



# COVID-19 PANDEMIC RESPONSE

1 YEAR REPORT

FEBRUARY 2020 - MARCH 2021



# WHERE WE'RE WORKING

## A GLOBAL RESPONSE

One year into the pandemic, Airlink continues working with nonprofit partners to respond; now reaching 30 countries with essential supplies, including personal protective equipment (gloves, gowns, masks), COVID-19 tests, oxygen supplies, diagnostic tools like pulse oximeters and X-Rays, and hygiene and sanitation supplies.



This map shows the countries reached with Airlink-supported shipments, and the number of shipments each country received via Airlink.

# BY THE NUMBERS

On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the COVID-19 epidemic—which began in Wuhan, Hubei Province, China—a public health emergency of international concern. In mid-February 2020, Airlink began responding to critical needs in China and Japan, and its first shipment for coronavirus response reached Japan on February 29. Following the announcement of the pandemic declaration by the WHO on March 11, 2020, Airlink made the decision to launch an initial 9-month response to help nonprofit organizations overcome the logistical challenges and high costs of sending PPE to their program countries. The response continues to this day.

Thanks to support from 11 airlines, as well as generous support from **Flexport.org** and the **Center for Disaster Philanthropy**, Airlink has been successful in responding to this global emergency.



POUNDS OF RELIEF  
SUPPLIES DELIVERED  
(BY VOLUME)



**144**  
RESPONDERS  
DEPLOYED



**\$2.1M**  
IN TRANSPORTATION  
RELIEF FOR NGOS



**23**  
NONPROFITS  
HELPED



**4.8M**  
PEOPLE PROVIDED  
WITH HEALTHCARE  
& SUPPLIES



**512K**  
PEOPLE PROVIDED  
WITH WASH  
ASSISTANCE



**239K**  
PEOPLE PROVIDED  
FOOD AID



**9K**  
PEOPLE PROVIDED  
WITH SHELTER &  
NON-FOOD ITEMS



Photo: ANERA, Lebanon



COVID-19 has caused unprecedented, systemic supply chain issues that affected both highly-developed and developing countries, causing issues with procurement, air transport, and ultimately access to healthcare. In early 2020, more than 90% of passenger air capacity was taken out of operation due to declining travel, and demand for freighter flights went up by as much as 500%. Prices were rising and NGOs were unable to access critical airfreight for personal protective equipment, so Airlink launched the **AviationCARES** initiative.

In collaboration with the aviation sector, Airlink developed and executed a dynamic distribution mechanism to support responding NGOs around the world. This mechanism is still working today, leveraging the existing capacity of commercial aviation through "prieghter" (passenger aircraft used for cargo only) and freighter flights in order to send PPE, medical supplies, and hygiene materials to communities impacted by COVID-19. By supporting the movement of emergency cargo and aid workers, Airlink is providing air logistics expertise and leveraging economies of scale in order to move needed supplies and experts from a variety of NGO partners into vulnerable areas globally.

The AviationCARES initiative has four phases that are ongoing, as well as a consideration for the continued support of communities in crisis, where COVID-19 has an outsize impact.

## Phase 1: Mobilize

Mobilize shipments of PPE, testing supplies, and key treatment tools quickly to high-density outbreaks of the virus globally, with specific focus on under-resourced communities.

## Phase 2: Support

Ensure continuity of health services in communities overwhelmed by COVID-19 response. This includes sending basic medical supplies, hygiene kits, and food aid (where needed) to support community resiliency.

## Phase 3: Rebuild

Help supply chains and communities recover by 1) supporting shipments that were paused due to the pandemic, and 2) transporting community health workers and trainers to bolster community resiliency.

## Phase 4: Vaccinate

Support vaccination campaigns in the US and internationally through deployment of personnel to administer injections and manage patient intake, as well as sending vaccines themselves where needed.

## Ongoing: Respond

Respond to seasonal and no-notice disasters, ongoing conflicts, and existing complex humanitarian crises, working to alleviate the additional strain caused by the pandemic.

Photo: International Medical Corps,  
Democratic Republic of Congo



# ASIA PACIFIC

In partnership with relief organizations and airline partners, Airlink delivered over 18,000 pounds of emergency supplies to support the COVID-19 response in China and Japan.

In February, with the help of United Airlines, 5,000 pounds of equipment for **World Central Kitchen** was sent to Japan, enabling teams to provide food for passengers and crew quarantined on the Diamond Princess cruise ship. Airlink also brought together **Project HOPE**, **MedShare**, and **Polar Air Cargo** to transport over 14,000 pounds of medical supplies to the community at the epicenter of the outbreak—Wuhan, China.

In July, as COVID-19 converged with the Rohingya refugee crisis in Bangladesh, Airlink worked with **Project HOPE** and **Qatar Airways** to send nearly a ton of medical supplies to support the ongoing response effort.



# LATIN AMERICA & THE CARIBBEAN



In Latin America, the combination of under-resourced health systems, refugee and migrant crises, and unprecedented natural disasters have created a challenging environment in which to respond to COVID-19.

Over the last year, Airlink and its partners have responded to needs for PPE, basic medical supplies, hygiene items, and food assistance in Colombia, El Salvador, Peru, Venezuela, and most recently, Mexico, where cases are beginning to surge again.

Thanks to support from **Atlas Air**, **United Airlines**, and **Avianca Cargo**, Airlink has sent over half a million pieces of PPE across 6 shipments throughout the region on behalf of **ADRA**, **Americares**, **Convoy of Hope**, and **Partners in Health**.

Special thanks to the **Center for Disaster Philanthropy** and **Flexport.org** for funding that made these shipments possible.

## MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA

As the COVID-19 pandemic spread widely throughout the Middle East and North Africa, existing conflict-related humanitarian crises continued. The key priority for the response in this region has been to provide basic personal protective equipment wherever possible, despite the complexity of the logistics required to deliver to conflict areas.

Airlink and its partners supported 3 shipments on behalf of **International Medical Corps** and **ANERA** to the region totaling more than 80,000 pieces of PPE, which ultimately went to five countries: Iraq, Lebanon, Sudan, Syria, and Yemen.

As part of its commitment to support disaster relief in the context of this pandemic, Airlink also supported a protracted response to the August 2020 industrial explosion in Beirut. The organization delivered more than 80,000 pounds of supplies to healthcare centers grappling with the aftermath and COVID-19.

Response in this region was made possible by **Qatar Airways** and **Flexport.org**



# NORTH AMERICA



The United States continues to lead the globe in total COVID-19 cases and deaths. While the US is a highly-developed country, frontline healthcare personnel, essential workers, indigenous people and people of color, the elderly and immunocompromised, and disaster-affected communities were all left in need of assistance.

Since April, Airlink has been working to send responders around the country to provide surge capacity in hard-hit hospitals, manage testing facilities, and provide clean water and meals to vulnerable populations.

Airlink has also worked with 9 organizations to send nearly 350,000 pounds of PPE and medical supplies to 20 states and territories. This effort has helped healthcare facilities get access to more than \$3.8M worth of critical medical supplies (including 4 million pieces of PPE) in a time when the cost of those items skyrocketed due to short supply.

Currently, Airlink is supporting two organizations, **All Hands and Hearts** and **Project HOPE**, in efforts to vaccinate eligible people in the Los Angeles area and the Navajo Nation, respectively.

COVID-19 response in this region has been made possible by **Alaska Airlines**, **Flexport.org**, **Hawaiian Airlines**, **Polar Air Cargo**, **Southwest Airlines**, and **United Airlines**.



## SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA



More than 50% of the shipments Airlink sent for pandemic relief in the last year have gone to Sub-Saharan Africa. With a wide range of vulnerable populations - internally displaced people, refugees, people in extreme poverty and famine - and a severe lack of testing capabilities, Airlink identified this region as a focus area, understanding the need to prevent further deterioration of humanitarian crises across the continent.

Working with organizations who have pre-existing relationships with communities, like **Afya Foundation, International Medical Corps, Last Mile Health, Partners in Health, Village Health Works, and We Care Solar**, Airlink delivered more than 93 tons of PPE, COVID-19 testing supplies, oxygenators, pulse oximetry equipment, and other medical supplies to 17 countries across the region. These supplies have helped community health workers reach people in rural areas, as well as bolstering COVID-19 response in urban centers.

The pandemic response in this region has been made possible through support from the **Center for Disaster Philanthropy, DHL Express, Ethiopian Airlines, Flexport.org, Lufthansa Cargo, and Qatar Airways**.

# THANK YOU TO OUR PARTNERS

## AIRLINE PARTNERS



**Lufthansa Cargo**  
Networking the world.



## FUNDING PARTNERS



# YOUR SUPPORT IS STILL NEEDED

**THE COVID-19 VACCINE IS HERE...  
BUT THAT'S JUST ONE PIECE OF THE PUZZLE.**

But without syringes, more personal protective equipment, better access to testing, and appropriate treatment, it's just a vial of vaccine. Airlink and its nonprofit partners are counting on your support to continue sending healthcare workers, PPE, and other health supplies to help marginalized and under-resourced communities in the US and around the world.





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