

# *Venezuela denounces entry of USS Pinckney into its territorial waters*

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Caracas, July 16 (RHC)-- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela expressed the country's strong rejection of the entry of the USS Pinckney (DDG-91) into its jurisdictional waters.

In a statement released Thursday, the Venezuelan Foreign Ministry denounced that the vessel, an Arleigh Burke class destroyer belonging to the U.S. Navy's Southern Command, sailed Wednesday in the waters of the Venezuelan Contiguous Zone, 16.1 nautical miles off the nation's coast.

The statement also denounced that the entry of the ship was furtive and described it as an act of erratic and childish provocation, as well as a violation of international maritime law.

Another issue highlighted by the Foreign Ministry is that, at the same time that the USS Pinckney violated Venezuelan sovereignty, the leadership of the Southern Command accused Venezuela on social networks of exercising "excessive control" over its jurisdictional waters.

"The institutions of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, and especially its Bolivarian National Armed Force (FANB), will ensure respect for the sacred sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country at all costs in accordance with international law, contemplating all actions it considers necessary, without falling into absurd provocations that seek to affect the peace and tranquility of Venezuelans, as well as the Latin American and Caribbean peoples," the statement concludes.

The USS Pinckney entered Venezuelan jurisdictional waters on Wednesday, without prior request or authorization, despite the warnings and notices from the FANB.

It is the second such situation in less than a month. On June 23rd, the destroyer USS Nitze, also of the Southern Command, entered Venezuelan waters without authorization.

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