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BRIEFING: NO TO TRUMP'S WAR ON VENEZUELA – SIGN THE EMERGENCY STATEMENT

How is the US threatening Venezuela?

Over the past few months the Trump administration has intensified its long-standing aggression against Venezuela by deploying a range of warships (including a nuclear submarine) in the Caribbean Sea in a purported anti-narcotics operation. This has been widely condemned as a pretext for a 'regime change' operation aimed at deposing President Maduro and destroying Venezuela's Bolivarian Revolution.

To date, US forces have attacked 18 small boats in the Caribbean and Eastern Pacific, claiming they were engaged in drug trafficking but without presenting any evidence. Approximately 70 people have been killed in these attacks. Trump's latest move has been to authorise the CIA to conduct covert operations inside Venezuela.

Defending Venezuela's sovereignty

The task now is to maximise support for solidarity with Venezuela on the basis of respect for Venezuela's sovereignty, a recall of the US fleet and an end to US military aggression in Latin America and the Caribbean. Apart from the incalculable damage that the US might wreak upon Venezuela through this aggression, the danger is that this might be the start of a wider military escalation by Trump in Latin America. **Please sign and circulate the emergency statement at <https://bit.ly/notrumpwaronvenezuela>**

Condemnation of the US's actions

The US's aggressive actions have been described by the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Volker Türk, as unacceptable and clear violations of international law. A large number of Latin American and Caribbean countries have condemned the attacks as a threat to the stability and self-determination of all the peoples of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Regionally, the ALBA bloc of countries has issued a statement strongly denouncing the US's actions: *"We categorically reject the orders from the United States government to deploy military forces under false pretexts, with the clear intention of imposing illegal, interventionist policies that are contrary to the constitutional order of the States of Latin America and the Caribbean."*

Is Venezuela the wrong target for cutting off the flow of drugs to the US?

The purported rationale for the US's actions, that under President Maduro's leadership Venezuela is a 'narco-terrorist' country engaged in major drug trafficking, is refuted by most international experts – including the authoritative 2025 United Nations World Drug Report – who consider Venezuela a minor player in the narcotics trade.

According to the 2025 UN Report, over 80% percent of the lethal drugs (cocaine and fentanyl) entering the US use Pacific Ocean routes (where Venezuela has no coastline) and only just above 10% go across the Caribbean Sea.

As the *New York Times* has put it, "Mr. Trump's focus on Venezuela is at odds with reality: The vast majority of cocaine is produced and smuggled elsewhere in Latin America, according to data from the United States, Colombia and the United Nations. And Venezuela does not supply fentanyl at all, experts say".

For a very long time now, the US's Drug Enforcement Agency has made the accurate assessment that most of the drugs entering the United States come from the Andes, from Central America, and from Mexico.

Why, then, is the US bent on attacking Venezuela?

Venezuela is a rich country with vast mineral reserves, but for the US the prize is its oil. In 2023 Trump himself publicly admitted that he wanted to overthrow Maduro to secure control over Venezuela's oil, mirroring the way he boasted in 2020 that he was militarily occupying Syria's crude oil-rich regions in order to "take the oil".

This current instance of US aggression towards Venezuela is the latest – and perhaps the most serious – in its long history of trying to destabilise and overthrow the Venezuelan Government.

Hugo Chávez was elected President in 1998 and in a challenge to neo-liberalism set about using its oil wealth to transform the country through a series of far-reaching measures including healthcare, education, land redistribution and anti-poverty programmes. Ever since then the US has, in concert with the extreme right-wing elites in Venezuela, sought to destabilise the country and effect 'regime change'.

In 2002, a US-backed military coup temporarily ousted Chávez before a spontaneous popular uprising restored him to the presidency. Other US tactics to destabilise the country have included massive funding of opposition groups to try – unsuccessfully – to win elections, coupled with disinformation campaigns to isolate the country, campaigns of violence on the streets, further coup attempts and domestic sabotage.

But the most powerful US weapon against Venezuela has been an increasingly severe set of economic sanctions, illegal under international law, designed to destroy the economy and bring the country to its knees. Ramped up by Trump in his first presidency into a crippling economic, trade and financial blockade, sanctions have led to a 99% fall in oil revenues and well over a hundred thousand unnecessary deaths.

Trump has at various times threatened military action against Venezuela. He also backed minor politician Juan Guaidó's attempt to bring about 'regime change' by declaring himself 'interim president' in 2019. But despite lavish bankrolling of his activities, including insurrectionary adventures, with confiscated Venezuelan assets, this attempt at 'regime change' fizzled out when the right-wing Venezuelan opposition ditched Guaidó in December 2022.

Venezuela's commitment to Latin American independence and resistance to neo-liberalism are anathema to the US's historic and continuing commitment to the Monroe Doctrine. Bringing down Venezuela would be a body blow to left movements and governments across Latin America, especially blockaded Cuba and heavily-sanctioned Nicaragua.

Pushback against Trump inside the US

As well as opposition from Latin American and Caribbean governments and others across the globe such as China and Russia, Trump's actions have encountered domestic criticism.

Although Congressional Democrats have long supported sanctions against Venezuela, their Senate resolution requiring Trump to seek Congressional authorisation before any further military strikes purportedly aimed at drug cartels was narrowly defeated 48-51 (with two Republicans in favour and one Democrat against).

Within Trump's own Make America Great Again (MAGA) movement and among libertarian-leaning Republicans, influential figures have been doubtful about Trump's hawkish approach, while Reuters has revealed that Venezuelan far-right leader María Corina Machado sold Trump's advisors the false narrative that President Maduro was the leader of the – in reality, defunct - Tren de Aragua criminal gang, subsequently used to justify military action against Venezuela.