

# *Colombian mercenaries planning new attack on Venezuela*

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Caracas, December 29 (RHC)-- Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has accused neighboring Colombia of organizing an imminent attack against the Venezuelan military. Maduro announced in an address to Venezuela's military forces that Colombian mercenaries, backed by President Ivan Duque, were planning to launch attacks against military units and centers in Venezuela in the coming days.

"Colombia is preparing new attacks against the country's military, with trained mercenaries, with funding from Ivan Duque, preparing attacks at the end of this year," Maduro said in his speech, which was shared on Twitter.

The Venezuelan president then ordered the implementation of a plan to protect the country's military bases and facilities within 24 hours, and demanded that all information about Colombia's plot be collected to enhance military readiness.

Maduro also announced that military drills, code-named the "Bolivarian Shield," would be held to protect Venezuela at any time, without specifying the date and location of the exercises. "The new method is that we will no longer publicly announce the date of these exercises so that the order of operations will remain secret and we will mobilize the Bolivarian National Armed Forces and people," he added.

Maduro also ordered the repair and maintenance of the country's weapons systems with the support of Caracas' allies, including Russia and China.

The government in Caracas announced back in May that it had prevented a maritime intrusion by Colombian "terrorist mercenaries," who had arrived on speedboats at the Venezuelan state of La Guaira along its northern coast.

The Venezuelan president also accused Colombia at the time of attempting to oust him with the help of the United States. Maduro has on multiple occasions blamed Colombia and the United States for plotting to eliminate him and senior military officials.

Most recently, the Venezuelan leader said earlier in the month that there had been a plan to assassinate him during the country's parliamentary election, blaming his Colombian counterpart for playing a role in the alleged plan.

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