



# ELDH European Association of Lawyers for Democracy & World Human Rights

EJDM Europäische Vereinigung von Juristinnen & Juristen für Demokratie und Menschenrechte in der Welt

EJDH Asociación Europea de los Juristas por la Democracia y los Derechos Humanos en el Mundo

EJDH Association Européenne des Juristes pour la Démocratie & les Droits de l'Homme

EGDU Associazione Europea delle Giuriste e dei Giuristi per la Democrazia e i diritti dell'Uomo nel Mondo

WITH LAWYERS  
IN 23 COUNTRIES

Equality Privacy Social Rights  
No Racism Peace No Torture No War  
Self-Determination of Peoples Civil Rights Democracy  
Human Rights Rights of Migrants

Bologna, Donostia, Düsseldorf, Vienna, 04/01/2026

## Statement: On the Illegal Act of Aggression by the United States Against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela

We strongly and unequivocally condemn the acts of aggression carried out by the United States against the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. These actions constitute a grave and flagrant violation of international law, undermine the international legal order, and pose a serious threat to international peace and security.

### Violations of the United Nations Charter

The use of force, threat of force, or coercive measures against Venezuela are in direct violation of Article 2(4) of the Charter of the United Nations, which prohibits any use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of a state. This prohibition constitutes a peremptory norm of international law (*jus cogens*) and admits no exception other than those expressly provided for in the Charter.

No lawful justification under Article 51 of the UN Charter can be invoked, as Venezuela has not committed an armed attack against the United States. Any unilateral action taken outside the strict framework of the Charter therefore amounts to an illegal use of force.

### Act of Aggression and Violation of the Principle of Non-Intervention

These actions meet the definition of aggression under UN General Assembly Resolution 3314 (1974) and violate the principle of non-intervention as affirmed in the Montevideo Convention on the Rights and Duties of States (1933) and the Declaration on Friendly Relations (UNGA Resolution 2625 (XXV)).

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The International Court of Justice, notably in *Nicaragua v. United States of America* (1986), has clearly established that political, economic, or military coercion aimed at influencing the sovereign choices of another state constitutes a breach of international law.

### **Illegal Kidnapping, Personal Inviolability, and Demand for Immediate Release**

We further denounce the illegal kidnapping and deprivation of liberty of President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, which constitutes an additional and particularly serious violation of international law. Such acts violate the principle of sovereign equality of states, the personal inviolability of heads of state and their families, and the prohibition of arbitrary detention and hostage-taking under international law, including the International Convention Against the Taking of Hostages (1979), customary international law, and general principles of immunity attaching to heads of state.

The seizure or detention of a sitting head of state and his spouse outside any lawful international procedure constitutes an internationally wrongful act, engaging the international responsibility of the state concerned and potentially giving rise to individual criminal responsibility.

We therefore demand the immediate and unconditional release of President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, and the full restoration of their liberty and rights, in accordance with international law. Any continued detention constitutes a continuing violation and further aggravates the responsibility of the aggressor state.

### **Right of Venezuela to Self-Defence**

In accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter, Venezuela retains its inherent right of individual and collective self-defence against acts of aggression until such time as the United Nations Security Council takes the measures necessary to maintain international peace and security.

### **State Responsibility and Accountability**

Under the Articles on Responsibility of States for Internationally Wrongful Acts (ILC, 2001), the United States bears full international responsibility for its unlawful conduct, including the obligation to:

- Cease the internationally wrongful acts;
- Provide full reparation for the harm caused;
- Offer guarantees of non-repetition.

All states are under an obligation not to recognize as lawful, nor to aid or assist in maintaining, a situation created by a serious breach of peremptory norms of international law.

### **Call to European States and the United Nations**

We call upon European States and the institutions of the European Union to publicly and unequivocally denounce these acts of aggression, reaffirm their commitment to the UN Charter and international law, and refrain from any action that may contribute to or legitimize unlawful uses of force.

We further urge Member States to request an urgent meeting of the United Nations Security Council to address this situation, to demand the immediate release of President Nicolás Maduro and his wife,

and to take all necessary measures, in accordance with the Charter, to uphold international peace and security and ensure accountability for violations of international law.

### **Final Consideration**

This new act of aggression against Venezuela, together with the wars of aggression against Ukraine and against Gaza—where genocidal acts have been widely documented and alleged—illustrates a profound and accelerating collapse of the international legal order established by the Charter of the United Nations. The repeated violation of peremptory norms prohibiting aggression and genocide, combined with persistent impunity and selective enforcement of international law, gravely undermines the collective security system and the rule of law in international relations, placing global peace and security at serious risk.