

# *Venezuela captures 39 deserters over failed plot*

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Caracas, May 15 (RHC)-- Venezuelan troops have arrested 39 army forces on the Colombian border, over a recent botched plot to kidnap President Nicolas Maduro. Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino said in a televised speech that troops had "captured 39 deserters trying to enter through the Colombian border."

He said the detainees were "part of the general scheme" to overthrow Maduro, but did not provide further details. In an incident earlier this month, a group of U.S.-backed mercenaries tried to penetrate into the northern state of La Guaira using high-speed boats, but Venezuelan authorities foiled the attack, which had been launched from Colombia.

They killed eight of the armed men and arrested several others, including two American mercenaries. The U.S. citizens -- Luke Denman and Airan Berry -- have been charged with "terrorism, conspiracy, illicit trafficking of weapons of war and criminal association." They face up to 30 years in prison.

Maduro said last week his government has evidence that US President Donald Trump "personally ordered" the military raid on his country. He showed the U.S. passports and other identification papers belonging to Berry and Denman, noting that they had been working with Jordan Goudreau, a military veteran who has already claimed responsibility for the attack.

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