

# *Venezuela sentences two U.S. mercenaries to 20 years in prison*

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Caracas, August 9 (RHC)-- After admitting to having committed the crimes of conspiracy, association (to commit a crime), illicit trafficking in weapons of war and terrorism, two U.S. citizens -- Luke Alexander Denman and Airan Berry, aged 34 and 41 respectively -- were sentenced to 20 years in prison in Venezuela.

Venezuelan Attorney General Tarek William Saab announced the sentence on his Twitter account, referring to the failed armed incursion into the country last May and also posting photographs of vehicles, weapons and identity documents of the convicted men.

Denman and Berry are among dozens of people arrested for an armed raid off the coast of northern Venezuela, which the Nicolás Maduro government said it foiled on May 3rd, killing at least eight. Caracas says the operation was supported by the United States and neighboring Colombia.

According to the Venezuelan government, the plan sought the "capture, detention and removal" of President Nicolás Maduro and the installation of opposition leader Juan Guaidó as president.

Guaidó was accused of having hired the mercenaries with funds blocked by White House sanctions against Venezuela and its state oil company PDVSA. The Venezuelan government has shown that the opposition leader signed a contract with a private security and defense company called Silvercorp USA.

Denman and Berry were employed by that company, founded by retired U.S. military officer Jordan Goudreau, a former Green Beret.

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