom</b>	Upper house approved emergency legislation creating temporary powers in different areas, notably to enforce lockdown procedures, detain citizens, protect public health and allow people to volunteer to join the National Health Service.  Parliament adjourned for one month to 21 April.  Government is looking into the creation of hotlines for MPs into ministries for urgent responses to issues during the break.	
<b>United States</b>	Senate passed \$2.2 trillion coronavirus stimulus package in a unanimous 96-0 vote to provide billions for industries, unemployment insurance and direct payments to citizens. Bill now with House of Representatives.	<a href="#">Coronavirus Stimulus Package</a>
<b>Uruguay</b>	Congress debating special measures to face the Covid-19 crisis, among them, the extension of the state of emergency until April 11.	<a href="https://www.pmldaily.com/news/2020/03/uganda-suspends-parliamentary-businesses-over-coronavirus.html">https://www.pmldaily.com/news/2020/03/uganda-suspends-parliamentary-businesses-over-coronavirus.html</a>

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