

# *Fire at Venezuelan National Electoral Council was intentional, officials say*

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Caracas, March 12 (RHC)-- A fire reported on March 7 at a warehouse of Venezuela's National Electoral Council (CNE) was a terrorist act aimed at destabilizing the electoral system, Interior Minister Néstor Reverol said.

Speaking at a press conference in Caracas on Thursday, the minister said that the arson was committed intentionally to destroy the CNE's operational structures to sabotage future electoral processes.

According to figures released by the authorities, the fire caused the loss of 49,400 voting machines, 49,300 fingerprint authentication systems, and more than 580 computers of the Civil Registry, among other equipment.

Reverol said that during the field investigations, three ignition points were identified on the perimeter of the damaged facilities, located in the state of Miranda.

The intention of terrorist elements was also demonstrated in the use of fuel to accelerate the spread of flames. Two containers with remains of inflammable material were found near the warehouse.

The minister denounced that the fire was planned by sectors hostile to the Bolivarian Government, and coincided with the process of review and replacement of parts and equipment promoted by the CNE to ensure the proper functioning of the system in the upcoming elections.

Minister Reverol announced the formation of a multidisciplinary team for the investigation of the fire that will be under the command of Police Commissioner Douglas Rico, director of the Scientific, Criminal, and Criminalistic Investigations Corps, and will be supervised by the National Anti-Terrorism Corps.

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