



Brazilian soldiers process migrants 24 April 2018 in Boa Vista, the capital city of the Brazilian state of Roraima. In February 2018, the Brazilian government tasked the army to lead support efforts aimed at mitigating the suffering and adverse regional socioeconomic impact resulting from thousands of migrants crossing the border into Brazil from the economically collapsing state of Venezuela. Migrants who could not be sheltered in the border city of Pacaraima were sent to Boa Vista and to other cities in the state. (Photo courtesy of the Humanitarian Logistics Task Force–Roraima)

# Use of the Brazilian Military Component in the Face of Venezuela's Migration Crisis

Maj. George Alberto Garcia de Oliveira, Brazilian Army

Beginning in 2014, Venezuela's social, economic, and political crisis led thousands of Venezuelans to begin migrating to other countries, including Brazil, to seek better living conditions. The ongoing situation continuing from that period has created an unparalleled regional crisis for Latin America.

The majority of Venezuelans entering Brazilian territory arrive through the town of Pacaraima and proceed to Boa Vista, capital of the state of Roraima, or to other cities in the Brazilian Amazon (see figure 1). All of these cities lack adequate public infrastructure to accommodate such a mass influx, and the local job market of each is insufficient to absorb the incoming population. These factors have produced social impacts that are highly apparent in Pacaraima and Boa Vista such as homelessness, invasion of public spaces, an increase in prostitution, overcrowding of hospitals, and isolated cases of xenophobia.

As reported by the newspaper *Le Monde*, "at first, the population was moved by their plight and made several donations of clothes and food. But the growing number of migrants eventually outstripped compassion, which was gradually replaced with contempt and xenophobia."<sup>1</sup> Similar examples were reported by other media outlets. On 5 February 2018, a man set fire to a house where thirty-one Venezuelans were sleeping, causing serious burns to a twenty-four-year-old Venezuelan woman.<sup>2</sup> On 8 February 2018, a homemade bomb was thrown inside a house sheltering a Venezuelan family; a three-year-old child and the child's parents sustained burns.<sup>3</sup> On 17 March 2018, Brazilians invaded an improvised shelter in the town of Mucajaí, located about thirty miles away from Boa Vista, threw out the Venezuelans who were sleeping there, and set fire to their belongings.<sup>4</sup>

On 15 February 2018, the Brazilian government officially recognized the "vulnerable situation resulting from the [increased] flow of migrants to the state of Roraima due to the crisis" in Venezuela, and it reacted by creating a Federal Emergency Assistance Committee.<sup>5</sup> Brazil's Ministry of Defense was designated as the committee's executive office, and an army lieutenant general was appointed operational coordinator of the emergency assistance operations.



(Image from Google Earth; modified by Michael Serravo, Army University Press)

**Figure 1. Town of Pacaraima, Major Entry Point for Venezuelan Migrants into Brazil**

As a result, Brazilian military troops have been carrying out humanitarian operations in coordination with the United Nations (UN), law enforcement agencies, government agencies, nongovernmental organizations, and religious and philanthropic institutions, receiving Venezuelans entering Brazilian territory to escape the crisis in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

In conjunction with humanitarian efforts and in view of the increase in the cross-border flow, the Brazilian government has also expanded the presence of troops along the Brazil-Venezuela border for security, especially in the area around the town of Pacaraima. The higher number of Brazilian soldiers in this area has made it possible to increase border inspection operations and effectively fight cross-border crime.

Brazil's current experience provides a vast field of study related to refugee migration. With the aim of sharing lessons, best practices, and opportunities



for improvement, this article seeks to provide a brief analysis of the participation of the Brazilian military component in government efforts in response to the Venezuelan migration crisis.

## A Global Problem

In an increasingly globalized world, local problems or crises tend to produce regional impacts. For instance, the civil war in Syria that started in 2011 and continuous conflicts in Africa have resulted in a large migration wave toward the European continent. Between the years 2015 and 2017 alone, about 1.6 million immigrants reached the European Mediterranean coast irregularly.<sup>6</sup>

This mass displacement of people toward Europe has created challenges for member states of the European Union (EU). In the security realm, the migration crisis led the EU to create, in October 2016, the European Border and Coast Guard “to ensure that Europe can protect its common external borders and face the new migration ... challenges together.”<sup>7</sup> In the humanitarian realm, the provision of food, water, and shelter has economically burdened several EU countries, especially Greece and Italy, primary destinations for the vast majority of refugees and immigrants.<sup>8</sup>

Migration cycles have always been a part of human history, but the European case is only part of a global scenario that features the highest level of involuntary population displacement in history. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), by the end of 2015 there were about 54.9 million refugees in the world, a number higher than that recorded at the end of World War II.<sup>9</sup>

Typically, when a crisis begins, there is a tendency toward shortages of basic goods, unemployment, and increased levels of violence. This leads many people to seek help in neighboring countries, first by making periodic trips to purchase goods and then by immigrating in search of new job opportunities if the situation becomes too dire. This has been the pattern that the Venezuelan crisis has produced in Latin America.

## Causes of Venezuela's Migration Crisis

The international community has followed with apprehension Venezuela's socioeconomic and political crisis, which began during President Hugo Chávez's administration and worsened during the tenure of the current president, Nicolás Maduro.

From an economic standpoint, the figures are disturbing. Projections by the International Monetary Fund concerning Venezuela for the year 2018 indicate that there will be a 15 percent downturn in the gross domestic product and that product prices will increase more than 13,000 percent.<sup>10</sup> Negative economic prospects in the short and medium term tend to aggravate the refugee crisis.

Regarding public security and governance, a study conducted by the InSight Crime Foundation indicates that Venezuela has serious problems, among which the following stand out:

- existence of state officials linked to organized crime;
- corruption of Venezuelan elites and misappropriation of public funds;
- transfer of state powers to armed civilian or militia groups known as “colectivos” (which establish a parallel justice system in the districts and neighborhoods under their control);
- growth of organized crime;
- high rates of violence by state and nonstate actors, evidenced by the highest murder rate in Latin America (eighty-nine homicides per one hundred thousand inhabitants);
- easy recruitment of young people by organized crime; and
- deaths during protests against the current government, consistently denounced by other countries and by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.<sup>11</sup>

In Venezuela's current reality, most people face hunger, unemployment, and shortages of basic goods and medication. Violence, which is a symptom of the process of state failure, has

**Maj. George Alberto Garcia de Oliveira,** **Brazilian Army**, graduated from the Military Academy of Agulhas Negras in 1999 and completed the Advanced Military Studies Course at the Brazilian Command and General Staff College. Among his key assignments, he served as the operations officer for the 25th Airborne Infantry Battalion, commander of the 12th Guard Company, and instructor at the Military Academy of Agulhas Negras and Escola de Aperfeiçoamento de Oficiais (counterpart to the Captains Career Course). He is currently the operations officer for the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade, headquartered in Boa Vista, state of Roraima.

taken over the streets of big cities and small towns alike. Trying to escape this situation, thousands of Venezuelans find themselves forced to leave their country in search of better living conditions.

According to a UNHCR report, between 2014 and 2017, one million Venezuelans migrated to other countries due to the crisis. Main destination countries for these immigrants include Colombia, Chile,

Service, respectively). Pacaraima has always served as a trading post, attracting Venezuelans in search of basic consumer goods and medical care. In addition, Brazilian tourists would often visit the beaches in the Venezuelan Caribbean, especially during the months of January, December, and July. However, in January 2018, after the death of a Brazilian tourist who was a victim of mugging in Margarita Island, the Brazilian

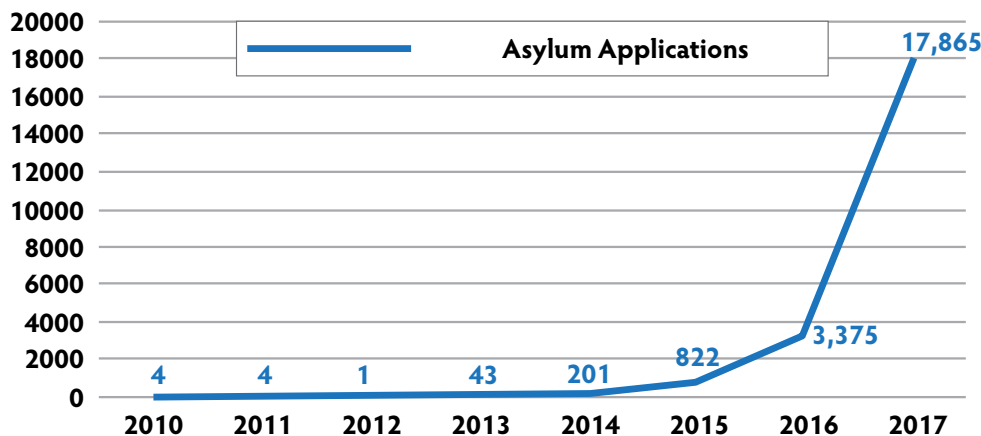
Ministry of Foreign Affairs raised the alert level concerning Venezuela, discouraging Brazilians from traveling to that country for tourism.<sup>15</sup>

As the crisis in the Bolivarian Republic worsened, daily life in Pacaraima changed dramatically, especially after 2016. According to statements by the local mayor, the health and security sectors have been the most affected. Before

Venezuelan migration intensified, about thirty people received care in one of the town's two health clinics each day. The average in February 2018 was around eighty people per clinic. Also according to the mayor's claims, muggings, thefts, and homicides, which had not been common in the small town, have become frequent events.<sup>16</sup>

The chaos resulting from the increased migration flow from Venezuela is especially apparent in the town's small business district. There are groups of people camped out on the streets and other public spaces, traffic is chaotic, and even clothing stores and pharmacies have been selling rice and other provisions sought by Venezuelans.

Venezuela's crisis has also resulted in the influx of Warao natives, an indigenous people from northeast Venezuela, into Brazil. While they have moved to many other cities in northern Brazil, such as Manaus, Santarém, and Belém, many of them have remained in Pacaraima and Boa Vista.<sup>17</sup> Begging is a common activity among the Warao, and they were constantly seen asking for money at traffic stops and other spots with



(Figure from the Casa Civil website, Brazilian Government)

**Figure 2. Asylum Applications by Venezuelans in Brazil from 2010 to 2017**

Peru, the United States, Ecuador, and Brazil.<sup>12</sup> And according to data from the Brazilian Federal Police, between January 2017 and June 2018, about 127,000 Venezuelans entered Brazil legally through the border checkpoint in Pacaraima. Of this total, about 59,000 remained in Brazilian territory.<sup>13</sup> Another piece of data that demonstrates the significant influx of Venezuelans into Brazil is the number of asylum applications. While in 2010 only four Venezuelans applied for asylum in Brazil, this number reached 17,865 in 2017.<sup>14</sup> The upward trend in the number of asylum applications may be seen in the graph in figure 2.

### Impact on Brazilian Border Region

The town of Pacaraima has a population of about twelve thousand inhabitants and is located next to BR-174, the only highway connecting Brazil to Venezuela. In this town, there is a Brazilian army *pelotão especial de fronteira* (special border platoon), along with immigration and customs centers (under the responsibility of the Brazilian Federal Police and Revenue





As part of Operation *Acolhida*, Brazilian soldiers process migrants fleeing from Venezuela 24 April 2018 after busing them to the town of Boa Vista from the Pacaraima border control area in Roraima, a Brazilian state that borders Venezuela. Pacaraima sits astride the easiest land access route into Brazil. (Photo courtesy of the Humanitarian Logistics Task Force–Roraima)

a concentration of people before the Brazilian military began their emergency efforts in the state of Roraima.

Daily life in the city of Boa Vista, the capital of Roraima, has also changed with the arrival of Venezuelans. A significant number of immigrants are living homeless on the streets. Public spaces such as Simón Bolívar Plaza, one the main squares in town, have been occupied by homeless families. Rates of violence and prostitution have also gone up. And the public health system has collapsed from the massive presence of Venezuelans in local maternity wards, hospitals, and health clinics.

The General Hospital of Roraima, which handles 80 percent of adults from the entire state, provided care to 1,815 Venezuelans in 2016, more than triple the number of those served in 2015. In February 2017 ... the hospital was treating, on average, 300 Venezuelan patients per month. The number of Venezuelan women seen at the

Women's and Children's Hospital Nossa Senhora de Nazareth, which receives patients from the entire state, virtually doubled in 2016, reaching 807.<sup>18</sup>

The shelters set up by the local government prior to the use of the armed forces were insufficient and lacked the structure to absorb the number of Venezuelans arriving daily. The overcrowding of shelters, combined with the lack of access control, allowed these sites to serve as havens for Venezuelans who were committing crimes on the streets of Boa Vista. This situation caused discontent among the Brazilian residents of Roraima's capital, as well as the emergence of isolated cases of xenophobia. It has brought unprecedentedly rapid economic and social challenges to the state of Roraima.

## Brazilian Crisis Response

The deteriorating situation led the Brazilian government to issue Executive Order [*Decreto Presidencial*] No. 9,285 on 15 February 2018, which recognized the

vulnerability of migrants caused by the humanitarian crisis in Venezuela, and Executive Order No. 9,286, also on 15 February 2018, which authorized the creation of the Federal Emergency Assistance Committee to receive those migrants into Brazil.<sup>19</sup> The committee would include representatives from various government agencies and ministries, including the Executive Office of the President, the Ministry of Defense, and the Office for Institutional Security.<sup>20</sup>

Pursuant to the executive order, the Ministry of Defense would serve as the executive office for the Federal Emergency Assistance Committee and would provide it with administrative support. In addition, an army lieutenant general was to be appointed as the Federal Emergency Assistance Committee's operational coordinator, responsible for coordinating emergency operations using the military component in cooperation with other institutions, government agencies, and Brazilian and international nongovernmental organizations.

As a result of the executive orders mentioned above, the Ministry of Defense issued Ministerial Directives [*Diretrizes Ministeriais*] No. 03/2018 and No. 04/2018, which established parameters and responsibilities for conducting Operation *Acolhida* (a word that denotes receiving, welcoming, refuge, and shelter, among other meanings) and Operation *Controle* (Control), respectively.<sup>21</sup> While the objective of the former is the humanitarian admission of Venezuelan immigrants into the state of Roraima, the latter is designed to increase security along the Brazil-Venezuela border.

## Operation Acolhida

Ministerial Directive No. 03/2018 authorized the initiation of Operation Acolhida for the purpose of providing humanitarian assistance in the state of Roraima. According to Brazilian military doctrine, a humanitarian assistance operation is designed to alleviate human suffering resulting from natural or manmade disasters that pose a serious threat to life or cause extensive damage, as well as to provide civic-social assistance. This type of operation is intended to supplement, with the use of military assets, the disaster response effort by the government and nongovernmental organizations.<sup>22</sup>

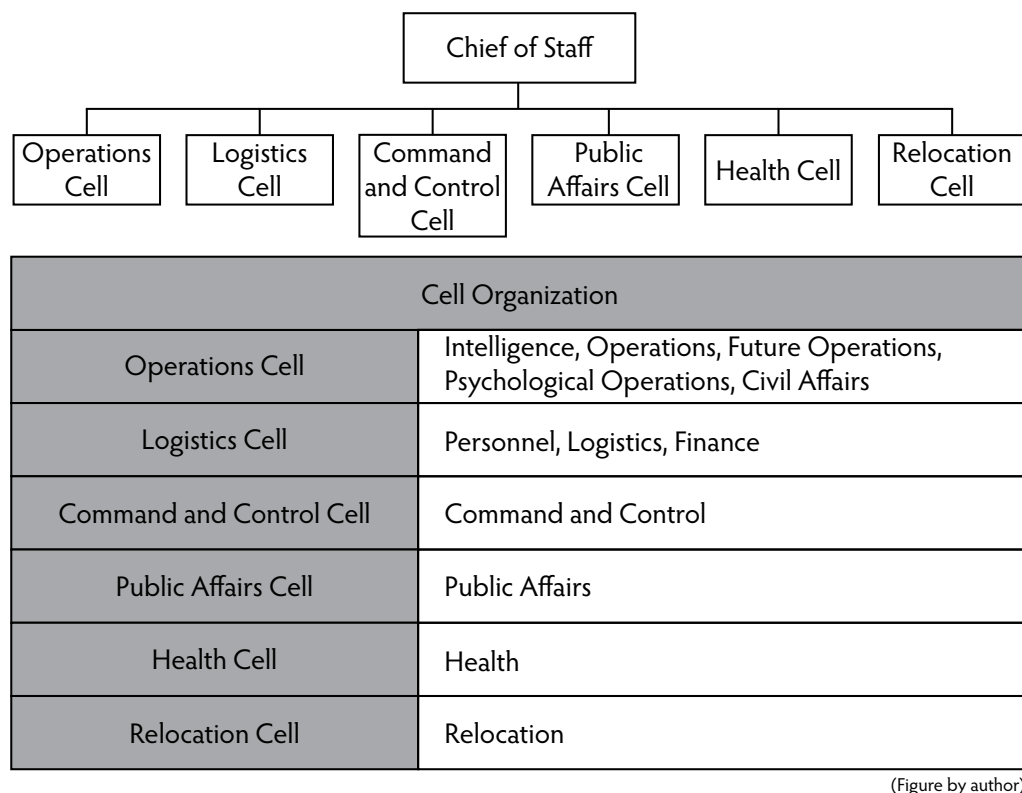
To plan and execute Operation Acolhida, Humanitarian Logistics Task Force–Roraima was

created and placed under army Lt. Gen. Eduardo Pazuello.<sup>23</sup> This task force is charged with coordinating with the federal, state, and municipal governments regarding emergency assistance measures for receiving immigrants from Venezuela who are in a “vulnerable situation due to the migration flow caused by the humanitarian crisis.”<sup>24</sup> In practical terms, this means receiving, identifying, screening, vaccinating, providing shelter, and relocating Venezuelans in need.

Operation Acolhida may be classified as a humanitarian, joint, and interagency operation. It is humanitarian because its primary purpose is to receive Venezuelan immigrants in a vulnerable situation. It is joint because it involves navy, army, and air force personnel. And it is interagency because there is a clear “interaction of the armed forces with other agencies for the purpose of reconciling interests and coordinating efforts” in order to receive Venezuelans in need in an organized, systematic, and efficient manner.<sup>25</sup> It is worth noting here the direct participation of agencies from all three levels of government (federal, state, and local), law enforcement agencies (police forces), international organizations, nongovernmental organizations, and religious and philanthropic institutions.<sup>26</sup>

Planning for Operation Acolhida was based on three pillars: organizing the border, providing shelter, and relocating Venezuelan immigrants. Organizing the border may be understood as organizing the Venezuelan migration flow from the moment of the immigrant's arrival at the border in Pacaraima. Migration control agencies lacked adequate personnel and infrastructure for handling the large number of Venezuelans who started to arrive in Brazil daily, which created the need to set up facilities and a workforce structure capable of addressing the new reality. The second pillar was the provision of shelter, offering decent conditions in lodging, food, and medical assistance to Venezuelans in need who, prior to Operation Acolhida, had started to haphazardly set up camps in public areas of Pacaraima and Boa Vista. Removing them from the streets and providing them with good-quality shelters became crucial to the success of the operation. The third pillar was relocation, the process of distributing the population of Venezuelan immigrants to other states in Brazil. This process was deemed a critical factor from the beginning of planning, given that there is a limit to the number





**Figure 3. Organization of the Humanitarian Logistics Task Force–Roraima's Joint and Interagency Staff**

of vacancies at the shelters in Pacaraima and Boa Vista and that the Venezuelan migration influx into Brazil will not diminish in the short term.

To enable the planning and execution of the operations, a joint and interagency staff was created to advise the task force's operational coordinator and keep him informed of any developments and outcomes (see figure 3).

### Humanitarian Logistics Task Force–Roraima

The Humanitarian Logistics Task Force–Roraima has established its command post in the city of Boa Vista and has five hundred navy, army, and air force personnel who work daily receiving Venezuelan immigrants, rotating on a quarterly basis. Because Pacaraima and Boa Vista are the two cities most affected by the increase in the Venezuelan migration flow, the task force has established a base in both (see figure 4, page 8). An overview of the migration flow of Venezuelans entering Brazil may be seen in figure 5 (on page 9).

Federal Police, which is the Brazilian agency responsible for migration control, their reason for entering Brazilian territory—whether for tourism, to request temporary residency, or to apply for asylum as the main options. Regardless of their intent, all immigrants receive guidance from UNHCR teams about the rights of asylum seekers and from the IOM about the rights of immigrants.

For its part, ANVISA checks each immigrant's immunization status. Immigrants who do not have proof of immunization receive a dose of the MMR vaccine against measles, mumps, and rubella, in addition to immunization against yellow fever. The purpose of this effort is to establish a health barrier to prevent the entry and propagation of diseases in Brazil. In 2018, before Operation Acolhida began, several cases of measles were reported in Boa Vista hospitals, a disease that had been eradicated from Brazil since 2016.<sup>27</sup> Immigrants are also given a small meal at the Reception and Identification Center; after all, many arrive hungry. Once processing is completed, tourists may proceed with their trip, but those

Immediately after crossing the Brazil-Venezuela border, Venezuelan immigrants go to the Reception and Identification Center, manned by personnel from the Brazilian armed forces and other institutions and agencies, including the Federal Police, the Brazilian National Health Surveillance Agency (ANVISA), the UNHCR, and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). At this center, immigrants must declare to the

immigrants who wish to apply for asylum or temporary residency are sent to the Screening Center.

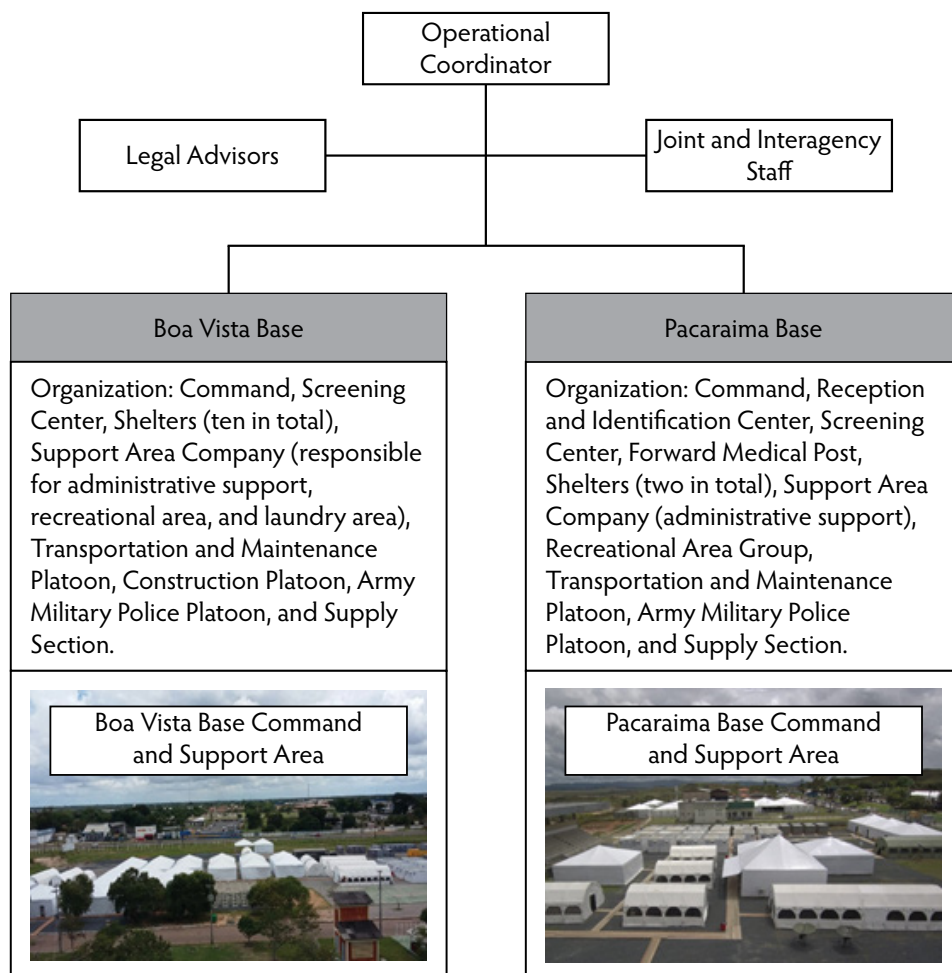
At the Screening Center in Pacaraima, Venezuelan immigrants who wish to apply for temporary residency or asylum must register with UNHCR and IOM for identifying the best shelter for them. Their luggage is inspected by customs agents. In addition, they are issued working papers, including the mandatory worker's record book and taxpayer identification number. Another meal is offered as well.

Venezuelan immigrants who are ill are sent to the *Posto de Atendimento Avançado* (Forward Medical Post), a field medical unit that includes doctors, dentists, pharmacists, and military medics. This post has twenty beds for patients with diseases of low to medium complexity. If the post is above capacity, patients are sent to the Hospital of Pacaraima, which also has military doctors. Immigrants with more serious diseases are immediately sent to the General Hospital of Roraima in Boa Vista.

From the Screening Center, indigenous Venezuelan immigrants are sent to Shelter Janakoida in Pacaraima or Shelter Pintolândia in Boa Vista, while nonindigenous Venezuelan immigrants are sent to Shelter BV-8, where they remain until there are openings at the shelters in Boa Vista.

Operation Acolhida has ten shelters in Boa Vista. In total, their shelters house approximately five thousand Venezuelans in Boa Vista and one thousand in Pacaraima. All of them were built or renovated by

Humanitarian Logistics Task Force personnel with support from the 6th Engineer Construction Battalion, an army unit headquartered in Boa Vista. All shelters comply with the standards set forth in UNHCR publications, adhering to criteria concerning size, the space between tents, the need to establish communal areas, and the number of bathrooms, among others.

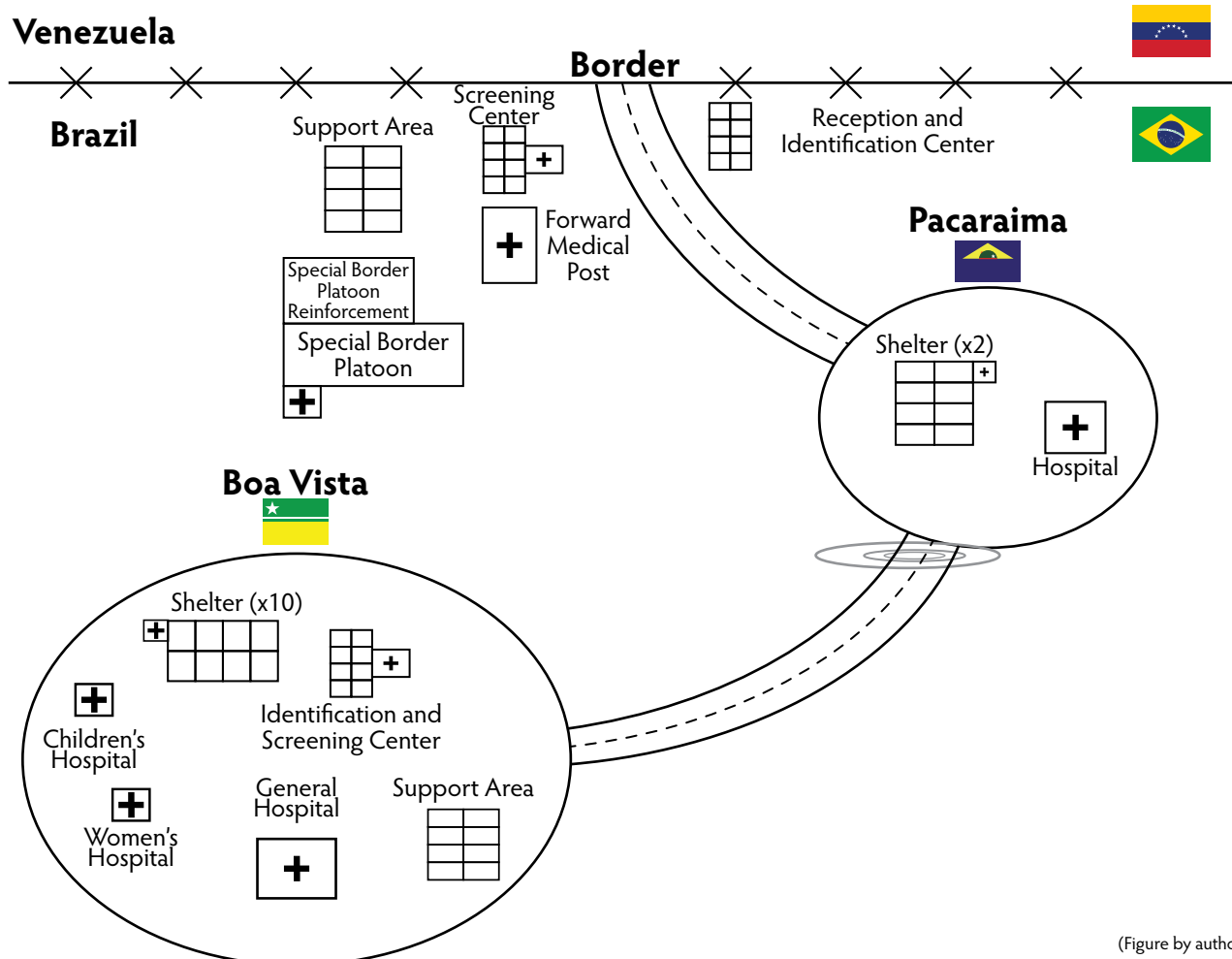


(Figure by author)

**Figure 4. Organization of the Humanitarian Logistics Task Force—Roraima**

Some shelters are managed by Humanitarian Logistics Task Force personnel, while others are managed by the UNHCR. Nevertheless, it falls to the UNHCR to identify which shelter is the best suited to each Venezuelan immigrant. There are shelters for single men, single women, and families. Operation Acolhida personnel provide all the required logistical





(Figure by author)

**Figure 5. Flow of Venezuelan Migrants through the Humanitarian Logistics Task Force–Roraima Base in Pacaraima**

support for operating the shelters, including construction and repairs, external and internal security, medical care, and meal provision.

Regarding meal provision, the Humanitarian Logistics Task Force provides hot meals to shelters for nonindigenous immigrants and dry goods to those with indigenous immigrants, consistent with their culinary traditions. From 20 March to 20 August 2018, 1,029,000 hot meals and over 120 metric tons of dry goods were delivered to Operation Acolhida shelters.<sup>28</sup>

The existence of shelters within the urban area of Boa Vista raises several considerations. The UNHCR calculates that 60 percent of refugees and 80 percent of displaced persons in the world live in urban areas.

Many avoid camps set up outside urban areas because of the lack of job opportunities.<sup>29</sup>

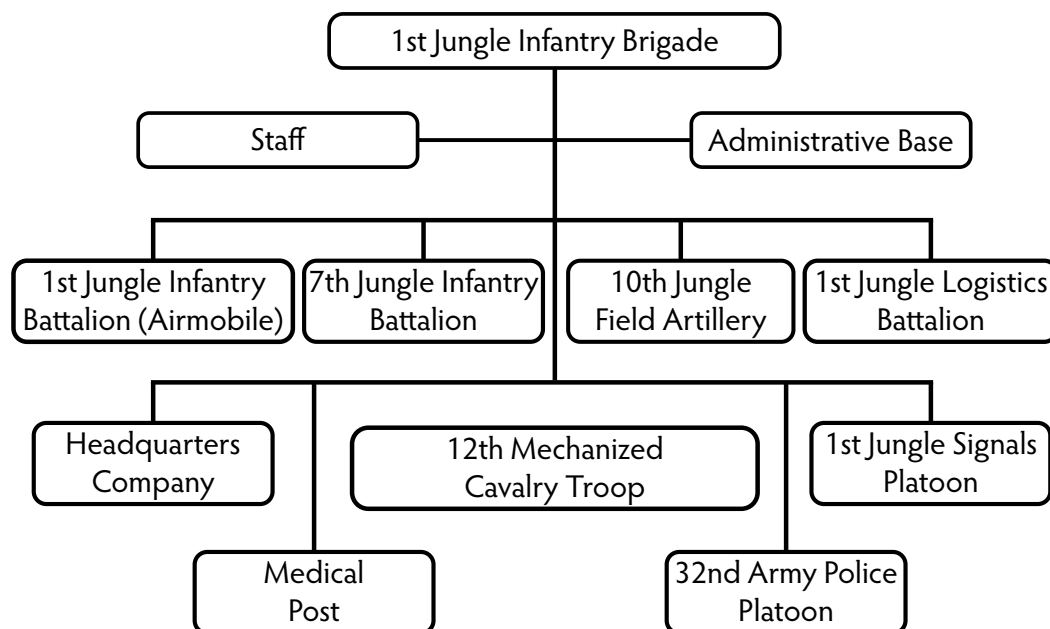
In the case of the Humanitarian Logistics Task Force, the decision to set up camps within the urban area of Boa Vista was based on the assumption that five hundred Venezuelans would be relocated each month. This number was reported by the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade, which, in the context of Operation Controle, counted the number of Venezuelan immigrants arriving and leaving the state of Roraima both by land and by air. Based on the data, it was found that on average, five hundred Venezuelans in need were remaining in the city of Boa Vista each month. However, relocation has not progressed as required. From the beginning of the operation through August 2018—that is, over a six-month

period—only 820 Venezuelans were relocated (well below the projected goal of three thousand people). If relocation efforts fail to reach the desired pace and given the lack of areas available for building new shelters in Boa Vista, Venezuelan immigrants will potentially start once again to occupy public areas in Roraima's capital in a few months. Therefore, it is important to consider establish-

Military Command), responsible for most states in the Amazon region, including Roraima.

The Amazon Military Command then developed the operational plan for Operation Controle, which directed the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade to intensify security along Roraima's border as of 20 February 2018 through preventive and enforcement operations,

especially in the area of the special border platoons in Pacaraima and Bonfim, and in deep areas along the highways coming from Venezuela and Guyana.<sup>30</sup> To this end, the operations were to be coordinated with the Humanitarian Logistics Task Force, law enforcement, and relevant government agencies. It would also fall to the



(Figure by author)

**Figure 6. Organization of 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade**

ing shelters outside Boa Vista's urban perimeter, which would serve as intermediate centers, relieving pressure on the shelters already located within the city.

## Operation Controle

The Ministry of Defense, through Ministerial Directive No. 04/2018, directed the Brazilian army to initiate Operation Controle, which would have the objectives of fighting cross-border crime and supporting migration control operations under the responsibility of the Federal Police, with the state of Roraima as its area of operations.

From this point, the Brazilian military followed its planning methodology. Because the operation was assigned to the army, it fell to the *Comando de Operações Terrestres* (Land Operations Command) to develop a military operational planning directive, which was sent to the *Comando Militar da Amazônia* (Amazon

Amazon Military Command) to provide the troops and assets to reinforce the efforts of the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade, which has a strength of 3,200 troops. It is a large unit formed by combat, combat support, and combat service support units (see figure 6).

Upon analyzing the tasks assigned to the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade for the purpose of fighting cross-border crime and supporting migration control efforts, several considerations guided this unit's tactical planning. Ten of them are highlighted below:

- BR-174 and BR-401, as the two main highways coming from Venezuela and Guyana, respectively, would need to be controlled through the establishment of roadblocks and checkpoints at the border.
- Because both borders are porous, allowing people to cross on foot away from border checkpoints, it would be imperative to conduct area patrols

(on foot and motorized) in the regions around Pacaraima and Bonfim and to include the use of drones for surveillance.

- It would be important to increase troops in the regions around Pacaraima and Bonfim, given that the strength of each special border platoon (about seventy soldiers only) would not allow sustaining daily road control and area patrol operations simultaneously in the medium and long term.
- The deployment of troops, whether those already in Pacaraima and Bonfim or those sent as reinforcements, should channel the movement of immigrants to border checkpoints and, at the same time, discourage the use of illegal routes that provide access into Brazilian territory.

- In addition to establishing roadblocks and checkpoints at the border, additional ones should be established in deep areas, near Boa Vista, to check whether Venezuelans arriving at the capital went through migration control with the Federal Police.
- The success of operations would depend on effective coordination with law enforcement and inspection agencies that

operate at the border and on federal highways, especially the Federal Police, Federal Highway Police, Revenue Service, and ANVISA.

- With no prospect of improvement in Venezuela's turbulent situation, the Brazilian government decided that the operation should proceed for a period of twelve months. Therefore, rotations and rest periods had to be stipulated.
- There was a need to reinforce training on cross-border crime and migration control, so the Federal Police and Revenue Service, the main beneficiaries of the increased military presence at the border, would be invited to help train deployed troops.

**Table. Task Organization of Task Force–Roraima**

Detachment	Constituent Troops	Tasks Assigned
<b>Border</b>	Troops from the 1st and 7th Jungle Infantry Battalions, 7th Army Military Police Battalion, and 12th Mechanized Cavalry Troop (reconnaissance teams)	Establishment of roadblocks and checkpoints near the border in Pacaraima, on BR-174 highway, and in Bonfim, on BR-401 highway; motorized and foot patrols along the border in the regions of Pacaraima and Bonfim
<b>Roadblock</b>	Troops from the 10th Jungle Field Artillery Group and 12th Mechanized Cavalry Troop	Establishment of deep area roadblocks and checkpoints on BR-174 and BR-401 (highways coming from Venezuela and Guyana)
<b>Command and Control</b>	Troops from the 1st Jungle Signals Battalion and 1st Jungle Signals Platoon	Installation, use, and maintenance of communications system in the area of operations
<b>Engineering</b>	Troops from the 6th Engineer Construction Battalion	Building lodging for the troops
<b>Logistics</b>	Troops from the 1st Jungle Logistics Battalion	Logistical support to troops deployed in the regions of Pacaraima and Bonfim
<b>Information</b>	Troops from the 4th Intelligence Company and the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade Intelligence Operations Group	Intelligence collection and analysis in the area of operations
<b>Dissemination</b>	Elements specialized in Public Affairs	Institutional dissemination of information about Operation Controle
<b>Psychological Operations</b>	Detachment from the 1st Psychological Operations Battalion	Execution of psychological operations campaigns, prioritizing three target audiences: our troops, the population of Boa Vista, and Venezuelan immigrants

(Table by author)



- The Brazilian population should be informed of all operations conducted by the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade in the context of Operation Controle so it could support such operations and recognize them as useful and necessary (in this regard, it was observed that psychological operations troops should reinforce border operations).
- The operations conducted should be guided by the principles of visibility and legality. While the former would provide the Brazilian population with a sense of security, the latter would encourage Brazilian service members to treat Venezuelan immigrants with dignity.

To accomplish the mission, the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade was reinforced with army military police, engineer, signals, psychological operations, and intelligence troops. Task Force–Roraima was designed based on both the brigade and reinforcement troops, and it was, in turn,

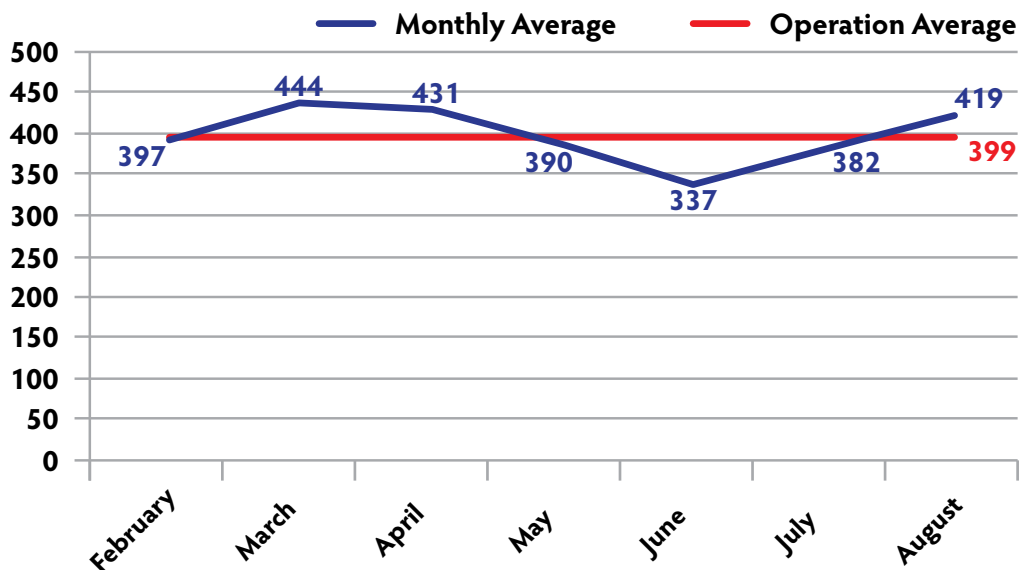
organized into detachments with specific tasks, as shown in the table (on page 11).<sup>31</sup>

Figure 7 shows the distribution of roadblocks and checkpoints within the area of operations. At the



(Google Earth image; modified by Michael Serravo, Army University Press)

**Figure 7. Checkpoints along BR-174 and BR-401 Highways**



(Figure by author)

**Figure 8. Average Number per Day of Venezuelans Crossing the Checkpoint on BR-174 in Pacaraima toward Boa Vista in 2018**

checkpoints, Task Force–Roraima personnel check immigrants’ papers to make sure they have entered Brazil legally. According to standard procedure, people, vehicles, and luggage are inspected in a joint effort with customs agents. Metal detectors and detection dogs have been critical in these inspection efforts.

From the beginning of Operation Controle, the approximately six-mile-long dry and porous border in the region of Pacaraima was acknowledged as a terrain feature that would complicate the operations. Area patrols by reconnaissance teams from the 12th Mechanized Cavalry Troop, combined with the use of drones, resulted in the arrest of thirty-two Venezuelans who were attempting to enter Brazil irregularly. Many were being used as “mules,” receiving about four U.S. dollars to enter Brazil illegally and transport smuggled goods.

A component of the Task Force–Roraima commander’s intent was to begin recording the number of Venezuelans going through the checkpoint on BR-174 in Pacaraima. To this end, they count the number of all Venezuelans crossing the checkpoint, whether they are traveling toward Boa Vista or toward Santa Elena de Uairén (in Venezuela). This tally, combined with numbers from the Humanitarian Logistics Task Force’s Reception and Identification Center, makes it possible to track the Venezuelan migration flow.

Between 20 February 2018, when Operation Controle began, and 14 August 2018, 70,217 Venezuelans went through the BR-174 checkpoint in Pacaraima. Therefore, on average, 399 Venezuelans cross that checkpoint daily, traveling toward Boa Vista but not necessarily remaining in Roraima’s capital. As may be seen in figure 8 (on page 12), the month of March shows the highest average for the operation (444 Venezuelans/day), while the month of June shows the lowest average (337 Venezuelans/day).<sup>32</sup>

While the daily average number of Venezuelans crossing the BR-174 checkpoint in Pacaraima toward southern Roraima is 399, the average number of those moving in the opposite direction is 116. In other words, according to the data compiled by Task Force–Roraima, for every four Venezuelans traveling toward Boa Vista, only one returns. This calculation is crucial, as it clearly shows the massive number of Venezuelans who have chosen not to return or to delay return to their country of origin.

## Final Considerations

Humanitarian operations are complex and represent a challenge for military forces. In the area of logistics, for instance, tremendous efforts are required during humanitarian crises and disasters to provide civilians with much-needed transportation, food, medical care, and lodging, among other services. And the military is the main executor of humanitarian logistics.<sup>33</sup>

The Brazilian armed forces, in coordination with the UN, government agencies, and other civil institutions, have been conducting humanitarian operations, receiving Venezuelans who are entering Brazil to flee the crisis in the Bolivarian Republic. The complexity of the situation has provided lessons for the Brazilian troops, who have sought to adapt their warfare logistics to meet the requirements of a mass population displacement due to a crisis in a neighboring country. It is worth noting here that the use of military forces in humanitarian operations such as Operation Acolhida is a striking feature of postmodern armies.<sup>34</sup>

In addition, it is critical to understand the problem of migration flow as an event that influences the stability of a country or region. Mass population displacements, especially those resulting from crises, alter border dynamics and cause social impacts on destination countries. Cross-border crime, for instance, tends to increase, while immigration and customs authorities may face constraints in carrying out their duties as defined in the Brazilian constitution.

In this respect, the Brazilian armed forces have also attempted, through Operation Controle, to mitigate the negative effects resulting from the growing influx of immigrants into Brazil from Venezuela. Troops have been repositioned or reinforced along the border, roadblocks and checkpoints have been established on cross-border highways, and border patrolling has been intensified with troops and drones.

Receiving Venezuelan immigrants in Brazil is an unprecedented mission for the Brazilian military, which previously only had contact with refugees and displaced persons abroad during missions under the auspices of the UN. There is certainly much to be done still, but the Brazilian military’s quick response, the quality of shelters set up within the urban perimeter, the tailored logistics in food delivery, and the provision of good-quality medical assistance all demonstrate the success of Operation Acolhida and Operation Controle. ■

## Notes

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26. List of participants: federal agencies (Receita Federal, Agência Brasileira de Inteligência, Força Nacional do Sistema Único de Saúde, and Vigilância do Trânsito Agropecuário Internacional); Roraima state agencies (state government, Companhia das Águas, Eletrobrás, Corpo de Bombeiros, Defesa Civil, and Coordenadoria Geral de Vigilância em Saúde); Boa Vista municipal agencies (city hall, Secretaria de Obras, Secretaria de Ação Social, and Guarda Municipal); law enforcement agencies (Polícia Federal, Polícia Rodoviária Federal, Força Nacional de Segurança Pública, and military [preventive] and civilian [investigative] police forces of the state of Roraima; international organizations (Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, United States Agency for International Development/Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance, International Organization for Migration, United Nations Population Fund, and Associazione Volontari per il Servizio Internazionale-Italy); nongovernmental organizations (Fraternidade Federação Humanitária Internacional, Pan American Development Foundation, Fraternidade sem Fronteiras, and Telecoms sans Frontières-France); and religious or philanthropic institutions (Catholic Church, Methodist Church, Seventh-day Adventist Church, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, International Red Cross, Rotary International, and Cáritas Brasileira).

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30. A unique feature of the 1st Jungle Infantry Brigade is the existence of special border platoons deployed along the Brazil-Venezuela and Brazil-Guyana borders, each border being approximately six hundred miles long.

31. This system of organizing troops to accomplish a particular mission is known as "task organization." Besides the detachments, Task Force–Roraima has a headquarters company for structuring the command post located in Boa Vista and troops from the 32nd Army Military Police Platoon, used to reinforce the Roadblock Detachment's roadblocks and checkpoints and to escort convoys.

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