

# *Venezuela Destroys 3000 Firearms*

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Caracas, November 8 (teleSUR-AVN-RHC)-- The Venezuelan government will use scrap metal from destroyed weapons as construction material in public housing. Authorities across Venezuela publicly destroyed thousands of weapons on Friday, according to AVN news agency.

The public displays took place in plazas in dozens of cities and towns “simultaneously,” according to interior minister Carmen Melendez.

“The weapons had either been handed over voluntarily or were seized in procedures conducted by law enforcement agencies,” the minister stated.

In Caracas, over 300 weapons were pulverized. The scrap metal remains of the firearms will be used as construction material for public housing.

The event was part of Venezuela's National Disarmament Plan. Under the initiative, Venezuelan gun owners have been urged by the government to voluntarily hand over weapons.

Despite public gun sales being banned under former president Hugo Chavez, Venezuela has one of the highest rates of gun violence in the world.

A commercial ban on sales was implemented in early 2012, along with a ban imports of firearms – excluding those for law enforcement, private security firms, military personnel and sports people. The government has vowed to prioritize gun control as a key measure of domestic security policy.

In June 2013, the government passed new legislation imposing tougher penalties on illegal gun ownership and sales, according to Venezuelanalysis.

The legislation also proposed the creation of a fund to compensate victims of gun violence. Firearm manufacturers, importers and retailers were called on to contribute five percent of their profits to the initiative.

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