

'They're Going to Be, Like, Dead': Trump Says Land Strikes on Venezuela Are Next

Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro demanded “no crazy war, please!” as the Trump administration showed no sign of dialing back its unlawful military attacks.

By BRAD REED · Oct 24, 2025

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President Donald Trump set off alarms Thursday when he signaled his administration would soon escalate its military campaign in Latin America.

For the last seven weeks, the Trump administration has conducted military strikes against purported drug boats in the Caribbean and the Pacific Ocean that have killed at least 37 people so far.

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Even though many legal experts and human rights advocates consider the attacks to be illegal acts of extrajudicial murder, Trump said during a law enforcement roundtable at the White House that he is going to soon expand the campaign to attack purported drug traffickers who are traveling by land as well.

As *The New York Times* noted, Trump said he's going to launch these strikes without seeking any authorization from the US Congress.

"I don't think we're going to necessarily ask for a declaration of war," said Trump. "I think we are going to kill people that are bringing drugs into our country, OK? We are going to kill them, you know? They are going to be, like, dead."

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Aaron Reichlin-Melnick, a senior fellow at the American Immigration Council, called Trump's comments a "blaring red warning signal for the rule of law."

The administration has claimed it is targeting boats to stop drug trafficking from Venezuela, despite the fact that the country is not a prominent source of either fentanyl or cocaine.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth indicated on Wednesday that the US is going to approach its new War on Drugs in the same way it approached the War on Terror, the result of which was two failed military campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan that cost hundreds of thousands of lives.

"Narco-terrorists intending to bring poison to our shores, will find no safe harbor anywhere in our hemisphere," Hegseth wrote in a Wednesday post on X. "Just as al-Qaeda waged war on our homeland, these cartels are waging war on our border and our people. There will be no refuge or forgiveness—only justice."

Dozens of elected officials throughout Latin America on Thursday released a letter denouncing the Trump administration's military aggression in their regions, and France 24 reported on the same day that Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro warned Trump against launching a "crazy war" against his nation.

“Yes peace, yes peace forever, peace forever. No crazy war, please!” said Maduro in a meeting with unions. The president has accused the Trump administration of seeking regime change.

Some US politicians have also denounced Trump’s military aggression in Latin America.

Rep. Ro Khanna (D-Calif.) described Trump’s boat attacks as a “stain on our moral conscience” and urged other lawmakers to speak up.

“This is not a time for the opposition party to be silent,” he said. “We must speak out for our moral values and to stand against a new regime change war.”

Sen. Adam Schiff (D-Calif.) said that Trump must seek permission from Congress before launching any military strikes in Latin America.

“Legally, he is required to come to Congress,” Schiff wrote on X. “Though he may not get the answer he expects. Americans don’t want another war.”

Former Rep. Justin Amash (R-Mich.), a longtime critic of US foreign interventionism, also said the president is required to go through Congress before taking any military action.

“The Constitution doesn’t permit a president to act as the legislature and judiciary on top of being the chief executive,” he wrote. “If it’s war, he must go to Congress. If it’s crime, he must go to court. When there’s no imminent danger, there’s no justification for unilateral strikes.”

Sen. Mark Kelly (D-Ariz.) slammed the administration for trying to employ tactics that failed in the War on Terror to a fight that it claims is targeting narcotics trafficking.

“Now the Trump administration is talking about ‘regime change’ in Venezuela,” he wrote. “When has that ever worked for us—in Cuba, Afghanistan, or anywhere else? This isn’t making us safer. It’s having the opposite effect.”