

Former Venezuelan General Hands Himself Over to US Authorities

Cliver Alcala had recently confessed to plotting a coup against the Venezuelan government.

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Retired Venezuelan Major General Cliver Alcala surrendered to Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) officials on Friday, vowing to cooperate with a US anti-narcotics probe.

Alcala was [indicted](#) by the US Department of Justice (DoJ) Thursday, alongside a series of high-ranking Venezuelan officials, including President Nicolas Maduro and National Constituent Assembly President Diosdado Cabello.

Washington alleged that the Venezuelan government had conspired with Colombian FARC rebels to “flood” the US with cocaine.

Critics, however, have pointed to the dearth of concrete [evidence](#) implicating top Venezuelan leaders. Data released by US agencies show that only a small percentage of [drug routes](#) pass through Venezuelan territory, with the majority of cocaine entering the US via Central America and Mexico.

Responding to the DoJ allegations, Alcala denied the charges, stating that he had held several meetings with US officials and that he would await authorities’ inquiries at his residence in Barranquilla, Colombia.

He also [confessed](#) to orchestrating a coup plot against President Maduro. After Colombian authorities seized an arms shipment, the retired general stated publicly that the weapons were part of an operation to “liberate” Venezuela. He added that the operation was coordinated with self-proclaimed “Interim President” Juan Guaido and “US advisors.”

The retired general has previously plotted military incursions into Venezuela. According to [Bloomberg](#), in the context of the Venezuelan opposition’s effort to force “[humanitarian aid](#)” across the Colombian border on [February 23](#), there was a plan for Alcala to lead an armed force of 200 men into Venezuela. Bogota reportedly vetoed the plan out of fear of spiraling violence.

Alcala later handed himself over to Colombian intelligence officers and was reportedly flown o to New York, on Friday afternoon, aboard a DEA plane. He pledged to cooperate with US investigations and defend “the truth.”

The Colombian Attorney General’s Office has since published a [statement](#) revealing that while Alcala was being investigated in connection to the seized weapons, there were no

charges against him nor any extradition request.

Meanwhile, [Reuters](#) has reported that another former Venezuelan general is currently negotiating the terms of his extradition to the United States via an intermediary.

Ex-military intelligence chief Hugo Carvajal was also indicted by the DoJ on Thursday. Carvajal broke with the Maduro government in 2017, going on to endorse Guaido following his January 2019 [self-proclamation](#).

Carvajal had previously vowed to provide US authorities with information about the Venezuelan government after his arrest in Spain last year. However, he went missing in November after the Spanish High Court approved his extradition to the US. The Spanish government agreed to the extradition in early March.

According to Reuters, there is a "50/50 chance" that Carvajal will surrender to US authorities, which appear poised to offer the ex-intelligence official a favorable plea bargain deal on the condition that he testifies against his former colleagues.

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Featured image: Retired General Cliver Alcala surrendered to US authorities and pledged to cooperate (El Universal)

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