

US murders 11 people with airstrikes on boats in both Caribbean and Pacific

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The US military killed 11 people Monday in strikes on three boats in the eastern Pacific and Caribbean Sea in the deadliest single day so far this year of the Trump administration's killing spree off the Latin American coast.

US Southern Command announced that four men were killed on one boat in the eastern Pacific, four on another in the eastern Pacific, and three on a boat in the Caribbean. It was the first time the military bombed targets on both sides of the Panama Canal in the same day. The military posted a 39-second video showing the three boats being destroyed—one on the move, two sitting motionless in the water. No evidence was provided that the vessels were carrying drugs or that those killed had any connection to drug trafficking.

The strikes are murders under international law. The men on these boats posed no imminent threat to anyone. They were not armed combatants. They were not engaged in hostilities. Under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the UN Charter, and the Pentagon's own Law of War Manual, killing them is a crime. UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) Article 98 establishes a duty to rescue persons in distress at sea.

The US media treated the strikes as entirely routine. ABC News ran a write-up of approximately 130 words. The *Washington Post* filed its report under "national security," not the front page. The killings did not receive even token condemnation from the Democratic Party. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Bernie Sanders, House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said nothing in response to the strikes.

The strikes bring the total death toll to at least 145 people killed in 42 known strikes since early September 2025. Another 11 survivors of earlier strikes are

presumed dead after the military left them to drown. Families of two Trinidadian fishermen killed in an October 14 strike have sued the US government, calling the campaign "lawless killings in cold blood; killings for sport and killings for theatre."

In October, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk called the strikes "unacceptable," stating that "none of the individuals on the targeted boats appeared to pose an imminent threat to the lives of others." In November, former ICC Chief Prosecutor Luis Moreno Ocampo concluded that the strikes "likely constitute crimes against humanity."

Representative Adam Smith, the top Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee, who viewed the classified video in December, described the scene: the men were "basically two shirtless people clinging to the bow of a capsized and inoperable boat, drifting in the water—until the missiles come and kill them." Killing survivors is a direct violation of the Hague Regulations' prohibition on denying quarter—one of the oldest rules of warfare.

An investigation by the Intercept published Monday revealed that when eight men jumped overboard during a December 30 triple strike, the Coast Guard took 45 hours to dispatch a rescue plane—into nine-foot seas and 40-knot winds where survival was measured in minutes. No survivors were found. "SOUTHCOM doesn't want these people alive," a government official told the Intercept.

The strikes take place in the context of a vast US military campaign across the Western Hemisphere. In January, the USS Gerald R. Ford, the world's largest aircraft carrier, took part in the kidnapping of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro amid a massive bombardment of the Venezuelan capital of Caracas.

The Trump administration's 2025 National Security

Strategy declares a “Trump Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine,” asserting that the United States will “restore American preeminence in the Western Hemisphere” and “deny non-Hemispheric competitors the ability to position forces or other threatening capabilities, or to own or control strategically vital assets, in our Hemisphere.”

At the Munich Security Conference over the week, Secretary of State Marco Rubio delivered an open defense of imperialist criminality: “We cannot continue to allow those who blatantly and openly threaten our citizens and endanger our global stability to shield themselves behind abstractions of international law.”

He boasted that the old international order “was unable to address the threat to our security from a narcoterrorist dictator in Venezuela.” The positions of the Trump administration that international law is an “abstraction” that the United States is not bound to observe.

The Ford carrier strike group has now been redeployed from the Caribbean to the Middle East, where it will join the USS Abraham Lincoln strike group. Approximately 50,000 US troops are deployed to the region. Reuters reported Friday that the Pentagon is planning “sustained, weeks-long operations” against Iran. Trump told troops at Fort Bragg that regime change in Iran would be “the best thing that could happen.”

The same carrier used to kidnap the president of Venezuela is being redeployed to wage war against a country of 88 million people.

Some Democrats made verbal criticisms of earlier strikes. In November, Tim Kaine said the double-tap “rises to the level of a war crime,” and in December, Himes called it “a violation of the laws of war.” But these criticisms have been completely dropped. War powers resolutions introduced by Kaine were defeated on party-line votes.

Ocasio-Cortez spoke at the Munich Security Conference last weekend and said nothing about the killing campaign or about the preparations for war against Iran. Instead, she accused Trump of insufficient aggression against Russia, called for reviving Obama’s Trans-Pacific Partnership to confront China and refused to rule out sending American troops to fight China over Taiwan.

Despite the total criminality of the Trump

administration’s killing spree in the Caribbean, the Democrats have consistently voted to fund Trump’s war machine. The \$901 billion National Defense Authorization Act passed the House 312-112 in December, with 115 Democrats voting yes. In the Senate, it passed 77-20, with the vast majority of Senate Democrats voting in favor.

Trump has called for a \$1.5 trillion military budget for fiscal year 2027—the largest in American history. The Democrats have said nothing to oppose it. They supplied the votes to pass the spending bill that funds the ongoing killing spree in the Caribbean and every warship now sailing toward Iran.



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