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Venezuela Sending 16 Tonnes of Aid to Gaza

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Venezuela will send 16 tonnes of humanitarian aid to the Gaza Strip, following a donation drive by the country's foreign affairs ministry.

The government is pitching in 10 tonnes of supplies, while the rest are donations from the Venezuelan public, collected by the ministry during a public appeal for Gazans in need last week.

Foreign Minister Elias Jaua urged Venezuelans to hand in supplies to the foreign ministry headquarters in Caracas.

"To date, [the appeal for donations] has collected six tons of medical/surgical supplies, nonperishable food and blankets, which will be sent in the coming days to the Palestinian people," Jaua stated in a press conference in Cairo on Wednesday.

The donations will be delivered to the besieged Gaza strip with the aid of Egyptian authorities, Jaua stated.

The foreign minister also said the Venezuelan government has pledged to send 242,000 barrels of oil to Gaza annually to aid in reconstruction efforts. He said the fuel will be used to rebuild schools, hospitals, public utilities and private homes destroyed during Israel's latest offensive against Gaza.

During his visit to Egypt yesterday for bilateral talks, he also visited a hospital treating victims of

Israeli bombing. Jaua said the Venezuelan government had requested Egypt's collaboration to send the supplies to Gaza, and the country will now help to guarantee that the flights can arrive in the region, he said.

Jaua demanded a "free and independent" Palestinian state, and condemned Israel's treatment of Palestinians.

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