

Russia Backs Venezuela's Interim Leader After U.S. Ousts Maduro

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Venezuela's acting president Delcy Rodríguez (center) greets ousted leader Nicolás Maduro's son at her swearing-in ceremony in Caracas, Jan. 5. **dpa / TASS**

Russia has [voiced](#) support for Venezuela's interim leader Delcy Rodríguez after the United States seized leader Nicolás Maduro in a shock military raid on the capital city of Caracas.

Former Vice President Rodríguez was [sworn in](#) as acting president after Maduro and his wife were detained by U.S. commandos and flown to New York, where Maduro later pleaded not guilty to drug trafficking and other charges in court.

Russia's Foreign Ministry said Rodríguez's swearing-in demonstrated the Bolivarian government's determination to maintain unity, preserve the constitutionally established chain of authority and reduce the risk of a constitutional crisis.

Her swearing-in would also create conditions for Venezuela's "peaceful and stable development" in the face of what Russia described as "blatant neocolonial threats and external armed aggression," the Foreign Ministry said.

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The ministry reiterated Moscow's call for de-escalation and the resolution of disputes through constructive dialogue and respect for international law, particularly the UN Charter.

"Latin America and the Caribbean must remain a zone of peace," the ministry's statement said.

Russia also said it was ready to continue providing what it called necessary support to "our friend" Venezuela.

Moscow has [demanded](#) the release of Maduro and his wife but has otherwise not taken action in support of its South American ally following the U.S. raid.

President Donald Trump has declared that the U.S. was "in charge" in Venezuela, adding that Rodríguez would remain in power only so long as she "[does what we want](#)," hinting at a second attack if Caracas' leadership did not cooperate.

Rodríguez has suggested that she will cooperate with Washington, which wants to tap Venezuela's massive oil reserves.

But she has also sought to project unity with the hardliners in Maduro's administration, who control the security forces and powerful paramilitaries.

Nobel Peace Prize-winning opposition leader Maria Corina Machado has slammed Rodríguez, saying she was "rejected" by the Venezuelan people and calling her "one of the main architects of torture, persecution, corruption, narco-trafficking."

The crisis after a quarter-century of leftist rule now leaves Venezuela's approximately 30 million people — and the world's largest proven oil reserves — facing uncertainty.

AFP contributed reporting.

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