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U.S. Should Topple Chechen Leader After Maduro, Zelensky Says

By AFP

January 07, 2026



Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky. **president.gov.ua**

The United States should pressure Russia by "carrying out some sort of operation" to remove Chechen head Ramzan Kadyrov from power, just like it did with Venezuelan leader Nicolás Maduro, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said Wednesday.

In comments to journalists, Zelensky said the operation to remove Maduro showed that Washington had the power to influence Moscow if it really wished, arguing that deposing Kadyrov would make Russian President Vladimir Putin "think twice" about his ongoing offensive on Ukraine.

U.S. special forces snatched Maduro and his wife from Caracas last Saturday, shocking Washington's allies and drawing condemnation from Venezuela's partner Moscow.

Kadyrov, the leader of Russia's Muslim-majority republic of Chechnya since 2007, is one of

Putin's most vocal supporters and has sent thousands of soldiers to fight in Ukraine.

"They need to put pressure on Russia. They have the tools, they know how. And when they really want to, they can find them," Zelensky said of the United States.

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"Here's an example with Maduro. They carried out an operation... Everyone can see the result, the whole world can see. They did it promptly. Let them carry out some sort of operation with, what's his name — Kadyrov," Zelensky said.

Hours after the U.S. operation to capture Maduro, Zelensky had joked that Putin himself should also be targeted.

"If you can do that with dictators, then the United States knows what to do next," he said at a press conference in Kyiv over the weekend, laughing and smiling.

Ukraine, which has been battling a full-scale Russian invasion for almost four years, has long claimed its partners, including the United States, have not put enough pressure on the Kremlin to end the war.

Kadyrov, who has ruled Chechnya with an iron fist for almost two decades, has consistently advocated for Moscow to use the most extreme options in Ukraine, even floating the idea of a nuclear strike.

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