

Venezuelan Diplomat Freed in Aruba and Arrives Home



Caracas, July 28 (Xinhua-RHC) -- Venezuela's ex-general Hugo Carvajal, wanted by the United States over drug trafficking charges and arrested several days ago on the Caribbean island of Aruba, was released Sunday and returned to Caracas.

Venezuelan Foreign Minister Elias Jaua earlier said he received a letter from the Netherlands saying Carvajal would be freed based on Article 13 of the 1961 Vienna Convention on diplomatic immunity.

"It is a very brave decision by Holland to acknowledge diplomatic immunity was violated, and for international law to be restored," President Nicolas Maduro said.

Carvajal, who ran Venezuela's military intelligence from 2004 to 2008, was held on Wednesday at Washington's request after flying to Aruba, which is an autonomous part of the Netherlands. He was sent to the Caribbean island as Venezuela's consul and was carrying a diplomatic passport, Jaua said.

The U.S. government put Carvajal on a blacklist in 2008, accusing him of protecting cocaine shipments from seizure by Venezuela anti-narcotics authorities and providing weapons and shelter to Colombia's FARC rebels on the border.

Carvajal denied those charges, while Maduro on Sunday blamed former Colombian President Alvaro Uribe for helping trump up the accusations against Carvajal.

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