

# *Venezuela breaks commercial ties with Air Canada*

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Caracas, March 19 (RHC) -- The Venezuelan government said on Tuesday it was breaking commercial ties with Air Canada a day after the airline suspended flights to Caracas citing security reasons.

"Commercial relations with Air Canada are ended as of this moment," Venezuela's Minister for Air and Water Transportation Hebert Garcia said on his Twitter account.

The Venezuelan government was "surprised" by Air Canada's decision to suspend the flights without consultation, he said.

Air Canada said on Monday it was suspending its flights to Venezuela for security reasons at a time when anti-government protests have left 29 dead. The airline had operated three return flights weekly between Toronto and Caracas.

Last week, Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro warned airlines against reducing operations, saying, "The company that leaves the country will not return while we hold power."

Airlines operating in Venezuela are required to sell tickets in bolivars in an arrangement in which the Venezuelan government converts the local currency to dollars.

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