

# *Forest Fire Cuts Power in Caracas*

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Caracas, March 26 (RHC) – A forest fire on a mountain overlooking Caracas has knocked out power to the downtown areas of the Venezuelan capital.

According to reports released on Wednesday, the fire broke out in Waraira Repano National Park on Monday afternoon and destroyed electricity transmission lines. During the night, a second fire also started, leaving parts of the center of the city in the dark.

Officials suspected that the blaze was set deliberately, with Venezuela's Electricity Minister Jesse Chacon saying: "The way in which this happened makes us suppose that it was provoked." Local firefighters chief William Martinez said the fire was "almost entirely extinguished," adding that it may have been intentional.

Government institutions and public property have been continuously vandalized during the political unrest that erupted in Venezuela in mid-February. At least 35 people have been killed in the violence, unleashed by US-backed opposition sectors that aim to forcefully overthrow the government of President Nicolas Maduro.



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