

Russia rejects reports on military experts withdrawal from Venezuela



Moscow, June 4 (RHC)-- Russia has rejected U.S. media reports about the withdrawal of Russian military specialists and advisors from Venezuela. The rejection came after The Wall Street Journal claimed Russia would cut the number of its military experts in Venezuela from about 1,000 to "just a few dozen" amid political and economic crisis gripping the Latin American nation.

"This is another piece of 'news' which has absolutely nothing to do with reality. Work is being carried out in accordance with existing obligations, and there is no talk of any cuts," Russian ambassador to Caracas Vladimir Zaemsky said on Monday.

Citing an unnamed source, the American daily newspaper reported on Sunday that Russian state defense contractor Rostec, which trains Venezuelan troops and offers advice on securing arms deals, would reduce the number of its staff in Caracas to "just a few dozen" from around 1,000.

Rostec's press service said in a statement that The Wall Street Journal had "overestimated the numbers of Rostec staff in Venezuela by several times," and noted that the numbers had actually remained "unchanged for many years."

"As for technical experts, they come to the country from time to time in order to repair previously delivered equipment and provide technical maintenance," Rostec added.

The Wall Street Journal 'fake news' story also claimed in the report that the alleged withdrawal of Russian advisers was an "embarrassment" for Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and a sign that Moscow was weighing "the leader's political and economic resilience against growing U.S. pressure."

Moscow has provided Venezuela with military support in the form of military specialists operating in the South American country under contracts for the supply of Russian-made weaponry.

Venezuela's armed forces are already equipped with a wide range of modern Russian aircraft, helicopters, armored vehicles and air defense systems, including the S-300VM.

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