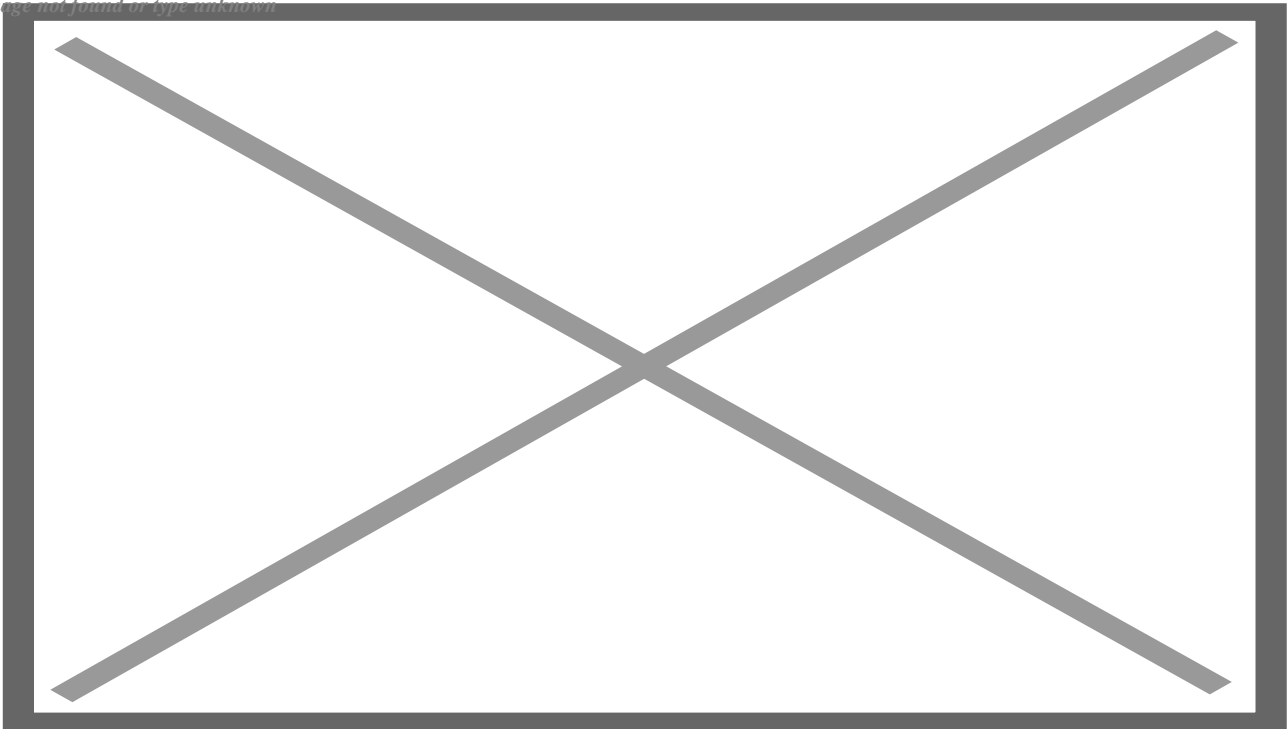


Venezuela expects immediate release of plane held in Argentina

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Buenos Aires, October 26 (RHC)-- The Venezuelan government expects the immediate release of the plane held in Argentina after the release of its 19 crew members, according to Foreign Minister Carlos Faría, who is in Buenos Aires to participate in the meeting of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC).

"Beyond everything they said that existed around our Venezuelan compatriots and Iranian brothers, absolutely no evidence was found that could incriminate them and we are waiting for the immediate release and return of our plane, which is a plane that works for the benefit of our people," said Faría through the state-run Venezolana de Televisión channel.

The ArgentineAN justice system released, between September and October, the 19 Venezuelan and Iranian crew members of the plane belonging to Empresa de Transporte Aerocargo del Sur (Emtrasur), a subsidiary of the state-owned Conviasa, who had been held in that nation since June.

The plane landed on June 6th in Argentinean territory, where it would have delivered a cargo supposedly composed of auto parts of the German company Volkswagen in Argentina. However, when it was about to leave the Argentine territory on June 6, 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 latter having been sanctioned by the US for its links with terrorist activities, according to the Argentine Israelite Mutual Association (AMIA) and the Delegation of Argentine Israelite Associations (DAIA).

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

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

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