



Brazilian army Lt. Col. Rodrigo Boechat de Souza speaks with a Venezuelan man 24 April 2018 during Operation Acolhida in Boa Vista, state of Roraima, Brazil. Many Venezuelans, displaced by the humanitarian crisis in their native country, have crossed the border into Roraima. Under the provisions established by Operation Acolhida, the Brazilian government has established immigrant camps like those in Boa Vista to provide displaced Venezuelans with food, shelter, health care, and other necessities. (Photo by 2SG-MO Paulo Johson, Brazilian Navy)

Operation Acolhida

The Brazilian Armed Forces' Efforts in Supporting Displaced Venezuelans

Dr. Tássio Franchi

Venezuela's migrant crisis has significantly affected several regions in South America and the Caribbean. In Brazil, the total number of displaced civilians from Venezuela is still low when compared

to that in Andean countries; however, the situation on the Brazil-Venezuela border requires attention due to its unique features in terms of population density, infrastructure, economic vigor, and capacity to absorb new populations.

The Brazilian state of Roraima, which sits on the border with Venezuela, stands out for its strategic value—both because of its geographic location and because of the importance assigned to the Amazon region by the international community. Therefore, it becomes crucial to understand the dynamics of new migration flows, as well as to reflect upon the lessons derived from the actions taken by the Brazilian state in the face of this challenge.

Migration in Human History

The phenomenon of migration is integral to humankind. Its countless reasons and levels of intensity vary according to time and region. It has existed since prehistory, when Neanderthals and sapiens left Africa and set out toward Europe and Asia. When the former group went extinct, the latter group followed to populate the planet between two hundred thousand and three hundred thousand years ago.¹ The Jewish exodus from Egypt and the migrations of barbarian peoples into Europe are some of the examples from ancient history.² And throughout the modern era, starting in the fifteenth century, great voyages of exploration and their resulting discoveries began a long process of human migrations from Europe to the Americas, Asia, and Africa. Colonization, slavery, and a migratory search for opportunities moved millions of people.³

Migration waves in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries helped form the workforce in several countries. During this time, Brazil received people from all over the world, notably migrations of European groups to the country's south and southeast regions in search of a better life.⁴ Additionally, over the course of the twentieth century, the two world wars and other conflicts forced the involuntary displacement of thousands of people. After World War II (1939-1945), over forty million people had left their places of origin.⁵ The involuntary migrants of that period were called "refugees," a term that persists to this day but turns out to be insufficient to describe all forms of human migration.⁶ With the advent of the United Nations (UN), issues involving refugees became the subjects of a series of policy documents in the area of international law.

In the twenty-first century, due primarily to wars, the forced displacement of people persists, reaching numbers higher than those seen after World War II. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the world now has over sixty

million refugees or people in similar situations.⁷ Asia and Africa are the two continents with the highest volume of people displaced from their regions of origin. In Latin America, Colombia stands out with more than seven million internally displaced people and several hundreds of thousands of Colombian refugees in other countries. The situation in Colombia is primarily due to the prolonged conflict between the government and non-state armed groups, most notably the *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia* (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC).

The Case of Venezuela

Several factors may contribute to the emergence of a forced displacement including ethnic and political persecutions, intentional use of human masses as an instrument of political bargain by dictators (such as what happened in Libya under Mu' ammar Gaddhafi and in Kosovo during Slobodan Milošević's administration), and the exacerbation of adverse environmental issues due to such circumstances as natural disasters, climate change, and other forms of environmental stress.⁸ However, none of these reasons relate to the situation in Venezuela. The country is neither at war nor experiencing any serious environmental problem. In the last decade of the twentieth century, Venezuela

had a relatively high Human Development Index (0.634), above that of neighboring countries in South America and the Caribbean (e.g., 0.611 for Brazil and 0.592 for Colombia).⁹ In the first decade of the twenty-first century, the index remained relatively high, sustained in part by oil industry profits.

Influence of oil.

The discovery of oil in Venezuela dates back to the nineteenth century. The first instances of commercial exploitation took place in the early decades of the twentieth

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Desperate Venezuelans search through garbage in hopes of finding food 22 June 2017 in Caracas, Venezuela. (Photo by JM López/dpa/Alamy Live News)

century, and by the 1930s, Venezuela was a major international exporter.¹⁰ For decades, oil provided the country with strong purchasing power and worldwide prominence. Venezuela was among the founding members of the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in 1960, along with Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia.¹¹

Today, OPEC controls over 80 percent of the world's proven oil reserves, and Venezuela holds almost a quarter of those reserves with an estimated 302 billion barrels. This makes it the largest holder of known reserves in the world.¹² However, the Caribbean nation has recently ceased to be a country of immigrants and has instead become a country of emigrants, with a large part of its population now crossing its borders with other countries seeking asylum and new opportunities in life.

So what issues have led this country to become, according to numerous authors, a fragile or failed state?¹³ More specifically, which issues have become serious enough to make Venezuelan citizens leave their

country? Venezuela is facing three different crises: political, economic, and social.

Political. The political crisis is characterized not only by the rise of a socialist-oriented government—a development that also occurred in other countries in the region at the beginning of the twenty-first century—but also by a complex series of instances of interference and imbalance among the three branches of Venezuela's government. The maintenance of democratic precepts such as the principle of rotation based on term limits has been compromised, and the result is that the legislative and judiciary branches have been deprived of their ability to curb or check the actions of the executive branch.¹⁴

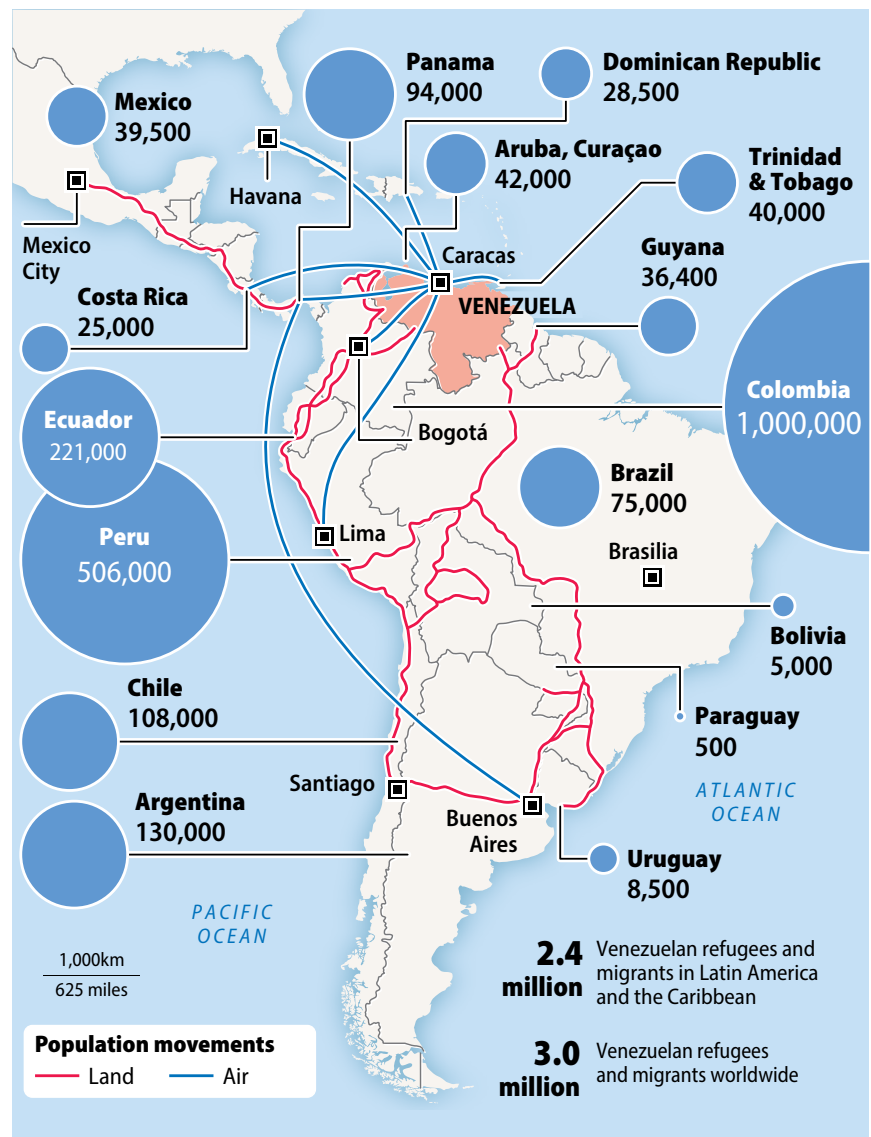
Economic. The ongoing economic crisis has largely been caused by the country's loss of purchasing power due to the drop in the price of oil in the international market. And, the crisis has been exacerbated by an overreliance on the importing of essential goods for the population due to insufficient domestic production.

Social. The political and economic crises have led to an acute social crisis. The government now has extreme difficulty in providing Venezuelans with basic goods and services such as food and medication, which has in turn led to higher crime rates, attributable in some measure to popular desperation.¹⁵

Root causes of the crises. The lack of basic goods has been one of the main reasons for leaving Venezuela given by migrants who arrived in Brazil in 2017.¹⁶ To understand the origins of this problem, we need to revisit the 1970s, when a surge in the value of oil after 1973 made it possible to purchase better-quality and lower-priced foreign food products on a large scale. Unable to compete with foreign food markets, domestic food production atrophied and the food industry gradually crumbled to the point that it was no longer able to supply the country in any significant way.

Several presidents and ministers of agriculture tried to reverse this scenario beginning in the 1980s, but the importation of basic goods was sustained by profits from oil production.¹⁷ However, with the drop in global oil prices in the international market beginning in the second decade of 2000, Venezuela lost its former purchasing power to import necessary products and found itself unable to meet domestic consumer demands. And the subsequent political and economic crises resulted in a social crisis that manifests itself, above all, in a greater lack of domestic security. The rise in the number of murders and the emergence of self-defense groups, the “colectivos,” have attracted the attention of international agencies.¹⁸

The result of these crises and the lack of domestic physical security is what some authors have identified as



(Graphic by Graphic News/Military Review. Source: UNHCR, Reuters; all numbers are approximate)

Venezuelans in Latin America and the Caribbean, 31 October 2018

The number of refugees and migrants fleeing the economic and political crisis in Venezuela has risen to three million, according to the United Nations. The figure amounts to around one in twelve of the Venezuelan population.

the “Venezuelan diaspora.” The migration process out of Venezuela that began in 2005 has intensified in recent years due to the collapse of the Venezuelan socioeconomic and political systems. At this writing, several studies indicate that between 1.2 and 1.5 million Venezuelans have left the country in the past two decades.¹⁹ According to the UNHCR, between January 2014 and June 2018

Table 1. Applications for Asylum or Other Forms of Legal Stays between 2014-2018

Country	Venezuelan Asylum Applications	Other forms of legal stay	Total Population
Venezuela (leaving)	282,180*	567,561	849,741
Colombia	1,057	181,472	182,529
Peru	126,997	46,299	173,296
Chile	2,247	84,479	86,726
Argentina	357	77,936	78,293
Ecuador	4,340	65,000	69,340
United States	68,270	...	68,270
Panama	7,122	51,420	58,542
Brazil	32,744	25,311	58,055
Mexico	6,794	24,979	31,773

(Graphic by author; based on data collected 1–15 June 2018. Source: UNHCR 2018, [unhcr.org](https://www.unhcr.org))

alone, 282,000 Venezuelans filed asylum applications. In addition, over 567,000 requested other legal types of foreign stay (from one to two years) different from tourist visas.²⁰ Altogether, over 849,000 Venezuelans left the country in four and a half years (see table 1).

Migrant Destinations

The main destinations for Venezuelan migrants are countries in South America and the Caribbean, in addition to a considerable movement toward the United States and Spain that occurred prior to 2014. An indication that a significant portion of these individuals have no plans to return to Venezuela anytime soon may be found not only in the number of asylum applications but also in the number of permanent visas obtained (see table 2, page 6). In the United States, thirty-five thousand visas (“green cards”) were granted between 1990 and 1999. From 2000 to 2009, this number grew to eighty-two thousand; and, in 2016, three years before the 2010-2019 period comes to a close, this figure has already reached the sixty-five thousand mark.²¹

Exacerbating the situation, some authors have identified a “brain drain” dynamic in the Venezuelan migration process that is further destabilizing Venezuelan society—that is, the population that is leaving the country is comprised of qualified professionals, educated in various fields of knowledge and skills needed to run all aspects of the country.²²

In South America, Andean countries have attracted the majority of refugees (over half a million people over the past five years) due to the existence of a network of cities and roads, as well as the sharing of a common language. However, Brazil has become the destination for nearly sixty thousand Venezuelans, over thirty thousand of whom have already formalized their application for asylum.

Roraima's Border and the Flow of Venezuelan Migrants

The main entry points for Venezuelans into Brazil are the international airports and Roraima's border, with the latter attracting the attention of authorities

due to the increased flow in recent years. The main access road is “Ruta 10,” which originates in the Caribbean and reaches the dry border, continuing along BR-174 to Boa Vista and Manaus (see map, page 7).

The state of Roraima has a border of 1,194 miles—599 miles with Venezuela and 595 miles with Guyana. Its vegetation includes dense equatorial forests to the west typical of the Amazon region and, to the north, a type of tropical savanna known as *cerrado*, present throughout the three-border region. Unlike the dense jungle forests, *cerrado* facilitates movement, which makes the border in that vicinity more porous. The region also has large natural reserves and indigenous lands in both countries.

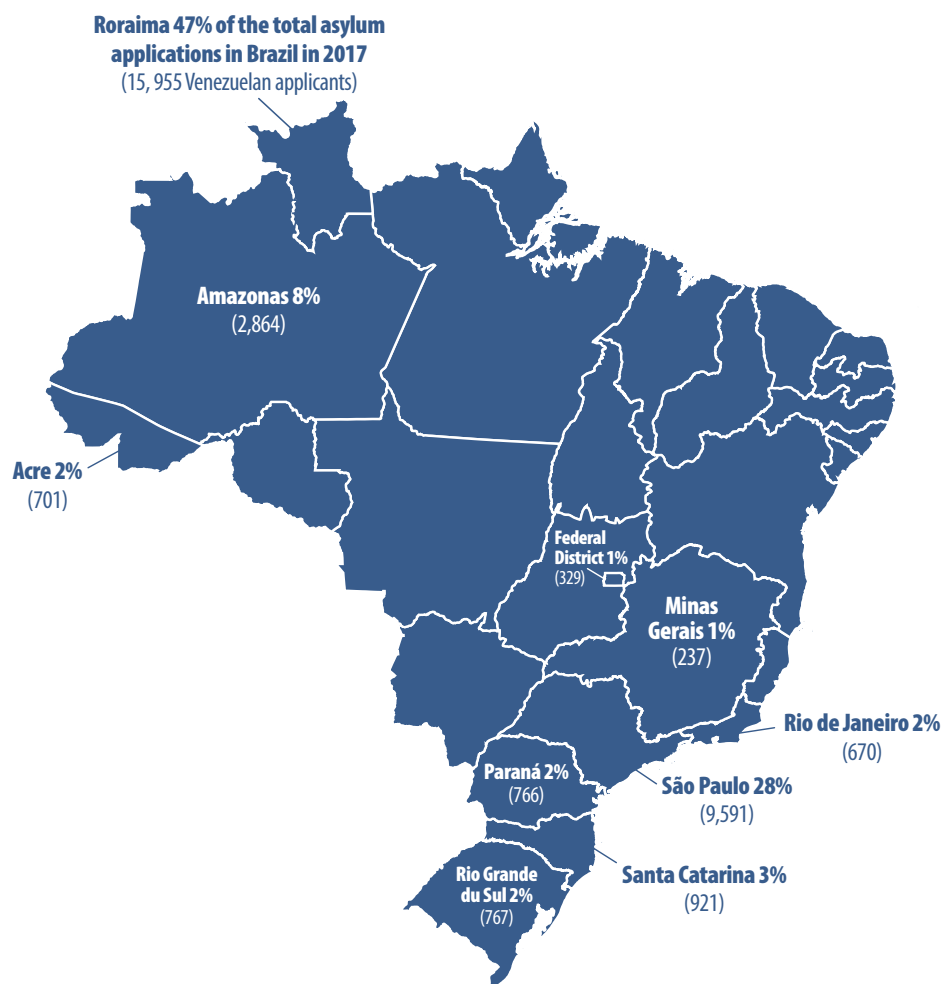
The low population density in the state of Roraima and in the Venezuelan states of Bolívar and Amazonas means that there are few well-structured urban centers in the bordering region. The towns of Santa Elena de Uairén, Venezuela, and Pacaraima, Brazil—which are about ten miles apart—are the largest on the border. They have a population of about thirty thousand and twelve thousand inhabitants, respectively.

Pacaraima has been the crossing point for Venezuelans going toward the state’s capital Boa Vista, with a population of about 330,000 inhabitants. It is in these two cities and along the BR-174 highway toward Manaus (capital of the Brazilian state of Amazonas) that

Table 2. Asylum Applications by Venezuelans in Brazil (2013–June 2018)

2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018 (as of June)
43	201	822	3,375	17,865	10,418

(Graphic by author; based on data collected 1–15 June 2018. Source: Brazilian Ministry of Justice; UNHCR 2018, [unhcr.org](https://www.unhcr.org))



(Graphic adapted by author. Source: Brazilian Ministry of Justice/Federal Police)

Figure. Asylum Applications in Brazil in 2017, by State

the flow of Venezuelan migrants is concentrated and where most shelters for them are located.

Beyond the tourists, binational population, and back-and-forth movement typical of border areas, it is important to understand that Venezuelans who arrive at the Brazilian border may apply for different types of prolonged stay within the national territory,

especially since the changes made to the legislation in 2017 and the creation of the “immigrant” category.²³ The federal government’s efforts—through the Ministry of Justice—aimed at implementing changes to national rules have made the legalization of displaced Venezuelans easier and more flexible.

Besides applying for asylum, persons crossing the border may now qualify as migrants or request temporary residency. However, according to Brazilian law, granting of asylum requires proof and adjudication on merits, which may take up to two years and has a low rate of approval. As a result, since the middle of 2017, official applications for asylum have tended to be replaced by other, simpler types of requests.

The Brazilian government has received 32,744 asylum applications so far, as well as 25,311 requests for other types of prolonged stay.²⁴ According to the Ministry of Justice, in 2017, the 17,865 asylum applications filed by Venezuelans already represented 53 percent of all applications filed in the country. Most of them were filed in the Brazilian states of Roraima and Amazonas, which were, respectively, the first and third states with the highest number of asylum applications in 2017 (see figure, page 6).²⁵ At the beginning of 2018, it was possible to observe a new increase in the influx of Venezuelans. The checkpoint set up by the Brazilian army in the town of Pacaraima in cooperation with other agencies recorded the entry of 24,982 people between 26 February and 18 April alone.²⁶ Although some of these Venezuelans may comprise “binationals” returning to their domicile of origin or simply tourists in temporary visits, it became clear that a considerable portion had not returned to Venezuela based on data related to asylum applications and other forms of prolonged stay in 2018.

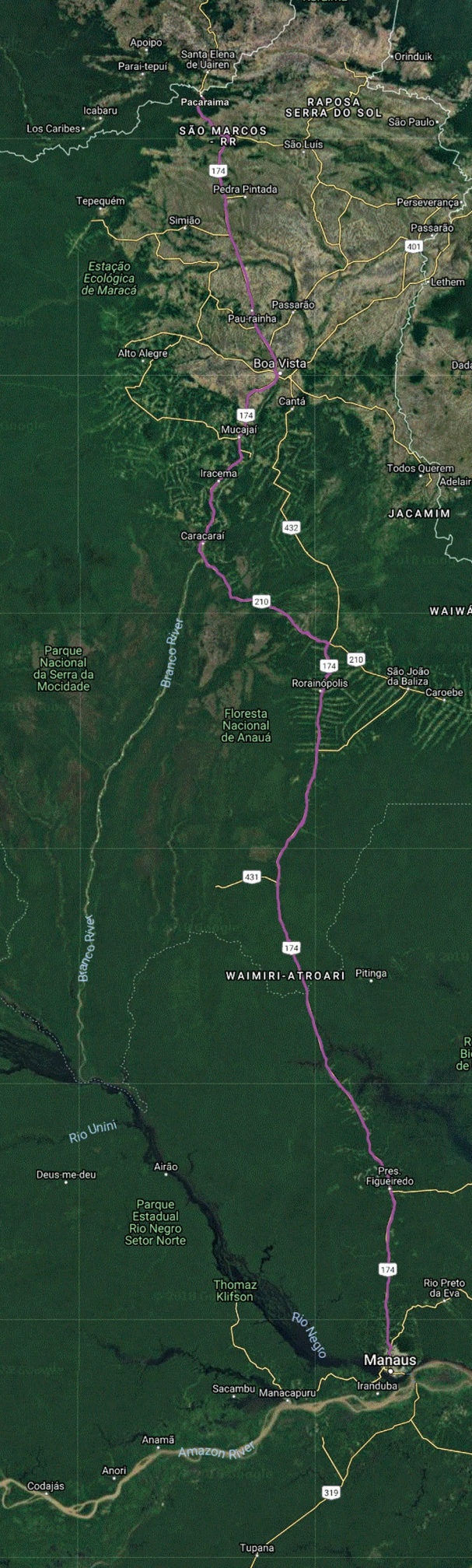
It is also worth noting that part of the back-and-forth movement observed in the border region is related to the purchase of food, medicine, and essential goods. Thus, the devaluation of the Venezuelan bolívar (VEF) in relation to the Brazilian real (BRL) and the shortage of supplies in Venezuela have encouraged smuggling.²⁷

Brazil's Venezuelan Immigrant Challenge

In theory, absorbing a number lower than sixty thousand migrants should not represent a serious problem in a country with more than two-hundred million inhabitants. However, when the size of the state of Roraima, its relative geographic isolation, and its government’s limited capabilities to care for a mass influx of refugees are taken into consideration, it is possible to understand how the number of displaced Venezuelans impacts directly on public services, on the precarious infrastructure available, and on the

Route on BR-174 from Pacaraima to Manaus

(Map courtesy of Google Maps)





Posts demarcate the border between Brazil and Venezuela in the town of Pacaraima, Brazil. The open, regular terrain and tropical savanna vegetation make the area a preferred point of entry for Venezuelans attempting to cross the border. (Photo by author)

local social dynamic itself. A state's inability to provide health care to both its citizens and displaced persons is one of the key concerns associated with migration crises in different parts of the world.²⁸ This medical concern is pronounced with regard to the ongoing situation on the Brazilian border.

In late 2016, during the first "boom" in migration flow, the state of Roraima found itself forced to declare a state of public health emergency. At that time, the number of hospitalizations had exceeded the capacity of hospitals and health clinics.²⁹ There were a few poorly organized shelters operating with the support of nongovernmental organizations, religious institutions, and civil society initiatives, supplementing efforts by the state and municipal governments. At that time, it was possible to observe unsheltered people sleeping in squares and other public areas.

Surveys conducted in 2016 and 2017 started to outline the profile of migrants arriving in Roraima. The majority were educated young people between twenty and thirty-nine years of age (72 percent), over half of whom were single men (53.8 percent). Most of them were originally from five Venezuelan states: Bolívar, Monagas, Anzoátegui, Carobo, and Caracas (Federal District).³⁰

While the profile of migrants pointed to a young and educated population in an economically active age group, the migrants have struggled to be absorbed by the atrophied local job market. This is due, in part, to Roraima's underdeveloped economy but also to legal issues that involve the recognition of diplomas and permission to exercise professions requiring higher education in Brazil. Since 2015, groups asking for help on the streets and from charitable institutions have become more common. Additionally, some migrants have resorted to prostitution

as an option to generate income, which has exposed a portion of migrants to greater risk. On top of it all, there was naturally fear among the local population of an increase in the crime rate due to the higher number of unemployed, desperate people.

The situation has been further complicated by the arrival of the *Warao* into Brazil, a protected indigenous

Constitution. This is especially true with respect to land rights, as this ethnic group is not originally from that region and is there solely due to the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela. As a result, they received the status of migrants or asylum seekers depending on their individual situation but not as a recognized protected population indigenous to Brazil.³¹



A mother and her child from the indigenous *Warao* people of the Orinoco Delta in eastern Venezuela are seen near a viaduct next to a bus terminal in Manaus, Amazonas, Brazil. Facing hunger and hardship in their villages along Venezuela's Caribbean coast, hundreds of *Warao* are now trying their luck on the gritty streets of Manaus, Brazil's Amazonian metropolis. (Photo by Bruno Kelly, Reuters)

group in Venezuela. The first records of their arrival in Brazil date back to 2014. As of 2016, the number had grown to several hundred people assigned to shelters in the towns of Pacaraima, Boa Vista, and Manaus. This ethnic group, the second largest in Venezuela, had its origins in the Orinoco Delta, with approximately forty-eight thousand individuals. Their arrival resulted in tensions with groups of indigenous people already within Brazil in the sense that while the *Warao* are recognized as an indigenous culture, they do not enjoy the same rights set forth in Articles 231 and 232 of the Brazilian

Brazil's Crisis Response

Prior to 2016, efforts were already being carried out by the state and local governments in cooperation with nongovernmental organizations and civil society sectors to provide assistance to displaced persons arriving in the state. However, beginning in 2016, the migration flow actually exceeded state and municipal capabilities to provide basic services to displaced persons. As a result, the federal government decided to intervene in a systematic manner.

Federal government actions. On 15 February 2018, Provisional Measure [*Medida Provisória*] 820/2018

created the “Federal Emergency Assistance Committee for receiving people in a vulnerable situation caused by a migration flow due to a humanitarian crisis,” a multi-agency effort aligning all branches at the federal, state, and local levels of government.³² Strategic diagnostics, consultations with various institutions and agencies, removal of funding limits, and emergency plans had already been developed in previous months.

Provisional Measure 820/2018 defined ten priority areas: (1) social protection; (2) health care; (3) providing educational activities; (4) professional training and qualification; (5) ensuring human rights; (6) protecting the rights of women, children, adolescents, the elderly, persons with disabilities, indigenous populations, and affected traditional communities; (7) providing infrastructure and sanitation; (8) law enforcement and strengthening border control; (9) logistics and distribution of basic goods; and (10) mobility, distribution within the national territory, and support to relocation efforts.

The Ministry of Defense, in partnership with other public agencies and representatives from organized civil society, initiated work on these priority areas through different actions. (The work continues through at the writing of this article.) It is in this context that the Brazilian armed forces—especially the Army and Air Force—were employed in Operation *Acolhida*. [Translator’s Note: The word “acolhida” encompasses several meanings, including refuge, shelter, welcome, and reception, among others.]

Air Force. Squadron *Corsário*, Wing 11, of the Brazilian air force has helped with logistical and humanitarian transportation, as well as mobility and relocation of sheltered migrants to other states in Brazil. The states of São Paulo, Mato Grosso, Amazonas, Rio de Janeiro, Paraíba, and Pernambuco received some of the first seven hundred migrants who voluntarily agreed to participate in the process of relocation. Migrants are sent to shelters, church centers, and reception centers responsible for receiving them, providing them with basic care and helping them seek employment in the local job market. Gradually, this process makes new openings available in the existing shelters and helps alleviate the pressure on basic services in the border region.

Army. The Brazilian army’s efforts in complying with Provisional Measure 820/2018 have been carried out by different units, including the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade and the 6th Construction Engineer

Battalion headquartered in Boa Vista; and detachments from the Army’s Logistical Support Base, located in Rio de Janeiro; as well as by service members mobilized from other regions.

The portfolio of tasks and missions carried out by the ground force in the face of the migration crisis includes measures related to law enforcement and strengthening border control. To this end, the Brazilian Army—employing its 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade—launched Operation *Controle* [Control], in which it reinforced its presence along the border with over four hundred soldiers. Roadblock and checkpoints were placed on the border with Venezuela and Guyana, in addition to rear-area checkpoints in the state’s interior.

The 3rd Special Border Platoon, located in Pacaraima, received reinforcements for the purpose of executing its primary missions and supporting other government agencies operating in town.

Another element in the Brazilian army’s efforts to provide support during the migration crisis has the aim of “cooperating with federal, state, and local governments in emergency assistance measures to receive immigrants from Venezuela who are in a vulnerable situation (persons in need) caused by a migration flow due to a humanitarian crisis.”³³ As it happens, the Brazilian army has ample experience in conducting civil-social actions throughout the Amazon. Still, the knowledge acquired during the multinational exercise called AMAZONLOG, held in 2017, has helped significantly in actions supporting Venezuelan migrants. During AMAZONLOG, soldiers planned and practiced zoonosis (disease that can be transmitted to humans from animals) control, activities related to food security, field hospital setup and operation, equipment testing, and other pertinent activities.³⁴

Ongoing Actions

The field hospital is, as of this writing, deployed in Pacaraima to assist in providing basic health care to displaced Venezuelans. The modules set up include an infirmary; clinical, pediatric, and gynecological care; lab testing; and emergency care. Since 26 April 2018, the field hospital facilities have operated in a complementary manner to the Hospital of Pacaraima. By late May, the unit had already handled more than 2,500 adult and pediatric visits.³⁵

Table 3. Venezuelans in shelters under Operation Acolhida (by June 2018)

City/shelter		Population	
		Capacity	Sheltered
Boa Vista	Pintolândia (indigenous)	400	716
	Tancredo Neves	300	323
	Hélio Campos	250	250
	Jardim Floresta	600	674
	São Vicente	400	402
	Nova Canaã	350	403
	Latif Salomão	500	450
	Santa Tereza	500	514
	Rondon 1	500	In progress
	Rondon 2	500	In progress
	Rondon 3	500	Planned
Pacaraima	Janokoida (indigenous)	500	452
	BV-8	500	In progress
Total		5800	4184
Relocation	São Paulo	278	
	Cuiabá	115	
	Manaus	194	
	Igarassú (PE)	70	
	Rio de Janeiro	70	
	Goioerê (PR)	50	
Total		777	

(Graphic by author; based on data collected 1–15 June 2018. Source: Brazilian Army)

Working in close civil-military cooperation with various governmental and nongovernmental organizations, the Brazilian army provides direct support in receiving and housing displaced Venezuelans. The immigrant shelters have a fluctuating population. In Roraima alone, there are more than four thousand Venezuelans in shelters. The number of openings is expected to increase to almost seven thousand, distributed among facilities that can accommodate 250 to 600 people. The choice of a model based on smaller and decentralized lodging units aims to provide closer and more humanized care.

Actions conducted in the context of Operation Acolhida include planning for and setting up shelters and supporting their operation: identifying areas and sites for the shelters; infrastructure construction (sanitation, power, etc.); organizing and setting up tents; food preparation and distribution; and provision of medical care, education, security, and other essential services. Just the federal government's investments administered by the Ministry of Defense add up to BRL 190 million (see table 3).³⁶ Other ministries, in addition to state and municipal departments, have also contributed significant financial resources to the humanitarian cause.

The use of military forces that are not under UN mandates to provide humanitarian organization and support during forced displacements is nothing new and has occurred since World War II, even before the UN came into existence.³⁷ However, according to many defense experts, this is not an ideal scenario, as it diverts the military from its core functions related to preparing for armed conflict. The participation of the Brazilian military does not represent a conversion of the situation into a security or military issue, but rather it fills the need for expediency in responding to humanitarian challenges and local difficulties.³⁸

Conclusion

The Venezuelan migration flow has fluctuated over the course of months. At this writing, the reasons for that still need to be better understood and analyzed in order to support the development of prospective scenarios and future planning.³⁹ The flow of migrants may decrease, and even stop temporarily, without solving the problem. The internal dynamics of Venezuelan politics and its foreign relations with Colombia (a bordering country that has absorbed a significant portion of

migrants but has a tense diplomatic relationship with Venezuela, including a record of closing its borders) are factors to be considered. The fact is that the crisis experienced by Venezuela has structural aspects creating challenges with no short-term or midterm resolutions.

Foreign aid initiatives to South American countries are generally poorly received and generate distrust with regard to particular interests and agendas.⁴⁰ Proposals at the regional level are more limited. Still, it is possible to build agendas based on clear interests linked to human security on both sides of the border. It is necessary to think and work together so as to evaluate and empower a regional forum that can operate with the Venezuelan government. Such a proposal has been suggested many times but has not yet been operationalized.⁴¹

As with other cross-border issues such as environmental concerns and organized crime, among others, there is no framework or broader set of rules to deal with migration. Although there are international organizations and protocols seeking to address the issue, they depend on internal approvals and regulations and, more than that, on operationalization by the different countries, since displaced individuals are located within their respective national borders. It is through their domestic policies and the dissemination of their concepts and actors that it is possible to gradually

establish regional governance mechanisms to facilitate synchronized cooperation about issues such as the flow of people—as Brazil and Argentina have already done with regard to the southern border.⁴²

In the Venezuelan case, it is necessary to better understand how Colombia, Peru, Ecuador, and other countries have been affected by the problem, which initiatives are in progress, and whether it is possible to actually build multinational solutions.

In the case of Brazil, the Brazilian army's previous experiences in preparing and conducting operations of a humanitarian nature, whether in the Amazon region or in other domestic and international scenarios, have contributed to a good level of civil-military integration in this crisis. However, it is important to remember that humanitarian relief for such crises is not the primary function of the military; that is to train to ensure the defense of the country and the protection of the country's interests in conflict environments.

Notwithstanding, it is necessary to think not only about managing the current crisis but also about ways for solving it in the medium and long term. That implies strengthening regional agreements and finding ways to dialog about the problem with Venezuela itself by pointing to the need for it to pay more attention to and provide better care of its own population. ■

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