

Global outcry over US abduction of Venezuelan president

Iran FM raps US move as 'clear instance of state terrorism'
Calls mount for immediate release of Maduro



People hold protest in front of the US consulate against the US attack on Venezuela in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, on January 4, 2026.
● AFP

International Desk

The United States came under fire for breaking international law after it launched airstrikes on the Venezuelan capital and kidnapped its president, Nicolas Maduro, and his wife – a move that has also sparked protests in many countries.

Venezuela's president was in a New York jail on Sunday after the shock US snatch-and-grab raid on Saturday to remove him from power.

Maduro and his wife are facing drug-trafficking and weapons charges in the US.

Handcuffed and in sandals, Maduro was escorted by federal agents through a Manhattan US Drug Enforcement Administration facility, a video posted by the White House on social media showed.

"Good night, Happy New Year," the 63-year-old leader was heard saying in English.

The US move to kidnap Maduro came amid six months of escalating tensions between Washington and the South American country following the US military buildup near Venezuela on the pretext of cracking down on drug cartels.

Anti-US protests

Major cities across the world have been the scene of protests against the US kidnapping of the Venezuelan president. Protesters took to the streets in Argentina, Chile, India, Pakistan, the UK, Spain, Italy and many US cities to denounce Washington's move and demand the release of Maduro.

Many countries also called the US strike a violation of international law and called for immediate release of the Venezuelan president.

"China calls on the US to ensure the personal safety of President Nicolas Maduro and his wife, release them at once, stop toppling the government of Venezuela," the Chinese Foreign Ministry said in a statement, calling the strike a "clear violation of international law." Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim urged the release of Venezuelan president and his wife "without any undue delay."

"I have followed developments in Venezuela with grave concern. The leader of Venezuela and his wife were seized in a United States military operation of unusual scope and nature," Anwar said on US social media company X. He stressed that such actions "constitute a clear violation of international law and amount to an unlawful use of force against a sovereign state."

North Korea also censured the US move as a "serious encroachment of sovereignty," state media said.

Pyeongyang's Foreign Ministry "strongly denounces the US hegemony-seeking act committed in Venezuela," said a ministry spokesperson in a statement carried by the official KCNA.

"The incident is another example that clearly confirms once again the rogue and brutal nature of the US," they added. Singapore is "gravely concerned by the US intervention" in Venezuela, the country's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

France, Spain, Brazil, Iran, Russia and

the European Commission were also among those who said US President Donald Trump had broken international rules.

There were also calls for the UN security council to urgently convene to discuss the matter.

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi in a phone conversation with his Venezuelan counterpart Yvan Gil Pinto described the move as a "clear instance of state terrorism" and a blatant violation of the Venezuelan people's sovereignty. The former denounced the abduction of Venezuela's legitimate president and his spouse in the strongest terms, saying the action constituted an open assault on Venezuela's national will.

He reaffirmed Iran's support for the Venezuelan people and their elected government.

'Dangerous precedent'

The UN secretary general, Antonio Guterres, said the action by the US sets a "dangerous precedent," a spokesperson said.

"The secretary general continues to emphasize the importance of full respect – by all – of international law, including the UN charter. He's deeply concerned that the rules of international law have not been respected," UN spokesperson Stephan Dujarric said.

Brazil's president, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, said that the US actions "crossed an unacceptable line", comparing them to "the darkest moments of [US] interference in Latin America and the Caribbean" – an apparent reference to the dozens of US military interventions in the region over the past two centuries.

French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot posted on social media, "The military operation that led to the capture of Nicolas Maduro violates the principle of not resorting to force that underpins international law. France reiterates that no lasting political solution can be imposed from the outside and that only sovereign people themselves can decide their future."

Spain's Prime Minister, Pedro Sanchez said, "Spain did not recognize the Maduro regime. But neither will it recognize an intervention that violates international law and pushes the region toward a horizon of uncertainty and belligerence."

Miguel Diaz-Canel, the Cuban president, described the attacks as "state terrorism against the Venezuelan people."

Veep says gov't acknowledges 'right to criticism' over shortcomings



Mohammad Reza Aref
● IRNA

National Desk

Iran's Vice President Mohammad Reza Aref said on Sunday that the government is open to criticism but some people are looking to take advantage of the situation to turn the protests over economic woes violent.

Addressing a meeting with some cabinet members, Aref said the government acknowledges that the country is faced with shortcomings.

"The government recognizes the right to criticism and protest, and this is [within] the capacity of our [1979] Revolution," he said, stressing that the government expects the Iranian youth "not to fall into the trap of the enemies."

Since December 28, several Iranian cities have been the scene of protests against economic problems, which began at Tehran's Grand Bazaar over the

national currency devaluation. Several people have been reportedly killed during the protests.

Leader of the Islamic Revolution Ayatollah Seyyed Ali Khamenei on Saturday reacted to the ongoing demonstrations, stressing that "protest is legitimate, but protest is different from rioting."

Officials must engage with protesters, he added, because "talking to the rioter is different from talking to the rioter; talking to the rioter is of no use, and the rioter must be put in his place."

Ayatollah Khamenei underlined that it is "absolutely unacceptable" for groups to come "under various titles and names with the intention of sabotage and creating insecurity," standing behind "faithful, healthy and revolutionary bazaaris," exploiting their protests and engaging in unrest.

Recently launched Iranian satellites successfully enter in-orbit testing stage



● AFP

The three indigenous Iranian remote-sensing satellites of Paya, Kowsar, and Zafar-2 have successfully completed multiple in-orbit testing phases in the first week following their launch, marking a major national achievement in the country's space and communications sector.

Throughout the orbital tests, all three satellites progressed into the subsystem performance evaluation phase, and their overall conditions were reported as favorable, Press TV reported.

As a result of a problem that arose during the orbital injection of the Paya satellite

by the launch vehicle, significant focus was placed on stabilizing the satellite, and required corrective actions were executed with great accuracy.

The three satellites have successfully finished testing their power supplies and distribution, thermal management, telemetry and telecommand communications, positioning, stabilization, attitude control, and pointing subsystems.

On December 28, 2025, the three Iranian satellites of Zafar-2, Paya (Tolou-3), and Kowsar were launched into space aboard Russia's powerful Soyuz launch vehicle and were successfully placed into orbit.

US Democrats rip Trump administration for 'illegal' strikes on Venezuela



Venezuela's President Nicolas Maduro is escorted by administrator of the personnel of the US Drug Enforcement Administration after arriving at Stewart Air National Guard Base in Newburgh, New York, on January 3, 2026.
● ABC News

— pointing to remarks the officials made during briefings late last year.

"Secretaries Rubio and Hegseth looked every Senator in the eye a few weeks ago and said this wasn't about regime change. I didn't trust them then and we see now that they blatantly lied to Congress," Kim wrote on social platform X.

"This strike doesn't represent strength. It's not sound foreign policy," he continued. "It puts Americans at risk in Venezuela and the region, and it sends a horrible and disturbing signal to other powerful leaders across the globe that targeting a head of state is an acceptable policy for the US government."

Senator Ruben Gallego echoed him, calling it the "second unjustified war in my life time."

Jim McGovern also questioned the military operation, saying, "Without authorization from Congress, and with the vast majority of Americans opposed to military action, Trump just launched an unjustified, illegal strike on Venezuela," he wrote on X. "He says we don't have enough money for healthcare for Americans — but somehow we have unlimited funds for war?"

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez argued that the move was more about oil and regime change than drugs. "They need a trial now to pretend that it isn't. Especially to distract from Epstein (scandal) + skyrocketing healthcare costs," the New York Democrat added.

Democrats have railed for months against the Trump administration's moves in the Caribbean, including mounting pressure on Venezuela and strikes against alleged drug trafficking boats.



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