



January 9, 2026

**Statement by the Global Institute for the Prevention of Aggression  
on the Situation in Venezuela**

The Global Institute for the Prevention of Aggression (GIPA) condemns the United States of America's act of aggression against Venezuela.

The military strikes carried out by the United States against Venezuela's territory and the forcible abduction of Nicolás Maduro and his wife on 3 January 2025 are a violation of the prohibition of the use of force enshrined under Article 2(4) of the Charter of the United Nations and customary international law. Together with the preceding United States' strikes on alleged Venezuelan drug trafficking vessels in the Caribbean Sea, and the ongoing blockade of Venezuelan ports by the United States, the 3 January strikes amount to an act of aggression. In the circumstances, assertions that Venezuela may face a "second wave" of a military attack if it does not comply with demands made by the United States (which has stated its intent to exploit parts of Venezuela's natural resources) amount to a threat to use force, which also violates the prohibition.

The United States has not set out a clear legal justification for its actions, and no such justification exists. In particular, the right of self-defence under international law is only enlivened by an actual or imminent armed attack. No such armed attack exists in the present circumstances: specifically, neither drug trafficking and other forms of organised crime, nor any Venezuelan expropriation of United States oil companies' assets, amounts to an armed attack as a matter of international law.

No other legal justification for the United States' use of force exists. Even if the Maduro regime was not considered to be the government of Venezuela as a matter of international law, no evidence of consent from any figure that might credibly claim to represent the government of Venezuela has been provided. There was also no authorisation of the use of force by the United Nations Security Council under Article 42 of the UN Charter.

The fact that Maduro and his wife were subject to United States' criminal law indictments does also not provide a valid legal basis for the use of force: the extraterritorial enforcement of a State's domestic criminal law is clearly unlawful in the absence of the relevant territorial State's consent.

In light of the circumstances surrounding its use of force, the actions of the United States may also involve the commission of crimes of aggression by persons in a position effectively to exercise control over or to direct the political or military action of the United States. Such persons should be held to account.

GIPA calls on the United States to end its blockade of Venezuelan ports, to ensure that all rules of international law applicable to legal proceedings against Nicolás Maduro are abided by, and to refrain from further threats to use force and further action against Venezuela or Venezuelan vessels that would amount to a violation of the prohibition of the use of force, or the prohibition against interference in internal affairs.

GIPA is deeply concerned that the actions of the United States in Venezuela represent a dangerous precedent. In this context, GIPA calls on all States to take meaningful steps to reinforce the prohibition of the use of force, including by supporting the amendment of provisions governing the International Criminal Court's exercise of jurisdiction over the crime of aggression. Mindful of the compounding risk posed by inconsistency in the application of the international law rules on the use of force, GIPA expressly urges States to join GIPA in calling out and condemning acts of aggression regardless of the identity of the author of such acts.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Two members of GIPA chose not to join in endorsing this statement.