

La'o Hamutuk

Timor-Leste Institute for Development Monitoring and Analysis

Rua Felicidade, Gricenfor, Bairro Central, Dili, Timor-Leste

Tel: +670-3321040 or +670-77234330 (mobile)

email: laohamutuk@gmail.com Website: www.laohamutuk.org



On the Illegal U.S. Military Operation in Venezuela and the Abduction of President Nicolás Maduro

A Warning Against the Normalization of Global Criminality

Dili, Timor-Leste — 13 January 2026

La'o Hamutuk strongly condemns the unilateral use of U.S. military force in Venezuela, the kidnapping of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and the killing of scores of people in Venezuela and on the high seas. These actions were conducted without the consent of the Venezuelan state or of the United Nations.

We appreciate the 5 January statement of Timor-Leste's Government calling for "restraint, a return to dialogue and diplomacy, and a peaceful resolution of the situation in accordance with international law and the principles of the United Nations Charter."

This is not a domestic law-enforcement matter. It is a profound challenge to the international legal order—including the United Nations Charter's prohibition on the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state and the core principle of non-intervention.

La'o Hamutuk also underscores the serious legal implications of kidnapping a sitting head of state. Even where criminal allegations exist, accountability must be pursued through lawful, transparent and internationally legitimate procedures—not through cross-border military coercion. Should Timor-Leste kidnap President Prabowo Subianto from Jakarta, as he committed serious crimes here during the illegal Indonesian military occupation of our country?

This is another instance of U.S. foreign policy to use unilateral military force to advance its political and economic interests. Repeated reference to Venezuelan oil by U.S. officials, including the president, in the last couple of days sound like 18th-century colonialism. The 'Monroe (or Donroe) Doctrine' has no legitimacy in today's world.

Since the advent of the UN, the U.S. has intervened overtly and covertly in other countries numerous times. We do not forget that U.S. support for Indonesia enabled the invasion and occupation of Timor-Leste from 1975 to 1999, killing more than 200,000 of our people. The

illegal occupation was belatedly ended through a UN-facilitated referendum and transitional administration, so Timor-Leste appreciates the value of international law and diplomacy. Decades later, the failure to hold perpetrators accountable remains a festering wound.

An oil tanker intercepted by the U.S. was falsely flying the flag of Timor-Leste, although our Government never registered it. We urge all involved not to drag the name of our nation into their conflict. Our people have already suffered too much from other nations' interests.

La'o Hamutuk calls for the U.S. to permanently stop intervening in others' sovereign territories. We also urge the international community to act together to block the U.S. from continuing its long-standing, aggressive interventionist foreign policy, but also to reject the use of force, consistently defend international law, demand credible UN action and end impunity for past crimes.

To conclude, when international law is applied selectively, it ceases to function as law and becomes an instrument of unilateral power.

As lutas continuam,



Marta da Silva



Celestino Gusmão



Charles Scheiner



Nicholas A. Kearney Orri



Mariano Ferreira



Elia da Costa Araújo



Elivania Alves Correia



Jonathan Gonsalves