

*Government of Venezuela offers help to Brazil recover from heavy rains and flooding*

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Caracas, May 5 (RHC)-- The Government of President Nicolás Maduro and the people of Venezuela expressed their solidarity and offered support to the authorities and citizens of Brazil in the face of the effects of the intense rains in Rio Grande do Sul, which have caused damage and victims in recent hours, reported this Friday the Venezuelan Foreign Minister Yván Gil.

"We offer support to the people and Government of Brazil in the face of the effects of extreme rains in Rio Grande do Sul, which have caused damage and victims in recent hours," wrote the Venezuelan Foreign Minister on his account on the social network X.

The Brazilian state Civil Protection agency reported on Friday that heavy rains in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, in the south of that country, caused the death of 37 people and 74 more are missing. Record flooding destroyed cities and forced thousands of people from their homes.

This has been the fourth environmental disaster in a year after the floods of July, September and November 2023, which killed 75 people.

According to Brazil's Geological Survey, flooding across the state has surpassed what occurred in 1941. The Civil Protection agency reported that water in some cities reached its highest level since records began nearly 150 years ago.

On Thursday, the dam of a hydroelectric power plant between Bento Goncalves and Cotipora partially collapsed, resulting in the flooding of entire towns in the Taquari River valley, such as Lajeado and Estrela. In Feliz, located 80 kilometers from Porto Alegre, the state capital, the enormous flooding of a river destroyed a bridge that connected the city with neighboring Linha Nova.

Across the state, operators reported power, communications and water outages. According to the Civil Defense of Rio Grande do Sul, tens of thousands of people were evicted, of which 8,168 are in public shelters and another 24,080 in the homes of relatives or friends.

Marcelo Seluchi, chief meteorologist at the National Center for Natural Disaster Surveillance and Alerts, said on Brazilian public television on Friday that the rains began on Monday and are expected to continue until Saturday.

On Thursday night, the state governor, Eduardo Leite, informed the gauchos, who reside in the state, about the prolongation of the rains and floods. The situation in Porto Alegre is expected to worsen, he indicated.

“As a human being, I feel internally devastated, as do all gauchos,” he said. “But as governor, I remain unwavering and guarantee that we will not fail. We are doing everything with focus, attention and discipline to ensure that we do everything within our power.”

El Niño, a naturally occurring periodic climate phenomenon that warms surface waters in the equatorial Pacific region, has had an impact on weather conditions throughout South America. El Niño has caused historic droughts in northern Brazil and heavy rains in the south.

The effects of El Niño have been especially severe this year, and the Amazon region has experienced an unprecedented drought. According to scientists, climate change caused by humanity is increasing the frequency of extreme weather events.

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