

# *Colombia prevents Venezuelans from returning to their country*

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Caracas, April 28 (RHC)-- Colombian authorities have prevented nearly 12,000 Venezuelans from returning to their country, leaving them stranded on their side of the border. Colombian President Ivan Duque's government also is not allowing another group of Venezuelans to cross that country's border into Ecuador.

Venezuelans stranded at both border crossings decided to return home due to the health crisis caused by the COVID-19. According to Colombian immigration authorities, not allowing the border crossing is a measure to avoid crowding at exit points.

Until recently, Colombian authorities had led migrants to believe that it was Venezuela that was preventing them from returning. But Colombia had to desist from that farce. "This is how the protocol set up with the mayors and governors is established. We must prevent agglomerations at the exit points," stated Juan Francisco Espinosa, director of Migration Colombia.

"Colombia is willing to help Venezuelans, but in a responsible way," Espinosa explained in a video released by his office. Those who wish to return voluntarily will be able to do so, as long as they comply with the established procedure. "And those who don't comply will have their trip suspended until they do."

Since March 25, over 12,000 have returned to Venezuela in some 300 buses. Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro reported over the weekend that more than 20,000 Venezuelans have returned, amid the current coronavirus pandemic.

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