

# *Venezuela Introduces Plan to Fight Organized Crime*

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Caracas, July 15 (teleSUR-RHC)-- Venezuelan lawmaker Freddy Bernal has called for national unity in support of President Nicolas Maduro anti-crime plan.

Bernal, a socialist congressman and member of the legislative Commission of Interior Politics, urged the country to “unite in this common cause and help the security bodies to protect the nation.” He said that security forces seek peace and have always been driven by the Constitution in all their actions.

The operation, called “Liberation of the People,” was deployed on Monday in areas known for being under control of organized crime, which in some cases is believed to keep contacts with the local or national police forces, he added, and even sometimes with attorneys of the Public Prosecutor's Office and judges.

This situation has deteriorated with the arrival of various Colombian paramilitary groups in the country, as their presence has been evidenced in the capital, Caracas. According to Bernal, the offensive against organized crime should also be directed to prisons, where criminal leaders often keep control of their illegal business.

On Monday, Minister of Interior Relations, Justice, and Peace Gustavo Gonzalez presented the first results of the operation, stating that 14 criminals were killed in Caracas during a clash with police forces, while 134 others had been arrested, including 32 foreigners, for alleged links to paramilitary groups.

The police also recovered stolen cars and seized weapons and drugs, without specifying the amount. In the suburb of Caracas “City Tiuna,” the same operation also resulted in the arrest of 102 people, including eight foreigners, “also linked to paramilitary groups.” The operation will now be extended to the rest of the national territory. Its members mainly come from the militarized police called the “National Guard,” among other agencies.

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