



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on September 3, 2025

Trump: U.S. Destroys TdA Terror-gang Drug Boat; Hegseth: More Strikes Ahead

Pursuant to President Trump's order for the military to use force against the terrorist drug cartels, U.S. forces destroyed a drug boat used by the Venezuelan Tren de Aragua (TdA) terror gang.

Seen on video released yesterday, the strike destroyed the boat and killed 11 narcoterrorists.

The strike likely has the regime of Venezuelan dictator Nicolas Maduro terrified. It not only suggests that more military action is ahead, but also that Maduro's days might be numbered. The administration has fingered him as the de facto head of TdA, and offered a \$50 million reward for information leading to the strongman's arrest.



AP Images
Donald Trump and Pete Hegseth

([@realDonaldTrump](#) - Truth Social Post)
(Donald J. Trump - Sep 02, 2025, 5:22 PM ET)

Earlier this morning, on my Orders, U.S. Military Forces conducted a kinetic strike against positively identified Tren de Aragua Narcoterrorists in the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility. TDA is... pic.twitter.com/zxChaoeQzK

— Fan Donald J. Trump 🇺🇸 TRUTH POSTS (@TruthTrumpPosts) [September 2, 2025](#)

The Strike

On Truth Social, Trump announced that the strike obliterated the speed boat, which was headed for Trinidad and Tobago, an island nation in the Caribbean off Venezuela's coast:

Earlier this morning, on my Orders, U.S. Military Forces conducted a kinetic strike against positively identified Tren de Aragua Narcoterrorists in the SOUTHCOM area of responsibility.

He noted that the terror outfit operates "under the control" of Maduro. It

is responsible for mass murder, drug trafficking, sex trafficking, and acts of violence and terror across the United States and Western Hemisphere.

The strike vaporized the boat and its occupants in international waters.



Continued Trump:

Please let this serve as notice to anybody even thinking about bringing drugs into the United States of America. BEWARE!

Appearing on *Fox & Friends* this morning, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said that he watched the strike live:

We knew exactly who was in that boat, we knew exactly what they were doing, and we knew exactly who they represented, and that was Tren de Aragua, a narcoterrorist organization designated by the United States, trying to poison our country with illicit drugs.

Hegseth wouldn't say which branch of the military conducted the attack or how it was carried out.

"President Trump is willing to go on offense in ways that others have not been" in handling the drug cartels, "and to send that clear signal" to TdA and other cartels.

"You want to try to traffic drugs?" Hegseth warned:

It's a new day, it's a different day. Those 11 drug traffickers are no longer with us, sending a very clear signal that this is an activity the United States is not going to tolerate in our hemisphere.

Other narcoterrorists in the region will "face the same fate," he warned.

Asked whether the U.S. is worried about the reaction of China and other of Venezuela's allies, Hegseth said that "the only person that should be worried" is Maduro, the "kingpin of a narcostate."

"We know he's involved in the types of drug running that has affected the American people directly," he added.

Cartels Background

Not blasting the boat to smithereens was not an option for Trump. Before his second administration took power, border czar [Tom Homan warned](#) the cartels during a speech at the Republican National Convention that "he's going to designate you a terrorist organization, and he's going to wipe you off the face of the earth! You're done! You're done!"

On his first day in office, [Trump declared](#) that TdA and other gangs are terrorist organizations. And in March he [proclaimed](#):

TdA operates in conjunction with *Cártel de los Soles*, the Nicolas Maduro regime-sponsored, narco-terrorism enterprise based in Venezuela, and commits brutal crimes, including murders, kidnappings, extortions, and human, drug, and weapons trafficking.

TdA has engaged in and continues to engage in mass illegal migration to the United States to further its objectives of harming United States citizens, undermining public safety, and supporting the Maduro regime's goal of destabilizing democratic nations in the Americas, including the United States.



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Early last month, he ordered the military to strike the cartels with force.

“We cannot continue to just treat these guys as local street gangs,” Secretary of State and acting National Security Advisor [Marco Rubio told](#) Eternal Word Television Network about Trump’s move:

They have weaponry that looks like what terrorists, in some cases armies, have. They control territory in many cases. Those cartels extend from the Maduro regime in Venezuela — which is not a legitimate government.

At the same time, U.S. Attorney General Pam Bondi announced the reward for Maduro’s arrest. In March 2020, [federal prosecutors indicted](#) Maduro and other top Venezuelan officials for drug trafficking and narcoterrorism.

Nicolás Maduro and his cronies think they’re untouchable. They’re wrong. We’re increasing our reward offer for Maduro to up to \$50 million. <https://t.co/mEomEgWLcT>
[pic.twitter.com/ltq1cdMUji](https://t.co/mEomEgWLcT)

— US Dept of State INL (@StateINL) [August 8, 2025](#)

TdA Infiltration

In April, a [secret FBI report disclosed](#) that Maduro directed the TdA terror gang to infiltrate the United States. The Justice Department indicted more than two dozen gang members.

Indeed, citing a former CIA operative, the *Miami Herald* validated the administration’s claims in March. Agency veteran Gary Berntsen told the newspaper that Maduro controls TdA and sent at least “300 gang members who had received paramilitary training in Venezuela” into the United States.

“The Venezuelan regime has assumed operational control of these guys [Tren de Aragua] and has trained 300 of them; they have given them paramilitary training, training them to fire weapons, on how to conduct sabotage, how to use crypto,” [Berntsen said](#):

They have given them all like a four- to six-week course. They put these 300 guys through that course and ... they were deploying them into the United States to 20 locations, to 20 separate states.

Those 300 would manage 5,000 gang members that Maduro planned to put into the United States, Berntsen told the paper.

[He continued](#):

This is the equivalent of an oversized combat brigade dispersed through 20 different locations, but with thousands of people that would be able to communicate, move drugs, and do whatever they needed, and be ... on hand to put pressure on the U.S. with violence in cities, and build out a massive criminal infrastructure in America.

That report comports with TdA’s [establishing bases](#) across the United States thanks to the Biden administration’s policy of [importing criminal Venezuelans](#). [They are responsible](#) for at least two



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murders and charged with a third.



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