



## STATEMENT

# The Breakdown of the Rules-Based International Order and Europe's Responsibility

The Union of European Federalists condemns the **aggression against Venezuela and the unprecedented abduction of its president on 3 January 2026**, carried out by the United States administration under President Donald Trump. Notwithstanding the authoritarian and illegitimate nature of Nicolás Maduro's regime, this act constitutes a **grave violation of international law and of the rules-based multilateral order**.

The US has clearly violated the United Nations Charter, which states in Article 2 that “*All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations.*” The UN Charter proposes different mechanisms to prevent conflicts or even mandate member states to use force to maintain or restore international peace and security under Chapter VII. The US administration chose not to even try to use the possibilities offered by the international organisation it has founded in 1945 in San Francisco. The Trump government is showing its complete disdain for a global regulation of conflicts and wars, where peoples are always the victims of the will of a few.

**As such, the act should have been unequivocally condemned by the European Union and its Member States.** This has not occurred so far, showing the weakness that arises from the division of Europeans, and the impotence that comes from acting on the international stage based on one's own national point of view. Except for Spain, European leaders have largely remained silent. This silence is not accidental. It reflects, first, a misplaced conflation between legitimate criticism of the Maduro regime and the principles of international law; and second, more seriously, a reluctance to confront President Trump.

Beyond the Venezuelan case itself—which the U.S. administration appears intent on managing unilaterally as a colonial power, without even engaging the democratic opposition, and seemingly with the primary objective of securing control over oil resources—the **global consequences of this action are profound**. It represents another step in Washington's **imperialist drift** already visible in explicit territorial ambitions regarding Canada, Panama, and Greenland, and in the normalization of force as a tool for settling international disputes, following previous military actions in Iran and Nigeria. Trump has already hinted at similar actions toward Cuba and Colombia.

**Such behaviour consolidates the strategy of partitioning the world among big autocratic imperial powers.** It also **legitimises wars of aggression** already underway, notably Russia's, and encourages others that may be contemplated, including a potential Chinese move against Taiwan, and brings the world closer to political chaos and a new devastating world war.

As the first anniversary of President Trump's return to office approaches, Europe must urgently draw several lessons:



- **First**, President Trump must be taken seriously—always. This applies equally to his public statements and to official documents such as the U.S. National Security Strategy of December 2025. His conception of power, rooted in a logic reminiscent of Carl Schmitt, recognises **no moral or legal limits**. He acts from a position of dominance, fully aware that he wields the largest “stick”, and he uses it systematically—whether through military threats or economic coercion—as the starting point of any negotiation, with the aim of extracting maximum concessions and submission. This approach has already been applied successfully against the European Union in the field of trade relations. Any pretence that his actions are driven by democratic principles is illusory.
- **Second**, weakness in the face of abuse only incentivises further abuse. Appeasement does not work—neither in human relations nor in international politics. It did not work with Hitler, and it will not work with Putin or with Trump. The European Union must **make itself respected**, reaffirm its commitment to a rules-based international order, and refuse to accept *faits accomplis* imposed by force. This requires the forging of **new alliances to organise the resistance**, including with Mercosur, now more relevant than ever, the African Union, ASEAN, Japan, Canada, Australia, and so on; and the **urgent launch of a process of federal-type political unification**, developed in parallel with the establishment of a **European defence capacity independent of the United States**.

This course of action is fully in line with the [proposals advanced by the renewed Action Committee for the United States of Europe](#), bringing together figures such as Enrico Letta, Danuta Hübner, Josep Borrell, Isabelle Durant, Guy Verhofstadt, Domènec Ruiz Devesa, Gabriele Bischoff, Pascal Lamy, Daniel Cohn Bendit, and many others. It must be pursued by those Member States willing to do so. Those European leaders who openly sympathise with Putin or Trump should remain outside this process.

- **Third**, President Trump’s ambition to establish political, economic, technological, and cultural hegemony explicitly encompasses the so-called “Western Hemisphere”, in line with a revived Monroe Doctrine. This includes not only the American continent, but also Greenland—part of the European Union through Denmark—as well as much of Europe, Africa, the Middle East and parts of the Pacific. Trump appears to recognise only two material limits to his ambitions: Putin’s Russia and Xi Jinping’s China, both large nuclear powers, each accorded de facto freedom of action within their respective “spheres of influence”, provided they do not interfere with his own—which would be the largest of the three.

The EU member states must choose between European independence through the European Union, or becoming **fully-fledged vassals of the United States**, as they already partially are through NATO dependency. In such a scenario, President Trump would effectively become **the dictator of the West**—able to impose his will, or even his whims, across half the world, from San Francisco to Sydney, without any meaningful counterbalance.

The Union of European Federalists therefore calls on European leaders, parliaments, and citizens to recognise the gravity of the moment and to act accordingly. In the face of imperialism, it must urgently put an end to its strategic dependencies and declare its independence. The question should no longer be whether Europe should react, but when. **What else must happen before European elites understand the danger we are facing? European citizens are overwhelmingly in favor of a European army and diplomacy, and that can only be created by uniting into a federation**



**which will save our democratic way of life, peace and freedom, while at the same time respecting the autonomy of its member states.**

As Europeans, we know perhaps more than others the cost of totalitarian adventures. Our continent has been ravaged several times at the cost of annihilating entire generations. We had learned the lessons of the past by understanding that autocrats who push for war do so for their own benefit, and not for that of the people they use to carry out their project of power and destruction. It is therefore our historical duty as European peoples to finally unite into a European federation, to carry this flickering light and responsibility so that the world does not return to the shadows of the apocalypse.

Brussels, 6 January 2025

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**Mathilde Baudouin**, Secretary General of UEF