



**Lemkin Institute**  
*for Genocide Prevention  
and Human Security*

## **Statement on U.S. Actions towards Venezuela**

*Released on 17 December 2025*

With the newly issued Executive Order from the U.S. President designating fentanyl as a weapon of mass destruction (WMD) on 15 Decemeber 2025, the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention and Human Security is gravely concerned about an impending U.S intervention in Venezuela and the commencement of even more brutal immigration enforcement tactics domestically. Since September 2025, the United States has already murdered at least 90 people in waters with close proximity to Venezuela in twenty different attacks. These strikes have been called illegal extrajudicial killings by experts in international law. The Lemkin Institute warns that a war in Venezuela will render the U.S. deeply vulnerable to the commission of genocide at home and abroad.

As of 9:00 a.m. on 17 December, the Trump Administration initiated a formal naval blockade of Venezuela. President Trump plans to address the U.S. public at 9:00 pm this evening. Over the last few months, President Trump has escalated both his rhetoric against Venezuela and committed illegal attacks against boats carrying citizens of Venezuela, Colombia, and Ecuador in international waters. In its latest National Security Strategy, the Administration has further outlined the U.S.'s willingness to use "various means" to "discourage" Latin American states from deviating from U.S. plans to "expand [its] network."

The Trump Administration is operating according to a "Trump Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine," as outlined in the same National Security Strategy, in which the U.S. will "ensure that

the Western Hemisphere remains reasonably stable and well-governed enough to prevent and discourage mass migration to the United States ... [with countries] whose governments cooperate with [the U.S.] against narco-terrorists, cartels, and other transnational criminal Organizations ... [whp] remain free of hostile foreign incursion or ownership of key assets, ... [who] support critical supply chains ... and [who] ensure [the U.S.'s] continued access to key strategic locations." A war with Venezuela will open up opportunities for mission radicalization similar to the radicalization that occurred during the illegal war against Iraq.

The Monroe Doctrine and its expansions under the Roosevelt Corollary and Truman Doctrine have historically justified numerous atrocities in the name of U.S. hegemony, most notably the Mayan genocide in Guatemala, the "Dirty War" in Argentina, and atrocious war crimes in the Salvadoran Civil War. Further attacks on Venezuela under a new Monroe Doctrine are likely to lead to a protracted war with Venezuela and possible spin-off genocides across Latin America. In addition, any military action will cause regional instability, an escalation of global political tensions, and a marked decline in human security in the Western Hemisphere.

The Lemkin Institute urgently notes that the Trump Administration is justifying its illegal actions by building a case for war with Venezuela in an eerily similar manner to the way that the George W. Bush Administration justified the preemptive invasion of Iraq in 2003: with reference to a threat from weapons of mass destruction. In the past weeks the Trump White House has been constructing a similar framework and propaganda machine to defend its illegal boat strikes and any impending illegal acts with reference to WMDs. In a leaked memo to the U.S. Congress the Trump Administration said that it had determined that the US was in a "non-international armed conflict" with drug cartels and that its strikes on small boats were done in self-defense. The Trump State Department has designated the Tren de Aragua cartel a "foreign terrorist organization." The Administration has labeled the casualties of these illegal strikes as "narco-traffickers." By using the drug trade as a justification for unilateral intervention and labeling fentanyl a WMD, the Trump Administration has laid the political groundwork for a repeat of Bush's dangerous, interventionist foreign policy. Just as the Bush Administration advocated for the overthrow of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to address the completely fabricated WMD threat, multiple reports note that President Trump seeks the overthrow of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. The first Trump Administration's record of failed coup attempts, and his current administration's desire to revive the Monroe Doctrine, speaks to the likelihood of a U.S.-backed regime change attempt.

The 2003 invasion of Iraq was one of the most egregious U.S. foreign policy failures of this century, costing U.S. tax payers trillions of dollars, leading to the deaths of approximately 2 million Iraqi civilians, and destabilizing Iraq such that it became the incubator of much more

tangible security threats to the U.S. We remind everyone that no WMDs were ever discovered in Iraq. During that war the U.S. committed atrocious war crimes and human rights violations that have largely remained unpunished. Genocidal violence was committed in Fallujah and against individual Iraqis, such as the terrible life force atrocity committed against 14-year-old Abeer Qassim al-Janabi and her family. It is imperative that the American people recognize these patterns and prevent the U.S. from repeating its all-too-recent history of failed wars characterized by mass atrocity. These wars have undermined global peace and security as well as democratic institutions at home, assisting the rise of the violent, fascist right that is now in power in the White House.

Though the illicit drug trade is the Trump Administration's justification for military action in Venezuela, his declaration of fentanyl as a WMD has troubling implications for his domestic immigration crackdowns. In early 2025, the Trump Administration issued an executive order accusing Venezuelan gang Tren de Aragua of invading the U.S. in order to justify the Administration's aggressive immigration raids across the country and its use of the Alien Enemies Act (AEA) to deport suspected gang members en masse. This focused police action quickly mushroomed to involve all immigrants in the U.S., including people who were in the U.S. legally and had no criminal record. The Lemkin Institute condemned the Trump Administration for these actions in its sixth and seventh Red Flag Alerts for Genocide in the United States, as these raids and resulting third country deportations began to snowball into ever-increasing infringements on the civil and human rights of all persons in the U.S., eventually culminating in the legally dubious deployment of National Guard and in some cases active duty military to American cities. The Lemkin Institute condemned the illegality of these deployments and their impact on vulnerable populations in a formal statement.

Though the Supreme Court blocked the Trump Administration from deporting Venezuelans under the AEA in early September, the Administration successfully ended Temporary Protected Status (TPS) for 250,000 Venezuelans in November. On the Thanksgiving Day holiday in the U.S., President Trump disparaged all immigrants with hostile rhetoric that the Lemkin Institute flagged as genocidal. Shortly afterwards, the Trump Administration released its National Security Strategy, which identified "mass migration" and "cultural subversion" as top national security threats, canonizing President Trump's Thanksgiving Day rhetoric as official government policy. A war with Venezuela and the recognition of fentanyl as a WMD would not only justify the AEA's use, but also legitimize large-scale federal troop deployments to U.S. cities. Two dozen Republican-controlled states are already working with the Trump Administration to streamline mass deportation initiatives under the AEA in 2026. Given the Supreme Court's approval of racial profiling by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), and ICE's stated desire to round up and deport political dissenters, the Lemkin Institute predicts such programs will target

anyone perceived as violating the U.S.'s "cultural health," or holding "Anti-American," "anti-capitalist," and "anti-Christian" values, including citizens, as articulated in the National Security Strategy and [National Security Presidential Memorandum \(NSPM-7\)](#), respectively.

The Lemkin Institute commends Congress for once again trying to limit President Trump's use of war powers in Venezuela, and calls on all members of Congress to put the human security interests of people in the U.S. and across the Western Hemisphere above the financial gains of select oligarchs and corporations who stand to profit from a war. Since coming to power, President Trump and his administration have routinely stripped Congress of its constitutionally guaranteed powers, often without much resistance. The Lemkin Institute calls on the U.S. Congress to reclaim its war powers from President Trump and take the necessary steps to make sure the horrors of past military interventions are not repeated in Venezuela or elsewhere.

Not only would a war with Venezuela result in the enrichment of specific U.S. industries, such as oil and weapons, but also it would be a blessing for a president whose popularity is in decline. War will give the President the ability to seize greater powers and eliminate dissent. Moreover, a violent takeover of Venezuela's oil industry would free up the United States to pursue war in other oil-rich regions of the world, such as the Middle East.

The president's address at 9:00 p.m. Eastern time tonight could see the U.S. descend more deeply into fascism, with ever more limited opportunities for a course correction.