

## **US blacklists Venezuela military agency after navy captain dies**

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Critics of President Nicolas Maduro's government have lambasted the use of arbitrary detention and systematic torture.

Members of the opposition accuse the government of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro - and the military that he controls - of human-rights abuses [File: Miraflores Palace/Handout/Reuters]

The [United States](#) has imposed sanctions against [Venezuela's](#) military counterintelligence agency, following the death of a navy captain after he spent a week in its custody.

The US Department of the Treasury said on Thursday it would freeze all assets directly or indirectly owned by Venezuela's General Directorate of Military Counterintelligence (DGCIM).

The government of Venezuelan President [Nicolas Maduro](#) confirmed the death on June 29 of Rafael Acosta, who was arrested eight days earlier for alleged participation in a coup plot.

Human rights organisations, political leaders and Acosta's family have accused the government of torturing Acosta to death.

"The politically motivated arrest and tragic death of Captain Rafael Acosta was unwarranted and unacceptable," US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said in a statement.

"The 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," he added.

Venezuelan authorities buried Acosta's remains on Wednesday despite opposition from his family members, who have demanded an independent autopsy.

Venezuelan Chief Prosecutor Tarek Saab said two officials working for DGCIM have already been charged with homicide in Acosta's death, but the prosecutor did not explain how Acosta died.

Critics have accused Maduro's government of arbitrary detentions and the systematic use of torture against dissidents and military officers.