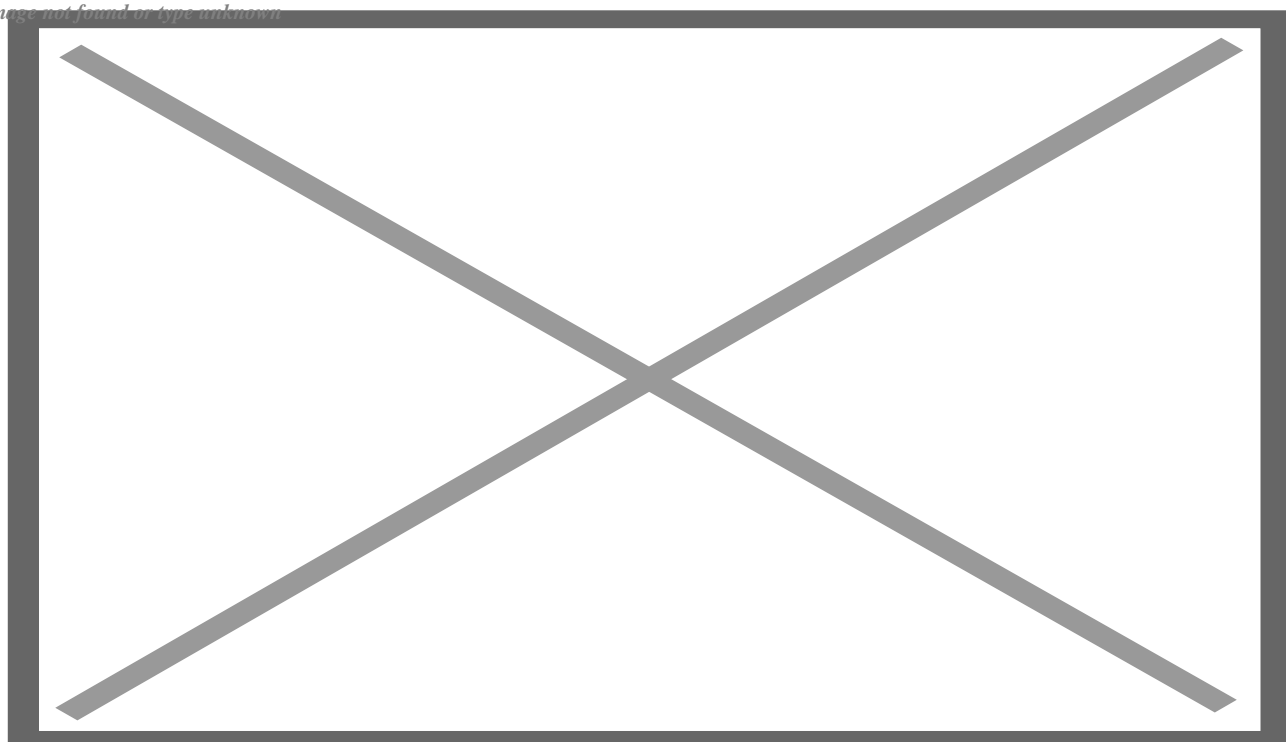


12 crew members of plane retained in Argentina arrive in Venezuela

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?The 12 crew members who were authorized to leave Argentina after the Venezuelan plane was detained in that country arrived on Friday at the Simón Bolívar de Maiquetía international airport in the state of La Guaira.?

Caracas, September 16 (RHC)-- The 12 crew members who were authorized to leave Argentina after the Venezuelan plane was detained in that country arrived on Friday at the Simón Bolívar de Maiquetía international airport in the state of La Guaira.

"We are celebrating the arrival of our first 12 crew members of our Emtrasur airplane (a subsidiary of the state-owned Conviasa). They are an example of ethics, strength and revolutionary struggle that they have endured and here they are arriving with the joy of all Venezuelans when they arrive to their country, happy to set foot on Venezuelan soil," expressed the Minister of Transportation and president of the state-owned Conviasa, Ramón Velásquez Araguayán.

On September 13, a second instance court in Argentina authorized the departure from the country of 12 of the 19 crew members of the Venezuelan airplane detained since June in that nation.

Meanwhile, the judge prohibited the departure from the country of seven other crew members: the pilot Gholamreza Ghasemi, Abdolbaset Mohammadi, and the Venezuelans Víctor Pérez Gómez, considered the general manager of operations, the mechanic José García Contreras and Mario Arraga Urdaneta, considering that there was evidence to investigate.

The plane of Empresa de Transporte Aerocargo del Sur (Emtrasur) landed on June 6th in Argentinean territory, where it would have delivered a cargo made up of auto parts from the German company Volkswagen in Argentina. However, when it was about to leave Argentina's territory on June 6th, no company provided them with fuel for fear of the sanctions that the U.S. could resort to.

The Boeing 747 3B3 aircraft, with 14 Venezuelan and five Iranian crew members, was purchased from the Iranian company Mahan Air; the U.S. has sanctioned the latter for supposed links with terrorist activities.

The aircraft then headed to Uruguay on June 8th, intending to refuel to return to Venezuela. Still, Uruguayan authorities rejected the request to land in their territory and the flight had to return to Ezeiza.

Subsequently, the U.S. Department of Justice sent a request to Argentinean authorities to seize the Boeing 747 cargo plane. Given this, a judge in Argentina accepted a U.S. request to seize the Venezuelan aircraft under investigation by that country's justice system.

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