

BREAKING: White House Confirms US Attack on Venezuela Captured Maduro

President Donald Trump announced shortly after 4 a.m. Eastern that the attacks on Venezuela had led to the capture of the country's fugitive strongman accused of narco-trafficking, Nicolás Maduro.

"The United States of America has successfully carried out a large scale strike against Venezuela and its leader, President Nicolas Maduro, who 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," Trump said on Truth Social.

"There will be a News Conference today at 11 A.M., at Mar-a-Lago. Thank you for your attention to this matter!"

– Rapid Response 47 (@RapidResponse47) January 3, 2026

While The Associated Press initially said that neither the Pentagon nor the White House would comment on the attacks and calls to the U.S. Southern Command, which is responsible for oversight on military operations in the region, were not answered, Fox News reported shortly after 3 a.m. Eastern that their sources in the administration could confirm "the United States is attacking Venezuela."

BREAKING: US attacks Venezuela, sources tell FOX News.

– Fox News (@FoxNews) January 3, 2026

While the sources did not go on record as to what the aims of the attacks were or what the first targets had been, Fox also reported that an hour before the attacks began, the Federal Aviation Administration issued a notice that prohibited all American aircraft from conducting operations “at all altitudes within Venezuelan airspace.”

The report from Fox came one hour after videos from the capital showed numerous explosions along with low-flying aircraft.

BREAKING: Several explosions have been reported in the capital city of Venezuela, Caracas.

– Benny Johnson (@bennyjohnson) January 3, 2026

The operation was apparently able to extract both Maduro and his wife; initial reports claimed that one of the types of helicopter used in the attack, a variant of the CH-47 Chinook transport, indicated that the operation may have been intended to either get troops in, or a high-profile target out, of Venezuela.

It now appears, with Maduro’s capture, that the latter was the case.

“The whole ground shook. This is horrible. We heard explosions and planes,” said Carmen Hidalgo, a 21-year-old office worker, told The Associated Press. “We felt like the air was hitting us.”

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro reportedly “ordered all national defense plans to be implemented” and declared “a

state of external disturbance” – although, given what is known now, it’s unclear whether Maduro or one of his associates sent the message.

“People to the streets!” a statement from the government said. “The Bolivarian Government calls on all social and political forces in the country to activate mobilization plans and repudiate this imperialist attack.”

Reuters said that Maduro condemned U.S. “military aggression” in a statement.

The president of neighboring Colombia, meanwhile, called for the United Nations and Organization of American States to immediately meet.

“The explosions in Caracas occurred within less than 30 minutes. People in various neighborhoods rushed to the streets. while others took to social media to report hearing and seeing the blasts. Two hours later, various areas of the city remained without power, but vehicles continued to move freely,” the AP reported.

“Smoke could be seen rising from the hangar of a military base in Caracas. Another military installation in the capital was without power.”

Relations between Maduro’s socialist government and the Trump administration, either the 45th or 47th, have never been particularly stable. During his first term, Trump recognized opposition leader Juan Guaidó as the legitimate leader of the South American nation, although this didn’t sufficiently destabilize Maduro’s hold on the country – nor did 2024 Venezuelan elections that international observers described as nakedly fraudulent.

However, tensions began to mount as the Pentagon began striking at boats operated by Venezuelan-based narco-terrorists in the Caribbean beginning in September. Then, in

December, two oil tankers that were allegedly skirting sanctions were seized by the U.S. military.

The Saturday morning attacks come after a drone strike against a docking area being run by Venezuelan drug cartels last week – the first U.S. military operation on Venezuelan soil. It came after Trump ordered a blockade against Maduro's regime after the seizure of the first oil tanker.

"Venezuela is completely surrounded by the largest Armada ever assembled in the History of South America," Trump said in announcing the blockade.

"It will only get bigger, and the shock to them will be like nothing they have ever seen before – Until such time as they return to the United States of America all of the Oil, Land, and other Assets that they previously stole from us."

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