

Venezuela: Press freedom is urgent to guarantee the right to reliable information about the crisis



At a crucial moment for the world to understand what is happening in Venezuela and the consequences of the US intervention, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) urges the authorities to allow foreign journalists to enter the country and to stop restricting the work of local media.

After years of repression and strict control over information under Nicolás Maduro's government, conditions for journalism in Venezuela have deteriorated even further following the illegal US military action on January 3 and the ensuing institutional instability. Journalists now face heightened and unpredictable risks in an increasingly fragmented environment where volatility prevails. Intimidation, direct threats, phone searches, and forced deletions of journalistic content — practices that became widespread [after the 2024 elections](#) — are now compounded by new dangers. These threats no longer originate from a single, identifiable state authority but from multiple actors, significantly increasing insecurity for media professionals.

Around 200 foreign journalists are currently stranded in Cúcuta, Colombia, awaiting authorization to enter Venezuela, according to RSF. Per Colombian journalists living in Cúcuta who spoke to RSF — who prefer to remain anonymous for security reasons — even those holding valid work permits may be unable to cross the border, as access depends largely on the discretion of individual soldiers. Many of those who manage to enter the country are subsequently deported.

At the same time, the Venezuelan government provides virtually no official information, while independent media outlets remain severely weakened by political pressure, economic hardship, and exile. This has created a profound information vacuum. Social media platforms are increasingly flooded with disinformation and manipulated content, much of it generated using artificial intelligence — including fabricated videos of Venezuelans celebrating the US attack and deepfakes depicting American soldiers alongside Maduro.

“Today, there is enormous opacity surrounding what is happening in Venezuela. At this crucial moment, the Venezuelan government continues to restrict press activity and to prevent foreign journalists from reporting. There is not even any information about the dozens of people who reportedly died during Trump’s attack. Without access to information and without press freedom, the conditions are ripe for information warfare. At this key moment for the world to understand what is happening in Venezuela and the consequences of the US intervention, Reporters Without Borders (RSF) urges the authorities to allow foreign journalists to enter the country and to stop restricting the work of national media.

Thibaut Bruttin

General director of RSF

As interventions tend to multiply risks for the press, often caught in the crossfire, there are no signs of an easing of government repression. On January 5, Venezuelan forces temporarily arrested 14 journalists during the inauguration of the new president, Delcy Rodríguez, at the National Assembly in Caracas, according to the Venezuelan Press Syndicate. Since then, four additional journalists have been detained at the border: two from Spain, one from Mexico and one from Colombia. Although all were released a few hours later, at least six journalists remain imprisoned in Venezuela for their professional activities.

They are: **Luis López**, [imprisoned since June 2024](#); **Leandro Palmar** and **Belices Salvador Cubillán**, arrested in January 2025; **Nakary Mena Ramos** and **Gianni González**, arrested in April 2025; and **Rory Branker** [imprisoned since February 2025](#) and transferred on December 8 from his place of detention to an [unknown location](#).

Nicolás Maduro is considered a predator of press freedom, and [Venezuela](#) ranks 160th out of 180 countries in the 2025. RSF is closely monitoring the situation inside the country and maintains a presence at the Colombian border, in direct contact with foreign journalists.