



Migration Profile

BRAZIL

A. Executive Summary

Brazil is the largest country in South and Central America, and is recognized as an example for its great effort to receiving and integrating refugees and migrantsⁱ. Even during the COVID-19 pandemic (being one of the most impacted areas worldwideⁱⁱ), the state continued relocating thousands of Venezuelans to rebuild their livesⁱⁱⁱ. In addition, Brazil has become the home to many migrants coming from neighbouring countries, and other African and Asian countries, looking for job opportunities and better living conditions^{iv}.

However, social and economic inequality along with structural poverty have also triggered emigration of Brazilians to other countries, such as the United States. Environmental problems as well have caused internal displacements, especially in the North and South Regions, while in the Southeast part of the country the main cities are located, which have better economic and environmental conditions. Most of the commercial activity is concentrated in this area, mainly industries and tourism. In recent decades, a redistribution of domestic migration flows has taken place, producing economic take-off in other parts of the country. Thanks to the efforts made to enhance communication and transportation, pendular migration is a widespread phenomenon, and people reside in their own cities but commute daily to capitals and big metropolises in order to work.

In 2020, Brazil's GDP amounted to US\$ 1,444,733.26^v, experiencing a growth annual rate of -4,06% mainly because of the COVID-19 pandemic^{vi}. Foreign direct investment (FDI) decreased from 4.1% of the GDP in 2018 to 2.61% in 2020^{vii}. The inflation rate in 2020 was 4%, but it has been lowered to 3.75% in 2021, and to 3.5% in 2022^{viii}.

Country Profile

I. Basic Information

Brazil is the largest country in South America, with a total surface area of 8,515,770.00 sq. km^{ix}. The country is divided into 26 federal states and has a wide biodiversity, Amazonia being the biggest tropical forest on the planet.

Brazil has a population of approximately 214,507,000 inhabitants^x, and the official language is Portuguese^{xi}. There are 896,917 indigenous people distributed in 305 different ethnic groups, such as the Tikúna, the Guarani, Caingangue, Macuxi, and Terena^{xii}. The main religion in

Brazil is Christianity (88.9%, being 65% Catholics and 23% Protestants). There are other religious groups, such as Folk Religions (2.8%), Buddhists, Jews, and approximately 7.9% of them are unaffiliated^{xiii}.

II. International and Internal Migration

Brazil's economy and weather make it the main destination country for many migrants coming from South and Central America. Recently there has been an increase of Venezuelan immigrants into the region.

Internal migration mostly occurs in the Southeast region of the country, affecting especially the indigenous communities that look for better living conditions, and people living in the Northeast often fleeing from droughts and other environmental disasters. In the past, rural exodus was the main emigration reason, while today internal movements are mostly linked to the redistribution of migrants and pendular migration.

In 2019 there were 986,919 immigrants in Brazil, i.e. 0,46% of the total population. 623,598 (63%) were men, and 363,321 women^{xiv}. Most immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers come from Venezuela (172,306), Haiti (149,085), and other bordering countries like Bolivia and Colombia^{xv}. In recent years, many refugees fleeing the political and economic crisis in Venezuela and Haiti have mostly arrived by land at Roraima. Haitians usually follow a different but longer route through Panama, Ecuador and Peru, landing finally at the border cities of Tabatinga (Amazonas) and Assis (Acre). The other migrants are instead located in the larger cities of the Southeast region (44%), mainly in Sao Paulo.

Migrants face many difficulties during their displacement and arrival at the border, such as violence, drug trafficking, theft, and human trafficking^{xvi}. Because of the health emergency crisis due to the COVID-19 pandemic, their vulnerability conditions have increased. The main problems faced by immigrants in Brazil are related to the labour market, and their main occupations are production line feeders, cleaners, food-services assistants and butchers^{xvii}.

Immigrants also experience major drawbacks related to their limited access to some essential services like education, health, and also political participation^{xviii}. They suffer discrimination due to social mistrust and have difficulties integrating, especially because they do not speak the local language. There is still a very low index of labour participation for women (even though they are 48% of the Venezuelan migrant population)^{xix}.

Even indigenous communities experience discrimination and occupational segregation. They must adapt to deep cultural changes in urban areas, bringing them to abandon their way of community life and threatening their identity. They usually live in poor and suburban neighbourhoods, work in low-paid occupations and have documentation problems that threaten their integration and indigenous identity^{xx}. In the state of Roraima, with a high density of indigenous communities, both migrants and refugees, as well as the indigenous communities face many challenges, especially related to their living conditions, where overpopulation and scarcity of food and water are some of the main issues.

III. Emigration and Skilled Migration

In addition to being the main destination for many Central and South American immigrants, Brazil is also an emigrant country, with 1,745,339^{xxi} emigrants in 2019 (0.83% of the total population)^{xxii}, where women were 1,007,396 people (57.71%). Brazilians mostly migrate to the USA (26.35%), Japan (10.87%), Portugal (7.82%), Italy (6.88%), and Spain (6.50%)^{xxiii}.

It is important to highlight the different levels of education depending on the destination country. Migrants moving to South American countries like Paraguay usually have a lower level of education^{xxiv}. Skilled emigration, however, increases when it comes to destinations such as the USA, Japan, and European countries^{xxv}. Since 2020, the worsening of the economic situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic increased emigration of skilled and unskilled Brazilians to the USA^{xxvi}.

IV. Forced Migrants (Internally Displaced Persons, Asylum Seekers, Refugees, and Climate Displaced Persons)

In 2019 there were 82,552 asylum applications^{xxvii}, and 40.52% of them were evaluated (33,453). In total 25.8% (21,304) were accepted, while 0.7% were rejected (585)^{xxviii}. Most of the asylum applications (65%) were from Venezuelans (53,713). Other countries of origin for refugees are Haiti, Cuba, China, Bangladesh, Angola, and Syria^{xxix}. The major increase has been determined by Venezuelan asylum seekers, who had only 2,601 asylum applications in 2016, and 61,391 in 2018^{xxx}. Most refugees accepted in 2019 were men between the age of 25 and 39, and mainly Catholic.

Refugees from Venezuela travel by bus for 1 or 2 days to arrive in the state of Roraima, settling then in the cities of Pacaraima and Boa Vista. To accommodate all of these people, 11 official shelters, administered by the Armed Forces and UNHCR, were created in Boa Vista and 2 in Pacaraima. According to local authorities and humanitarian agencies, at least 1,500 Venezuelans in Boa Vista are homeless, and among them almost 500 are under 18 years old^{xxxi}.

Haitians mostly arrive by bus, taxi or on foot in the cities of Tabatinga (Amazonas) and Assis (Acre), after a long and economically costly trip. The visa for humanitarian reasons, the request of refugee status and the authorisations granted by the National Immigration Council are the main channels for Haitians to be allowed into the national territory^{xxxii}. There is a high percentage of refugee relocation into capitals and metropolises in the interior. Most Haitians establish themselves in cities like Belo Horizonte, Curitiba, Porto Velho and São Paulo^{xxxiii}.

Refugees face vulnerable conditions while travelling, encountering problems such as theft and human trafficking. Also, in the different refugee routes the “coyotes” charge immigrants great amounts of money. Once in the host country, refugees encounter difficulties such as overcrowded shelters, bad sanitary conditions and poor response to their legal assistance and support. For instance, at their arrival at Brasilia and Acre, there are long lines and an administrative collapse in the shelters^{xxxiv}. Moreover, children’s lack of documentation limits their access to public education. Adolescents are also at great risk in an environment conducive to gang recruitment, drug trafficking and labour exploitation.^{xxxv}

In 2019 there were around 358,000 internally displaced persons, due to different disasters^{xxxvi} (illegal mining in the Amazonian lands, climate change, deforestation, hydroelectric plants

and fires). These adverse situations also entail major environmental and cultural threats to the indigenous communities. In 2021 there were estimated to be approximately 20,000 illegal gold miners in the Yanomoni area, Brazil's largest protected indigenous reserve^{xxxvii}. In the Northeast region droughts and economic instability force people to migrate to the more secure regions of the Southeast.

V. Victims of Human Trafficking

Brazil is ranked tier 2 in the 2021 Trafficking in Person Report, since it does not meet all the TVPA's minimum standards for mitigating trafficking activities, although it is making significant efforts to do so^{xxxviii}. The Ministry of Health reported in 2019 61 adult and 36 child trafficking victims; more than 50% are of Afro-Brazilian or mixed race^{xxxix}. However, between 2018 and 2020, the police reported a total of 203 victims of human trafficking: 129 men, 42 women, 32 under 18 years old. There is a lack of coordination among state actors, and trafficking cases remain under-represented. There are also great difficulties to detect cases of sexual exploitation.

Victims of Human trafficking mostly come from Paraguay, Bolivia, South Africa and Venezuela. Traffickers recruit them via online advertisements and social media platforms offering fraudulent job opportunities, and afterwards exploit them sexually in major cities like Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro^{xl}.

During the lockdown, traffickers present in the Amazon changed their activity patterns by sending child sex trafficking victims to the perpetrators' private quarters or other specific locations, instead of the usual places where children were sold to perpetrators. Traffickers sexually exploit children along Brazil's highways, including BR-386, BR-116, and BR-285. Child sex tourism remains a major problem, especially in resort and coastal areas^{xli}.

The most problematic areas for human trafficking in Brazil are the borders. Recent research by UNODC on trafficking in persons in the Venezuelan migratory flow identified ongoing investigations and legal proceedings concerning trafficking situations with Venezuelans for the purposes of servitude (forced begging) and labour exploitation. This report also pointed out other possible forms of exploitation such as sexual, illegal adoption of newborns (especially in Roraima), servile marriage and cases of trafficking "mules" drugs^{xlii}.

The main issues in Brazil regarding trafficking in persons are: insufficient legal action, impunity and lack of effective public action. Most of the punishments for forced labour traffickers are only administrative penalties, while victims are usually criminalised for the actions committed during their trafficking situation^{xliii}. Shelter services are inadequate and vary, depending on the area. Some states do not have municipal anti-trafficking offices and place victims in shelters with migrants, homeless or victims of domestic violence.

Brazil has developed an extensive training to identify victims and provide assistance to slave labour victims^{xliv}. In 2019 all 942 victims identified had access a three-month unemployment insurance^{xlv}. In 2020, the government reported identifying and providing protection services to 494 potential trafficking victims. Furthermore, law 13.344 mandated by the government provides victims with temporary shelter, legal, social and health assistance, and protection

against revictimization. The government increasing efforts led to the conviction of three sex traffickers and started the conviction process for six labour traffickers.

VI. National Legal Framework

The current migratory legislation in Brazil entails Law no. 13,445^{xlvi} and Decree 9,199/2017^{xlvii}. They regulate the rights and duties of migrants and visitors, the entry and stay in the country, and establish the main guidelines related to public policies for emigration^{xlviii}.

Through Law no. 9,474, the process for the implementation of the 1951 UN Refugee Statute was established^{xliv}. The Decree no. 3,768^{li} and Decree no. 9,277^{li} regulate the identification of asylum seekers and the Provisional Document of National Migration Registry. Law no. 13,344 frames the different activities related to human trafficking^{lii}.

AS part of MERCOSUR, in the migration field, Brazil enables free movement of people among member and associate states, equal working conditions, family reunification and access to education. Brazil is also a member state of the Organisation of American States (OAS), fostering regional cooperation and integration.

As for the international scope, Brazil is a signatory to the 1949 ILO Migration for Employment Convention^{liii}. It is a member state of the 1951 Refugee Convention and its 1967 Protocol^{liv}, as well as the Cartagena Declaration of Refugees and the Protection of People Fleeing Armed Conflict and Other Situations of Violence in Latin America^{lv}. In 1999 it signed the Refugee Resettlement Program with the UNHCR^{lvi}. It also signed the 1954 Convention relating to the Status of Stateless Persons^{lvii}, and the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Stateless^{lviii}.

In 1981, Brazil ratified the 1969 International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination. It has also signed the UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime^{lix} and the Palermo Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons^{lx}.

VII. Main actors

The State

The National Committee for Migration (Law no. 6,815 of 1980) formulates the national immigration policy, coordinates labour immigration activities, and promotes investigations related to labour immigration. Its members belong to multiple ministerial organisms (Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Economics, the Ministry of Education, the Federal Police and the Ministry of Science and Technology)^{lxi}.

The National Committee for Refugees (CONARE) is a collegiate body, linked to the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, which deliberates the requests for recognition of refugee status in Brazil and establishes the procedures for applications, identification, and requirements of asylum. Its competences and composition are regulated by Law no. 9,474, of July 22, 1997^{lxii}.

International Organisations

The main international organisations dealing with migration in Brazil are the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). They have been supporting the Government in policy and program design, case

identification, referral and screening, pre-departure preparation procedures, medical checks, travel assistance, reception and integration activities^{lxiii}.

UNHCR is responsible for identifying refugees in need of resettlement and referring them to host sites^{lxiv}. This bilateral collaboration falls within one of the key objectives of the Global Compact on Refugees. IOM has developed health protocols and conducted medical assessments to identify and address pre-existing health conditions and ensure that refugees are protected during travel. IOM has also been responsible for conducting a three-day pre-departure cultural orientation, tailored to the special needs of refugees, to help them develop the knowledge and skills to facilitate their reintegration^{lxv}.

Likewise, the International Labour Organisation (ILO) regulates labour migration and migrants' access to labour markets and decent working conditions^{lxvi}.

In terms of EU action, the EU has reached diplomatic agreements with Brazil to deal with the arrival of Venezuelan refugees, mobilise donor funds and raise awareness about the crisis situation^{lxvii}. Furthermore, the EU has provided technical assistance to Brazil for the protection of Venezuelan migrant children^{lxviii}.

As for UNICEF, it creates spaces for intercultural dialogue with indigenous people providing guidelines for their care and access to services. In addition, UNICEF cooperates with national and local institutions linked to migration regularisation, health and education ensuring that assistance takes into account the cultural peculiarities of beneficiaries. In addition to the humanitarian emergency of the flow from Venezuela, UNICEF is involved in an important strategy to support the indigenous peoples of the Brazilian Amazon in the prevention of the COVID-19 virus^{lxix}.

NGOs and Other Organisations

In the Amazonas, CARE (*Centro de Apoio e Referência a Refugiados e Migrantes*) works in documentation, legal assistance and employment opportunities. It also offers Portuguese and professional courses and emergency financial assistance to the most vulnerable groups. The *Hermanitos* organisation develops similar activities in the region.

In Rio de Janeiro, the State University of Rio de Janeiro and the Federal Fluminense University (UFF) provide legal and mental health assistance and teach the Portuguese language.

In Roraima, due to the amount of refugees, there are also some associations such as *Fraternidade – Federação Humanitária Internacional* (FFHI) whose work focuses on education, first aid (psychology and trauma), reception, employability and legal assistance.

In São Paulo, Adus – *Instituto de Reintegração do Refugiado*, focuses on employability, legal assistance, teaching Portuguese and helping with documentation^{lxx}.

The Catholic Church

Catholic organisations play an essential role in assisting immigrants and refugees in Brazil, building a bridge between the State and the civil society.

Catholic institutions in Brazil do not only offer humanitarian aid, but also represent the migrant community in government agencies dedicated to this field. Caritas' connection with the Brazilian government and its integration with local NGOs exemplifies this fact^{lxxi}.

In that way, Caritas does not work exclusively on the reception of refugees, but also as one of the administrative entities working within the institutions to uphold refugees' and migrants' rights. Furthermore, Caritas is in charge of the interviews in refugee applications, and deliberates the eligibility of these requests. In relation to welcoming refugees and immigrants, Caritas is present in several places in Brazil. In São Paulo it runs the Reception Centre for Refugees (CAR). The principal role of Caritas is to provide legal, psychological, and social assistance, to help request documentations, and to cover basic needs (health, housing and food) for migrant and refugee communities. The centre has likewise several partnerships with local NGOs for the integration of these people into society through projects that promote learning Portuguese, technical specialisation for their insertion in the labour market, and access to education.^{lxxii}.

In the city of São Paulo, the organisation *Missão Paz* (run by the Scalabrinian Congregation) carries out important activities related to migration. Its core mission is to advocate for the rights of migrants. Its projects range from reception into the *Casa do Migrante* shelter to legal assistance, job placement, training and health and social services. Furthermore, the Sisters of the Holy Cross worked with the Pastoral for Marginalised Women serving food and providing other services for homeless people in Sao Paulo during the grave crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic^{lxxiii}.

The *Serviço Jesuíta para Migrantes e Refugiados* (SJMR) focuses on assistance to migrants and refugees and has similar structures to the aforementioned organisations, with labour and social integration projects and legal, psychological and educational assistance. One of their main offices is located in Roraima. In recent years, they have played a key role in welcoming Venezuelan refugees, working together with other institutions, NGOs and UNHCR.

Likewise, at Pacaraima at the border with Venezuela the Sisters of San Jose of Chambery provide temporary shelter for vulnerable groups^{lxxiv}. As for the Consolata Missionary Sisters, they operate in Boa Vista offering food and other basic needs to hundreds of Venezuelan refugees daily^{lxxv}. The Scalabrinian Congregations have further carried out education, health, shelter and social care services, in the provinces of Cristo Rei and Caxias do Sul^{lxxvi}.

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D. Endnotes

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