

# Commotion across Latin America over the violation of Venezuelan sovereignty

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January 10, 2026



Havana, Jan. 7 — On January 3 Latin America awoke shaken by one of the most serious and dramatic episodes in international relations in recent decades. The bombing of military facilities and residential neighborhoods in Caracas and three other states of the country by the United States, followed by the kidnapping—rather than the “extraction,” as the corporate media presents it — of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro Moros and his wife, Cilia Flores, marks a breaking point in an already weakened regional system. For broad political, social, and religious sectors of the region, the operation represents a flagrant violation of a state’s sovereignty and a definitive blow to what for years had been called the “rules-based world order.”

The military action, directly attributed to the administration of Donald Trump, was confirmation of an openly belligerent foreign policy. The U.S. president, who has been promoting himself as a “president of peace” including his claim for a Nobel Peace Prize, is now regarded as one of the most warmongering leaders in modern times. We cannot forget the massive financial and military aid provided carte blanche to the Israeli genocide of the Palestinian people while exerting European governments to finance and sustain the war effort of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky; not to mention the bombing of Iran.

In this context, Venezuela is once again the target of a policy that, according to corporate analysts, never had the defense of democracy, justice, or human rights at its core, “much less in this part of the world,” according to voices from Caracas and other Latin American capitals. The history of interventions and blockades explains the peoples’ rejection of the humanitarian arguments put forward by Washington.

Following the attacks, the Venezuelan government decreed seven days of national mourning. The acting president, Delcy Rodríguez, announced the measure “in honor and glory of the young women and men who died, defending Venezuela.” The decree seeks to pay tribute to the victims of the bombings, which, in addition to military

targets—32 of them Cubans—caused collateral damage in civilian areas, increasing domestic and regional outrage.

At the same time, a contradictory event occurred that reignited the debate over the construction of narratives to justify aggression. The U.S. Department of Justice published a revised indictment against Nicolás Maduro in which it tacitly acknowledges that the so-called “Cartel of the Suns” is not a real criminal organization. This admission dismantles one of the most widely disseminated media narratives of recent years, which portrayed the Venezuelan leadership as part of an alleged continent-wide drug-trafficking structure.

For years, that narrative made front-page news in major international media outlets, fueled by alleged leaks from agencies such as the DEA and the CIA, and amplified by journalists and news agencies. However, recent documents reinforce the denial: the DEA’s own 2025 National Drug Threat Assessment details drug-trafficking routes in the Americas with precision, but does not include Venezuela as a main transit country nor does it mention the “Cartel of the Suns.” Reports from the UN and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction reach the same conclusion, further weakening the arguments used to criminalize the Venezuelan state.

The regional reaction was swift. Governments, political movements, and social and religious organizations across Latin America and the Caribbean condemned the U.S. aggression. Venezuelan Foreign Minister Yván Gil denounced what he described as “Marco Rubio’s hatred toward Latin America,” asserting that the Secretary of State “does not serve the interests of Americas, but rather the Miami mafias that finance his lobby.”

From Havana, Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel described the attack as a “criminal act” and “state terrorism,” and demanded a firm response from the international community. Former Bolivian President Evo Morales also expressed his

repudiation, joining a long list of leaders who consider the bombing a dangerous precedent for regional stability.

Political organizations such as the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity denounced that imperial interests continue to shatter global harmony, pointing to a line of continuity between the aggression against Venezuela, the genocide in Gaza, the blockade against Cuba, and acts of “piracy” against countries that do not align with Washington. In the same vein, the Communist Movement of Latin America and the Caribbean condemned the military aggression as a “slap in the face to international law” and a desperate attempt to regain control of the region’s strategic resources through terror and force.

The condemnation transcended the political sphere and reached spaces of faith. The Council of Methodist Evangelical Churches of Latin America and the Caribbean (CIEMAL) rejected any military intervention that fails to respect the sovereignty of peoples and promotes “ideologies of death.” In a statement, the organization recalled that from the Christian faith there is a call to raise a prophetic voice so that peace, justice, and healing may reign on earth, warning that violence will never be an effective solution to conflicts.

The impact of the episode also extended to Colombia. President Gustavo Petro called for a national mobilization in defense of sovereignty, after Donald Trump accused him of promoting drug production and suggested a possible military incursion into Colombian territory. Petro described those statements as a direct threat and called on the people to take to public squares to reject any attempt at foreign intervention.

Also, the Political and Academic Forum of the Puebla Group issued a strong condemnation of statements made by President Donald Trump directed at Colombian President Gustavo Petro and Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, describing such language as a form of intimidation against democratically elected governments and an attempt to reimpose a logic of coercion incompatible with

peaceful coexistence among sovereign states. According to the Group's statement, these remarks cannot be separated from the context of the recent U.S. military action against Venezuela and the detention of President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores—acts the forum characterized as an unjustifiable violation of international law and the United Nations Charter. In its declaration, the Puebla Group reaffirmed its solidarity with Petro and Sheinbaum and reiterated its commitment to the principles of sovereignty, self-determination, non-intervention, and the peaceful resolution of disputes in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Thus, the attack on Venezuela not only reopened old wounds but also reshaped the region's political map. For many governments and social movements, what happened confirms that Latin America once again faces the challenge of defending its sovereignty against a power willing to ignore international law. Amid mourning, outrage, and mobilizations, these questions echo across the continent: how far will this escalation go, and what cost will it have for regional peace?

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*Source: [Resumen Latinoamericano](#)*



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