
Venezuelan Authorities Recover 157 Tons of Contraband

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Venezuelan authorities have detained at least ten people in a series of anti-contraband operations in Carabobo state, amid a crackdown on smuggling and hoarding.

“After a joint effort ... between institutions [including] the [military] and especially intelligence bodies, here are 157 tons of food and basic necessities for the Venezuelan people,” military official Carlos Leal said on Thursday.

Among the seizures, Leal stated security forces had confiscated 12 tons of milk, nine of sugar and six of chicken. In one raid alone, Leal said they found over 30 tons of hoarded butter. In a different operation, 15 tons of cement were seized.

Illegal stockpiles of coffee, toilet paper and pre-baked corn were also recovered. Venezuela has experienced scarcities of all of these products over the last year.

Leal stated many of the products were probably being hoarded by price speculators.

“Definitely all this...is somehow related. Organizations are engaged in ... actions that violate the rights and security of our citizens and our people,” he stated.

The Venezuelan government is currently undertaking an anti-contraband crackdown, aimed at stopping speculators from illegally stockpiling goods and smuggling basic food products to neighboring countries.

Many basic consumer goods are subject to price regulations in Venezuela, and can be resold at higher prices in Colombia and Brazil.

Around 40 percent of domestic produce is smuggled abroad, according to government estimates. Over 600 people have been arrested since the crackdown was launched earlier this year.
