

# *Venezuela refutes U.S. claims that deportees from Guantánamo prison camp were gang members*

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Caracas, February 21 (RHC)-- The Trump administration says that it had abruptly deported at least 177 Venezuelan immigrants who had been detained in a newly constructed prison camp at the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

Dozens of the Venezuelan immigrants who were forcefully transferred to Guantánamo were accused, without evidence, of involvement with Tren de Aragua, as Trump claimed to be targeting only “the worst of the worst.” But recent reports showed many of them had never been convicted of violent crimes.

Venezuela’s interior minister was at the airport outside Caracas when the U.S. deportation flight arrived Thursday. Diosdado Cabello said: “The United States says that there are people from the Tren de Aragua gang and criminals. We checked the first group that were said to be from Tren de Aragua, and there was no one from there, not one. We are going to check the legal situation of each one of them. Those without a record will go home, and we will take them, and we will take them with care.”

Asylum seekers and immigrants have described torturous conditions while on U.S. deportation flights, including being shackled at the ankles, waist and wrists for hours. This comes as The Guardian reports the corporate conglomerate Akima, charged with running Guantánamo’s immigrant detention camp, has been accused of gross human rights abuses over conditions at three other immigration jails it oversees.

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