

Venezuela expels over 8,400 illegal miners from the Amazon

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Illegal miners are evicted by the Venezuelan military authorities, Aug. 12, 2023. | Photo: Twitter/ @ZODI_Apure

Caracas, August 13 (RHC)-- The Bolivarian National Armed Forces (FANB) Commander Domingo Hernandez confirmed on Sunday that the military has expelled 8,431 illegal miners from the Venezuelan Amazon region since July 1st.

The control operations took place in the Yapacana National Park, which houses ecosystems endowed with unique biodiversity and close to the borders with Colombia and Brazil. The FANB, however, did not offer details about the fate of these people or if they will face any criminal proceedings.

In a recent operation, members of the FANB dismantled a camp area where they found and destroyed 18 homes, 14 engines, 1,400 meters of hoses, 800 liters of fuel, 8 power plants, 4 chainsaws, 9 water pumps, 500 grams of mercury, and other materials used for illegal mining.

"These illegal practices are promoted from the Colombian Guainia department. This destructive behavior generates ecocide in our Indigenous lands," Hernandez denounced, reiterating that the FANB will remain

deployed "until the last predator is expelled from the Amazon region."

Subsequently, the troops will begin reforestation processes and other necessary measures for the recovery of the Amazonian soils and rivers, which are severely degraded after years of mineral extraction.

The eviction of illegal miners began by order of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, who asked the FANB to "cleanse" the Amazon of illegal mining, an economic activity that employs about 10,000 people.

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