

FARC guerrilla wanted by US captured in Colombia

Bogota, Nov 2 (EFE) A suspected member of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), wanted by the US on terrorism charges, has been arrested, Colombian authorities said.

Maribel Gallego Rubio, known as 'Maritza', was arrested in Bogota, DAS security service said, without providing the date of the arrest.

The guerrilla was captured by intelligence officers with the support of Interpol Colombia.

'According to the investigation, Maritza had contact with the FARC secretariat and was the logistics coordinator' for 'the acquisition of cutting-edge technical equipment, such as satellite telephones, scanners and computers', the DAS said.

Maritza, who allegedly belonged to the FARC's 1st Front, is the niece of Nancy Conde Rubio, the girlfriend of Alexander Farfan, one of the guerrillas in charge of holding hostages.

Farfan was arrested during the operation that freed former presidential candidate Ingrid Betancourt last year in the southern province of Guaviare.

Investigators determined that Maritza was the go-between in deals involving equipment suppliers in the US and FARC members in Colombia, the DAS said.

She was also the contact who provided satellite phones to Gerardo Antonio Aguilar, another FARC jailer, used to coordinate movements of hostages.

A federal court in Washington has been seeking Maritza's extradition on charges that she conspired to provide material support to a terrorist organisation.

The FARC, Colombia's oldest and largest leftist guerrilla group, was founded in 1964. It has an estimated 8,000 to 17,000 fighters and operates across a large swath of this Andean nation.

President Alvaro Uribe's administration has made fighting the FARC a top priority and has obtained billions in US aid for counterinsurgency operations.

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