



US Bombs Venezuela — Trump Claims Maduro Captured | Dimitri Lascaris Reacts

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Zain Raza (ZR): Thank you for tuning in. I'm your host Zain Raza. Before we begin this video, I would like to provide you with the fourth update to the progress of our crowdfunding campaign. To provide you some context first: In last year's campaign we managed to raise 62,000 euros thanks to 2,200 donors. And in this year's campaign, due to a difficult economic environment and increased cost, we are aiming to raise 80,000 euros. If we do not achieve this target, we will be left with no choice other than to drastically scale back our capacities or in the worst case even shut down our YouTube channel.

So let's get to the update. As of 2nd January 2026, we've managed to raise 46,000 euros thanks to 1,200 donors. Compared to last year at this stage, we managed to raise €42,000. There are only 10 days left, and with the amount raised so far, we can continue operating until July or August of next year. However, if we reach our target, we'll be able to make it through until next year's crowdfunding campaign. I want to sincerely thank everyone who donated to our campaign so far. At the same time, however, it's important to put the number 1200 donors into context, which is fewer than the least watched videos on our channel. Our channel was watched 240,000 times in December alone and has over 165,000 subscribers.

If you've not donated so far and are watching our videos, please consider doing so now, even if it's just 1 to 5 euros, or by simply sharing the link to our crowdfunding campaign within your network. There are only 10 days left, and the actions of each and every one of you counts and will determine whether we can continue broadcasting in the coming months ahead.

On the screen, you will now see a PayPal QR code appear. If you click on pause and scan it with your phone's camera, you will be able to donate immediately without any hassle. For more detailed information on our crowdfunding campaign, our past work, the challenges and costs that we face this year, and how you can participate, please see the link in the description of this video. I thank you for your love, generosity and support.

Today I'll be talking to journalist and lawyer Dimitri Lascaris. Dimitri specializes as a lawyer in class actions, human rights and international law. He also has a YouTube channel called Reason2Resist. Dimitri, welcome back to the show.

Dimitri Lascaris (DL): I wish it could be under better circumstances, but thank you for having me, Zain.

ZR: According to multiple news sources, on January 3rd, 2026, this morning, the United States carried out large-scale strikes on Venezuela with at least seven explosions and low-flying aircraft reported over Caracas and other regions. President Donald Trump stated on his Truth Social Account that US forces had captured Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his wife and flown them out of the country following those military actions. The Venezuelan government has condemned the strikes as military aggression, declared a state of emergency, rejected the legitimacy of the reported operation, and demanded international scrutiny through an emergency UN Security Council meeting. This follows a pressure that has been escalated since the summer, including a significant military buildup in the Caribbean, repeated strikes on alleged drug smuggling vessels, and the labeling of elements of Venezuelan state apparatus as terrorist organizations. Can you comment on the current situation and talk about its significance?

DL: Well, there does appear very much to have been attacks on Caracas. Whether there were significant attacks outside of the capital is unclear. But there are multiple videos online of explosions throughout the capital. I've also communicated with a Venezuelan journalist who

lives in Caracas, who acted as my guide when I first visited the country in 2019. She tells me that it's currently quiet as far as she can tell, but that there's no electricity in her part of the city, it's been knocked out, and that access to the internet is scarce. So the question I think that most people are grappling with is whether President Maduro has in fact been apprehended. The Vice President of Venezuela, Delcy Rodríguez, called into a television program and said that they did not know where the president and the first lady were and demanded that if the Americans had him in their custody, that they produce him and prove that he's still alive. I don't know that there's been any further update. There was a photograph circulating, by the way, on social media, which some corporate media outlets published, which appeared to show President Maduro in the custody of two US soldiers, but according to anti-war activist Tim Anderson, that is a fake. So as of yet, there's no confirmation that I know of that President Maduro has been apprehended. However, the fact that Delcy Rodríguez is demanding these things of the US government, condemning its actions, suggests that for the time being that the government of Nicolás Maduro remains in control, even if he himself has been apprehended by US authorities.

It's interesting to look at the international reaction to this. The regional powers have all been swift and unequivocal in their condemnation. The Mexican president Claudia Sheinbaum has put out a very powerful statement condemning the US action. So too has the government of Colombia and I understand that Gustavo Petro's government, which currently has a seat on the UN Security Council, is inclined to call an emergency session of the UN Security Council. Lula, the president of Brazil, who was equivocal after the presidential election in 2024 and was not prepared to say that he recognized Nicolás Maduro, it seemed, has been unequivocal in condemning this aggression. So too, of course, has the Russian Federation, Belarus, Iran. I have yet to see an official statement from the Chinese government. But its special envoy was in Caracas last night and met with Nicolás Maduro only hours before this attack. And one wonders whether that meeting had something to do with the timing of this attack.

And the other thing I want to say is about the video footage, you mentioned low-line aircraft. It looks as though those are US military helicopters. And it's quite odd that they were able to fly that low over Caracas because those are relatively easy targets for air defense systems, and Venezuela does have some air defense systems, and you would imagine that they have been allocated primarily to the capital. So why none of those appear to have been shot down and the US is not at this stage reporting any casualties is a mystery. Now, Venezuelan opposition figures apparently have told Sky News that this was a negotiated exit, so that there were behind the scenes discussions between the Trump regime and Nicolás Maduro about his departure from the country. Maybe that would explain why there seems to have been so little resistance to that influx of US military personnel into the capital. But again I have to preface everything that I've just said, qualify everything I've just said by reiterating that a lot of this is unclear. We don't even know if Nicolás Maduro has in fact been apprehended, whether in fact there have been US casualties. So I think we're going to have to just bide our time and watch closely as more information emerges.

ZR: You talked about international reaction. What stands out is also the reaction or lack thereof from Europe itself. According to Reuters' reporting today, the European Union and several European governments, including Germany, have reacted to the US strikes on Venezuela by calling for restraint, de-escalation, and adherence to international law. However, these statements drop short of explicitly condemning the US bombing or directly challenging Washington's justification for their operation. How do you assess this response? Does it go far enough in your view? And setting aside the governments for a moment, why should people in Europe care about this development? Many may see this as something happening far away in Latin America with no immediate consequences for their own lives. What should people in Europe be demanding right now from the governments in your view?

DL: Well, let's start with the statement from the European Union. I'm going to read you the post on X of Kaja Kallas, the foreign policy spokesperson of the EU. She wrote: "I have spoken with Secretary of State Marco Rubio and our ambassador in Caracas. The EU is closely monitoring the situation in Venezuela. The EU has repeatedly stated that Mr. Maduro lacks legitimacy and has defended a peaceful transition. Under all circumstances, the principles of international law and the UN charter must be respected. We call for restraint. The safety of EU citizens in the country is our top priority". This is really grotesquely unsatisfactory from the perspective of international law, Zain. I say this as a lawyer with expertise in international law. This is a flagrant violation of the UN Charter, which she herself referenced in her statement. And this is exactly what Western governments do when the US acts in a criminal manner, in flagrant violation of the UN Charter. They wait until the US government commits the aggression and then they call for restraint. So now what? Are the Venezuelans going to exercise the restraint? The Venezuelans were just subjected to an act of war, amongst many others, by the way. So they should have demanded restraint before the United States committed this latest criminal act of aggression.

And as far as how Europeans should view this – if the United States continues to get away with this kind of piracy, illegality, naked frontal assaults on the international legal order, eventually it is going to come back and haunt Europe. This type of aggression will happen closer to Europe's shores and perhaps within Europe itself. Nobody should underestimate the willingness of the US government to interfere in the elections and the democratic processes of European states. And in fact, they've pretty much been doing that, at least rhetorically, for the last several months. The US government and proxies of the US government like Elon Musk have been openly and brazenly interfering in EU internal politics. And if they're allowed to get away with this kind of criminality, they'll only escalate. At some point, and this is something that EU governments seem completely oblivious to, if you don't hold these criminals accountable, then their conduct will worsen over time and eventually will come home to your backyard and will impact you negatively. So I think that it's time for all of Europe and the peoples of Europe in particular, to demand strict compliance by the United States government with international law and to stop being selective in their application of international law.

ZR: We only have a few minutes left, but for those people, the younger viewers or the people that are hearing Venezuela for the first time in the news and that get the Western version of Maduro being an oppressive dictator, violating human rights and democracy, and as someone like yourself who's done a lot of historical work on US intervention across the globe, what would you say to them that are getting this version that Maduro is a dictator and it was right to take him out?

DL: Well, I was actually in Venezuela last year. I was invited by the governing socialist party to be an election observer. And I was there with well over a hundred other people from around the world, including from Western countries who observed the elections, and I saw no evidence of electoral fraud. None of the people who were there as observers with me and to whom I spoke saw any evidence of electoral fraud. The Venezuelan electoral system has been praised historically for its integrity and its accuracy. Now, can I guarantee you that the result was honest? No, I can't guarantee you, because I'm not on the inside of the Venezuelan government with access to all the data. But what I can tell you is that I and my fellow observers did not see any evidence of electoral fraud.

And at the end of the day, we should have no question in our minds that the ultimate objective of the US government and its Western vassals is not democracy promotion. It never has been. If they cared so much about democracy and human rights and respect for international law, would the West be arming to the teeth Israel as it carries out a genocide? Would the West be aligning itself with autocracies in the Gulf, like Saudi Arabia and Bahrain? Would it be supporting the dictatorship of Egypt? So let's be honest here and let's understand that whatever one may think of Nicolás Maduro, the US government introducing military forces into the country for the ostensible purpose of ensuring respect for international law and controlling the drug trade is only going to make matters worse for the Venezuelan people. It's not to benefit them. It will make them suffer even more than the U.S. Has already made them suffer. And the region at large will be made to suffer because if this continues, this military aggression, there's likely to be another massive outflow of desperate refugees from Venezuela, and that could potentially destabilize the region.

So again, we need to keep two issues separate here. What is one's view of Nicolás Maduro and the current government, which I think has been democratically elected, but it's a separate issue from the issue of what should we do if we decide that his government was not duly elected by the Venezuelan people? Military intervention is not the answer, never has been, it always ends up making things worse.

ZR: Dimitri Lascaris, journalist and lawyer, thank you so much for your time on such short notice for this breaking development.

DL: Thank you, Zain. Always a pleasure.

ZR: And thank you for tuning in today. If you like the journalism that we undertook in this video, make sure to click on the subscribe button below. And please don't forget to participate

in our crowdfunding campaign, which ends in less than 10 days. If we don't achieve our target, we will be left with no choice but to reduce our capacities and in the worst case to completely shut down our YouTube channel. We only depend on you as we don't take any money from corporations and governments. I thank you for your support and for tuning in. I'm your host Zain Raza. See you next time.

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