

Treasury Sanctions Venezuela's Military Counterintelligence Agency Following the Death of a Venezuelan Navy Captain

July 11, 2019

Washington – Today, the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated the Government of Venezuela's General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence, or La Dirección General de Contrainteligencia Militar, most commonly known as the DGCIM. This action, taken pursuant to Executive Order (E.O.) 13850, as amended, targets the DGCIM for operating in Venezuela's defense and security sector.

"The politically motivated arrest and tragic death of Captain Rafael Acosta was unwarranted and unacceptable," said Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. "Treasury is committed to ending the former Maduro regime's inhumane treatment of political opponents, innocent civilians, and members of the military in an effort to suppress dissent."

On June 21, 2019, the DGCIM detained Navy Captain Rafael Acosta Arévalo, claiming he was involved in a plot to assassinate Maduro. When Acosta was next seen publicly at his hearing seven days later, he showed signs of physical abuse, including being in a wheelchair, and he was unable to speak. On June 29, Captain Acosta died. Though two DGCIM officials were charged with homicide in connection with Acosta's death, this is only the most recent display of brutality undertaken by an agency notorious for its violent methods.

On July 5, 2019, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights released a report that detailed methods used by the DGCIM to extract information and confessions, intimidate, and punish detainees. Earlier reports by the Organization of American States and Human Rights Watch, among other organizations, have also detailed the DGCIM's brutality and use of torture.

As a result of today's action, all property and interests in property of this entity, and of any entities that are owned, directly or indirectly, 50 percent or more by this entity, that are in the United States or in the possession or control of U.S. persons are blocked and must be reported to OFAC. OFAC's regulations generally prohibit all dealings by U.S. persons or within (or transiting) the United States that involve any property or interests in property of blocked or designated persons.

U.S. sanctions need not be permanent; sanctions are intended to bring about a positive change of behavior. The United States has made clear that we will consider lifting sanctions for persons designated under E.O. 13692 or E.O. 13850, each as amended, who take concrete and meaningful actions to restore democratic order, refuse to take part in human rights abuses, speak out against abuses committed by the government, and combat corruption in Venezuela.

For information about the methods that Venezuelan senior political figures, their associates, and front persons use to move and hide corrupt proceeds, including how they try to exploit the U.S. financial system and real estate market, please refer to Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN) advisories [FIN-2019-A002](#) , "Updated Advisory on Widespread Public Corruption in Venezuela," [FIN-2017-A006](#) , "Advisory to Financial Institutions and Real Estate Firms and Professionals" and [FIN-2018-A003](#) , "Advisory on Human Rights Abuses Enabled by Corrupt Senior Foreign Political Figures and their Financial Facilitators."

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