

## Nearly 800 Venezuelans arriving in Brazil each day, many seeking asylum, UN refugee agency says

The United Nations refugee agency is scaling up its assistance to the rapidly growing number of Venezuelans arriving in Brazil, with daily arrivals averaging 800 in recent days amid the worsening political and socio-economic situation in their country.

“As the complex political and socio-economic situation in their country continues to worsen, [arriving Venezuelans are in more desperate need](#) of food, shelter and health care. Many also need international protection,” William Spindler, spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), told reporters in Geneva, Switzerland.

More than 52,000 Venezuelans have arrived in Brazil since the beginning of 2017. Of those, 25,000 are asylum seekers, 10,000 hold temporary resident visas, while the rest are working to regularizing their status, according to UNHCR. The Government’s latest estimates show that more than 800 Venezuelans are entering Brazil each day.

An estimated 40,000 have entered through the isolated northern state of Roraima and are living in Boa Vista, the state capital, Mr. Spindler added.

“With numbers growing, public services such as health care and sanitation are becoming stretched,” Mr. Spindler said.

Authorities recently declared a state of emergency and have allocated about \$58 million for emergency humanitarian assistance for people coming from Venezuela.

For its part, UNHCR has been working closely with the Brazilian Government to register Venezuelans and ensure all arrivals have proper documentation.

Once documented, Venezuelan asylum-seekers, as well as those with special stay permits, have the right to work, and access health, education and other basic services.

Venezuelans who are living on the streets are facing growing risks, including sexual exploitation and violence.

To mitigate those risks, two new shelters have been opened in Boa Vista over the last two weeks. UNHCR is managing the new shelters, which are each nearly at its capacity of 500 people. Priority is given to families with children, pregnant women, elderly people and others with specific needs.

UNHCR is also helping the Government identify Venezuelans willing to relocate voluntarily from Roraima to other parts of Brazil as relocation will provide

longer-term solutions and ease the strain on local communities in Roraima.

Two flights, operated by the Brazilian Air Force, are leaving Boa Vista this week. One left yesterday, flying 104 Venezuelans to Sao Paulo. The second is expected today to Sao Paulo and Cuiabá, the capital of the Mato Grosso state located in the centre of the country.

UNHCR has recently requested from donors an initial \$46 million to implement its regional response plan for Venezuelans in the main host countries, including Brazil. So far, this plan is only four per cent funded.

---

## [UN condemns attack that kills two 'Blue Helmets' in Mali](#)

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres and the Security Council have strongly condemned an attack on UN peacekeepers in Mali and underscored that such attacks may amount to war crimes under international law.

In a [statement](#) attribute to his spokesperson, Secretary-General Guterres stressed that such acts “only reinforce the commitment of the United Nations to support the people and the Government of Mali in their quest for peace.”

Two Chadian peacekeepers were killed and at least ten others injured when a camp of UN mission in Mali (known by its French acronym, MINUSMA) in Aguelhok, Kidal region, came under mortar attack at about 18:45 (local time) on 5 April.

[According](#) to the UN mission, immediate medical evacuations were organized and the security of the camp strengthened.

In a separate statement, the Security Council also denounced the attack and called on the Government of Mali to swiftly investigate the incident and bring the perpetrators to justice.

“Those responsible for these killings should be held accountable,” said the 15-member Security Council, urging all UN Member States, in accordance with their obligations under international law and relevant Council resolutions, “to cooperate actively with all relevant authorities in this regard.”

They also stressed that involvement in planning, directing, sponsoring or conducting attacks against MINUSMA peacekeepers constitutes a basis for sanctions designations pursuant to Security Council resolutions.

The UN mission in Mali is one of the most dangerous, with over 160 peacekeepers having [lost their lives](#) in the country. In late February, [four peacekeepers were killed](#) when their convoy came under attack in Mopti,

central Mali.

---

## [As Security Council debates Salisbury chemical attack, Russia calls accusation absurd; UK stands by charge](#)

During a [heated debate](#) in the United Nations Security Council on Thursday, Russia again rejected allegations levelled by the United Kingdom that Moscow was behind a deadly nerve-agent attack in the English city of Salisbury on 4 March.

Russia “is not responsible” for the attack in Salisbury, that country’s Ambassador to the UN, Vassily Nebenzia, said, stressing that the origin of the substance used in the incident has not been confirmed.

Today’s meeting, requested by Russia, took place amid expectations that the results of tests of samples collected from individuals exposed to a nerve agent in Salisbury will be known by early next week.

The United Kingdom sent the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons ([OPCW](#)) samples of the nerve agent within days of the incident, which left Sergei Skripal and his daughter, Yulia, hospitalized.

After the incident, the UK wrote a letter to the UN Security Council, stating that it was “highly likely” that Russia was behind the incident using deadly nerve-agent Novichok. At the Security Council meeting requested by the UK on 14 March, Russia – a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention ([CWC](#)) – firmly denied the allegations.

The Convention, which came into force in 1997, outlaws the production, stockpiling, and use of [chemical weapons](#) and their [precursors](#).

At today’s meeting, Mr. Nebenzia accused the UK of engaging in a “theatre of the absurd,” and wondered why Russia would want to wage such an attack, eight years after Mr. Skripal was granted amnesty, and before the Russian presidential elections and the 2018 World Cup soccer event.

Further, the Russian delegate said that Russia does not have a copyright on Novichok and that line of toxic substances has been developed in many countries, including the United States and the UK.

“Yet people are demanding that the Russian Federation acknowledged its guilt,” he said.

His delegation has prepared a draft statement for the Council that will be a

litmus test as to whether the UK and its allies are true to their words; rejecting that test will be a confirmation of their “dirty games,” he added.

At an OPCW Executive Council special meeting on Wednesday, Russia proposed a joint investigation with the UK, which was rejected by the UK and its allies.



UN Photo/Eskinder Debebe

Karen Pierce, Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to the United Nations, addressing the Security Council meeting to consider a letter dated 13 March 2018 from the United Kingdom to the Council regarding the 4 March chemical attack in Salisbury.

Speaking after Mr. Nebenzia was UK Ambassador to UN, Karen Pierce, who said that her Government’s investigations into the use of chemical weapons involved 250 police detectives interviewing more than 500 witnesses, supported by a range of experts and partners that have gone through more than 5,000 hours of video footage.

A military-grade nerve agent – a weapon of mass destruction – has been used in an attempt to kill civilians on British soil in a reckless fashion, she said.

Telling the meeting that she would “take no lectures” from Moscow, Ms. Pierce said: “There is one country, Russia, which is playing a fast and loose with our collective security and the international institutions that protect us.”

Noting that Yulia is now able to communicate and is getting better, Ms. Pierce said that the UK Government received a request from the Russian consulate for access to Yulia, which was already conveyed to her.

---

## **Burundi: Security Council urges dialogue amid deteriorating political and humanitarian situation**

Expressing deep concern over the slow pace of the inter-Burundian dialogue and the lack of engagement by the Government, the United Nations Security Council called on all stakeholders, in particular the authorities to commit to the dialogue and reach an agreement ahead of the 2020 elections.

“Dialogue is the only viable process for a sustainable political settlement in Burundi,” underscored the Security Council in a statement read-out by its President at a formal meeting Thursday afternoon.

In the statement, the Council also “strongly” condemned human rights violations committed in the country, including extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, arbitrary arrests and detentions, forced disappearance, torture and harassment and intimidation of human rights defenders and journalists.

The Security Council also reiterated its “regret” at the Government’s decision to suspend all cooperation and collaboration with the Office of the UN High Commission for Human Rights (OHCHR) and called for a swift solution through dialogue between the UN human rights arm and Burundi in order to enable OHCHR to fully resume its mandated activities, including its monitoring and reporting functions.

Also in the statement, the 15-member Council voiced concerns over the continued worsening of the humanitarian situation in the country and, in the context of Burundians seeking refuge in neighbouring countries, called on those Governments to ensure that the return of the refugees is voluntary, based on informed decisions and in safety and dignity.

According to estimates, some 180,000 people remain displaced within Burundi and more than 429,000 have sought refuge across its borders.

Following the July 2015 election in which Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza won a disputed third term, violence broke out among state forces, suspected opposition members, and civilians.

---

## **UN chief applauds Sierra Leoneans for**

# peaceful elections; congratulates new President

United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres took note of the announcement by the National Electoral Commission on 4 April of the final results of the presidential run-off election in Sierra Leone, the UN Spokesman said Thursday.

“He congratulates Mr. Julius Maada Bio on his election as the next President of the Republic of Sierra Leone and all the candidates for their contributions to the successful outcome of the electoral process,” said Stéphane Dujarric.

“He also applauds the people of Sierra Leone for the sense of responsibility that they have demonstrated in [successfully completing the elections in a peaceful manner](#),” added the spokesperson.

The UN Spokesman said that Mr. Guterres commended the efforts of “the national, regional and international electoral observation teams” as well as those of his “Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohammed Ibn Chambas.”

According to media reports, the election went to a second round after neither of the candidates achieved the required 55 per cent of the ballot in the first round.

As some African outlets have reported alleged electoral malpractices, the Secretary-General appeals for continued calm and stresses the need for all stakeholders to seek redress of any grievances that could arise through established legal means.

“The Secretary-General reiterates the support of the United Nations to the new Government in consolidating peace and pursuing sustainable development,” the Spokesman concluded.