

# *Brazil retains 50 respirators purchased by Paraguay*

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Asuncion, April 15 (RHC)-- Paraguay's government has denounced that their neighbors in Brazil retained 50 respirators purchased by the Ministry of Health to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

"They were retained but I don't know if the measure invoked by the Brazilian government is a law or a presidential decree," Paraguay's Health Minister Julio Mazzoleni told a local TV channel. The Paraguayan health official added that now "other non-traditional routes" are being sought for the acquisition of equipment and supplies to care for those infected by the coronavirus.

Mazzoleni explained that "everything that's associated with medicine in terms of equipment is retained in Brazil as their companies cannot sell their products out of the country anymore." The Brazilian supplier was forced to refund the Paraguayan government.

Meanwhile, members from MERCOSUR's Parliament rejected the decision by Jair Bolsonaro's administration, calling it "a seizure and abuse by Brazil, violating human rights," as "these types of equipment were acquired to respond to the needs of the COVID-19 pandemic in Paraguay."

The lawmakers reminded Bolsonaro's government that because Paraguay is land-locked, they depend solely on the MERCOSUR partners for essential imports, especially now amid the pandemic.

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