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6 defiant words: Maduro sends message from New York, vows resistance after U.S. kidnapping

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Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro sent his first message from U.S. custody in New York, declaring: “We are well, we are fighters.”

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Maduro sent a message from New York confirming that he and First Lady Cilia Flores are “well” despite being held in U.S. custody following what Venezuela describes as a military kidnapping on Jan. 3, 2026. The message, delivered through legal representatives and shared publicly by his son, National Assembly Deputy Nicolás Ernesto Maduro Guerra, marks the first direct communication from the Venezuelan president since the alleged U.S. operation that left more than 100 people dead across Caracas, La Guaira, Aragua and Miranda states.

In the brief but powerful statement, Maduro urged supporters not to succumb to despair. “We are well, we are fighters,” he declared — a phrase that has already become a rallying cry across Venezuela and solidarity movements worldwide. His son emphasized that his father remains “strong” and unbroken, despite what Caracas calls an act of war. “They couldn’t defeat him by any means, so they used disproportionate force — but they did not defeat him,” he said.

The revelation comes amid intensifying diplomatic fallout. Acting President Delcy Rodríguez, appointed by Venezuela’s Supreme Court to lead the government in Maduro’s absence, has formed a High-Level Commission to pursue his release through legal and political channels. Meanwhile, mass protests continue daily across all 23 states, with citizens demanding the immediate return of their democratically elected leaders.

Maduro sends message from New York amid global condemnation of U.S. aggression

According to Venezuelan officials, the Jan. 3 operation involved coordinated airstrikes and ground incursions by U.S. special forces targeting presidential residences and military installations. The assault culminated in the forced extraction of Maduro and Flores, who were flown to New York and are reportedly being held at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn, a federal facility known for housing high-profile detainees.

While the U.S. government has framed the action as a “counter-narcoterrorism operation,” citing long-standing — but unproven — allegations linking Maduro to the so-called “Cartel de los Soles,” no formal charges have been presented in an international court. Venezuela rejects the accusations as politically motivated fabrications.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres condemned the operation, stating that it “violates core principles of the UN Charter, including sovereignty, non-intervention and the prohibition of the use of force.” Several members of the U.N. Security Council, including China, Russia and Algeria, echoed this stance, calling for an emergency session to address what they describe as a dangerous precedent in international relations.

“This is not law enforcement — it is state-sponsored abduction,” said Dr. Amara Diallo, an international law professor at the University of Dakar. “Even if allegations were true, due process requires extradition requests, judicial cooperation and respect for diplomatic immunity — not midnight raids and forced transfers.”

Under the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, heads of state enjoy absolute immunity — a norm critics say the U.S. appears to have disregarded. Legal experts warn that if such actions go unchallenged, the door opens for powerful states to unilaterally detain foreign leaders under flimsy pretexts.

Geopolitical context: A world reckoning with unilateral power

The crisis triggered by Maduro’s detention represents more than a bilateral dispute. At a time when multipolarity is rising and trust in Western institutions is eroding, the U.S. operation has galvanized a broad coalition of nations that view it as an overreach disguised as justice.

From Serbia, where President Aleksandar Vučić declared the U.N. Charter “nonfunctional,” to India, which called for a peaceful resolution, and Brazil, which convened an emergency CELAC summit, the response has been wide-ranging. Traditionally neutral actors such as the Vatican and South Africa have also expressed concern.

Regionally, the attack challenges the 2012 CELAC declaration of Latin America and the Caribbean as a “zone of peace,” which rejects foreign military intervention. In response, several governments have called for renewed regional dialogue.

Globally, the incident has intensified discussions around de-dollarization and alliance diversification. Venezuela has deepened energy and defense partnerships with Russia, China and Iran, while critics argue that continued unilateral actions by Washington risk further isolating the United States.

More than 100 Venezuelans — both soldiers and civilians — were killed in the Jan. 3 strikes, according to Venezuelan authorities. Those casualties have received little attention in U.S. official statements, which have focused instead on allegations against the country’s leadership.

Domestic unity and international solidarity in defense of sovereignty

Inside Venezuela, authorities say institutional continuity has been maintained. The Supreme Court’s designation of Rodríguez as acting president was presented as a constitutional measure, while the Bolivarian National Armed Forces reaffirmed loyalty to the civilian chain of command.

“The revolution does not depend on one person — it belongs to the people,” Rodríguez said in a national address, pledging to “work and fight simultaneously” for peace and sovereignty.

Her administration has pursued diplomatic efforts at international forums while mobilizing domestically to prevent destabilization. Officials report that community organizations and social movements have continued organizing daily activities amid heightened tensions.

International reactions have continued to emerge. Iran labeled the operation “criminal aggression,” China demanded the immediate release of Maduro and Flores, and Cuba described the action as “state terrorism.” In the United States, some lawmakers and human rights organizations have questioned the legality of the operation.

The message from Maduro — brief and personal — has taken on symbolic weight among supporters. By stating “we are fighters,” he framed the moment as one of resistance rather than defeat.

Conclusion: Words that defy empire

In a context marked by sanctions, military pressure and diplomatic conflict, Maduro’s message from New York has resonated widely. His five-word statement — “We are well, we are fighters” — has been repeated in demonstrations and public statements across Venezuela.

As the situation continues to unfold, supporters say the message reflects a broader insistence on sovereignty and political self-determination in the face of external pressure.

Source: [teleSUR](#)

