

## Maduro Calls for Nationwide ‘Anti-imperialist’ Drills After Trump’s Threat of ‘Military Option’

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*A massive rally in support of the Venezuelan president has taken place in Caracas, condemning **Donald Trump**'s proposal of a "military option" to resolve the country's issues. **Nicolas Maduro** announced a nationwide military drill next week to fend off a possible "imperialist" invasion.*

*"I have given the order to the armed forces' joint chiefs of staff to start preparations for a national civil-military exercise for the integrated armed defense of the Venezuelan nation," Maduro told supporters who had gathered in the nation's capital. The drills are scheduled for August 26-27.*

"Everyone has to join the defense plan, millions of men and women, let's see how the American imperialists like it," Maduro added, as thousands of supporters denounced Trump's threats of possible military intervention.

On Friday, Trump branded Maduro a "dictator" blaming him for months of unrest in the country. To put an end to the crisis Trump said that a "military operation, a military option, is certainly something we could pursue."

On Monday, thousands of Venezuelans denounced Trump's statements.

"We will defend our country if at any moment the American empire wants to tread on the sacred soil of Bolivar and Chavez. We are here, ready to fight, ready to defend it with the blood of our patriots if necessary," said **Nelson Rafael Pineda**, a military officer at the rally.

While the Pentagon [said](#) Monday that it is not preparing for military action in Venezuela, US **Vice President Mike Pence** warned that the US will not just standby and watch the Latin American country descend into a "dictatorship."

"President (Donald) Trump has made it very clear that we will not standby while Venezuela collapses into a dictatorship," Pence told reporters in Cartagena, Colombia. "A failed state in Venezuela threatens the security and prosperity of our entire hemisphere and the people of the United States of America."

However, before the US potentially turns to a military option, Washington intends to pursue economic sanctions against the Venezuelan government.

“We are absolutely determined to bring the full measure of American economic and diplomatic power to bear until we see democracy restored in Venezuela,” Pence told reporters, as [quoted](#) by Reuters.

Venezuela has been gripped by violent protests since April, which has already led to over 120 deaths, according to Reuters. Amid the ongoing crisis in the country, the Trump’s administration last month blacklisted a number of senior Venezuelan officials including Maduro himself, freezing their assets in the US and banning American citizens from doing business with them.

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