



HRN strongly condemns the United States' attack on Venezuela and its violations of Venezuela's sovereignty

On 3 January 2026, the US military launched an attack on Venezuela, striking locations in and around the capital Caracas and abducting Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores from their residence. At least 80 people, including both civilians and military personnel, were killed in the attack. President Maduro and his wife were then forcibly transported to the United States.

Human Rights Now strongly condemns the US military attack on Venezuela and its violations of Venezuela's sovereignty. The UN Charter prohibits the threat or use of force between states, permitting exceptions only for the exercise of the right to self-defence or when authorised by a UN Security Council resolution. It is clear that this attack falls under neither category. Grave human rights violations have been reported in Venezuela under Maduro's repressive regime, but these can in no way justify the illegal use of force. This principle was underlined by the international community in 2005 when the UN General Assembly recognized the "responsibility to protect" populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity, but clarified that force could only be used as a last resort and only through the Security Council, in accordance with the UN Charter (A/RES/60/1).

It should be noted that the US attack on Venezuela also constitutes the international crime of aggression under the Statute of the International Criminal Court. Moreover, the abduction and detention of a sitting head of state (and the abduction and detention of a foreign citizen from foreign soil) constitute clear violations of sovereignty and cannot be justified under international law.

The Trump administration has declared its intention to "run" Venezuela and take control of its oil industry, while hinting at military action should there be non-cooperation. Such threats of force also violate the UN Charter. Furthermore, President Trump has suggested the possibility of military intervention in Colombia, Mexico, Cuba and Greenland. Attempts to change the status quo by force, in disregard of international law, constitute an assault on the post-war international order founded on the principle of sovereign equality.

We demand that the United States immediately cease its violations of Venezuela's sovereignty and any use of force or threats of force against Venezuela.

As we approach the 81st anniversary of the end of WWII, we call upon all world leaders, including those of the United States and Japan, to respect sovereignty and to adhere to international law. We urge them to condemn all attempts to change the status quo by force and to make every effort to uphold a peaceful international order, in order to prevent a return to the dark days of the pre-war period.