

Brazil's Bolsonaro says he will not take coronavirus vaccine

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Brasilia, November 29 (RHC)-- Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro says that he would not take a coronavirus vaccine, the latest in a series of statements he has made expressing scepticism towards vaccination programmes that many hope will bring an end to the pandemic.

In statements broadcast live over multiple social media platforms, the right-wing leader added that Congress was unlikely to require Brazilians to take a vaccine.

Brazil has the second-highest number of coronavirus deaths in the world, and for months, Bolsonaro has played down the seriousness of the pandemic despite being diagnosed with the virus in July.

"I'm telling you, I'm not going to take it. It's my right," he said.

Many countries around the world have made masks mandatory in public, and the WHO has said masks should be worn in public areas where there is a risk of widespread community transmission and physical

distancing is difficult, such as on public transport, in shops or other closed settings.

In his latest comments, Bolsonaro expressed scepticism about the effectiveness of mask-wearing, implying there was little conclusive evidence that masks stem the transmission of the virus.

Scientists have shown that masks prevent droplets and aerosols from being passed into the air, while the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention stresses their importance in preventing the spread of the disease by people who do not have symptoms and do not know they have the virus.

The Brazilian president has repeatedly said that Brazilians will not be required to be vaccinated when a coronavirus vaccine becomes widely available. In October, he joked on Twitter that vaccination would be required only for his dog.

He has also touted the unproven anti-malarial hydroxychloroquine as a treatment for the virus, saying he took the drug when he was diagnosed with COVID-19 in July. That same month, the WHO dropped hydroxychloroquine from its large-scale treatment trials because it did not reduce death rates in people being treated in hospital for the disease.

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