
Venezuela Sends 3,000 Soldiers To Colombian Border

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Venezuela deployed more than 3,000 troops to its Colombian border on Thursday after the South American nation declared an orange alert.

“More than 3,000 men and women from the FANB (National Bolivarian Armed Forces) are in perfect operational readiness along the Colombian border,” said government representative Freddy Bernal in a statement, according to Cuban state news agency Prensa Latina.

On Tuesday, President Nicolas Maduro government declared the orange alert at Colombian border due to the “threat of military aggression” from the neighboring country.

“It’s just one more tension,” Bernal evaluated on the current relations between two countries and added: “We won’t reach any kind of conflict.”

Maduro also announced Wednesday a military exercise called “Peace and Sovereignty” to begin on Sept. 10 until Sept. 28 throughout the western border of the country.

“It is an exercise for peace, for Venezuela to be respected. To say that we are not willing to be a colony (...) we have the highest quality technological anti-missile system in Latin America, that we have already deployed and in due course details will be given about this exercise,” Bernal said.

“Colombia does not attack anyone, this is a country that always respects the territorial integrity of other nations,” President Ivan Duque told reporters for his part.

Venezuela's relations with neighboring Colombia has been undergoing a new phase of deterioration after the former second in command of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) announced the rebel group's rearmament in a video message last week.

Duque blamed Maduro administration for the sudden reappearance of FARC.

In July, Maduro praised former leaders of FARC Ivan Marquez and Jesus Santrich, saying that two "are welcome in Venezuela" and called them "leaders of peace."

Colombia and FARC reached a peace deal in November 2016, ending more than 50 years of conflict between the two sides.

Duque threw his support behind Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido after the South American nation has been embroiled in political unrest as Maduro and Guaido engage in a power battle at the beginning of 2019.

Colombia also participated in the failed U.S. aid mission to bring truckloads of supplies from Cucuta, Colombia to Venezuela.
