

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Title: s 33(a)(iii)
MRN: s 22(1)(a)(ii) 04/01/2026 s 22(1)(a)(ii)
To: Canberra
Cc: FAF Posts
From: Washington
 Sent by: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
References: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Response: **Priority, Information Only**

Summary:

The United States has conducted strikes across in Venezuela and Maduro and his wife are in US custody. The US said no US troops were killed. Trump said the US would run the country as an interim step, US oil companies would restore infrastructure and exploit resources, and that the US would retain all military options until its demands had been fully satisfied.

Following an extended build-up of military assets and rhetoric around Venezuela (s 22(1)(a)(ii)) the United States on 3 January conducted strikes on Caracas and detained President Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores, on charges of ‘Narco-Terrorism Conspiracy, Cocaine Importation Conspiracy, Possession of Machineguns and Destructive Devices, and Conspiracy to Possess Machineguns and Destructive Devices against the United States’. The US military also conducted air strikes on military targets in the Venezuelan states of Miranda, Aragua and La Guair.

The US captures Maduro

2. President Trump on 3 January announced on Truth Social that ‘**the United States of America has successfully carried out a large-scale strike against Venezuela** and its leaders, President Nicolas Maduro, how has been, along with his wife, captured and flown out of the Country. This operation was done in conjunction with U.S. Law Enforcement. Details to follow..’.

3. In a 3 January press conference with Trump, Chairman of Joint Chiefs General ‘Raizin’ Caine described ‘Operation Absolute Resolve’ as **an integrated apprehension mission** and an audacious operation of which only the United States was capable of doing. The operation was the culmination of ‘months of planning and rehearsal’ including an interagency process that ‘began months ago’. Caine said it required involvement of every component of the joint force, working in coordination with intelligence and law enforcement. Personnel were on notice to deploy from early December, pending alignment of conditions including weather, minimization of civilian casualties and to maximise the ‘element of surprise’.

4. At 2246 EST on Friday 2 January, Trump ordered US forces to proceed with the mission. More than 150 aircraft deployed from 20 air and sea bases across Western Hemisphere to layer effects and enable an interdiction force into Caracas. Space and Cyber Command dismantled and disabled systems across Venezuela. US Marines provided tactical overhead aviation protection.



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5. At 0101, US Special Forces landed in Maduro's heavily fortified military complex in Caracas. When met with fire, the US responded with 'overwhelming force'. **According to Trump, no US personnel were injured. One US military asset (a helicopter) sustained damage** but remained operational. Maduro and Flores sought shelter in a steel-enforced safe-room but, unable to close the door, surrendered and were taken into custody by Department of Justice officials, assisted by US military. Multiple strikes were conducted in self defence as US troops withdrew. The operation concluded at 0329 on Saturday 3 January.

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s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 33(a)(iii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)



s 22(1)(a)(ii) – this page, together with the following pages (5-7) are irrelevant and have been removed

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Title: Mexico and Central America: Initial responses on US air strikes in Caracas and capture of President Maduro

MRN: s 22(1)(a)(ii) 04/01/2026 s 22(1)(a)(ii)

To: Canberra

Cc: Americas Posts

From: Mexico City

Sent by: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Attachments: s 33(a)(iii) Embassy documents sent to Post.docx

Response: Routine, Information Only

Summary:

Mexico condemned US military actions in Venezuela and urged respect for international law in line with its non-intervention policy. Protests are occurring at US and Venezuelan embassies in Mexico City, largely against the US. Central American responses varied, with El Salvador and Honduras supporting the strikes and Guatemala voicing concerns similar to Mexico. Costa Rica, Dominican Republic and Panama backed Venezuela's democratic transition. Cuba demanded Maduro's release and an international response. But for a brief government statement, Nicaragua was largely silent today, however in the leadup to the airstrikes had issued numerous statements against the US military presence.

Cable reports on initial responses from Post's nine countries of accreditation (Mexico, Cuba, Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Dominican Republic, Panama and Costa Rica) on the US' airstrikes in Venezuela and the capture of Nicolas Maduro.

Mexico

2. Shortly following the US's airstrikes in Venezuela, Mexico issued an [official statement](#) condemning the US's unilateral military actions in Venezuela, calling on the UN to act immediately to de-escalate tensions and enable a peaceful, sustainable solution. Mexico reaffirmed its willingness to support negotiation and mediation efforts.

3. President Claudia Sheinbaum shared the statement on her X account, along with supporting text quoting Article 2(4) of the UN Charter. When interviewed by the press, Sheinbaum said the government would expand on its official position tomorrow in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (including on Mexico's relationship with Venezuela, now that the US will administer the country). Sheinbaum reiterated that Mexico condemned the intervention in Venezuela, noting the Estrada doctrine enshrined in the Constitution (Mexico's core foreign policy principle of non-intervention). Sheinbaum had not yet spoken with President Trump, however several other presidents had reached out to Mexico and Sheinbaum noted the importance of regional unity, particularly in support of International Law and the UN Charter.

4. In his 3 January interview with Fox and Friends, Trump denied that actions in Venezuela were intended as a 'message' but that 'something had to be done about Mexico'. Although Trump had a good relationship with Sheinbaum, he said the cartels were running Mexico, and noted that Sheinbaum had refused US assistance. In response, Sheinbaum reiterated Mexico's position - collaboration, coordination but not subordination. She said Mexico had a good

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

relationship with the US on security, based on communication and a common understanding that had been established in many meetings, including during Rubio's recent visit to Mexico.

5. The [Mexico City local government](#), [Senate](#), Governors, and the Morena party issued statements in line with the government's position. Opposition parties PRI and PAN supported US actions, with PRI party President Alito Morena welcoming the fall of a 'terrorist and communist narco-dictatorship' and PAN condemning Maduro's 'narcotyranny' and 2024 electoral fraud. Former President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador described the operation in Venezuela as an act of tyranny, that neither Simon Bolivar nor Abraham Lincoln would have endorsed. Protestors mobilised at the US and Venezuelan Embassies in Mexico City, with most condemning the US's actions.

Cuba

6. Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canal demanded urgent reaction from the international community against the 'criminal US attack on Venezuela', calling it state terrorism against the Venezuelan people and the Americas. Cubans also took to the streets in Havana with President Diaz-Canal, demanding the immediate release of Nicolas Maduro and Cilia Flores and accusing the US of threatening peace in Latin America and the Caribbean in pursuit of control over Venezuela's oil.

s 33(a)(iii)

Central American responses

s 33(a)(iii)



s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 33(a)(iii)

10. In line with Mexico's statements, Guatemalan President Bernardo Arevalo called for an end to all unilateral military action, reaffirming the government's commitment to international law, non-intervention, and peaceful conflict resolution.

s 33(a)(iii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii) - this section, together with the following pages (11-14) are irrelevant and have been removed



s 33(a)(iii) – this page, together with the following pages (16-17) are exempt and have been removed.



s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 33(a)(iii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii) – this section, together with the following pages (19-22) are irrelevant and have been removed

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: "Anita Downey" <Anita.Downey@dfat.gov.au>
Date: Sunday, 4 January 2026 at 07:06:31
To: "Paul Schofield" <Paul.Schofield@dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Cc: "Sarah deZoeten" <Sarah.Dezoeten@dfat.gov.au>, "Harinder Sidhu" <Harinder.Sidhu@dfat.gov.au>, "George Mina" <George.Mina@dfat.gov.au>, "Anna Oldmeadow" <Anna.Oldmeadow@dfat.gov.au>, "Adam Mccarthy" <Adam.McCarthy@dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>, "Dougal McInnes" <Dougal.McInnes@dfat.gov.au>, "Kate Mitchell" <Kate.Mitchell@dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>, "Shilpa Pullela" <Shilpa.Pullela@dfat.gov.au>, "John Larkin" <John.Larkin@dfat.gov.au>, "Media" <media@dfat.gov.au>, "Julie Shams" <Julie.Shams@dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>, "Beth Delaney" <Beth.Delaney@dfat.gov.au>, s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>, "Rachel Moseley" <Rachel.Moseley@dfat.gov.au>, "Elizabeth Ward" <Elizabeth.Ward@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Venezuela - media points [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

OFFICIAL

Good morning,

As per the advice provided last night, the Venezuelan Embassy in Australia remains open. s 33(b)

The Charge, s 22(1)(a)(ii) , remains an accredited diplomat. While we should be informed when a Head of mission departs Australia temporarily, that doesn't always happen and he may be offshore. We would need to make enquiries with Home Affairs to confirm.

Many thanks

Anita

Anita Downey

A/g Chief of Protocol

Protocol and Events Branch | Executive Division

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

P s 22(1)(a)(ii) **M** s 22(1)(a)(ii)

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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all First Nations peoples, their cultures and to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

OFFICIAL

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Monday, 5 January 2026 3:26 PM
To: Global Watch Office; s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) Dougal McInnes; s 22(1)(a)(ii) Media; s 22(1)(a)(ii)
; Alan Copeland; s 22(1)(a)(ii) Anna Oldmeadow; s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: Re: *FMO request* Venezuela updated TPs/SITREP Tues 6/1/25 [SEC=OFFICIAL]

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: Global Watch Office <s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, January 5, 2026 3:22 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; Dougal McInnes <Dougal.McInnes@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; Media <media@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; Alan Copeland <Alan.Copeland@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; Global Watch Office <s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Subject: RE: *FMO request* Venezuela updated TPs/SITREP Tues 6/1/25 [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Confirming GWO will issue a sit rep at 0500 tomorrow. Current plan is for GWO to issue sit reps at 0500 (i.e. once per day) with the last one being issued on Wednesday, 7 January.

Kind regards
GWO
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Australian Government Global Watch Office
Crisis Preparedness and Management Branch | Consular and Crisis Management Division
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Sent: Monday, January 5, 2026 3:17 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Cc: Global Watch Office <s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; Dougal McInnes <Dougal.McInnes@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; Media <media@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Subject: *FMO request* Venezuela updated TPs/SITREP Tues 6/1/25 [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} and team,

Can updated TPs for Venezuela be circulated to FMO tomorrow morning by 5.45am please? (please include ^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)} CC'd).

GWO - FMO also require the updated SITREP by this time, which I assume will be distributed as a matter of course prior to then, as per this morning's?

Regards,
^{s 22(1)(a)(ii)}

A/g Director | Media Liaison Section
Media and Communications Delivery Branch | Strategic Communications Division
^{T s 22(1)(a)(ii)} | ^{M s 22(1)(a)(ii)}

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Monday, 5 January 2026 5:09 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) John Larkin; Angela Robinson; s 22(1)(a)(ii); Shilpa Pullela; s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: RE: UNSC Briefing 5 January Venezuela [REDACTED]

Thanks s 22(1)(a)(ii) – and we will get UNNY to send through summary points of statements from this briefing directly to FMO.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)
 Director
 Multilateral Strategy and Candidacies Branch

E | s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
 M | s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Sent: Monday, 5 January 2026 4:55 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; John Larkin <John.Larkin@dfat.gov.au>; Angela Robinson <Angela.Robinson@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; Shilpa Pullela <Shilpa.Pullela@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Subject: RE: UNSC Briefing 5 January Venezuela [REDACTED]

Thanks s 22(1)(a)(ii) for the update.

We understand that attendance at this debate would be business as usual, and are happy to leave it to UNNY's discretion to determine appropriate level.

On a related note in case the message hasn't arrived separately, when Anna and s 22(1)(a)(ii) were speaking with Sarah and Dougal earlier today, they mentioned it would be very helpful if UNNY could please send through some rolling email updates with key points (very rough is fine) from key statements in the UNSC briefing. A/g FM Watt is doing some media early in the morning Canberra time, so this will be useful and timely background.

Grateful if UNNY could send through the updates directly to FMO (Anna, s 22(1)(a)(ii) and me).

Thanks again

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Adviser to Senator the Hon Penny Wong
 Leader of the Government in the Senate
 Minister for Foreign Affairs
 Labor Senator for South Australia
 s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au) | M: s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au)
Sent: Monday, 5 January 2026 4:40 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au)
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au); John Larkin <John.Larkin@dfat.gov.au>; Angela Robinson <Angela.Robinson@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au); s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au); s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au); s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au); Shilpa Pullela <Shilpa.Pullela@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](mailto:dfat.gov.au)
Subject: UNSC Briefing 5 January Venezuela [REDACTED]

Dear s 22(1)(a)(ii)

HNY! Per my earlier message, today the UNSC has an open briefing under the “Threats to international peace and security” agenda item to discuss the recent escalation in Venezuela.

Council member Colombia requested this an emergency meeting. Venezuela also sent a 3 January letter requesting an emergency Council meeting, and s 33(a)(iii)

Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs Rosemary DiCarlo is expected to brief. s 33(a)(iii)

A completed template with recommended positioning is below, developed in consultation with ALM and USB, and more detail on the positioning of others is also below with thanks to ALM.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Thanks

Decision Template UNSC Open Briefing: Venezuela Critical Deadline: 5 January 2026	
Decision	Agreed / Please Discuss
Decision Requested by	9pm 5 January 2026. Meeting takes place on 5 January (NY time).
Recommendation	Australian attendance in UNSC chamber – acting HOM or acting DHOM at Post discretion, to give Post flexibility to remain in step with likemindeds. (Under the Rules of Procedure, Australia cannot speak.)

	s 33(a)(iii)
Penholder	N/A
Description	<p>The UNSC ‘Open Briefing’ will involve a briefing by UN USG for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, Rosemary Di Carlo, followed by statements by UNSC members and other “specially affected” member states under Rule 37 of the UNSC Rules of Procedure (we understand Venezuela, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Mexico, Paraguay, and Cuba).</p> <p>Member states that are not UNSC members (including Australia) can attend open briefings in their seats at the rear of the chamber but cannot speak. The very specific exceptions to this are under Rules 37 and 39; they do not credibly apply to Australia on this matter.</p> <p>s 33(a)(iii)</p> <p>HOM/DHOM may be asked in the margins about Australia’s position. They will refer to existing WOG talking points and the PM’s statement.</p>

s 33(a)(iii)

Like-minded positions	Likemindeds, including the UK, Finland, Austria, Sweden, Canada, Japan, ROK and NZ have generally called for a safe, peaceful, and democratic transition; for all states to act in accordance with international law; and for a transition that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people.
Previous engagement with FMO	Nil.
DFAT/WOG consultation outcomes	LCS, UGS
DFAT POC	s 22(1)(a)(ii) , EL2 USP, s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cleared by	Angela Robinson, FAS MPD

Europeans

- **Germany’s** Chancellor Friedrich Merz said Maduro had led his country to ruin and the most recent election was rigged. Germany did not recognise his presidency.
- **UK** Prime Minister Keir Starmer stated the UK had long supported a transition of power in Venezuela and would discuss the evolving situation with US counterparts ‘as we seek a safe

and peaceful transition to a legitimate government that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people' and would shed no tears about the end of Maduro's regime.

- **Finland's** Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen said 'all states have a responsibility to respect and act in accordance with international law', reaffirming support for a peaceful, democratic transition.
- **Austria's** President Alexander Van der Bellen asserted (in German) that Maduro was not a legitimate president and stressed that international law must be upheld.
- **Sweden's** Foreign Minister Maria Stenergard said Sweden 'sheds no tears' over Maduro's loss of power calling for a swift and peaceful transition.

Others

- **Canada's** Prime Minister Mark Carney said Canada had imposed additional sanctions on the Maduro regime in March, unequivocally condemning his grave breaches of peace and security. **Canada's** Foreign Minister Anita Anand said Canada stands by the people of Venezuela and their desire to live in a peaceful and democratic society. Canada also calls on all parties to exercise restraint and uphold international law.
- **Japan's** Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said (in Japanese) Japan would advance diplomatic efforts toward restoring democracy in Venezuela, reaffirming respect for international law and the UN Charter. **Japan's** foreign ministry said Japan will advance diplomatic efforts aimed at restoring democracy and stabilizing the situation in Venezuela, while continuously working closely with relevant countries, including G7 members and regional nations.
- **South Korea's** foreign ministry urged all parties to ease tensions and expressed hope that democracy would be restored through dialogue and respect for the will of the people.
- **New Zealand's** Foreign Minister Winston Peters said 'New Zealand is concerned by and actively monitoring developments in Venezuela and expects all parties to act in accordance with international law. New Zealand stands with the Venezuelan people in their pursuit of a fair, democratic and prosperous future.'

Latins

- **Peru's** foreign ministry said (in Spanish) the illegitimate government of Maduro violated the human rights of the Venezuelan people and called for the resolution to the political situation in Venezuela.
- **Paraguay** urged (in Spanish) democratic solutions for an orderly transition in Venezuela and warned that criminal networks in power threaten regional stability.
- **Guatemala's** President Bernardo Arevalo (in Spanish) said his government had consistently rejected Maduro's authoritarian rule and the July election outcome and that Guatemala stood ready to contribute to an inclusive and peaceful transition led by legitimate authorities chosen by Venezuelans.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Director

Multilateral Strategy and Candidacies Branch

E | s 22(1)(a)(ii) [@dfat.gov.au](https://dfat.gov.au)

M | s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Monday, 5 January 2026 5:54 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: Beth Delaney; s 22(1)(a)(ii) ; Angela Robinson; s 22(1)(a)(ii) ; John Larkin; s 22(1)(a)(ii) ; Dougal McInnes; s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: UNSC Open Briefing on Venezuela [REDACTED]

Hi s 22(1)(a)(ii) UNNY colleagues

Thanks for your work over the weekend, and in particular s 22(1)(a)(ii). Confirming our understanding that UNNY will attend the UNSC Open Briefing today as business as usual. We're happy to leave it to UNNY's discretion to determine the appropriate level for attendance. We've discussed this approach with FMO.

Noting this message might arrive through other channels too, FMO has requested that UNNY send through rolling email updates with key points (very rough is fine) from key statements in the UNSC briefing. A/g FM Watt is doing media early in the morning Canberra time, so this will be useful and timely background. Please keep timing in mind – to get FMO as much as possible as early as possible, you may need to send multiple emails throughout the debate (hence the rolling updates).

Grateful if UNNY could send these through directly to FMO (Anna Oldmeadow, s 22(1)(a)(ii)). With our apologies for the rather large distribution, please also CC Sarah deZoeten, Craig Maclachlan, Dougal McInnes, s 22(1)(a)(ii), John Larkin, and s 22(1)(a)(ii) as well as MPD (Angela Robinson, s 22(1)(a)(ii), and me).

In case Australia's representative is asked in the margins about our position, please refer to the following DFAT media talking points (in the broader 'United State – Trump Administration' points from the TP Database):

US military action in Venezuela

What is the Government's reaction to US strikes in Venezuela/capture of Maduro?

- *The Australian Government is monitoring developments in Venezuela.*
- *The situation is moving quickly and officials will continue to engage with international partners as circumstances evolve.*
- *As the Prime Minister has said, Australia has long held concerns about the situation in Venezuela, including the need to respect democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms.*
- *We continue to support international law and a peaceful, democratic transition in Venezuela that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people.*

Were the US military actions in Venezuela legal?

- *We continue to support international law and a peaceful, democratic transition in Venezuela that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people.*
- *Not in a position to provide a running legal commentary.*
- *It is for the US to explain the legal basis of its actions.*

What is the Government's response to President Trump's stated intention for US to run Venezuela until a 'safe and judicious transition' can take place?

- *We continue to support international law and a peaceful, democratic transition in Venezuela that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people.*

What is the Government's response to President Trump's statement that it would be 'very tough' for (de-facto opposition leader and Nobel Peace Prize recipient) Maria Corina Machado to lead Venezuela?

- *Support a peaceful, democratic transition that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people.*

Does Australia recognise President Maduro?

- *Australia has a longstanding policy of recognising states, not governments.*
- *Australia has long held concerns about the situation in Venezuela, including the need to respect democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms.*

Was Australia involved in the US actions/has the US requested assistance for its actions?

- *The US has not requested Australian support and Australia was not involved in these actions.*
- *No ADF personnel were involved in any stage of the operation.*

Will Australia condemn US actions?

- *It is for the US to explain the legal basis of its actions.*
- *We continue to support international law and a peaceful, democratic transition in Venezuela that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people.*

If pressed:

- *Australia's approach on issues of transnational crime is to cooperate with regional parties to disrupt and prosecute, where possible.*

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s 22(1)(a)(ii)

In case useful for UNNY, LAC has drawn up the following summary of current national positions that are similar to Australia's:

Europeans

- **Germany's** Chancellor Friedrich Merz said Maduro had led his country to ruin and the most recent election was rigged. Germany did not recognise his presidency.
- **UK** Prime Minister Keir Starmer stated the UK had long supported a transition of power in Venezuela and would discuss the evolving situation with US counterparts 'as we seek a safe and peaceful transition to a legitimate government that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people' and would shed no tears about the end of Maduro's regime.
- **Finland's** Foreign Minister Elina Valtonen said 'all states have a responsibility to respect and act in accordance with international law', reaffirming support for a peaceful, democratic transition.
- **Austria's** President Alexander Van der Bellen asserted (in German) that Maduro was not a legitimate president and stressed that international law must be upheld.
- **Sweden's** Foreign Minister Maria Stenergard said Sweden 'sheds no tears' over Maduro's loss of power calling for a swift and peaceful transition.

Others

- **Canada's** Prime Minister Mark Carney said Canada had imposed additional sanctions on the Maduro regime in March, unequivocally condemning his grave breaches of peace and security. **Canada's** Foreign Minister Anita Anand said Canada stands by the people of Venezuela and their desire to live in a peaceful and democratic society. Canada also calls on all parties to exercise restraint and uphold international law.
- **Japan's** Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said (in Japanese) Japan would advance diplomatic efforts toward restoring democracy in Venezuela, reaffirming respect for international law and the UN Charter. **Japan's** foreign ministry said Japan will advance diplomatic efforts aimed at

restoring democracy and stabilizing the situation in Venezuela, while continuously working closely with relevant countries, including G7 members and regional nations.

- **South Korea**'s foreign ministry urged all parties to ease tensions and expressed hope that democracy would be restored through dialogue and respect for the will of the people.
- **New Zealand**'s Foreign Minister Winston Peters said 'New Zealand is concerned by and actively monitoring developments in Venezuela and expects all parties to act in accordance with international law. New Zealand stands with the Venezuelan people in their pursuit of a fair, democratic and prosperous future.'

Latins

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- **Paraguay** urged (in Spanish) democratic solutions for an orderly transition in Venezuela and warned that criminal networks in power threaten regional stability.
- **Guatemala**'s President Bernardo Arevalo (in Spanish) said his government had consistently rejected Maduro's authoritarian rule and the July election outcome and that Guatemala stood ready to contribute to an inclusive and peaceful transition led by legitimate authorities chosen by Venezuelans.

Kind regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Assistant Director | United Nations Political Section
 Multilateral Policy Branch | Multilateral Policy and Human Rights Division
 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
 P s 22(1)(a)(ii) | M s 22(1)(a)(ii)
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We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of Country throughout Australia, and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all First Nations peoples, their cultures and to their Elders, past, present and emerging.

From: Global Watch Office
Sent: Tuesday, 6 January 2026 5:12 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: SITREP 5 : Venezuela : Strikes in Caracas [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL



Australian Government
 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

Global Watch Office Situation Report

Venezuela Strikes in Caracas

Key Developments

- Delcy Rodríguez was sworn in as Venezuela’s interim president, saying she was willing to ‘cooperate with the US on the future of the country’.
 - Rodríguez invited the US to ‘work together on a cooperative agenda, oriented toward shared development, within the framework of international law, and to strengthen lasting community coexistence’.
- US President Donald Trump warned Rodríguez that she would pay ‘a very big price’ if she did not meet the US’ policy demands.
- The UN Security Council [met](#) to discuss the US’ actions in Venezuela.
 - The UN Secretary-General António Guterres [said](#) it was important to respect the UN Charter, stick to the principles of sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of states, and prohibit the threat or use of force.
 - Venezuela’s Ambassador to the UN Samuel Reinaldo Moncada Acosta called the US attack ‘illegitimate’ with no legal justification that constituted a ‘flagrant violation’ of the UN charter.
 - US Representative to the UN Mike Waltz [said](#) the action to arrest Nicolás Maduro was a law enforcement operation and the US would not waver in protecting Americans from the ‘scourge’ of narco-terrorism.
 - The [UK](#), Russia and China have also delivered statements.
- Appearing before a federal court judge, Nicolás Maduro, and his wife, Cilia Flores, pleaded ‘not guilty’ on charges of drug trafficking and other crimes.
- Switzerland [froze](#) assets held in the country by Maduro and his associates with immediate effect.
 - The measure, valid for four years, aims to prevent an outflow of potentially illicit assets and is in addition to existing sanctions imposed on Venezuela since 2018.

- Trump said the US was ‘thinking about’ reopening their embassy in Venezuela, which has been closed since 2019.
- The general sentiment in Caracas appears calm, though cautious, with life returning to normal.
- Flights continue to resume with Venezuelan airlines operating both domestic and international routes, including to Bogota and Panama City, as well as scheduled flights to Barcelona, Curaçao and Madrid.

Australian Government Response

- Bogotá post’s Crisis Action Plan (CAP) for Venezuela remains at Yellow.
- There have been 13 calls to the Consular Emergency Centre and Bogotá post in relation to this event.

Local Government Response

- Interim president Rodríguez created a commission to seek Maduro’s release.
 - Foreign Minister Yvan Gil and President of the National Assembly of Venezuela Jorge Rodríguez will co-chair the commission.

International Responses

- Canada’s Prime Minister Mark Carney [spoke](#) with Maria Corina Macado and expressed support for a ‘peaceful transition of power led by Venezuela that respects the democratic will of the Venezuelan people’.
- The EU High Representative issued a [statement](#) supported by 26 members (except Hungary) that advocated for a Venezuelan-led peaceful transition to democracy and calling for the unconditional release of all political prisoners.
- China’s Foreign Minister Wang Yi [said](#) China could not accept that any nation can claim to be the ‘world’s judge’ and ‘the sovereignty and security of all countries should be fully protected under international law’.
- The Philippines foreign ministry [acknowledged](#) the US’ underlying security considerations and stressed ‘the relevant principles of international law’.
- Hungary’s Prime Minister Viktor Orban said the US decision to remove Maduro should have a ‘positive impact’ on world energy markets.
- The UK [updated](#) its travel advice for Venezuela, removing information about sheltering in place.

Regional Responses

- Trump threatened military action against Colombia’s government, telling reporters that such an operation ‘sounds good to me’.
 - Colombia’s President Gustavo Petro said he was ready to ‘take up arms’ in the face of threats from President Trump, insisting his anti-narcotics policy is ‘sufficiently robust’.
- Trump said Cuba was ‘ready to fall’, saying Havana would find it hard to ‘hold out’ without receiving heavily subsidised Venezuelan oil.
- Cuba announced that 32 of its citizens had been killed in the US strikes, including military and intelligence personnel.
- At a Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) meeting, Trinidad and Tobago said it was not a participant in the US military operation in Venezuela and reaffirmed its commitment to the US’ aim to dismantle transnational crime in the Americas.

Media

- *Live updates:* [AP](#), [BBC](#), [CNN](#), [DW](#), [NYT](#), [WP](#)
- [ABC](#): Ousted Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro and wife Cilia Flores plead not guilty in New York court

- [AFP](#): Switzerland to freeze any Maduro assets ‘with immediate effect’
- [AFP](#): Colombian president ready to ‘take up arms’ in face of Trump threats
- [Al Jazeera](#): Cuba says 32 Cubans killed during US raids on Venezuela
- [Bloomberg](#): US taking early steps to prepare for Venezuela embassy reopening
- [CBS](#): As Delcy Rodríguez is sworn in as Venezuela’s interim president, who is Nicolás Maduro’s former No 2?
- [France 24](#): Trump warns Venezuela’s interim president of ‘big price’ if she resists US
- [Politico](#): Schumer says Senate will vote on Venezuela authorization ‘this week’
- [Reuters](#): Trump threatens military operation against Colombia, after Venezuela raid
- [Reuters](#): Hungary’s Orban says US intervention in Venezuela good for energy markets

Cables

s 33(a)(iii)

Australian Government Global Watch Office

Ts 22(1)(a)(ii) | **Ms 22(1)(a)(ii)**

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Sent: Tuesday, 6 January 2026 5:34 AM
To: Anna Oldmeadow; s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Cc: Craig Maclachlan; James Larsen; Beth Delaney; Sarah deZoeten; Dougal McInnes; s 22(1)(a)(ii) ; John Larkin; s 22(1)(a)(ii) ; Angela Robinson; s 22(1)(a)(ii)
Subject: UN Security Council - Venezuela briefing summary [REDACTED]
Attachments: REMARKS TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON VENEZUELA.pdf

[REDACTED]

Colleagues

A brief update on the UNSC Venezuela briefing that took place in New York today.

Briefers:

USG Di Carlo read a statement ([attached](#)) on behalf of the **Secretary-General**, expressing concern that the rules of international law were not respected during the 3 January military action, expressing concern at the setting of precedent on the conduct of relations between states, noting that the casualty numbers remained undetermined, urging all parties to engage in dialogue, and noting that existing international law is there to address narcotics trafficking and transnational crime.

Jeffrey Sachs s 33(a)(iii) urged states to defend the UN Charter, the role of the UNSC was not to discuss the Venezuelan government or Maduro's actions, but to defend Article 2 (4) and what a state can and cannot do under the Charter.

s 33(a)(iii) Mercedes D Frietas from Transparency Venezuela, outlined the negative impacts of the Maduro regime on Venezuelans: corruption, transnational crime, economic crisis, power cuts, and political prisoners.

Council Members:

[The US](#) (Ambassador Waltz) echoed Rubio's lines (s 22(1)(a)(ii)) – announced the successful capture and transfer of Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores to face trial in US courts for narcoterrorism, drug trafficking, and weapons charges, emphasizing that this was a lawful law enforcement operation, not an act of war. The statement condemned Maduro's illegitimate regime for election fraud, human rights abuses, and alliances with terrorist organizations including Hezbollah, corrupt Iranian officials, and other malign actors, asserting that these actions destabilized the Western Hemisphere and harmed millions, while reaffirming US commitment to justice and regional stability.

Of Security Council Members, [Russia](#), [China](#), [Colombia](#) condemned the actions taken by the US on 3 January as breaches of international law. Russia noted the double-standards of those attempting to justify the actions of Washington when they "froth" to condemn others' violations of international law, and called in question the relevance of the UN and UNSC if it could not take action here. China listed the US actions over past decades that bypassed the UNSC in an attempt to "topple governments".

[The UK](#), [Denmark](#), [Latvia](#), [Panama](#), [Bahrain](#), [Greece](#), and the A3 ([DRC](#), [Somalia](#), [Liberia](#)) s 33(a)(iii) noting the illegitimate regime of Maduro and it's human rights and other violations, calling for dialogue and a peaceful transition, and noting their support for the UN Charter and International law in general. **Panama** also noted that a genuine transition could not occur if it preserved the Maduro regime or power structures under another name, and VP Rodriguez could not legitimately take power.

s 33(a)(iii)

France stated that international law had to be upheld in all places and at all times; the military actions on 3 January were counter to the principles of non-use of force and non-intervention, and that such actions chip away at the foundations of the international order, undermine the foundations of the United Nations, and weaken international peace and security.

Regional voices:

Venezuela called the US actions on 3 January an illegitimate armed attack with no justification, which included the destruction of civilian infrastructure and the kidnapping of a Head of State in violation of the norm of immunity while in office. Venezuela called on the Security Council to: demand the US respect international law and the immunities of its Head of State; immediately release and return Maduro and his wife to Venezuela; condemn the use of force and the acquisition of territory and natural resources.

Under Rule 37, the following states also intervened:

- Condemned or expressed concerns about the US actions: **Cuba, Nicaragua, Eritrea** (on behalf of the GoF of the Charter), **South Africa, Brazil, Mexico, Iran, Uganda** (on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement), **Chile**
- Supported the US actions: **Argentina, Trinidad and Tobago**
- Called for dialogue and respect for international law (s 33(a)(iii)): **Paraguay, Spain**

We will also send a cable.

Regards

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

—
Acting Deputy Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of Australia to the United Nations
150 East 42nd Street, Floor 33, New York, NY 10017-5612
P s 22(1)(a)(ii) | M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

REMARKS TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL ON VENEZUELA

New York, 5 January 2025

[As delivered by Under-Secretary-General Rosemary A. DiCarlo]

Mr. President, Members of the Security Council,

We meet at a grave time following the 3 January United States military action in the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

The broad outlines of the events of Saturday have been widely reported.

Early that day, US forces were active across Caracas and in the northern states of Miranda, Aragua, and La Guaira.

The extent of casualties resulting from these actions remains undetermined.

In a statement on social media on Saturday, President Donald Trump announced the conduct of a “large scale strike against Venezuela, and its leader, President Nicolás Maduro”.

During a press conference on Saturday, President Trump stated: “We are going to run the country until such time that we can do a safe, proper and judicious transition”.

The Government of Venezuela has characterized the United States action as a military aggression carried out in civilian and military areas, and as a flagrant violation of the Charter, posing a threat to international and regional peace and security.

As we speak, President Maduro is being held in New York accused by US authorities, along with his wife Cilia Flores, of serious criminal offenses.

What is less certain is the immediate future of Venezuela.

I am deeply concerned about the possible intensification of instability in the country, the potential impact on the region, and the precedent it may set for how relations between and among states are conducted.

Mr President,

The situation in Venezuela has been a matter of regional and international concern for many years now.

Attention on the country only grew following the contested presidential elections in July 2024.

The panel of electoral experts I appointed at the Venezuelan Government's request to accompany the elections highlighted serious issues.

We have consistently called for full transparency and the complete publication of the results of the elections.

As we reported to the Council on 23 December, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights has catalogued serious violations.

On 3 January, Venezuelan interim President Delcy Rodríguez invoked an emergency decree throughout the national territory extending additional security powers to the government.

Mr. President,

The latest developments follow a period of heightened tensions, beginning in mid-August, as discussed in this Council on two previous occasions.

I have consistently stressed the imperative of full respect, by all, for international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, which provides the foundation for the maintenance of international peace and security.

I remain deeply concerned that rules of international law have not been respected with regard to the 3 January military action.

The Charter enshrines the prohibition of the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

The maintenance of international peace and security depends on the continued commitment of all Member States to adhere to all the provisions of the Charter.

Mr. President,

Venezuela has experienced decades of internal instability and social and economic turmoil. Democracy has been undermined. Millions of its people have fled the country.

The situation is critical, but it is still possible to prevent a wider and more destructive conflagration.

I call on all Venezuelan actors to engage in an inclusive, democratic dialogue in which all sectors of society can determine their future.

This entails the full respect of human rights, the rule of law and the sovereign will of the Venezuelan people.

I also urge Venezuela's neighbors, and the international community more broadly, to act in a spirit of solidarity and in adherence to the principles, laws and rules erected to promote peaceful coexistence.

I welcome and am ready to support all efforts aimed at assisting Venezuelans in finding a peaceful way forward.

Mr. President, Excellencies,

In situations as confused and complex as the one we now face, it is important to stick to principles.

Respect for the UN Charter and all other applicable legal frameworks to safeguard peace and security.

Respect for the principles of sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of states.

The prohibition of the threat or use of force.

The power of the law must prevail.

International law contains tools to address issues such as illicit traffic in narcotics, disputes about resources and human rights concerns.

This is the route we need to take.

Thank you.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Sent: Tuesday, 6 January 2026 3:07 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; Anna Oldmeadow <Anna.Oldmeadow@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; Craig Maclachlan <Craig.Maclachlan@dfat.gov.au>; Sarah deZoeten <Sarah.Dezoeten@dfat.gov.au>; Shilpa Pullela <Shilpa.Pullela@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; Kate Mitchell <Kate.Mitchell@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; Dougal McInnes <Dougal.McInnes@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; John Larkin <John.Larkin@dfat.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Venezuela TPS [REDACTED]

Thanks s 22(1)(a)(ii)

With thanks to colleagues in US and LatAm teams, please see responses in blue below:

- We saw that UK Foreign Secretary Cooper mentioned in her address to Parliament that she had spoken to Secretary Rubio. We would be very grateful if DFAT could please advise which

other counterparts Secretary Rubio has spoken with about the matter, to the extent known / possible to find out.

s 33(a)(iii)

- **Delcy Rodríguez, Acting President of Venezuela** – President Trump said Rubio spoke with Rodríguez after Maduro’s capture and that she indicated she would “do whatever you need” as Venezuela’s interim leader ([BBC](#)).
- **Yvette Cooper, UK Foreign Secretary** – Cooper said in a [statement to the House of Commons](#) on 5 January that she discussed with Rubio “what should happen next” and the importance of complying with international law as the US and UK coordinate their diplomatic approaches.
- **David van Weel, Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs** – the [State Department](#) reported that Secretary Rubio spoke to Dutch Foreign Minister van Weel about ‘the US’ counternarcotics operations in the Caribbean and the need to ensure a proper, judicious transition of power in Venezuela.’ [This may have been a pre-arranged call.]
- **Kaja Kallas, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs & Security Policy** – Rubio spoke by phone with the EU’s foreign affairs chief, who reiterated the EU’s denial of Maduro’s legitimacy and urged respect for international law and restraint ([X](#)).

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Happy to discuss.

Many thanks,

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Director | United States Global Issues Section
 US Branch | Geostrategy and Partnerships Division
 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

T s 22(1)(a)(ii) | M s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 6 January 2026 12:59 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; Anna Oldmeadow <Anna.Oldmeadow@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Cc: Dougal McInnes <Dougal.McInnes@dfat.gov.au>; Craig Maclachlan <Craig.Maclachlan@dfat.gov.au>; Sarah deZoeten <Sarah.Dezoeten@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; Shilpa Pullela <Shilpa.Pullela@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; Kate Mitchell <Kate.Mitchell@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Subject: RE: Venezuela TPs [REDACTED]

Hi Dougal, s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Thanks again for these updated TPs this morning.

A few background questions from us today:

- We saw that UK Foreign Secretary Cooper mentioned in her address to Parliament that she had spoken to Secretary Rubio. We would be very grateful if DFAT could please advise which other counterparts Secretary Rubio has spoken with about the matter, to the extent known / possible to find out.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Thank you!
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Tuesday, 6 January 2026 6:02 AM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; Anna Oldmeadow <Anna.Oldmeadow@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Cc: Dougal McInnes <Dougal.McInnes@dfat.gov.au>; Craig Maclachlan <Craig.Maclachlan@dfat.gov.au>; Sarah deZoeten <Sarah.Dezoeten@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; Shilpa Pullela <Shilpa.Pullela@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>; Kate Mitchell <Kate.Mitchell@dfat.gov.au>; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au>
Subject: Venezuela TPs [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Dear s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Please find attached some refreshed lines responding to developments overnight. Mostly reorganising existing lines. We've worked them into your existing points below highlighting new content in red. Background is all new.

Happy to discuss.

Thanks,
s 22(1)(a)(ii)

From: Dougal McInnes <Dougal.McInnes@dfat.gov.au>
Sent: Monday, 5 January 2026 5:26 PM
To: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au; s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Subject: Re: Lines tomorrow [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Thanks s 22(1)(a)(ii)
 Will do

Dougal McInnes

Assistant Secretary, United States Branch
 Geostrategy and Partnerships Division
 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
 P s 22(1)(a)(ii) | M s 22(1)(a)(ii)
dfat.gov.au | [X](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [LinkedIn](#)

From: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Date: Monday, 5 January 2026 at 5:17:51 pm
To: "Dougal McInnes" <Dougal.McInnes@dfat.gov.au>
Cc: s 22(1)(a)(ii) @dfat.gov.au
Subject: Lines tomorrow [SEC=OFFICIAL]

OFFICIAL

Hi Dougal,

Thanks for the chat earlier.

Below are our current lines on the main Venezuela questions.

As mentioned, we will just need lines on any significant updates / changes / announcements that occur overnight that the PM and other Ministers may be asked about by 6:30am at the latest (ideally 6am which will give us a moment to review).

Even a few dot points to give us a steer would be helpful, and we are happy for this to come from US Post who is in a more manageable timezone.

s 22(1)(a)(ii) (cc'ed) will be on for media tomorrow.

Thanks again,
 s 22(1)(a)(ii)

VENEZUELA

The Australian Government is monitoring developments in Venezuela.

We urge all parties to support dialogue and diplomacy in order to secure regional stability and prevent escalation.

Australia has long held concerns about the situation in Venezuela, including the need to respect democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We continue to support international law and a peaceful, democratic transition in Venezuela that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people.

Australians in Venezuela who need assistance can contact the 24/7 emergency consular assistance team at +61 2 6261 3305 from anywhere in the world or 1300 555 135 from within Australia.

Is this legal? Is this a violation of international law?

It is for the US to explain the legal basis of its actions.

Australia has consistently stated its support for adherence to international law, and we continue to do so.

Which countries has Australia spoken to?

The situation is moving quickly, and as you would expect, officials are engaging with international partners as circumstances evolve.

Australia does not have an Embassy in Venezuela, so officials are engaging with partner missions both in Venezuela and the region.

Has Australia raised this with the US?

As you would expect, officials are continuing to engage with international partners as circumstances evolve, but it would not be appropriate to disclose the details of those discussions.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

VENEZUELA

The Australian Government is monitoring developments in Venezuela.

We urge all parties to support dialogue and diplomacy in order to secure regional stability and prevent escalation.

Australia has long held concerns about the situation in Venezuela, including the need to respect democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

We continue to support international law and a peaceful, democratic transition in Venezuela that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people.

Australians in Venezuela who need assistance can contact the 24/7 emergency consular assistance team at +61 2 6261 3305 from anywhere in the world or 1300 555 135 from within Australia.

Reactions to Maduro's court appearance?

Will not run commentary on an ongoing process.

Australia has long held concerns about the situation in Venezuela, including the need to respect democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

What is important now is a peaceful, democratic transition in Venezuela that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people.

Reactions to UN Security Council meeting on Venezuela?

As the Prime Minister has said, we continue to support international law and a peaceful, democratic transition in Venezuela that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people. This is consistent with what several UN Security Council members said today.

Australia has long held concerns about the situation in Venezuela, including the need to respect democratic principles, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Is this legal? Is this a violation of international law?

It is for the US to explain the legal basis of its actions.

Australia has consistently stated its support for adherence to international law, and we continue to do so.

s 33(a)(iii)

We continue to support international law and a peaceful, democratic transition in Venezuela that reflects the will of the Venezuelan people.

Not in a position to provide a running legal commentary.

It is for the US to explain the legal basis of its actions.

If pressed:

It is for the United States to set out the facts and explain the legal basis for its actions.

Which countries has Australia spoken to?

The situation is moving quickly, and as you would expect, officials are engaging with international partners as circumstances evolve.

Australia does not have an Embassy in Venezuela, so officials are engaging with partner missions both in Venezuela and the region.

Has Australia raised this with the US?

As you would expect, officials are continuing to engage with international partners as circumstances evolve, but it would not be appropriate to disclose the details of those discussions.

s 22(1)(a)(ii)

Background

On 6 January, media reported that during **Maduro's appearance in court in New York**, he pleaded not guilty and said he was 'a decent man' and was still president. Being led from the court, he spoke to a member of the public, referring to himself as a 'kidnapped president' and a 'prisoner of war'.

US President Donald Trump said a second strike could be conducted against Venezuela 'if they don't behave.' He has also threatened Colombia and Cuba.

UN Security Council meeting (5 January New York time)

Briefers:

Under-Secretary-General DiCarlo read a statement (attached) on behalf of the **Secretary-General**, expressing concern that the rules of international law were not

respected during the 3 January military action, expressing concern at the setting of precedent on the conduct of relations between states, noting that the casualty numbers remained undetermined, urging all parties to engage in dialogue, and noting that existing international law is there to address narcotics trafficking and transnational crime. While the current situation was critical, it was still possible to prevent a ‘wider and more destructive conflagration.’

Jeffrey Sachs s 33(a)(iii) urged states to defend the UN Charter, the role of the UNSC was not to discuss the Venezuelan government or Maduro’s actions, but to defend Article 2(4) and what a state can and cannot do under the Charter.

s 33(a)(iii) **Mercedes De Frietas from Transparency Venezuela**, outlined the negative impacts of the Maduro regime on Venezuelans: corruption, transnational crime, economic crisis, power cuts, and political prisoners.

Council Members:

The US (Ambassador Waltz) echoed Rubio’s lines (s 22(1)(a)(ii)) – announced the successful capture and transfer of Nicolás Maduro and Cilia Flores to face trial in US courts for narcoterrorism, drug trafficking, and weapons charges, emphasising that this was a lawful law enforcement operation, not an act of war, nor an occupation. The statement condemned Maduro’s illegitimate regime for election fraud, human rights abuses, and alliances with terrorist organizations including Hezbollah, corrupt Iranian officials, and other malign actors, asserting that these actions destabilised the Western Hemisphere and harmed millions, while reaffirming US commitment to justice and regional stability.

Waltz did not provide an explicit international law justification of the US’ actions, unlike his invocation of UN Charter Article 51 (self-defence) in press remarks the day prior. Waltz did say the action was ‘consistent with the President of the United States’ responsibility as Commander in Chief to protect Americans at home and abroad’ and stressed several times the illegitimacy and human rights abuses of the Maduro regime – ‘he was not a head of state’.

Of Security Council Members, **Russia, China, Colombia** condemned the actions taken by the US on 3 January as breaches of international law. Russia noted the double-standards of those attempting to justify the actions of Washington when they ‘froth’ to condemn others’ violations of international law, and called into question the relevance of the UN and UNSC if it could not take action here. China listed the US actions over past decades that bypassed the UNSC in an attempt to ‘topple governments’.

The UK, Denmark, Latvia, Panama, Bahrain, Greece, and the A3 (**DRC, Somalia, Liberia**) s 33(a)(iii), noting

the illegitimate regime of Maduro and its human rights and other violations, calling for dialogue and a peaceful transition, and noting their support for the UN Charter and international law in general. **Panama** also noted that a genuine transition could not occur if it preserved the Maduro regime or power structures under another name, and VP Rodriguez could not legitimately take power.

s 33(a)(iii) France stated that international law had to be upheld in all places and at all times; the military actions on 3 January were counter to the principles of non-use of force and non-intervention, and that such actions chip away at the foundations of the international order, undermine the foundations of the United Nations, and weaken international peace and security.

Regional voices:

Venezuela called the US actions on 3 January an illegitimate armed attack with no justification, which included the destruction of civilian infrastructure and the kidnapping of a Head of State in violation of the norm of immunity while in office. Venezuela called on the Security Council to: demand the US respect international law and the immunities of its Head of State; immediately release and return Maduro and his wife to Venezuela; condemn the use of force and the acquisition of territory and natural resources.

Under Rule 37, the following states also intervened:

- Condemned or expressed concerns about the US actions: **Cuba, Nicaragua, Eritrea** (on behalf of the Group of Friends of the Charter), **South Africa, Brazil, Mexico, Iran, Uganda** (on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement), **Chile**
- Supported the US actions: **Argentina, Trinidad and Tobago**
- Called for dialogue and respect for international law s 33(a)(iii) **Paraguay, Spain**