

## After boat shootout: Authorities present evidence



*Weapons, ammunition, equipment: Evidence presented by the Cuban authorities (source: [Minint/Cubadebate](#))*

Cuba has published detailed information for the first time about the armed [incident last Wednesday](#) in which a boat coming from Florida opened fire on Cuban border guards. Three of the occupants died after the coast guard returned fire, and a fourth later succumbed to his injuries. The six people arrested now face charges of terrorism.

At a press conference on Friday, senior representatives of the Cuban Ministry of the Interior [presented](#) the confiscated items to the public for the first time. The incident occurred on Wednesday morning in the region of the municipality of Corralillo (Villa Clara province), in an island area called Los Cayos de Falcones, about ten miles from the Cuban coastline.

### Sequence of events

According to Colonel Ivey Daniel Carballo of the Cuban border forces, the suspicious vessel was detected at 7:10 a.m. by the border forces' technical surveillance equipment – at that point, it was already 3.7 nautical miles inside Cuban territorial waters, which extend to 12 nautical miles.

The US-made boat was traveling south at a speed of 24 knots and was carrying approximately 1.8 tons of cargo.



*The boat, which originated in Florida (source: [YouTube](#))*

When the Cuban border patrol boat had approached to within approximately 185 meters, the occupants of the boat with Florida license plates opened fire. “We could clearly see that we were dealing with a terrorist act from a boat from the US,” Carballo [told](#) the AP news agency. The commander of the Cuban boat, Captain Yosmany Hernández Hernández, was seriously injured by shots to the stomach and forearm. “Despite his injuries, the captain did not leave the helm,” Carballo emphasized. The five-member crew returned fire.

Technical investigations revealed 13 bullet holes in the Cuban border patrol boat and 21 bullet holes in the attackers' boat. The exchange of fire took place at a distance of about 20 meters. Carballo described the crew's response as “correct, energetic, and decisive.” The firearms used by the Cuban side consisted of three AKM assault rifles and a light RPK machine gun.

The Cuban investigation revealed that two boats had originally departed from Cayo Marathon in Florida. One of them suffered technical problems en route, whereupon all persons and equipment were transferred to the remaining boat and the defective vessel was left behind. According to the authorities, this circumstance was confirmed by statements made by the arrested suspects.

## **Confiscated equipment**

The boat was equipped with GPS and radio navigation devices. Among the items confiscated were twelve high-powered weapons, including DB AR-15 rifles, a Delta rifle, a Winchester shotgun, and eleven pistols, one of which is capable of penetrating bulletproof vests. In addition, 134 magazines and a total of 12,846 rounds of ammunition of various

calibers were seized, including 5.56×45 mm and 7.62 mm (AKM). According to authorities, the rifles have an effective range of up to 800 meters and were in perfect condition.

In addition, a drone with two cameras, ten communication devices, combat knives, a portable generator, bolt cutters, camouflage uniforms, helmets with cameras, balaclavas, medicines, and sterile materials were found. Each of the ten occupants apparently had an individually assembled equipment package. Among the items seized were badges of the “November 30” movement, which Cuba considers counterrevolutionary, as well as insignia bearing the inscription “People's Defense.”

## Suspects and alleged masterminds

Víctor Eduardo Álvarez Valle, deputy head of the Interior Ministry's investigative department specializing in state security crimes, said that the detainees themselves had revealed where and how they had obtained the equipment and what training they had received. The source of funding had also been named. “We did not expect to find so many people and weapons,” Álvarez told the *AP*.

Among the suspects is Amijail Sánchez González, who is considered one of the organizers and was already on the national list of suspected terrorists.



*According to the authorities, the attackers had carried over 12,000 cartridges of various calibers (source: [Cubadebate](#)).*

According to Álvarez, the investigation indicates that the mastermind behind the plot was Maritza Lugo Fernández, a woman based in the US who is described as the main sponsor of the “November 30” movement. The group's stated goal was to invade the country, stir up public unrest, commit acts of violence, and attack military units.

Chief prosecutor Edward Robert Campbell stated that several of the defendants were already on the national terrorism list prior to the incident. The six detainees, all of Cuban origin, are charged with armed aggression, illegal entry, and terrorism-related offenses. Cuban criminal law provides for prison sentences of between ten and thirty years, life imprisonment, or the death penalty for terrorism—although the latter has been effectively suspended for more than a decade.

Campbell also pointed out that individuals who financed the operation from abroad could be prosecuted for financing terrorism. Violations of US law relating to shipping and weapons possession could also be considered.

## **Health status of those involved and contact with US authorities**

Military doctor Colonel Dr. Juan Antonio Ramírez from the Ministry of the Interior reported that Captain Hernández Hernández is out of danger and in stable condition with good clinical progress. According to the authorities, the injured detainees are also receiving medical care. “It is an ethical practice of our institutions to provide assistance without distinction,” Ramírez said.

Lieutenant Colonel Carballo concluded by emphasizing that Cuba cooperates operationally with the US Coast Guard on migration issues, drug enforcement, and search and rescue operations.

In connection with the current incident, there had been an almost real-time exchange of information with the liaison officer at the US Embassy and with authorities in Miami, who had been informed of the details of the incident. The authorities announced that they would continue to keep the public informed about the progress of the investigation. ([Cubaheute](#))