

# *Food Seizures in Venezuela Increased 70 Percent in Last Four Months of 2014*

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Caracas, December 22 (RHC-AVN) -- About 28,000 tons of food were seized in 2014 and 70% of this amount was seized just in the past four months through the implementation of special measures by the Venezuelan Government, said Minister for Defense Vladimir Padrino Lopez.

In an interview with state media, Padrino Lopez stressed: "Since last year, when President Nicolas Maduro launched the economic operation, we exposed and brought to light all grotesque speculative nature of the Venezuelan economy and this year, in July-August, when the President took special measures against smuggling, we had already exceeded the amount seized in 2013."

Padrino Lopez, who is also chief of the Bolivarian National Armed Force's strategic operational command (CEOFANB), recalled that in 2013, officials seized 17,230 tons of food, and in 2014 this amount has been almost doubled, with an increase of 163%.

In addition, he said that 27 planes used by smugglers were disabled in 2014, which represents a significant number of aircraft that used to enter the Venezuelan space without authorization.

He stressed that these results have been possible thanks to the investment the National Government has made by buying a comprehensive air defense system, because radars that previously existed in the states of Falcon and Nueva Esparta reported to the United States first and then the country.

During the interview, the minister also recalled that this week he visited the Canaima National Park, located in Bolivar state, where seven clandestine camps used for illegal gold mining were destroyed.

These add up to the 262 already dismantled, a measure that has allowed to declare the park a territory free of illegal mining.

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