

Venezuelan Authorities Capture Opposition Politician Transporting Military Armaments

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Venezuelan authorities arrested opposition city councilman Jose Vicente Garcia in San Cristobal Tuesday for alleged possession of grenades and military vests.

A member of Leopoldo Lopez's far-right Popular Will (VP) party, Garcia was reportedly detained in his vehicle in the capital of the south-western state of Tachira by Venezuela's National Bolivarian Intelligence Service (SEBIN).

According to police sources, Garcia attempted to flee the state security personnel, initiating a pursuit that concluded with his arrest.

Upon searching the vehicle, authorities discovered a box containing various grenades and army vests.

Tachira Governor Jose Vielma Mora confirmed the arrest via his official Twitter account Tuesday afternoon.

"State intelligence bodies have arrested the young city councilman of San Cristobal Jose Vicente Garcia with war armaments, grenades and vests," he stated.

Opposition spokespeople, for their part, have accused the government of planting the arms as part of a supposed "set up".

"We denounce the kidnapping of VP Councilman Jose Vicente Garcia at the hands of the national government in order to continue persecuting and intimidating dissent," declared VP congressman for Tachira Sergio Vergara.

VP has long sought to make a name for itself as the radical right-flank of Venezuela's diverse and divided opposition, frequently pushing to escalate anti-government confrontation using violent tactics.

In late August, VP activist Yon Goicoechea was arrested in possession of alleged explosive equipment just days ahead of the Venezuelan opposition September 1 mobilizations.

The opposition leader was awarded the Washington-based Cato Institute's \$500,000 "Milton Friedman Prize for Advancing Liberty" in 2008 in recognition of his role in 2007 anti-government protests.