

Venezuela's interim president paints Trump as defender of "peace" after Washington shooting

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30 April 2026

Minutes after US Secret Service agents took Donald Trump from the stage at the White House Correspondents Dinner Saturday and detained an alleged attacker after a shooting incident, Venezuela's interim president Delcy Rodríguez became one of the first world leaders to publicly condemn the attack.

In a post on X, she declared: "We reject the attempt of aggression against President Trump and his wife, Melania, to whom we extend our good wishes, as well as to the attendees of the Correspondents' Dinner. Violence will never be an option for those of us who defend the banners of peace."

This statement was one of the most grotesque from any leader. Associating Trump with "peace," Rodríguez whitewashes the ongoing avalanche of war crimes unleashed by Washington across the globe and directly against Venezuela itself.

The *World Socialist Web Site* opposes the kind of attack alleged at the Washington Hilton on a principled basis. Political violence carried out by individuals serves only to strengthen the forces of reaction. But this opposition does not require—or permit—portraying Trump, or US imperialism more broadly, as a victim divorced from its own systemic violence.

Indeed, as in previous assassination attempts, Trump is already exploiting the incident to criminalize opposition and escalate his authoritarian drive. His efforts to overturn democratic processes in the United States are inseparable from a broader imperialist campaign aimed at recolonizing Latin America. Rodríguez's statement, along with a similar one from Mexico's "leftist" president Claudia Sheinbaum, objectively lends support to these efforts, providing political cover for Washington's aggression.

Hypocrisy and the kidnapping of Maduro

The hypocrisy becomes even more glaring when contrasted with recent events in Venezuela itself. As recently as January 3, US military forces carried out a brazen operation to kidnap President Nicolás Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores. The assault, involving heavily armed special forces troops descending from helicopters under cover of darkness, resulted in the deaths of more than 100 people and the wounding of a

similar number, including civilians.

The operation was executed with chilling brutality. Soldiers equipped with advanced technology rappelled into secured compounds, cutting down Venezuelan and Cuban guards without suffering casualties. The attack was preceded by a bombing raid that plunged Caracas into darkness. Residents described a city under siege, with explosions echoing through the night and helicopters hovering so close that buildings shook.

"The apartment shook, the doors, the windows. At that moment I didn't know the attack was only against military targets... 'We're going to die,' I burst into tears," one resident told the BBC.

Another recounted: "I looked out the window carefully and saw the missiles. They were like laser beams exploding on the mountains of Fort Tiuna... 'Wow, it's happening. The Americans have arrived.'"

Hospitals were overwhelmed. A doctor described activating mass casualty protocols in an already collapsing healthcare system. Patients began arriving at 7am, with the doctor left traumatized after seeing those injured from the blasts. "I remembered the many times we saw images from the wars in the Middle East," he said, recalling bodies covered in dirt and blood.

Families armed themselves with whatever they had—knives, broomsticks—preparing to defend their homes. The blood in the presidential bunker has barely been washed away and the ringing of the bombs still echoes in the minds of Venezuelans.

Yet Rodríguez, representing the very government targeted by this act of imperialist terror, now speaks of Trump as a figure deserving protection in the name of peace.

Escalating imperialist violence

The January operation was not a one-off attack. US military activity in the region has intensified dramatically. Bombing campaigns have expanded into Latin American waters and border regions. A joint US-Ecuadorian operation dubbed "Total Extermination" targeted rural areas, bombing rural homes and detaining agricultural workers.

Simultaneously, the Pentagon has escalated maritime strikes,

particularly in the Caribbean and eastern Pacific. More attack aircraft and MQ-9 Reaper drones have been sent to bases in El Salvador and Puerto Rico to carry out more air strikes on fishing boats, killing at least 186 people under the pretext of combating drug trafficking since September.

Meanwhile, Washington is openly threatening further regime change operations, including against Cuba. Trump has declared that “Cuba is next” after Iran.

US naval exercises have begun near Cuba, codenamed Flex2026, integrating artificial intelligence, unmanned systems, and traditional forces to enhance surveillance and control. Reconnaissance drones like the MQ-4C Triton and electronic aircraft such as the RC-135 patrol Cuban airspace and maritime routes, tightening the noose around the island.

Within Venezuela, Rodríguez’s statement has drawn criticism even from Chavista circles, with some pointing out that it ignores the long campaign of US sanctions that has caused over 100,000 excess deaths and forced over 8 million to flee the country.

Some commentators, however, argue that the government is merely “buying time,” hoping for better conditions—higher oil prices, geopolitical shifts, or a popular upsurge—to reassert sovereignty and defend social programs. But such illusions have already been exposed.

The class nature of Chavismo

This trajectory is not a betrayal of Chavismo’s principles—it is their logical outcome. The so-called Bolivarian Revolution, proclaimed after the 1998 election of Hugo Chávez, represented sections of the national bourgeoisie seeking better terms within the global capitalist system. During periods of high commodity prices and closer ties to China, Russia and other economic powers, it used limited social programs to contain the class struggle and negotiate a greater share of the profits for the local ruling class.

But as conditions changed—particularly with the slowing growth of the Chinese economy, the weight of US sanctions and military threats—these same forces have capitulated, prioritizing their own privileges and class rule over the working class.

The reality is that the Venezuelan government has systematically shifted the burden of crisis since the downturn in oil prices in 2014 onto the working class, implementing austerity measures, maintaining starvation-level wages, and opening the economy to foreign capital.

The policies prior to the January 3 raid set the stage for what has taken place since. At each turn, Hugo Chavez and Nicolas Maduro prioritized the defense of capitalist property relations and made concessions to foreign capital by offering the country as a source of cheap labor and natural resources.

Today, the minimum wage stands at just 130 bolivars per month—around \$0.30. Protests demanding higher wages have been met with tear gas, water cannon, and repression. Rodríguez’s promise of a “responsible” wage increase—so as

not to fuel inflation—repeats the familiar lie that workers, not corporations, are to blame for rising prices.

What we are witnessing is the dismantling of all forms of sovereignty. The Venezuelan state is being transformed into a de facto puppet of US imperialism.

The Chavistas are implementing a program that goes beyond what the deregulation and privatizations the Chicago Boys led by Milton Friedman sought to implement under the Augusto Pinochet fascist-military dictatorship in Chile.

Oil, gold, and rare earth minerals have been privatized and handed over to foreign companies. Export revenues are funneled through the US Treasury, which determines how much is returned to fund the Venezuelan state.

The Central Bank has enlisted foreign auditing firms like Deloitte—deeply tied to the Pentagon and CIA—to oversee its accounts. Agreements with Chevron, Shell, Repsol, Eni, and BP further entrench foreign control over the country’s oil reserves, the largest in the world.

Even the International Monetary Fund is back in the picture, with Rodriguez welcoming this imperialist agency of Wall Street asking for a \$5 billion loan that would add to an already crushing \$170 billion debt. Every Latin American knows the long history of IMF structural programs and its impact on poverty and inequality.

Now, *El Pais* runs the headline, 'Have you been to Caracas yet?: the question investors are asking about Venezuela.'

The way forward

The events in Venezuela confirm a fundamental lesson: the national bourgeoisie in oppressed countries is incapable of carrying out democratic tasks, including genuine independence from imperialism.

This reality vindicates the Theory of Permanent Revolution advanced by Leon Trotsky. Only the working class, leading a socialist transformation of society, can break the chains of imperialist domination. This requires not only the overthrow of capitalist states domestically, but an international movement aimed at restructuring the global economy to serve human need, not private profit.

Rodríguez’s statement is not merely hypocritical—it is symptomatic of a deeper crisis. It reflects a political movement that has abandoned any pretense of resistance to imperialism and now seeks accommodation with the very forces responsible for the immense suffering of the people it claimed to represent.



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