



Belgisch Genootschap voor Internationaal Recht

Société belge de droit international

INTERNATIONALE VERENIGING ZONDER WINSTOOGMERK | ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE SANS BUT LUCRATIF

Venezuela: Protecting International Law and Reaffirming Its Relevance as an Essential Foundation for International Peace and Security

Declaration adopted by the Board of Directors of the Society on 9 January 2026

The prohibition against the use of force and the principle of the sovereign equality of States constitute cardinal normative achievements in the history of international relations; they are among the founding principles of the Charter of the United Nations and of the contemporary international legal order.

The recent military operation carried out by the United States on the territory of Venezuela, which notably involved bombardments, the abduction of Nicolás Maduro and his wife, and resulted in the deaths of several dozen individuals, constitutes in several respects a flagrant breach of international law, and, in particular, an act of aggression.

In light of the openly asserted nature of this violation, which is embedded in a context marked by the progressive erosion of multilateralism and the resurgence of the logic of 'might makes right' and of *faits accomplis* as instruments governing international relations, a collective and unequivocal stance is required. International law, which is built upon the practice and declarations of States, relies on the manner in which States themselves engage with it. History has further demonstrated that serious breaches of international law, when not condemned clearly and forcefully, risk becoming normalised, spreading by contagion, and ultimately leading to the erosion of the rules concerned.

Against this risk, it is more than ever the duty of Belgium, the European Union, and all States committed to upholding international law to protect it without ambiguity, and to reaffirm its relevance as the indispensable normative framework for the maintenance of international peace and security.

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This declaration was adopted by the Board of Directors of the Belgian Society of International Law by a majority of the members present and voting. No negative votes were cast. Some members declared that they abstained due to a duty of restraint or because of their principled position regarding collective statements.