



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on May 14, 2019

Venezuelan General Urges Nation's Military to Revolt Against Maduro Regime

Venezuelan Air Force General Ramon Rangel called on his nation's armed forces on May 12 to rise up against leftist strongman Nicolás Maduro (shown). Rangel charged that the Maduro government is being controlled by the "communist dictatorship" in Cuba.

"We have to find a way to get rid of the fear, to go out into the streets, to protest, and to seek a military union to change this political system," Rangel, with a copy of the constitution in his hand, said in a video posted on YouTube.

"It's time to rise up."

During a rally in Caracas on April 27, opposition leader Juan Guaidó (the head of the country's National Assembly) appealed to members of the nation's army to cease their support for Maduro and come over to his side.

Three days later, Guaidó and a group of soldiers called on the armed forces to turn on Maduro, but the military never supported the uprising, and it failed. The government called the event a coup attempt and accused a group of 10 opposition legislators of treason for joining protests that day.

Reuters reported that Rangel's appeal to the military marks another blow to Maduro after a handful of similar defections by senior officers this year. However, by itself, there is little to indicate that his statement will tip the scales.

Those military officers who have disavowed Maduro have fled the country, while most senior officers who remain in command continue to support Maduro. Rangel himself fled to Colombia last month, according to a source close to Venezuela's military who spoke to Reuters but asked not to be identified. The report noted that, unlike other officers who have spoken against Maduro, Rangel did not voice support for Guaidó.

More than 50 nations, including the United States, have recognized Guaidó as the legitimate head of Venezuela's government. President Trump stated on January 23:

Today, I am officially recognizing the President of the Venezuelan National Assembly, Juan Guaidó, as the Interim President of Venezuela. In its role as the only legitimate branch of government duly elected by the Venezuelan people, the National Assembly invoked the country's constitution to declare Nicolás Maduro illegitimate, and the office of the presidency therefore vacant.



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In addition to the widespread international diplomatic support for Guaidó, Maduro is feeling great economic pressure. Venezuela's economy is in shambles, with the inflation rate now at more than 10 million percent a year. There are widespread shortages of food and medicines.

The only thing keeping Maduro in power is the support from his army and support from Cuba, China, and Russia.

Maduro has been willing to use brutal tactics to keep himself and his dictatorship in place. Human Rights Watch (HRW) reported: "The Venezuelan government has brutally cracked down on members of the military accused of plotting against it. Not only are intelligence agents detaining and torturing members of the military, in some cases they are also going after their families or other civilians when they can't find the suspects."

Photo: AP Images

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