

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: Young, Eric <Eric.Young@pmc.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 6 January 2026 8:52 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pm.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pm.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pm.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pm.gov.au
Cc: Elliston, Lisa <Lisa.Elliston@pmc.gov.au>; DepSec ISG Office s 47E(d) @pmc.gov.au; Lawson, Elly <Elly.Lawson@pmc.gov.au>; Stevenson, Alex <Alex.Stevenson@pmc.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au; International - Europe and Latin America s 47E(d) @pmc.gov.au; International - US, UK and Canada s 47E(d) @pmc.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au; Office of the Secretary <s 47E(d) v@pmc.gov.au>; International - Middle East Africa and Multilateral Issues <s 47E(d) @pmc.gov.au>; Rayner, Karla <Karla.Rayner@pmc.gov.au>; Sadleir, Richard <Richard.Sadleir@pmc.gov.au>; Rose, Andrew <Andrew.Rose@pmc.gov.au>; Henty, Philippa <Philippa.Henty@pmc.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au
Subject: RE: US Strikes on Venezuela and reported capture of President Maduro - Update 4 - Final [SEC=PROTECTED, CAVEAT=SH:CABINET]

PROTECTED//CABINET

BLUF: no unexpected updates overnight and no action suggested.

Good morning all,

Please see below and update on Venezuela from overnight (GWO Update attached for convenience):

- **Delcy Rodríguez was sworn in as Venezuela's interim president.** She said she was willing to 'cooperate with the US on the future of the country', but insisted that Venezuela had 'the right to its development, sovereignty and its future' and reasserted her loyalty to President Maduro, calling him and his wife 'two heroes'. She also established a domestic commission to seek Maduro's release, to be co-chaired by the Venezuelan Foreign Minister and President of the National Assembly of Venezuela (her brother).
- **The UN Security Council met** (full statements from China, US and UK attached).
 - UN Secretary-General Guterres reiterated the importance of the principles of sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of states, and prohibition of the threat or use of force.
 - US Ambassador Waltz reasserted the US was not at war and that Maduro's capture was a **law enforcement operation** (full remarks attached).
 - The UK and China, amongst others, made statements s 33(a)(iii) attached). China strongly criticised the 'unilateral, illegal and bullying acts of the United States'. The UK said Maduro's 'claim to power was fraudulent', supported a peaceful transition to democracy and reiterated support for the UN Charter, but did not mention the US actions directly.
- Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, pleaded 'not guilty' on charges of drug trafficking and other crimes in a federal court. Maduro insisted he was still the legitimate President of Venezuela.
- President Trump reiterated that the US was now "in charge" of Venezuela and said of the interim government, "if they don't behave, we will do a second strike". He also threatened military action against Colombia's government, said Cuba was 'ready to fall', and reiterated his previous threat to annex Greenland.
- There have been 13 calls to the Consular Emergency Centre and Bogotá post.

Additional International Updates (from GWO SITREP 5)

- s 47E(d) (attached) from Bogota Post contains an update on the situation and assessments of what may unfold.

Next Steps:

- s 33(a)(i) s 33(a)(iii)
- s 33(a)(iii)

Eric

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s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: Young, Eric
Sent: Monday, 5 January 2026 8:29 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pm.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pm.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pm.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pm.gov.au
Cc: Elliston, Lisa <Lisa.Elliston@pmc.gov.au>; DepSec ISG Office s 47E(d) @pmc.gov.au; Lawson, Elly <Elly.Lawson@pmc.gov.au>; Stevenson, Alex <Alex.Stevenson@pmc.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au

s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au>; International - Europe and Latin America < s 47E(d) @pmc.gov.au>; International - US, UK and Canada s 47E(d) @pmc.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au>; 'Secretary's Office' s 47E(d) @pmc.gov.au>; International - Middle East Africa and Multilateral Issues s 47E(d) @pmc.gov.au>; Rayner, Karla <Karla.Rayner@pmc.gov.au>; Sadleir, Richard <Richard.Sadleir@pmc.gov.au>; Rose, Andrew <Andrew.Rose@pmc.gov.au>
Subject: US Strikes on Venezuela and reported capture of President Maduro - Update 3 [SEC=PROTECTED]

PROTECTED

BLUF: No substantial updates / changes from overnight and no action required

Good Morning all,

Further to yesterday's emails, please see below a further update on developments overnight. Recent GWO Updates are attached for ease of access.

- In comments to media on 4 January (press release attached), Secretary Rubio said President Trump **did not want to 'publicly rule out' US occupation of Venezuela or deploying troops on the ground, but the focus was presently on continuing to assert pressure via an 'oil quarantine'** (blockade of sanctioned oil tankers) to exert leverage over Venezuela's political future.
 - Rubio said the US was 'not at war' with Venezuela.
 - Rubio said the US expected to see changes to the way the oil industry was run, an end to drug trafficking, ejection of FARC and the ELN (Colombian armed militia groups) and an end to 'cozying up to Hizballah and Iran in our own hemisphere'.
 - Rubio said the US would make an assessment about its ability to work with Interim President Delcy Rodriguez, but repeatedly declined to state who the US would recognise as the legitimate leader of Venezuela (including whether it would support opposition leaders Maria Corina Machado and Edmundo Gonzalez).
- Venezuela's military has recognised Delcy Rodriguez's authority as Interim President, suggesting it remains loyal to Maduro's allies.
 - Trump has demanded Rodriguez cooperate: 'if she doesn't do what's right, she is going to pay a very big price'
- **Maduro will be arraigned on federal drug charges at a Manhattan court on Monday 5 January** (Tuesday 6 January AEDT).
- **The UNSC Presidency has scheduled an urgent debate on Venezuela for 10am 5 January** (New York Time; 2am 6 January AEDT).
- President Trump said US forces in the region remained 'at a high state of readiness'. The US would work with major oil companies to refurbish and operate Venezuela's degraded oil infrastructure as part of the takeover.
- Caracas and other areas in Venezuela appear calm, with utilities functioning and food supplies sufficient. Venezuelan airspace has reopened and some airlines have recommenced flights.
- There have been 11 calls to the Consular Emergency Centre and Bogotá post in relation to this event. There are no Australians known to be affected.

Additional International Reactions (from GWO SITREP 3 and 4)

- s 47E(d) (attached) contains reactions from Central American countries.

Next Steps:

- s 33(a)(i) , s 33(a)(iii)
- s 33(a)(iii)
- s 33(a)(iii)

Please let me know if you would like anything further at this stage.

Eric

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s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: Young, Eric

Sent: Sunday, 4 January 2026 7:47 AM

To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pm.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pm.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pm.gov.au>

Cc: Elliston, Lisa <Lisa.Elliston@pmc.gov.au>; DepSec ISG Office s 47E(d) @pmc.gov.au>; Lawson, Elly <Elly.Lawson@pmc.gov.au>; Stevenson, Alex <Alex.Stevenson@pmc.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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s 47E(d) @pmc.gov.au>; International - Middle East Africa and Multilateral Issues s 47E(d) @pmc.gov.au>; Rayner, Karla <Karla.Rayner@pmc.gov.au>; Sadleir, Richard <Richard.Sadleir@pmc.gov.au>; Rose, Andrew <Andrew.Rose@pmc.gov.au>

Subject: US Strikes on Venezuela and reported capture of President Maduro - Update 2 [SEC=PROTECTED]

PROTECTED

Good Morning All,

Following my earlier interim update, sending through a second update on the situation, in red below. Updated and cleared DFAT TPs are attached, s 33(a)(iii)

What

- **Maduro and his wife (Cilia Flores) are aboard the USS Iwo Jima heading to New York to face US charges.** Trump said adding that he spoke to the Venezuelan president a week ago. Trump posted a photo of Maduro on the Iwo Jima to Truth Social. Vice President JD Vance also posted on social media, saying Trump offered "multiple off ramps" before the US executed the operation.
- Trump said he watched the complex capture of Maduro in real-time from a room in his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, alongside military generals (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, **General Cain provided a detailed run down of the operation**). **No Americans were killed**, Trump said, but some were injured while attempting to capture Maduro at what he described as a heavily fortified location. The president added that a helicopter had been hit

during the operation but no US aircraft were lost.

- **Trump detailed intent for US 'stewardship' of Venezuela until transition.** Trump clarified to the New York Post that US troops wouldn't need to be on the ground if Venezuelan Vice President Delcy Rodriguez "does what we want", but said if not "We're prepared...you know, we have a **second wave** that's much bigger than the first wave." Rodriguez subsequently said in a press conference she viewed the United States as an illegal invader that must be rejected: "We are determined to be free...what is being done to Venezuela is a barbarity." Trump signalled his intent to rebuild the oil industry with US investment.

So What

s 33(a)(iii)

s 33(a)(iii) Updates since GWO SITREP 2:

- UK PM Starmer followed up initial comments by saying "The UK has long supported a transition of power in Venezuela. We regarded Maduro as an illegitimate President and we shed no tears about the end of his regime. I reiterated my support for international law this morning. The UK government will discuss the evolving situation with US counterparts in the days ahead as we seek a safe and peaceful transition to a legitimate government that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people."

s 33(a)(iii)

Now What

- The UNSC Presidency has scheduled a meeting on Venezuela for Monday 10am (New York Time; 2am Tuesday Canberra time).
- Smart Traveller travel advice has been updated and remains 'Do Not Travel.'
- We will monitor and significant updates from protests that have been called outside various US embassies, including in Australia.

• s 33(a)(i) s 33(a)(iii)
s 33(a)(iii)

Please let me know if there is anything else you need at this stage. Unless otherwise directed or any material updates, I don't intend providing a further updated before tomorrow.

Eric

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s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: Young, Eric
Sent: Sunday, 4 January 2026 5:56 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) pmc.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pm.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pm.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pm.gov.au
Cc: Elliston, Lisa <Lisa.Elliston@pmc.gov.au>; DepSec ISG Office s 47E(d) @pmc.gov.au; Lawson, Elly <Elly.Lawson@pmc.gov.au>; Stevenson, Alex <Alex.Stevenson@pmc.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au; International - Europe and Latin America s 47E(d) @pmc.gov.au; International - US, UK and Canada s 47E(d) @pmc.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au; International - Middle East Africa and Multilateral Issues s 47E(d) @pmc.gov.au
Subject: US Strikes on Venezuela and reported capture of President Maduro - Update 1 [SEC=PROTECTED]

PROTECTED

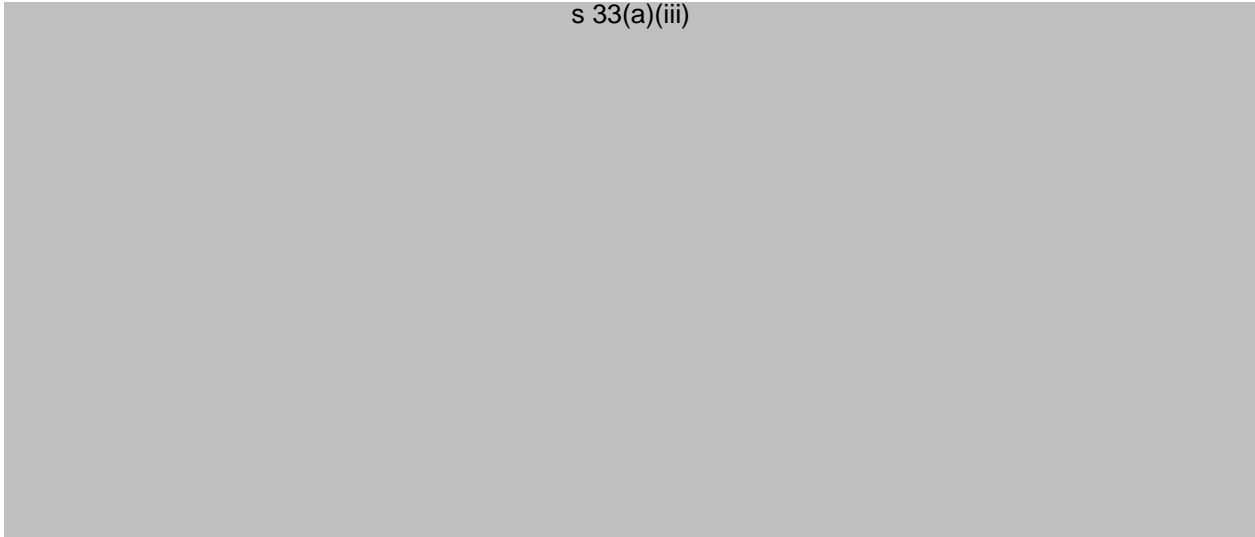
Good Morning All,

Per the message from s 22(1)(a)(ii) last night, providing an interim update (in addition to the GWO update attached) to support any morning media, noting we are still awaiting cable from post (on Trump's press conference) and updated DFAT TPs.

What

- **Maduro and his wife (Cilia Flores) are aboard the USS Iwo Jima heading to New York to face US charges.** Trump said adding that he spoke to the Venezuelan president a week ago. Vice President JD Vance also posted on social media, saying Trump offered "multiple off ramps" before the US executed the operation.

- Trump said he watched the complex capture of Maduro in real-time from a room in his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, alongside military generals (Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, **General Cain provided a detailed run down of the operation**). **No Americans were killed**, Trump said, but some were injured while attempting to capture Maduro at what he described as a heavily fortified location. The president added that a helicopter had been hit during the operation but no US aircraft were lost.
- **Trump detailed intent for US 'stewardship' of Venezuela until transition.** The US is now making decisions on what happens next in Venezuela, Trump said. "We can't take a chance of letting somebody else run it and just take over what (Maduro) left off. So we're making that decision now. We'll be involved in it very much," Trump told Fox News. For his part, Venezuela's foreign minister has insisted that Maduro remains the country's leader and has demanded his return. **Trump signalled his intent to rebuild the oil industry with US investment.**
- **US are maintaining escalation readiness** and able to mount a second, larger strike, if needed.



s 33(a)(iii)

Now What

- Smart Traveller travel advice has been updated and remains 'Do Not Travel.'
- Draft holding statements in the attached.
- We will continue to Monitor Leader reactions and provide a follow on update by 8 am, including updated TPs from DFAT when received.
- **s 33(a)(i)** **s 33(a)(iii)**

Please let me know if you need anything else ahead of the next update at 0800.

Eric

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s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: Young, Eric
Sent: Saturday, 3 January 2026 8:58 PM
To: **s 22(1)(a)(ii)** @pmc.gov.au; **s 22(1)(a)(ii)** @pmc.gov.au; **s 22(1)(a)(ii)** k@pmc.gov.au
Cc: Elliston, Lisa <Lisa.Elliston@pmc.gov.au>; DepSec ISG Office <**s 47E(d)** @pmc.gov.au>; Lawson, Elly <Elly.Lawson@pmc.gov.au>; Stevenson, Alex <Alex.Stevenson@pmc.gov.au>; **s 22(1)(a)(ii)** @pmc.gov.au; **s 22(1)(a)(ii)** @pmc.gov.au; **s 22(1)(a)(ii)** @pmc.gov.au;
s 22(1)(a)(ii) @pmc.gov.au; International - Europe and Latin America <**s 47E(d)** @pmc.gov.au>; International - US, UK and Canada <**s 47E(d)** @pmc.gov.au>; **s 22(1)(a)(ii)** @pmc.gov.au; International - Middle East Africa and Multilateral Issues <**s 47E(d)** @pmc.gov.au>
Subject: US Strikes on Venezuela and reported capture of President Maduro [SEC=PROTECTED]

PROTECTED

Good Evening **s 22(1)(a)(ii)**,

As discussed, please find below an initial assessment

What

- Early Saturday morning (local time) there were explosions in Caracas and in the Venezuelan states of Miranda, Aragua and La Guaira. Media is reporting that targets have included both military and non-military sites, including 'Fuerte Tiuna' (Venezuela's largest military base), the residence of Venezuela's Minister of Defence and two military airports.
- US officials have confirmed to media a military operation is underway ([WSJ](#), [Fox News](#)).
- President Trump in a [social media post](#) said the US has successfully captured Maduro and his wife. A news conference is planned for 11am Florida time.
- Venezuelan President Maduro has [condemned](#) US "military aggression" and declared a state of emergency.

- [No senior Government](#) figures have made an appearance since the explosions. Venezuela's opposition are [not commenting](#) at this stage. [Vice President Delcy Rodriguez](#) was reported safe.
- Commentary by notable figures
 - President Miguel Díaz-Canel of Cuba, in a social media post, denounced what he called a "criminal attack" by the United States against Venezuela, and demanded "urgent reaction" from the international community ([NYT reporting](#)).
 - Colombia's President is reported to have condemned the strike and said the US struck the Parliament building (not yet in formal reporting but see [here](#))
 - [Sen. Brian Schatz](#) (D. Hawaii) condemned the strikes on Venezuela, saying in a social media post: "We have no vital national interests in Venezuela to justify war."

s 7 , s 33(a)(i)

Now What

- [s 33\(a\)\(i\)](#)
- President Trump has said there'll be a press conference at 11am at Mar-a-Lago (3am Sunday in Sydney) (We will ask for a readout from Post).
- We will continue to Monitor Leader reactions and provide an update in the morning by 8 am, including updated TPs from DFAT.

Please let me know if there is anything else you need at this stage.

Eric

PMO Briefing Pack – Initial International Reactions U.S. Strikes on Venezuela & Capture of President Nicolás Maduro

Date: 4 January 2026

PM Draft Media Top Lines

- Call for calm and diplomacy; urge de-escalation to protect civilians and regional stability.
- Not in a position to provide a running commentary.
- It is for the US to explain the legal basis of its actions.
- We are consistent in stating our position that adherence to international law is important and reinforce support for multilateral institutions (UN/UNSC).

If Asked:

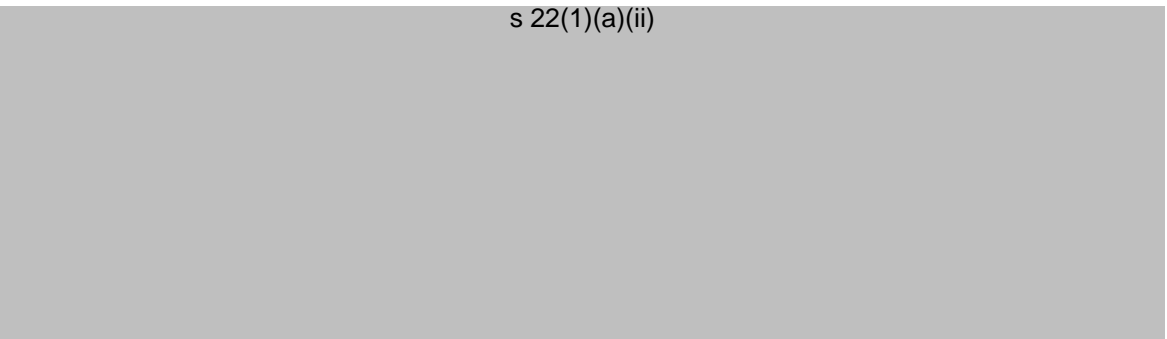
Has the US requested assistance or support for its actions?

- United States military action is a matter for the US Government.
- The US has not requested Australian support.

Will Australia condemn US strikes and capture of President Maduro and first lady?

- It is for the US to explain the legal basis of its actions.
- Call for de-escalation of tensions

s 22(1)(a)(ii)



Global Reactions (per Global Watch Office Update) – Summary

- **Latin America:** Colombia calls UN & border security; Cuba and Mexico condemn; Brazil says “unacceptable line”; Chile urges dialogue; Argentina praises action.
- **Europe:** UK seeks facts and upholds international law; EU leaders urge restraint and UN Charter principles; Spain calls for mediation; France says non-use of force must be respected.
- **Middle East:** Iran labels the action an act of aggression; urges immediate UNSC response.
- **Africa:** South Africa calls a manifest UN Charter violation; demands urgent UNSC session. Nigeria civil society condemns “imperialist aggression.”
- **United Nations:** SG Guterres warns of a dangerous precedent; calls for inclusive dialogue and full respect for international law.

Background

Escalation Timeline (Aug 2025 – Jan 2026)

- Aug 2025 – U.S. buildup in Caribbean (CRS Insight IN12618; USA Today).
- Sep 2, 2025 – First lethal boat strike (CRS; House war-powers debates).
- Nov 29, 2025 – Airspace closure; FTO designation context (CRS).
- Dec 12, 2025 – Senior Democrats seek boat-strike video release (Reuters/AOL).
- Dec 2025 – Oil-tanker seizures & naval quarantine (CBS live; USA Today).
- Jan 3, 2026 – Large-scale strikes; Maduro captured (CBS, POLITICO, Al Jazeera).

From: [Global Watch Office](#)
To: [Young, Eric](#)
Subject: SITREP 2 : Venezuela : Strikes in Caracas [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Sunday, 4 January 2026 5:04:46 AM
Attachments: [image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image001.png](#)

OFFICIAL



Australian Government
 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Global Watch Office
Situation Report

Venezuela

Strikes in Caracas

Key Developments

- US President Donald Trump said the US would 'run' Venezuela 'until such time as we can do a safe, proper and judicious transition' following the capture of Venezuela's President Nicolás Maduro.
 - Trump shared a [photo](#) of Maduro in captivity and [footage](#) of the strikes on Caracas.
- US Secretary of State Marco Rubio [asserted](#) Maduro was not Venezuela's legitimate president but the leader of a cartel under US indictment for drug trafficking.
 - The Department of Justice [released](#) the indictment of Maduro, his wife and son.
- US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth said Trump was 'deadly serious about getting back the oil that was stolen from us and deadly serious about reestablishing American deterrence and dominance in the Western Hemisphere'.
- US Vice President JD Vance [said](#) Trump had offered 'multiple offramps' and was clear 'the drug trafficking must stop, and the stolen oil must be returned to the United States'.
- US Attorney General Pamela Bondi [announced](#) Maduro and his wife would face multiple charges in the Southern District of New York, including 'narco-terrorism conspiracy' and 'cocaine importation conspiracy'.
- Media reported the US Army's Delta Force, an elite special forces unit, conducted the mission with the CIA tracking Maduro's location for some time.
- Travel to, from and throughout the Caribbean is expected to be severely disrupted with major US and international airlines cancelling flights across the region, including to Puerto Rico and Aruba.
- Following the US FAA's [NOTAM](#), the EU's aviation safety agency [issued](#) an advisory recommending EU airlines not operate in Venezuelan airspace.
 - Flight tracking monitoring sites show Venezuelan airspace is entirely empty of commercial flights.
- Internet monitoring metrics [indicated](#) ongoing connectivity losses in parts of Caracas.

Australian Government Response

- Bogotá Post confirmed all staff and dependents were safe and accounted for. To post's knowledge, there were no Australian Government officers in Venezuela.
 - Bogotá post advised it would raise its Crisis Action Plan (CAP) level to Yellow.
- There have been five calls to the Consular Emergency Centre in relation to this event and no

consular calls to post.

- Smartraveller [travel advice](#) and [social media](#) updates have been updated. Venezuela remains classified as a 'Do Not Travel' destination.

Local Government Response

- Venezuela's Vice President Delcy Rodríguez said Maduro's whereabouts were 'unknown' and demanded 'proof of life' from the US. She remains the highest-ranking official in the country.
 - Some media were reporting she was now in Russia, accompanied by her brother, Jorge Rodríguez, the head of the national assembly.
- Defence Minister Vladimir Padrino López accused US forces of attacking 'residential areas populated by civilians' and announced Venezuela would initiate a 'massive deployment of all land, air, naval, riverine and missile capabilities ... for comprehensive defence'.
- Foreign Minister Yván Gil Pinto called for an urgent meeting of the UN Security Council. Colombia, currently a Council member, confirmed it will request an emergency session. South Africa also [voiced](#) support for convening the UNSC.

International Responses

- UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer [said](#) he would speak with Trump to 'establish facts first' and consult allies, denying UK involvement and reaffirming his commitment to upholding international law.
- Canada's Foreign Minister Anita Anand [said](#) Canada 'refused to recognise any legitimacy of the Maduro' calling on 'all parties to respect international law and we stand by the people of Venezuela and their desire to live in a peaceful and democratic society'.
- UN Secretary-General António Guterres [said](#) he was deeply alarmed by the escalation, which he described as 'a dangerous precedent', urging 'full respect, by all, of international law, including the UN Charter'.
- EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen [said](#) the EU was closely monitoring the situation and reaffirmed support for 'a peaceful and democratic transition'.
- EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Kaja Kallas [reiterated](#) the EU 'has repeatedly stated that Mr Maduro lacks legitimacy and has defended a peaceful transition'.
- China's foreign ministry strongly [condemned](#) US actions and called on the US to 'stop violating other countries' sovereignty and security'.
- Indonesia's foreign ministry [said](#) (in Bahasa) it was monitoring the developments to ensure the safety of its nationals and called for de-escalation and respect for international law and the UN Charter.
- France's Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot [said](#) the US operation breached international law, with grave consequences to global security, but noted that Maduro had deprived Venezuelans of their freedoms.
- Spain's foreign ministry [called](#) for de-escalation and respect for international law and the UN Charter, offering to mediate a 'peaceful and negotiated solution to the current crisis', recalling it had never recognised Venezuela's 2024 elections.
 - Spain's Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares [said](#) (in Spanish) he was monitoring the situation and maintaining close contact with counterparts from Portugal and Italy which, along with Spain, have the largest contingent of EU nationals in Venezuela.
- Italy's Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani [said](#) (in Italian) he was monitoring events, particularly concerning the Italian community.
- Russia's foreign ministry [said](#) Moscow was extremely concerned and [urged](#) for 'immediate clarification', condemning US actions as 'an unacceptable encroachment on the sovereignty of an independent state'.
- Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha [said](#) Ukraine 'defended the right of nations to live freely, free of dictatorship, oppression, and human rights violations' questioning Maduro's legitimacy.
- Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar [said](#) Israel commended the 'US operation led by President Trump' who 'acted as the leader of the free world'.
- Switzerland [called](#) (in German) for 'de-escalation, restraint, and compliance with international

law, including the prohibition on the use of force’.

- Iran’s foreign ministry strongly [condemned](#) ‘the US military attack on Venezuela and the blatant violation of the country’s national sovereignty and territorial integrity’.
- A number of other statements were released including by [Qatar](#), [Albania](#), [Kosovo](#), [Qatar](#) and [Türkiye](#).
- Protests have been called outside US embassies against US actions in Venezuela, including in Australia, UK, Germany, Spain, France and Türkiye.
- Multiple countries issued consular alerts or updated travel advisories to warn against all travel to Venezuela including [Canada](#), [UK](#), [Ireland](#), [India](#), South Korea, Japan and China.

Regional Responses

- Brazil President Inácio Lula da Silva [said](#) the ‘bombings on Venezuelan territory and the capture of its president cross an unacceptable line’.
- Mexico’s President Claudia Sheinbaum [condemned](#) ‘the military intervention in Venezuela’ with the foreign ministry [affirming](#) (in Spanish) Mexico’s ‘willingness to support any efforts to facilitate dialogue, mediation, or accompaniment that contribute to preserving regional peace and avoiding confrontation’.
- Cuba’s President Miguel Diaz-Canel [denounced](#) (in Spanish) the strikes as ‘state terrorism’.
- Colombia mobilised its armed forces to the border with Venezuela amid concerns over a refugee ‘influx’ following condemnation by its president Gustavo Petro.
- Chile’s President Gabriel Boric Font [expressed](#) (in Spanish) ‘concern and condemnation’ and reaffirmed Chile’s commitment to international law.
- Argentina’s President Javier Milei [posted](#) (in Spanish) an earlier statement in which he described Maduro as a regional threat and backing US pressure on Caracas.
- Panama’s foreign ministry [reaffirmed](#) (in Spanish) its commitment to democracy and human rights, expressed concern over developments in Venezuela while condemning Maduro’s authoritarianism and repression.
- Trinidad and Tobago’s Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar [denied](#) any participation in US military operations and reaffirmed ‘peaceful relations with the people of Venezuela’.
- Uruguay’s foreign ministry [said](#) (in Spanish) Uruguay ‘rejects, as it always has, military intervention by one country in the territory of another and reaffirms the importance of respecting international law and the UN Charter’.
- Ecuador’s President Gabriel Noboa Azin [said](#) (in Spanish) ‘the time is coming for all the narco-Chavista criminals’, reaffirming his support for the ‘Venezuelan people’.

Media

- *Live updates:* [abcNEWS](#), [AlJazeera](#), [Bloomberg](#), [CBS](#), [CNN](#), [euronews](#), [France 24](#), [NYT](#), [WP](#)

DFAT.GOV.AU

Australian Government Global Watch Office
s 47E(d)

From: [Global Watch Office](#)
To: [International - Europe and Latin America](#)
Subject: SITREP 3 : Venezuela : Strikes in Caracas [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Sunday, 4 January 2026 5:16:59 PM
Attachments: [image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image001.png](#)

OFFICIAL



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Global Watch Office Situation Report

Venezuela

Strikes in Caracas

Key Developments

- Nicolás Maduro was taken to New York City to face federal drug charges. Media is reporting he will be held at the Metropolitan Detention Center.
 - Maduro was extracted from Venezuela on the USS Iwo Jima and transported to Guantanamo Bay, before being flown to New York Stewart International airport.
 - An arraignment hearing is expected.
- Media reports at least 40 Venezuelan soldiers and civilians were killed during the US attack.
- US President Donald Trump said US forces in the region remained 'at a high state of readiness' (s 47E(d)).
 - Trump said major US oil companies would move into Venezuela, which has the world's largest oil reserves, and refurbish badly degraded oil infrastructure as part of the takeover.
- The UN Security Council is scheduled to meet on Monday as requested by Colombia, supported by Russia and China s 47E(d)
- Venezuela's air space continues to be empty ([Flightradar24](#)).
- US Secretary of Transportation Sean Duffy [said](#) restrictions on Caribbean airspace were expiring at midnight local time (1600 Sunday 4 January AEDT).
 - [Delta](#) and [United Airlines](#) confirmed preparations to resume most flights from Sunday
 - Delta, United Airlines, Frontier Airlines, Spirit Airlines and JetBlue Airways earlier cancelled flights in compliance with the flight restrictions on Saturday (local time).
- Open source reporting indicates no public ferries are currently operating.
- Media reported security at the Venezuelan borders with Brazil and Colombia was strengthened.
 - Venezuela temporarily closed its border with Brazil (also see s 47E(d))
 - Colombia's President Gustavo Petro said he had deployed security forces at the country's border in case of a 'massive influx of refugees'.
- A US [security alert](#) was issued for Venezuela, advising the situation was fluid, commercial flights were not currently operational and to enrol in the Smart Traveler Enrolment Program.
- The US issued alerts for demonstrations outside US Embassies in Latin America (including [Argentina](#), [Colombia](#), [Costa Rica](#) and [Mexico](#)).

Australian Government Response

- Prime Minister Anthony Albanese [urged](#) all parties to support dialogue and diplomacy to secure regional stability and prevent escalation.
- Leader of the Opposition Sussan Ley [stated](#) the Coalition welcomed the announcement that Nicolás Maduro had been taken into custody ...
- Bogota post reported on the situation in Caracas in **s 47E(d)**
- Bogota post activated the Crisis Action Plan (CAP) for Venezuela to Yellow. The CAP for Colombia remains at Green (**s 47E(d)**).
- Smartraveller [travel advice](#) was updated for Venezuela.
 - Smartraveller [social media](#) was updated to reflect expected flight disruptions in the region.
- There have been eight (8) calls to the Consular Emergency Centre and Bogotá Post in relation to this event.

Local Government Response

- Venezuela's Supreme Court directed Vice President Delcy Rodriguez to assume the powers and duties of acting president on Saturday evening (local time).

International Responses

- UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer [stated](#) the UK has long supported a transition of power in Venezuela, and would shed no tears about the end of Maduro's regime.
- Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney [said](#) Canada had imposed additional sanctions on the Maduro regime in March, unequivocally condemning his grave breaches of peace and security ...
- Canada's Minister of Foreign Affairs Anita Anand issued a [statement](#) reiterating that Canada refused to recognise the legitimacy of the Maduro regime and called for restraint ...
- New Zealand's Foreign Minister Winston Peters [said](#) NZ was actively monitoring developments and expects all parties to act in accordance with international law.
- Netherlands Minister for Foreign Affairs David van Weel [confirmed](#) the Netherlands did not recognise the Maduro regime and urged all parties to prevent further escalation.
- France's President Emmanuel Macron (in French) [called](#) for a quick and peaceful transition of power to Edmundo González Urrutia
 - Macron further [stated](#) (in Spanish) that France supports María Corina Machado's call for the liberation and the protection of the political prisoners of Nicolás Maduro's regime.
- Germany's Chancellor Friedrich Merz [said](#) Maduro had led his country to ruin and the most recent election was rigged. Germany did not recognise his presidency ...
- Greece's Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis [said](#) Maduro presided over a brutal and repressive dictatorship and end of his regime offers hope. It is not the time to comment on the legality ...
- The African Union released a [communiqué](#) that expressed solidarity with the Venezuelan people and called for all parties to exercise restraint, responsibility and respect for international law ...

Regional Responses

- **s 33(a)(iii)**
- Cuba issued a [statement](#) condemning the 'cowardly US aggression' and pledge support for Executive Vice President Delcy Rodriguez.
- Peru released a [statement](#) (in Spanish) that the 'illegitimate government of Nicolás Maduro violated the human rights of the Venezuelan people', and called for a swift resolution in favour of a transition with 'full respect for international law'.
- Guyana's President Dri Irfaan Ali [pledged](#) Guyana's support towards efforts that uphold democratic norms.
- Jamaica's Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a [statement](#) to clarify their primary concern remained for the people of Venezuela, the maintenance of democracy ...
- CARICOM [stated](#) it was actively monitoring the situation including possible implications on the Caribbean community.

- Trinidad and Tobago [confirmed](#) its airspace remained open despite the US ban on commercial flights in Venezuelan airspace (s 47E(d))

Media

- *Live updates:* [Al Jazeera](#), [CNN](#), [France 24](#), [NYT](#), [WSJ](#)
- [AP](#): US plans to 'run' Venezuela and tap its oil reserves, Trump says, after operation to oust Maduro
- [Reuters](#): US lifts Caribbean airspace curbs after attack on Venezuela
- [Reuters](#): Brazil says US crossed 'unacceptable line' on Venezuela as officials track border
- [Al Jazeera](#): Venezuela temporarily closes border with Brazil following US strike

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Australian Government Global Watch Office
s 47E(d)

Click here to [subscribe/unsubscribe](#) to Global Watch Office alerts for the Latin America region.

From: [Global Watch Office](#)
To: [International - Europe and Latin America](#)
Subject: SITREP 4 : Venezuela : Strikes in Caracas [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Monday, 5 January 2026 5:13:08 AM
Attachments: [image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image001.png](#)

OFFICIAL



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Global Watch Office Situation Report

Venezuela

Strikes in Caracas

Key Developments

- US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said President Donald Trump did not want to 'publicly rule out' US occupation of Venezuela or deploying troops.
 - Rubio added that acting president Delcy Rodríguez was not Venezuela's legitimate leader.
- US Vice President JD Vance [said](#) Venezuela remains linked to drug trafficking and criticised its past expropriation of US oil assets as justification for US military action.
- The UN Security Council is scheduled to meet on Monday (Tuesday AEDT) to address the issue.
- Nicolás Maduro is expected to appear in a Manhattan federal court on Monday (Tuesday AEDT).
 - US Homeland Security [confirmed](#) its investigation into Maduro had been 'ongoing for more than a decade'.
- Caracas and other areas in Venezuela appear calm, with utilities functioning and food supplies sufficient. Some rationing was reported, though open stores remain stocked despite reports of limited panic buying **s 47E(d)**
- Starlink [said](#) it was providing free broadband service until 3 February.
- Diplomatic contacts advised Venezuelan airspace has reopened and some Venezuelan airlines have recommenced domestic and international flights.
 - Commercial air traffic over Venezuelan airspace continues to appear limited ([Flightradar24](#)).
 - At least one international airline (COPA Airlines) is scheduled to recommence flights from 6 January (**s 47E(d)**)
- Airlines began resuming flights into the Caribbean following the lifting of US restrictions. Delays and cancellations continue on some routes including into Saint Maarten, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago, Puerto Rico and Aruba.
 - Disruptions have eased for The Bahamas, Cayman Islands, Jamaica and Mexico (Cancún).
- Diplomatic contacts advised ferry services are not operating into Venezuela.
- There continues to be reports of ongoing small-scale protests outside US embassies globally.

Australian Government Response

- Bogotá post's Crisis Action Plan (CAP) for Venezuela remains at Yellow.
- There have been 11 calls to the Consular Emergency Centre and Bogotá post in relation to this

event.

Local Government Response

- During a meeting of the National Defence Council, acting president Delcy Rodríguez reaffirmed her support for Maduro as president.
- Minister of Defence Vladimir Padrino López [issued](#) (in Spanish) a statement reaffirming his support for Maduro, while recognising Rodríguez as acting president.

International Responses

- Spain, Brazil, Mexico, Chile, Colombia and Uruguay [issued](#) (in Spanish) a joint statement condemning unilateral military actions in Venezuela as a violation of international law, urging a peaceful resolution through dialogue and rejecting the appropriation of resources.
- China's foreign ministry [called](#) on the US to release Maduro and his wife and 'stop toppling the government of Venezuela and resolve issues through dialogue and negotiations'.
- India's foreign ministry [said](#) it was 'deeply concerned' by recent developments and called on all parties to address issues peacefully through dialogue.
- Thailand's foreign ministry [urged](#) all parties to resolve tensions peacefully in accordance with the UN Charter and international law and called for restraint to avoid escalation.
- Indonesia's foreign ministry [reiterated](#) it was monitoring the developments and called for restraint and respect for international law and the UN Charter.
- Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim [said](#) the seizure of Maduro was a clear violation of international law, called for his release and urged dialogue and de-escalation.
- Malaysia's foreign ministry [reaffirmed](#) opposition to foreign intervention and the use of force, citing UN Charter principles and urged restraint and dialogue.
- Singapore's foreign ministry [said](#) it was 'gravely concerned' by the US intervention, reaffirmed commitment to international law and the UN Charter, urging restraint and a peaceful resolution.
- Sweden's Foreign Minister Maria Stenergard [said](#) Sweden 'sheds no tears' over Maduro's loss of power calling for a swift and peaceful transition.
- Norway's Foreign Minister Espen Barth Eide [said](#) 'the American military operation in Venezuela is not in accordance with international law', urging a peaceful transition to democratic governance.
- Austria's President Alexander Van der Bellen [asserted](#) (in German) that Maduro was not a legitimate president and stressed that international law must be upheld.
- Belgium's Foreign Minister Maxime Prevot [said](#) 'Venezuelans deserve a democratic and legitimate regime' and stressed that 'international law must be respected, in all circumstances'.
- Finland's Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen [said](#) 'all states have a responsibility to respect and act in accordance with international law', reaffirming support for a peaceful, democratic transition.
- Japan's Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi [said](#) (in Japanese) Japan would advance diplomatic efforts toward restoring democracy in Venezuela, reaffirming respect for international law and the UN Charter.
- Japan's foreign ministry [reaffirmed](#) Japan's commitment to 'freedom, democracy and respect for international law', adding it will pursue diplomatic efforts to restore democracy in Venezuela and coordinate with G7 and regional partners.
- South Korea's foreign ministry [urged](#) all parties to ease tensions and expressed hope that democracy would be restored through dialogue and respect for the will of the people.
- Israel's Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu [expressed](#) support for the 'determined decision and action of the US to restore freedom and justice to that part of the world as well'.
- Iran's foreign minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi [said](#) during a phone call with his Venezuelan counterpart that the US action was 'a clear example of state terrorism and a blatant assault on sovereignty', reaffirming Iran's support for Maduro's government.
- Georgia's foreign ministry [expressed](#) hope developments in Venezuela will align with the Venezuelan people's interests and lead to the reversal of Venezuela's recognition of Abkhazia and South Ossetia as independent states.
- The DPRK's foreign ministry [denounced](#) 'the US hegemony-seeking act committed in Venezuela

as a wanton violation of the UN Charter and international law’.

- Bolivia’s foreign ministry [voiced](#) (in Spanish) support for restoring democracy in Venezuela and urged coordinated international action in line with human rights and the UN Charter.
- Paraguay [urged](#) (in Spanish) democratic solutions for an orderly transition in Venezuela and warned that criminal networks in power threaten regional stability.
- The US Embassy in Guyana [issued](#) an alert advising of flight disruptions in the Eastern Caribbean.

Media

- *Live updates:* [BBC](#), [DW](#), [CNN](#), [NYT](#), [Al Jazeera](#)
- [AFP](#): Australia, NZ back international law after US raid on Venezuela
- [NBC](#): Secretary of State Marco Rubio says US capture of Maduro is not a war against Venezuela
- [Reuters](#): World reacts to US strikes on Venezuela
- [Reuters](#): Venezuela's interim government says it remains united behind Maduro after his U.S. capture

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Australian Government Global Watch Office
s 47E(d)

Click here to [subscribe/unsubscribe](#) to Global Watch Office alerts for the Latin America region.

From: [Global Watch Office](#)
To: [s 22\(1\)\(a\)\(ii\)](#)
Subject: SITREP 5 : Venezuela : Strikes in Caracas [SEC=OFFICIAL]
Date: Tuesday, 6 January 2026 5:15:08 AM
Attachments: [image005.png](#)
[image006.png](#)
[image001.png](#)

OFFICIAL



Australian Government
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Global Watch Office Situation Report

Venezuela

Strikes in Caracas

Key Developments

- Delcy Rodríguez was sworn in as Venezuela's interim president, saying she was willing to 'cooperate with the US on the future of the country'.
 - Rodríguez invited the US to 'work together on a cooperative agenda, oriented toward shared development, within the framework of international law, and to strengthen lasting community coexistence'.
- US President Donald Trump warned Rodríguez that she would pay 'a very big price' if she did not meet the US' policy demands.
- The UN Security Council [met](#) to discuss the US' actions in Venezuela.
 - The UN Secretary-General António Guterres [said](#) it was important to respect the UN Charter, stick to the principles of sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of states, and prohibit the threat or use of force.
 - Venezuela's Ambassador to the UN Samuel Reinaldo Moncada Acosta called the US attack 'illegitimate' with no legal justification that constituted a 'flagrant violation' of the UN charter.
 - US Representative to the UN Mike Waltz [said](#) the action to arrest Nicolás Maduro was a law enforcement operation and the US would not waver in protecting Americans from the 'scourge' of narco-terrorism.
 - The [UK](#), Russia and China have also delivered statements.
- Appearing before a federal court judge, Nicolás Maduro, and his wife, Cilia Flores, pleaded 'not guilty' on charges of drug trafficking and other crimes.
- Switzerland [froze](#) assets held in the country by Maduro and his associates with immediate effect.
 - The measure, valid for four years, aims to prevent an outflow of potentially illicit assets and is in addition to existing sanctions imposed on Venezuela since 2018.
- Trump said the US was 'thinking about' reopening their embassy in Venezuela, which has been closed since 2019.
- The general sentiment in Caracas appears calm, though cautious, with life returning to normal.
- Flights continue to resume with Venezuelan airlines operating both domestic and international routes, including to Bogota and Panama City, as well as scheduled flights to Barcelona, Curaçao and Madrid.

Australian Government Response

- Bogotá post's Crisis Action Plan (CAP) for Venezuela remains at Yellow.
- There have been 13 calls to the Consular Emergency Centre and Bogotá post in relation to this event.

Local Government Response

- Interim president Rodríguez created a commission to seek Maduro's release.
 - Foreign Minister Yvan Gil and President of the National Assembly of Venezuela Jorge Rodríguez will co-chair the commission.

International Responses

- Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney [spoke](#) with Maria Corina Macado and expressed support for a 'peaceful transition of power led by Venezuela that respects the democratic will of the Venezuelan people'.
- The EU High Representative issued a [statement](#) supported by 26 members (except Hungary) that advocated for a Venezuelan-led peaceful transition to democracy and calling for the unconditional release of all political prisoners.
- China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi [said](#) China could not accept that any nation can claim to be the 'world's judge' and 'the sovereignty and security of all countries should be fully protected under international law'.
- The Philippines foreign ministry [acknowledged](#) the US' underlying security considerations and stressed 'the relevant principles of international law'.
- Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orban said the US decision to remove Maduro should have a 'positive impact' on world energy markets.
- The UK [updated](#) its travel advice for Venezuela, removing information about sheltering in place.

Regional Responses

- Trump threatened military action against Colombia's government, telling reporters that such an operation 'sounds good to me'.
 - Colombia's President Gustavo Petro said he was ready to 'take up arms' in the face of threats from President Trump, insisting his anti-narcotics policy is 'sufficiently robust'.
- Trump said Cuba was 'ready to fall', saying Havana would find it hard to 'hold out' without receiving heavily subsidised Venezuelan oil.
- Cuba announced that 32 of its citizens had been killed in the US strikes, including military and intelligence personnel.
- At a Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) meeting, [Trinidad and Tobago](#) said it was not a participant in the US military operation in Venezuela and reaffirmed its commitment to the US' aim to dismantle transnational crime in the Americas.

Media

- *Live updates:* [AP](#), [BBC](#), [CNN](#), [DW](#), [NYT](#), [WP](#)
- [ABC](#): Ousted Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro and wife Cilia Flores plead not guilty in New York court
- [AFP](#): Switzerland to freeze any Maduro assets 'with immediate effect'
- [AFP](#): Colombian president ready to 'take up arms' in face of Trump threats
- [Al Jazeera](#): Cuba says 32 Cubans killed during US raids on Venezuela
- [Bloomberg](#): US taking early steps to prepare for Venezuela embassy reopening
- [CBS](#): As Delcy Rodríguez is sworn in as Venezuela's interim president, who is Nicolás Maduro's former No 2?
- [France 24](#): Trump warns Venezuela's interim president of 'big price' if she resists US
- [Politico](#): Schumer says Senate will vote on Venezuela authorization 'this week'
- [Reuters](#): Trump threatens military operation against Colombia, after Venezuela raid
- [Reuters](#): Hungary's Orban says US intervention in Venezuela good for energy markets

s 33(a)(iii)



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s 47E(d)

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Developments in Venezuela

- Call for de-escalation of tensions.
- Dialogue is the best means to secure regional stability and to support a peaceful, democratic transition for the people of Venezuela.
- We are consistent in stating our position that adherence to international law is important.
- We are monitoring developments closely.

Legality of US military action in Venezuela

- Call for de-escalation of tensions.
- We are consistent in stating our position that adherence to international law is important.
- Not in a position to provide a running legal commentary.
- It is for the US to explain the legal basis of its actions.
- What is most important now is a peaceful, democratic transition that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people.

Legality of arrest of President Maduro and his wife and their transfer to US

- Not in a position to provide a running legal commentary.
- We are consistent in stating our position that adherence to international law is important.
- It is for the US to explain the legal basis of its actions.

President Trump's stated intention for US to run Venezuela until a safe and judicious transition can take place

- Support a peaceful, democratic transition that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people.
- We are consistent in stating our position that adherence to international law is important.

President Trump's statement that it would be 'very tough' for (de-facto opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize recipient) Maria Corina Machado to lead Venezuela

- Support a peaceful, democratic transition that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people.

Does Australia recognize President Maduro?

- Australia has a longstanding policy of recognizing states, not governments

Has the US requested assistance or support for its actions?

- United States military action is a matter for the US Government.
- The US has not requested Australian support.

Will Australia condemn US actions?

- It is for the US to explain the legal basis of its actions.
- Call for de-escalation of tensions.

If pressed:

- We are consistent in stating our position that adherence to international law is important.
- Australia's approach on issues of transnational crime is to cooperate with regional parties to disrupt and prosecute, where possible.

Legality of US blockade of sanctioned oil tankers to/from Venezuela

- Not in a position to provide a running legal commentary.
- It is for the US to explain the legal basis of its actions.
- We are consistent in stating our position that adherence to international law is important.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Has the US committed war crimes with respect to strikes on alleged drug boats in the Pacific/Caribbean

- Not in a position to provide a running legal commentary.
- We are consistent in stating our position that adherence to international law is important.

s 33(a)(iii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Background

s 33(a)(iii)

s 33(a)(iii)

he US military also conducted air strikes (on military targets) in the Venezuelan states of Miranda, Aragua and La Guair.

In a press conference on 4 January 2026 President Trump said the US was going to run Venezuela "until such a time that we can do a safe, proper and judicious transition".

s 33(a)(iii)

Priorities were rebuilding Venezuela's oil industry, recovering money lost during the nationalisation of Venezuela's oil sector, and ensuring that the benefits flowed to the Venezuelan people and US investors (who would recuperate losses from past nationalisations). Trump was unclear the extent to which this would involve US boots on the ground.

The Venezuelan opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize winner, Maria Corina Machado, welcomed the US intervention, saying the country's "hour of freedom" had arrived and the opposition's candidate for the 2024 elections Edmundo Gonzalez (widely considered to have won with approximately 70% of the vote), should assume the presidency. President Trump said he had not spoken to Machado but that it would be tough for her to take over as leader as she doesn't have support or command respect within the country. He said Secretary of State Rubio had spoken to Venezuela's Vice President, Delcy Rodriguez, who he understood had been sworn in as President. She had expressed her willingness to do whatever is necessary.

Venezuela has requested an urgent meeting of the UNSC and Colombia has also requested as a current SC member supported by China and Russia. The Presidency is yet to schedule the meeting is not likely to be scheduled before tomorrow at the earliest.

As of 31 December, there have been at least 32 reported US strikes against vessels in the Southern Caribbean and Eastern Pacific which have resulted in 116 deaths of people who were allegedly smuggling illicit drugs. On 17 December (AEDT) President Trump ordered, via a Truth Social post, a blockade of all sanctioned oil tankers entering and leaving Venezuela.

Bogotá Post confirmed all staff and dependents were safe and accounted for. There have been five calls to the Consular Emergency Centre in relation to this event and no consular calls to post.

s 33(b)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

International Responses

- UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer [said](#) he would speak with Trump to 'establish facts first' and consult allies, denying UK involvement and reaffirming his commitment to upholding international law. He subsequently [said](#) the UK has long supported a transition of power in Venezuela. We regarded Maduro as an illegitimate President and we shed no tears about the end of his regime. I reiterated my support for international

law this morning. The UK government will discuss the evolving situation with US counterparts in the days ahead as we seek a safe and peaceful transition to a legitimate government that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people.

- Canada's Foreign Minister Anita Anand [said](#) Canada 'refused to recognise any legitimacy of the Maduro' calling on 'all parties to respect international law and we stand by the people of Venezuela and their desire to live in a peaceful and democratic society'.
- UN Secretary-General António Guterres [said](#) he was deeply alarmed by the escalation, which he described as 'a dangerous precedent', urging 'full respect, by all, of international law, including the UN Charter'.
- EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen [said](#) the EU was closely monitoring the situation and reaffirmed support for 'a peaceful and democratic transition'.
- EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs Kaja Kallas [reiterated](#) the EU 'has repeatedly stated that Mr Maduro lacks legitimacy and has defended a peaceful transition'.
- China's foreign ministry strongly [condemned](#) US actions and called on the US to 'stop violating other countries' sovereignty and security'.
- Indonesia's foreign ministry [said](#) (in Bahasa) it was monitoring the developments to ensure the safety of its nationals and called for de-escalation and respect for international law and the UN Charter.
- France's Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot [said](#) the US operation breached international law, with grave consequences to global security, but noted that Maduro had deprived Venezuelans of their freedoms.
- Spain's foreign ministry [called](#) for de-escalation and respect for international law and the UN Charter, offering to mediate a 'peaceful and negotiated solution to the current crisis', recalling it had never recognised Venezuela's 2024 elections.
 - Spain's Foreign Minister José Manuel Albares [said](#) (in Spanish) he was monitoring the situation and maintaining close contact with counterparts from Portugal and Italy which, along with Spain, have the largest contingent of EU nationals in Venezuela.
- Italy's Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani [said](#) (in Italian) he was monitoring events, particularly concerning the Italian community.
- Russia's foreign ministry [said](#) Moscow was extremely concerned and [urged](#) for 'immediate clarification', condemning US actions as 'an unacceptable encroachment on the sovereignty of an independent state'.
- Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha [said](#) Ukraine 'defended the right of nations to live freely, free of dictatorship, oppression, and human rights violations' questioning Maduro's legitimacy.

- Israel's Foreign Minister Gideon Sa'ar [said](#) Israel commended the 'US operation led by President Trump' who 'acted as the leader of the free world'.
- Switzerland [called](#) (in German) for 'de-escalation, restraint, and compliance with international law, including the prohibition on the use of force'.
- Iran's foreign ministry strongly [condemned](#) 'the US military attack on Venezuela and the blatant violation of the country's national sovereignty and territorial integrity'.
- A number of other statements were released including by [Qatar](#), [Albania](#), [Kosovo](#), [Qatar](#) and [Türkiye](#).
- Protests have been called outside US embassies against US actions in Venezuela, including in Australia, UK, Germany, Spain, France and Türkiye.
- Multiple countries issued consular alerts or updated travel advisories to warn against all travel to Venezuela including [Canada](#), [UK](#), [Ireland](#), [India](#), South Korea, Japan and China.

Regional Responses

- Brazil President Inácio Lula da Silva [said](#) the 'bombings on Venezuelan territory and the capture of its president cross an unacceptable line'.
- Mexico's President Claudia Sheinbaum [condemned](#) 'the military intervention in Venezuela' with the foreign ministry [affirming](#) (in Spanish) Mexico's 'willingness to support any efforts to facilitate dialogue, mediation, or accompaniment that contribute to preserving regional peace and avoiding confrontation'.
- Cuba's President Miguel Diaz-Canel [denounced](#) (in Spanish) the strikes as 'state terrorism'.
- Colombia mobilised its armed forces to the border with Venezuela amid concerns over a refugee 'influx' following condemnation by its president Gustavo Petro.
- Chile's President Gabriel Boric Font [expressed](#) (in Spanish) 'concern and condemnation' and reaffirmed Chile's commitment to international law.
- Argentina's President Javier Milei [posted](#) (in Spanish) an earlier statement in which he described Maduro as a regional threat and backing US pressure on Caracas.
- Panama's foreign ministry [reaffirmed](#) (in Spanish) its commitment to democracy and human rights, expressed concern over developments in Venezuela while condemning Maduro's authoritarianism and repression.
- Trinidad and Tobago's Prime Minister Kamla Persad-Bissessar [denied](#) any participation in US military operations and reaffirmed 'peaceful relations with the people of Venezuela'.
- Uruguay's foreign ministry [said](#) (in Spanish) Uruguay 'rejects, as it always has, military intervention by one country in the territory of another and reaffirms the importance of respecting international law and the UN Charter'.

- Ecuador's President Gabriel Noboa Azin [said](#) (in Spanish) 'the time is coming for all the narco-Chavista criminals', reaffirming his support for the 'Venezuelan people'.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Title: s 33(a)(iii)**MRN:** s 47E(d)**To:** Canberra**Cc:** FAF Posts**From:** Washington

Sent by: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

References: s 47E(d)**Response:** Priority, Information Only**Summary:**

The United States has conducted strikes across in Venezuela and Maduro and his wife are in US custody. The US said no US troops were killed. Trump said the US would run the country as an interim step, US oil companies would restore infrastructure and exploit resources, and that the US would retain all military options until its demands had been fully satisfied.

Following an extended build-up of military assets and rhetoric around Venezuela (s 47E(d)), the United States on 3 January conducted strikes on Caracas and detained President Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, on charges of ‘Narco-Terrorism Conspiracy, Cocaine Importation Conspiracy, Possession of Machineguns and Destructive Devices, and Conspiracy to Possess Machineguns and Destructive Devices against the United States’. The US military also conducted air strikes on military targets in the Venezuelan states of Miranda, Aragua and La Guair.

The US captures Maduro

2. President Trump on 3 January announced on Truth Social that ‘**the United States of America has successfully carried out a large-scale strike against Venezuela** and its leaders, President Nicolas Maduro, how has been, along with his wife, captured and flown out of the Country. This operation was done in conjunction with U.S. Law Enforcement. Details to follow..’.

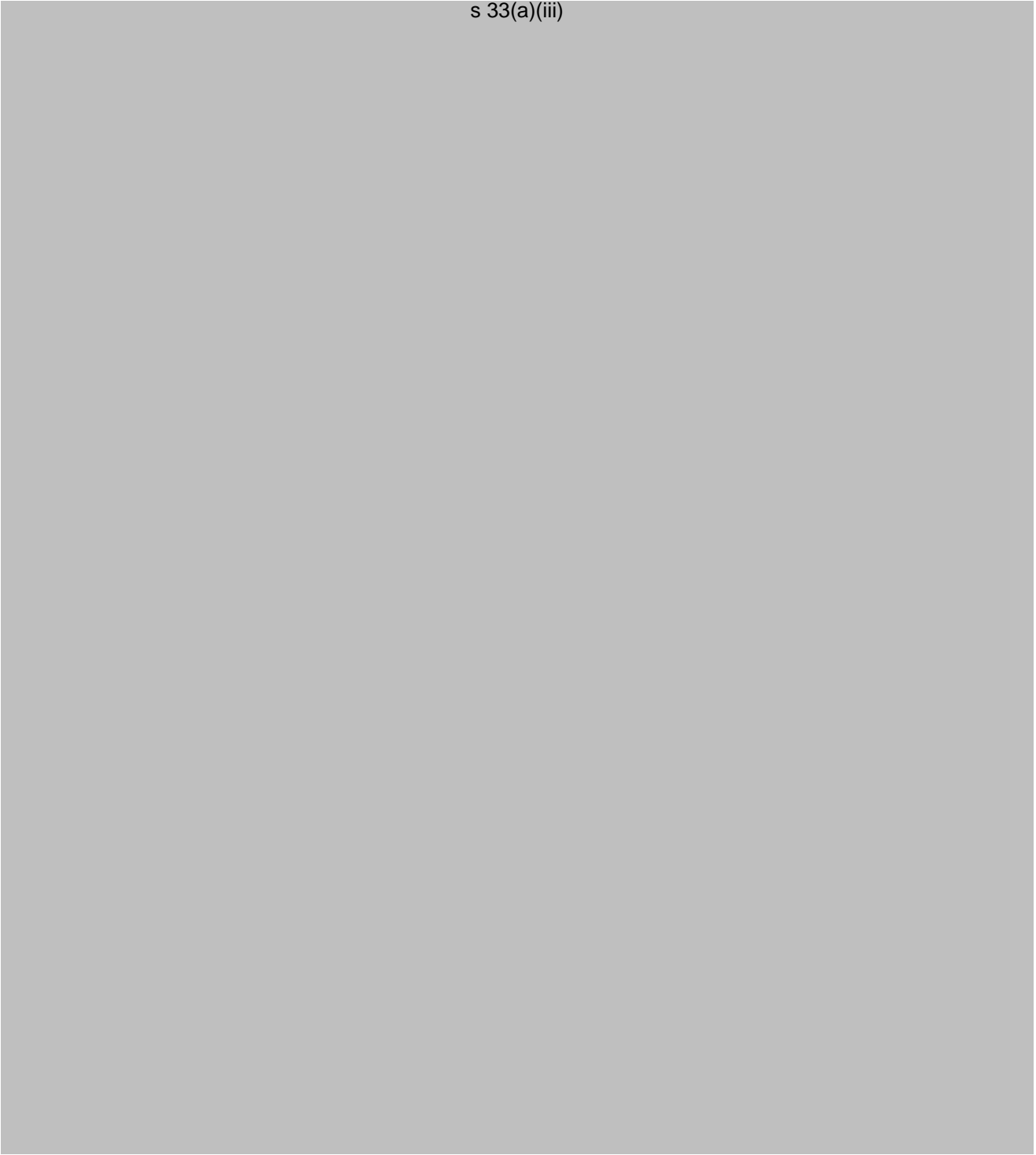
3. In a 3 January press conference with Trump, Chairman of Joint Chiefs General ‘Raizin’ Caine described ‘Operation Absolute Resolve’ as **an integrated apprehension mission** and an audacious operation of which only the United States was capable of doing. The operation was the culmination of ‘months of planning and rehearsal’ including an interagency process that ‘began months ago’. Caine said it required involvement of every component of the joint force, working in coordination with intelligence and law enforcement. Personnel were on notice to deploy from early December, pending alignment of conditions including weather, minimization of civilian casualties and to maximise the ‘element of surprise’.

4. At 2246 EST on Friday 2 January, Trump ordered US forces to proceed with the mission. More than 150 aircraft deployed from 20 air and sea bases across Western Hemisphere to layer effects and enable an interdiction force into Caracas. Space and Cyber Command dismantled and disabled systems across Venezuela. US Marines provided tactical overhead aviation protection.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

5. At 0101, US Special Forces landed in Maduro's heavily fortified military complex in Caracas. When met with fire, the US responded with 'overwhelming force'. **According to Trump, no US personnel were injured. One US military asset (a helicopter) sustained damage** but remained operational. Maduro and Flores sought shelter in a steel-enforced safe-room but, unable to close the door, surrendered and were taken into custody by Department of Justice officials, assisted by US military. Multiple strikes were conducted in self defence as US troops withdrew. The operation concluded at 0329 on Saturday 3 January.

s 33(a)(iii)



s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Title: Mexico and Central America: Initial responses on US air strikes in Caracas and capture of President Maduro

MRN:

s 47E(d)

To: Canberra

Cc: Americas Posts

From: Mexico City

Sent by: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Attachments: s 33(a)(iii) Embassy documents sent to Post.docx

Response: Routine, Information Only

Summary:

Mexico condemned US military actions in Venezuela and urged respect for international law in line with its non-intervention policy. Protests are occurring at US and Venezuelan embassies in Mexico City, largely against the US. Central American responses varied, with El Salvador and Honduras supporting the strikes and Guatemala voicing concerns similar to Mexico. Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and Panama backed Venezuela's democratic transition. Cuba demanded Maduro's release and an international response. But for a brief government statement, Nicaragua was largely silent today, however in the leadup to the airstrikes had issued numerous statements against the US military presence.

Cable reports on initial responses from Post's nine countries of accreditation (Mexico, Cuba, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Panama and Costa Rica) on the US' airstrikes in Venezuela and the capture of Nicolas Maduro.

Mexico

2. Shortly following the US's airstrikes in Venezuela, Mexico issued an [official statement](#) condemning the US's unilateral military actions in Venezuela, calling on the UN to act immediately to de-escalate tensions and enable a peaceful, sustainable solution. Mexico reaffirmed its willingness to support negotiation and mediation efforts.

3. President Claudia Sheinbaum shared the statement on her X account, along with supporting text quoting Article 2(4) of the UN Charter. When interviewed by the press, Sheinbaum said the government would expand on its official position tomorrow in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (including on Mexico's relationship with Venezuela, now that the US will administer the country). Sheinbaum reiterated that Mexico condemned the intervention in Venezuela, noting the Estrada doctrine enshrined in the Constitution (Mexico's core foreign policy principle of non-intervention). Sheinbaum had not yet spoken with President Trump, however several other presidents had reached out to Mexico and Sheinbaum noted the importance of regional unity, particularly in support of International Law and the UN Charter.

4. In his 3 January interview with Fox and Friends, Trump denied that actions in Venezuela were intended as a 'message' but that 'something had to be done about Mexico'. Although Trump had a good relationship with Sheinbaum, he said the cartels were running Mexico, and noted that Sheinbaum had refused US assistance. In response, Sheinbaum reiterated Mexico's position - collaboration, coordination but not subordination. She said Mexico had a good

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relationship with the US on security, based on communication and a common understanding that had been established in many meetings, including during Rubio's recent visit to Mexico.

5. The [Mexico City local government](#), [Senate](#), Governors, and the Morena party issued statements in line with the government's position. Opposition parties PRI and PAN supported US actions, with PRI party President Alito Morena welcoming the fall of a 'terrorist and communist narco-dictatorship' and PAN condemning Maduro's 'narcotyranny' and 2024 electoral fraud. Former President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador described the operation in Venezuela as an act of tyranny, that neither Simon Bolivar nor Abraham Lincoln would have endorsed. Protestors mobilised at the US and Venezuelan Embassies in Mexico City, with most condemning the US's actions.

Cuba

6. Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canal demanded urgent reaction from the international community against the 'criminal US attack on Venezuela', calling it state terrorism against the Venezuelan people and the Americas. Cubans also took to the streets in Havana with President Diaz-Canal, demanding the immediate release of Nicolas Maduro and Cilia Flores and accusing the US of threatening peace in Latin America and the Caribbean in pursuit of control over Venezuela's oil.

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10. In line with Mexico's statements, Guatemalan President Bernardo Arevalo called for an end to all unilateral military action, reaffirming the government's commitment to international law, non-intervention, and peaceful conflict resolution.

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