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## Venezuela arrests three generals for alleged coup plot

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Caracas (AFP) - Venezuela has arrested three air force generals suspected of plotting an uprising against the leftist government, President Nicolas Maduro said Tuesday.

Maduro told a meeting of South American foreign ministers that the three generals, who were not identified, had been in contact with the opposition and "were trying to rise up against the legitimately constituted government."

"This group that was captured has direct links with sectors of

the opposition and they were saying that this week was the decisive week," Maduro said.

He said the generals had already been summoned before a court martial, adding that the plot was discovered because other officers had come forward to say they were being recruited.

The disclosure comes amid a broadening government crackdown against Maduro's opponents after weeks of street protests that have left at least 34 dead.

On Monday, National Assembly president Diosdado Cabello announced that a prominent opposition deputy, Maria Corina Machado, had lost her seat and parliamentary immunity, and could be arrested at any moment.

Last week, two opposition mayors were arrested, and another prominent opposition leader has been in jailed for a month, accused of inciting violence.