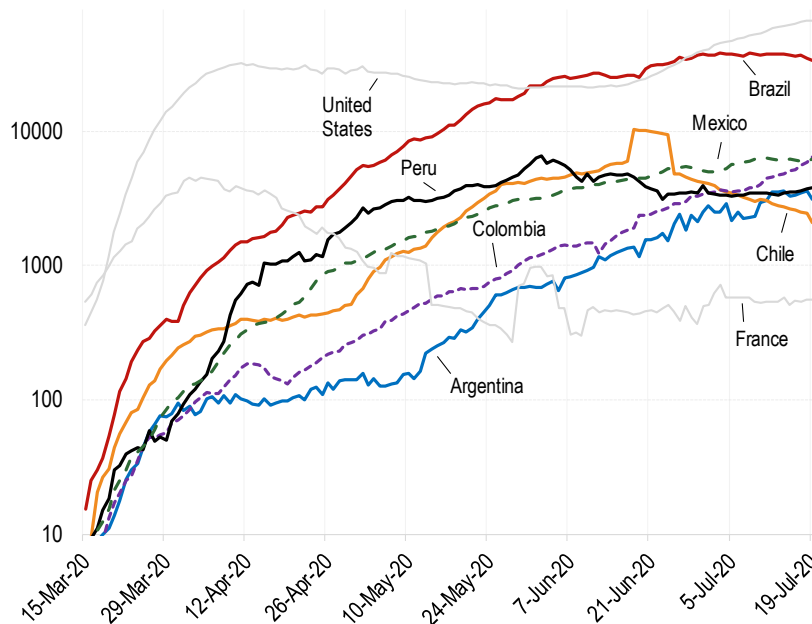


22 July 2020

LATIN AMERICA'S LARGEST ECONOMIES: STRUGGLING TO BEND THE COVID-19 EPIDEMIC CURVE

Salim Hammad

COVID-19 : NEW CONFIRMED CASES PER DAY (7-DAY ROLLING AVERAGE, LOGARITHMIC SCALE)



Note : On a logarithmic scale, the steepness of the line corresponds to the growth rate. France and the US included for the sake of comparison. France : methodological change in June. Chile : earlier cases added in June.

SOURCE: EUROPEAN CDC, OWID, BNP PARIBAS

In early June, the World Health Organization declared Latin America as the new epicentre of the Covid-19 pandemic. Only Chile has managed so far to “bend” the curve of new cases. Peru also seemed on track but its decline was interrupted and its curve has since flattened. Both countries have faced however high death tolls relative to the size of their population. Colombia and Argentina – two countries that put in place tight lockdowns early on and have witnessed comparatively lower deaths relative to the size of their population – are facing rising numbers of new cases and deaths. In recent weeks, Brazil has gotten closer to stabilizing the pandemic’s progression albeit at an elevated level (~ 35000 cases per day, second only to the United States worldwide). In Mexico, high levels of underreporting due to very low testing (more than 10 times less than Chile) have cast doubts on the claim that the epidemic is slowing down. A still rapid spread of the virus across the Latin American region has led the IMF to project a -9.4% regional recession, the most severe contraction worldwide and almost twice the global average.

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