

# The New York Times

Paramilitaries may be treated as terrorists

## Total of 130 Detained in Venezuela Paramilitary Plot

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**Caracas, Venezuela.** May 23 ([Venezuelanalysis.com](http://Venezuelanalysis.com)).- According to Venezuelan Vice-president Jose Vicente Rangel, a total of 130 individuals have been detained after a group of 70 Colombian paramilitary fighters were initially captured at a farm outside Caracas last week. Several dozens have been presented before military judges, including 13 men captured last Thursday.



The paramilitary group was concentrated at farm in the outskirts of Caracas belonging to a well-known opposition leader **Robert Alonso**. According to testimonies by some of the detainees, **Alonso** was training the paramilitary group in preparation for attacks on Venezuelan military bases and for a coup d'etat against the government of President Hugo Chavez.

While oppositionist **Robert Alonso** is being actively sought by authorities, retired Army General Uson Ramirez was detained yesterday morning. Ramirez is thought to have provided help to the paramilitary group. The general was part of a group of high ranking officers who rebelled against the Chavez government during the coup d'etat of April 2002. Seven military officers have been detained in connection with

the paramilitaries.

### Paramilitaries may be treated as terrorists

Venezuela's National Assembly announced last Thursday that it will determine if the Colombian paramilitaries should be treated as terrorists.

According to National Assembly Deputy Nestor Leon Heredia, who heads a special commission to investigate the paramilitary incursion, the Assembly will determine "what kind of intruders or invader we have in the country".

Even though Venezuela has signed all international anti-terrorism treaties, no anti-terror law exists in the country. A draft for a local Anti-terrorism Law was introduced last year by the Executive for discussion and approval at the National Assembly. Lawmakers from political parties that support the government have accused the opposition of blocking the discussion as several opposition activists have been charged with crimes that might be classified as terrorism, including the bombing of the Colombian Consulate and Spanish Embassy offices in Caracas last year.

