

## After deadly US attacks on Venezuela: What next for Cuba?



On Saturday morning, a rally was held in Havana in solidarity with Venezuela, which is under attack (source: [Eduardo Rodríguez Dávila/FB](#))

Following the US attacks on Venezuela, which violated international law and resulted in the kidnapping of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro on Saturday, the Cuban government has confirmed the deaths of 32 of its own soldiers. On Monday morning, Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel declared two days of national mourning.

In a [communiqué](#) distributed via social media and the party newspaper *Granma*, the government stated that the fallen soldiers had been carrying out “missions on behalf of the Revolutionary Armed Forces and the Ministry of the Interior at the request of the relevant authorities of the South American country.” The soldiers were part of Maduro’s bodyguard, half of whom were Cuban and half Venezuelan.

According to the Cuban government, the identities of the fallen soldiers have been verified and their families have been informed. “True to their responsibility for security and defense, our compatriots fulfilled their duty with dignity and heroism and fell after stubborn resistance in direct combat with the attackers or as a result of the bombing of the facilities,” the statement said. At the same time, Havana admits, contrary to earlier denials, that there was at least a small military presence in friendly Venezuela.

According to the statement, the relatives of the fallen received “sincere condolences and support” from Raúl Castro, President Díaz-Canel, and the leadership of the Ministry of the Interior and the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

## “Act of state terrorism”

Cuba's government had strongly condemned the US military action on Saturday. Díaz-Canel described the abduction of the incumbent president of a sovereign country as part of a military operation as a “criminal attack” and an “act of state terrorism.” The Cuban government emphatically demanded the immediate release of President Maduro and his wife Cilia Flores by the US authorities.

On Saturday, a [rally](#) was held at the “[anti-imperialist tribune](#)” in the immediate vicinity of the US embassy in Havana. In an unusual move, the population was [called upon](#) for the first time via text message to participate in the gathering. Díaz-Canel demonstratively appeared in civilian clothes, but found clear words for Washington: “We are prepared to give our own blood, even our own lives, for Venezuela and, of course, for Cuba.”



*Rally in Havana on January 3, with the US Embassy in the background (source: Eduardo Rodríguez Dávila/FB)*

Venezuela [published](#) a communiqué on Monday thanking Cuba for its support “within the framework of cooperation between sovereign states.” The fallen had fulfilled “tasks of institutional protection and defense.” “The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela pays tribute to the 32 Cuban fighters who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty,” the document states. Venezuela's Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino previously spoke of a “cowardly kidnapping” of Maduro and his wife “after a large part of his security team was murdered in cold blood: soldiers, female soldiers, and innocent citizens.” .

The total number of fatalities remains unclear. [According to the New York Times](#), citing Venezuelan sources, it is 80 people. US officials told the newspaper that there were half a dozen wounded US soldiers, although US President Donald Trump declined to confirm the figures.

## What next for Cuba?

While the situation in Venezuela remains dynamic, the question arises as to what the attack means for Cuban-Venezuelan relations. Since the early 2000s, Venezuela has been Cuba's most important oil supplier – on favorable terms in exchange for the services of up to 30,000 Cuban medical professionals at times. Despite declining volumes, Venezuelan supplies are essential for the socialist island, which has been experiencing a [severe energy crisis](#) for several years.

Although Trump has so far ruled out direct military attacks on Cuba, he has announced his intention to further increase economic pressure on the country. With immediate effect, [no more Venezuelan oil will be allowed to reach Cuba](#). Trump [demanded](#) “full access to oil and other things” from Venezuela's interim president, Delcy Rodríguez, and announced that the US would control the country until further notice (although it is unclear what this control would entail). Trump [threatened](#) Rodríguez: If the government in Caracas does not cooperate fully, further military strikes, including invasion, will follow and her fate will be “worse than Maduro's.”

[According to](#) energy expert Jorge Piñon of the University of Texas, who has been closely monitoring Cuba's energy situation for years, an average of 35,000 barrels of oil per day arrived from Venezuela in the last quarter of 2025. In addition, 7,000 barrels came from Mexico and Russia. At the beginning of last year, Mexico was still supplying 22,000 barrels per day, but after a visit by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, the figure dropped to 7,000. This meant that the total amount of oil Cuba received was around 50,000 barrels per day, which is only about 60 percent of its demand of around 80,000 barrels. Of these 50,000 barrels per day, 70 percent came from Venezuela.

At the same time, Cuba's dependence on oil is likely to remain high for the foreseeable future:

Although the massive [expansion of solar energy](#) since the beginning of 2025 has led to the installation of 41 new solar parks with a total capacity of 778 megawatts, the lion's share of electrical energy (>90 percent) continues to be generated from fossil fuels – primarily heavy oil, at least some of which comes from Cuba's own production.

Piñon would see an abrupt end to Venezuelan supplies as a “death sentence” for the government in Havana. But is that really the case? In fact, Cuba could survive in the short term even with limited reserves. Emergency plans, which assume a complete sea and air blockade, have been elaborated since the 1980s. However, the situation would not be sustainable for long. In the medium term, the question arises as to who would step in to replace Venezuela's supplies: Mexico would be a possibility, but it is under enormous pressure from the US. Russia, China, Iran, and Algeria, on the other hand, with which Cuba has friendly relations, have significantly more room for maneuver and could well be willing to support Havana, which still has foreign exchange reserves and could recently offer [more flexible options for foreign investors](#) (e.g., hotel concessions, factory leases, mining rights, and others) in return.

Furthermore, it remains to be seen whether the US really wants to accept a complete collapse of Cuba. The likely consequences would be open-ended political instability and a massive wave of emigration 140 kilometers off the coast of Florida. Given this complex situation, it would be “difficult” for hardliners such as Cuban exile Rubio to convince Trump to push for Cuba's collapse, [says](#) Cuba expert Michael Bustamante of the University of Miami. ([Cubaheute](#))