

# *Trump frees U.S. Marine who murdered three in Venezuela prison swap*

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Washington, July 27 (RHC)-- Donald Trump has freed a convicted triple-murderer as part of a high-profile prisoner swap with Venezuela. Dahud Hanid Ortiz, 54, a former U.S. Marine who killed three people in Madrid in 2016, was one of 10 Americans released last Friday.

Ortiz, a dual Venezuelan-American citizen, had been tried, convicted and sentenced to 30 years in Venezuela last year. Now, he is free and living in Orlando, Florida, sources told The New York Times.

Diosdado Cabello, Venezuela's justice minister, confirmed that U.S. officials were told of his crimes and conviction, but still wanted him released.

Hailing the success of the exchange, Marco Rubio, U.S. secretary of state, said that the U.S. "welcomes home" 10 Americans. "Every wrongfully detained American in Venezuela is now free and back in our homeland."

Ortiz was reportedly not classified as "wrongfully detained."

A photo released by the State Department showed Ortiz, who served 19 years in the army and was awarded a Purple Heart for injuries sustained in Iraq, smiling on the plane and waving an American flag.

In exchange for the release of 10 Americans, the Trump administration allowed the release of 252 Venezuelan men, previously detained in the U.S., who it had sent to a maximum security prison in El Salvador.

Trump had invoked the wartime power, the Alien Enemies Act to expel them in March of this year, claiming they were part of the Tren de Aragua gang that was invading the U.S. at the behest of the Venezuelan government.

Hundreds of Venezuelan men were quickly expelled to El Salvador's notorious Cecot prison, despite the Trump administration providing little evidence that those detained were criminals.

In a highly-publicised case that shocked Spain in 2016, Ortiz had driven from Germany to Madrid to track down Victor Salas, a lawyer who he believed was having an affair with his wife.

He entered his office and stabbed to death two female employees as he waited for Mr Salas. Ortiz then killed a taxi driver, a client of the firm, who he mistook for the lawyer.

Victor Salas, who had slept in, arrived shortly after and discovered the three bodies.

Ortiz then fled to Germany and onto Venezuela and Spanish authorities launched an international manhunt. He was later caught in 2018, but Venezuela refused an extradition request by Spain.

In January 2024, he was sentenced by a Venezuelan court to 30 years in prison for the triple murder.

After hearing of Ortiz's release, Mr Salas said he now fears for his life.

"We all feel like we've been deceived, betrayed and let down," he said on Spanish TV programme Vamos a Ver. "We feel deceived because Dahud Hanid Ortiz was never a political prisoner; he was a murderer who was convicted and sentenced by the Venezuelan authorities. The case record makes it quite clear that he's a criminal."

[ SOURCE: THE TELEGRAPH ]

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