

Chavez hopeful for prisoner exchange

by UPI

PARIS -- Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez expressed hope prisoners could be exchanged for hostages held by Colombia's leading rebel group. "It could open the way to peace in Colombia," said Chavez, El Universal reported Tuesday. Speaking late Monday in Paris during a visit with French President Nicolas Sarkozy, Chavez said that among those that could be freed is Ingrid Betancourt, a former Colombian presidential candidate who also has French citizenship. Betancourt was abducted in 2002 by the leftist rebel group known as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC. She was last seen in a video appeal released by the FARC a year later. The FARC is demanding that several of its members be released from Colombian and U.S. prisons.

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