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## Declaration of the Old Catholic Churches International on the Illegal Invasion of Venezuela and the Kidnapping of its President

**For publication on the Official Website and Social Media**

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The Old Catholic Churches International condemns, in the strongest possible terms, the **illegal and unprovoked military attack upon the sovereign nation of Venezuela**, and the reported **kidnapping/forcible seizure of President Nicolás Maduro and the First Lady**. Such acts constitute grave violations of international law, threaten regional and global peace, and deepen human suffering—especially among the poor, the displaced, and the vulnerable.

At the same time, we acknowledge a painful and widely documented truth: **President Maduro has been widely regarded by many Venezuelans and by international observers as an authoritarian ruler, and Venezuela's state institutions and security forces have been credibly accused of grave human-rights violations**. The United Nations has established an Independent International Fact-Finding Mission on Venezuela, and UN reporting has described patterns including killings, arbitrary detention, torture, and repression. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (OAS) has also published reporting on serious human-rights violations connected to Venezuela's political repression.

Nevertheless, **even the gravest allegations against a head of state do not grant any foreign power the moral or legal right to invade, bomb, abduct, or impose rule by force**. The Church rejects the false choice between **supporting authoritarianism** on the one hand and **endorsing unlawful war and abduction** on the other. A commitment to human rights must be expressed through **lawful, accountable, and peace-seeking means**—not through collective punishment of a nation.

### Catholic Social Teaching: Peace, Justice, and the Common Good

Catholic social teaching compels us to uphold the **dignity of the human person**, the **common good**, and the virtue of **solidarity**, insisting that peace is not merely the absence of war but the fruit of justice.

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We therefore appeal urgently for an **immediate cessation of hostilities**, for the protection of civilians, and for a renewed commitment to **diplomatic dialogue** under legitimate international frameworks—alongside **independent investigations** into alleged abuses and credible pathways to accountability that do not sacrifice the lives of ordinary people.

## **Scriptural Foundations**

Holy Scripture commands the faithful to reject the cycle of violence and to labor for peace:

**“They shall beat their swords into plowshares... nation shall not lift up sword against nation.”** (Isaiah 2:4)

**“Seek peace and pursue it.”** (Psalm 34:14)

**“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God.”** (Matthew 5:9)

These are not ideals for private devotion alone; they are mandates shaping Christian witness in public life.

## **Appeals to International Bodies and Religious Leaders**

We call upon:

- The **United Nations** and relevant international bodies to act decisively to defend international law, protect civilians, and prevent escalation, while supporting impartial human-rights monitoring and accountability processes.
- Governments across the world to reject the normalization of “state kidnapping” and military regime-change tactics.
- Religious leaders and communities, Catholic, Orthodox, Protestant, Evangelical, Jewish, Muslim, and all faith traditions, to raise a united moral voice against unlawful war, political repression, and the abuse of human dignity in all its forms.

A public statement of condemnation has also been issued by CODEPINK opposing the bombing of Venezuela and the kidnapping of President Maduro.

## **Call to Action for the Faithful**

We ask the faithful of the Old Catholic Churches International, and all people of goodwill, to respond with disciplined moral clarity:

### **1) Prayer**

Pray for the people of Venezuela, especially families, children, the elderly, and those caught in violence. Pray for victims of political repression and for all who suffer under injustice. Pray also for political leaders, that they may repent of violence, whether the violence of tyranny or the violence of invasion, and choose the hard work of peace.

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## **2) Advocacy**

Contact your elected representatives to demand support for diplomacy, civilian protection, humanitarian access, and adherence to international law. Urge your government to support impartial international mechanisms that document abuses and pursue accountability without collective punishment.

## **3) Concrete Mercy**

Support reputable humanitarian relief efforts serving displaced persons and those impacted by the conflict. Encourage parishes and missions to hold public intercessions and to offer pastoral support to Venezuelan communities in diaspora.

## **Conclusion**

The Church must never become accustomed to war. We must not permit the abduction of national leaders, the bombing of cities, and the overriding of sovereignty to be treated as normal instruments of policy. And we must likewise refuse to normalize political repression, torture, or the crushing of democratic aspirations.

We reaffirm: **peace is possible**, but only when truth is honored, human dignity is protected, and law governs force, not the other way around.

May the Lord of Peace guide the nations away from violence and toward reconciliation.



Rt. Rev. Gregory W. Godsey, OSFoc



**Bishop Greer Godsey, OSFoc**  
**Presiding Bishop, Old Catholic Churches International**

***Affirmed by the all the Clergy of the Old Catholic Churches International.***