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Venezuela Accepts Shipment of Russian Humanitarian Aid — Reports

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Fernando Vergara / AP / TASS

Venezuela on Wednesday received a shipment of humanitarian aid sent from Russia, including medicine and medical equipment, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency reported, citing a Russian diplomatic source.

Russia has sided with Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro in his stand-off with opposition leader Juan Guaido, who declared himself interim president late last month. Maduro retains control of state institutions including the military, but most Western countries, including the United States, have recognized Guaido as Venezuela's president.

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Earlier this week, Maduro had said that Russia was scheduled to deliver 300 tons of humanitarian aid to the country.

"On Wednesday, 300 tons of Russian humanitarian aid will be legally delivered to the international airport of Caracas," Maduro was cited as saying at a meeting with scientists on Monday.

Venezuela had earlier this month blocked a bridge on its border with Colombia to stop trucks carrying U.S. humanitarian aid, including high-protein foods, from entering the country. Venezuelan officials had said that the aid was a U.S. attempt to put pressure on the Maduro regime.

On Monday, British billionaire Richard Branson announced in a video posted on YouTube that he was organizing a charity concert in Cúcuta, Colombia, near the Venezuelan-Colombian border, to raise funds for "much-needed medical help" for Venezuela.

Branson said that Guaidó had asked him to help organize the event, planned for Friday, and said it would include international and regional artists.

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