

WHITE PAPER

The Republic of Colombia



IN RESPONSE TO THE NORTH
AMERICAN CRISIS AND
VENEZUELAN TERRITORIAL
VIOLATION

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Executive Summary

The Republic of Colombia condemns the unilateral military action initiated by the United States against Canada on August 30, 2025, as a flagrant violation of international law and the principles of peaceful coexistence. The situation has escalated dramatically with confirmed US airstrikes on Venezuelan territory at Base Aérea Mayor Buenaventura Vivas Guerrero, marking a dangerous expansion beyond the initial Canada-US conflict. This crisis poses a fundamental threat to Colombia's national security and regional stability. The resignation of the American Defence Secretary of Colombian origin further highlights the threat to Colombian diaspora security.

Colombia's response prioritizes immediate de-escalation, multilateral diplomacy, adherence to international law, and regional stability while exercising strategic autonomy. As an incoming UN Security Council member and current Pacific Alliance pro tempore president, Colombia will lead urgent diplomatic efforts to prevent further regional escalation while protecting Colombian territorial integrity and regional sovereignty

National Interests and Strategic Goals

Colombia's national interests in this crisis are guided by fundamental principles of territorial sovereignty, international law, and regional stability:

Preservation of International Legal Order

Colombia upholds UN Charter principles and international law as the foundation of global peace and security. The US violations of both Canadian sovereignty and Venezuelan territorial integrity represent existential threats to the rules-based international order that Colombia depends upon as a middle power.

Regional Stability and Colombian Security

Given Venezuela's direct border with Colombia spanning 2,341 kilometres,¹ US military action against Venezuelan territory creates immediate security threats. This requires urgent border protection measures and potential refugee contingency planning.

Strategic Autonomy and Non-Alignment

Colombia maintains an independent foreign policy positioning without automatic alignment with any major powers. This unique position can be leveraged to mediate conflicts while protecting national sovereignty.

Protection of Colombian Diaspora

The resignation of the American Defence Minister of Colombian origin can lead to prejudice against the Colombian diaspora in the United States of America. Ensuring their safety requires immediate consular protection protocols and potential repatriation planning.

Humanitarian Leadership

Colombia's experience managing 2.8 million Venezuelan refugees positions it to lead humanitarian responses to potential displacement from both Venezuelan conflict zones and broader North American crisis spillovers.²

Multilateral Institution Strengthening

¹ Sogecol, Fronteras de Colombia: Venezuela, https://www.sogecol.edu.co/Ova/fronteras_colombia/fronteras/venezuela/venezuela.html.

² U.N. High Comm'r for Refugees, The private sector increases work-based integration for Venezuelan refugees and migrants in Colombia (Aug. 28, 2023), <https://www.unhcr.org/blogs/the-private-sector-increases-work-based-integration-for-venezuelan-refugees-and-migrants-in-colombia/>.

As an incoming UN Security Council member,³ Colombia seeks to strengthen multilateral crisis management mechanisms while preventing institutional collapse of inter-American organizations.

³ Vibhu Mishra, Five countries elected to serve on UN Security Council, U.N. Peacekeeping (June 11, 2024), <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/five-countries-elected-to-serve-un-security-council>.

Key Challenges Pertaining to the Crisis

Immediate Security Threats

The expansion of US military action to Venezuelan territory fundamentally alters Colombia's security environment. The proximity of Base Aérea Mayor Buenaventura Vivas Guerrero to Colombian borders creates immediate spillover risks, potential Venezuelan military mobilization affecting shared borders, and increased likelihood of refugee flows requiring humanitarian response activation.

Colombian-American dual citizens face unprecedented persecution risks, evidenced by the Defense Secretary's self-imposed exile. This threatens approximately 1.6 million Colombian-Americans requiring urgent consular protection protocols and potential community security coordination.⁴

Institutional and Legal Complications

Colombia confronts simultaneous institutional crises across multiple frameworks. The OAS faces potential collapse with both the United States and Venezuela as members in direct conflict, while UN Security Council paralysis appears likely given US veto power over condemnatory resolutions.

The breakdown of the inter-American security architecture threatens Colombia's traditional diplomatic tools, while NATO Article 5 complications create pressure even though it does not apply to Colombia as a global partner.⁵

Geopolitical Realignment Pressures

Colombia must balance its trade relationships with the United States, which contribute significantly to its economy, against fundamental legal principles regarding territorial violations.⁶

There could be increased pressure for alignment with the anti-US bloc following the Venezuelan attack, considering Colombia's joining of the BRICS New Development Bank.⁷

⁴ Cassandra Z. Calle & Jeanne Batalova, Colombian Immigrants in the United States, Migration Pol'y Inst. (July 11, 2023), <https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/colombian-immigrants-united-states>.

⁵ North Atlantic Treaty art. 5, Apr. 4, 1949, 34 U.N.T.S. 243; Relations with Colombia, NATO (last updated Oct. 3, 2024), https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_143936.htm.

⁶ Colombia, Office of the United States Trade Representative, USTR.gov, <https://ustr.gov/countries-regions/americas/colombia>.

⁷ Colombia Joins BRICS New Development Bank, TV BRICS (June 20, 2025), <https://tvbrics.com/en/news/colombia-joins-brics-new-development-bank/>.

This creates opportunities for strategic diversification while risking economic retaliation. Recent diplomatic normalisation with Venezuela requires careful management to avoid the appearance of choosing sides while upholding territorial sovereignty principles consistently across all cases.

The emergence of a Cuba-Russia protection bloc and the risk that Colombia will face pressure to choose between this bloc and the United States. This would require direct diplomatic outreach to both Cuba and Russia to clarify the scope and intentions of their announced “protection” for Latin American states, and to insist on Colombia's neutrality and strategic autonomy.

Proposed Actions/Policies

Immediate Emergency Response (0-6 hours)

Colombia will issue a presidential emergency address condemning both the Canadian invasion and Venezuelan territorial violation as flagrant violations of international law and UN Charter principles. Immediate deployment of additional military units to the Venezuelan border as defensive measures will demonstrate Colombia's commitment to territorial security while avoiding provocative positioning.

Emergency activation of consular protection protocols for Colombian nationals in the United States, including direct communication with US authorities regarding dual citizen safety and potential repatriation coordination for those facing persecution.

Critical Multilateral Diplomacy (6-24 hours)

Colombia will request an immediate UN Security Council emergency session addressing the expansion of conflict to South American territory, emphasizing Article 2(4) violations of the UN Charter and threats to international peace and security.⁸ As an incoming Security Council member, Colombia will leverage its position to build coalitions supporting peaceful resolution.

Further, Colombia will call for an emergency OAS session under Article 3 of the Rio Treaty regarding the attack on Venezuela as a member state, while simultaneously working to prevent institutional collapse through measured collective security responses prioritizing diplomatic solutions.⁹

Direct coordination with BRICS partners on a collective diplomatic response to US territorial violations would be required, positioning Colombia as a bridge between traditional Western partnerships and emerging power alignments.

Regional Leadership Activation (1-7 days)

Colombia will convene emergency Pacific Alliance and UNASUR sessions to forge unified regional responses condemning interventionism while proposing alternative security frameworks based on territorial sovereignty and peaceful dispute resolution.

⁸ U.N. Charter art. 2(4).

⁹ Inter-American Treaty of Reciprocal Assistance art. 3, Sept. 2, 1947, 21 U.N.T.S. 77.

Apart from that, acceleration of contingency planning for Venezuelan civilian displacement would be undertaken, activating UNHCR protocols and regional humanitarian coordination mechanisms developed during previous refugee crises.

Fast-track implementation of trade diversification initiatives with BRICS partners and other emerging economies would lead to reduced dependence on US-controlled trade routes and economic pressure mechanisms.

Medium-term Strategic Framework (1-4 weeks)

A crisis resolution initiative could be launched by the American States, positioning Colombia as a lead mediator for comprehensive regional peace processes addressing both North American conflicts and South American territorial violations. Coordination with Non-Aligned Movement countries would help sustain collective diplomatic pressure supporting international law compliance and peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms.

Colombia would propose a new inter-American treaty framework for protecting territorial integrity and establishing conflict prevention mechanisms independent of major power interference.

Risk Analysis

Military and Humanitarian Risk

The highest probability risk is direct US military action against Colombian targets following the Venezuelan precedent. Colombia's condemnation of US actions and support for Venezuelan territorial sovereignty could trigger economic sanctions, military pressure, or targeted actions against Colombian infrastructure.

Mitigation requires strengthening diplomatic immunity claims through multilateral support, coordinating BRICS cooperation frameworks, and preparing asymmetric defense strategies emphasizing international law violation costs.

Venezuelan military response potentially affecting Colombian territory represents another critical scenario requiring immediate military-to-military communication establishment, coordinated border security measures, and civilian protection protocols.

Mass refugee crisis from simultaneous Venezuelan and potential North American displacement could overwhelm Colombia's humanitarian infrastructure, requiring pre-positioned UNHCR coordination, regional burden-sharing agreements, and emergency humanitarian corridor establishment.

Economic and Political Risk

US economic warfare through trade sanctions against Colombia for supporting Venezuela could threaten bilateral trade relationships worth billions annually. Mitigation requires accelerated BRICS New Development Bank integration, emergency trade corridor establishment with alternative partners, and regional economic cooperation strengthening.

Systematic targeting of Colombian-American dual nationals in the United States could affect 1.6 million individuals, requiring international legal protection coordination, emergency repatriation planning, and multilateral pressure for minority protection compliance.

Alignment with International Law and Multilateral and Bilateral Commitments

UN Charter Compliance Enhancement

Colombia's response directly supports UN Charter Articles 2(4) and 51, condemning territorial integrity violations while acknowledging legitimate self-defense rights.¹⁰

The territorial integrity principle allows absolute defense of Venezuelan sovereignty, establishing international legal precedents protecting middle power sovereignty rights.

Inter-American System Preservation

Article 1 of the OAS Charter defends sovereignty and territorial integrity of all American states.¹¹ This requires collective response coordination supporting Venezuela while working to preserve institutional functionality despite member state conflicts.

Rio Treaty Article 3 supports collective response against attacks on Venezuela as an American state, while the Democratic Charter provisions ensure that crisis responses respect democratic governance standards despite emergency conditions.¹²

Regional Integration Strengthening

UNASUR Defense Council needs to be activated for South American territorial defense coordination. Further, Pacific Alliance emergency protocols would help with regional economic security.

Alliances like BRICS and Russia-Cuba could further strengthen security cooperation while providing multilateral frameworks supporting Colombian crisis response.

There is a need to strengthen Latin American-Caribbean solidarity against external aggression through CELAC while supporting broader Global South coordination on territorial sovereignty protection.

Strategic Bilateral Recalibration

US-Colombia relations require the suspension of military cooperation until regional conflict de-escalation. At the same time, Venezuela-Colombia normalisation includes security cooperation agreements addressing border protection and humanitarian coordination.

¹⁰ U.N. Charter arts. 2(4), 51.

¹¹ Charter of the Organization of American States art. 1, Apr. 30, 1948, 119 U.N.T.S. 3 (entered into force Dec. 13, 1951).

¹² Inter-American Democratic Charter, Org. of Am. States, Sept. 11, 2001, <http://www.oas.org/OASpage/eng/Documents/DemocracticCharter.html>.

Brazil would likely express strong condemnation of Venezuelan territorial violation. In light of this, Colombia and Brazil can engage in defence cooperation, focusing on Amazon security and broader border coordination against external threats.

Colombia's response transforms this unprecedented crisis into an opportunity for strategic autonomy consolidation, regional leadership establishment, and international legal order strengthening through principled multilateral diplomacy and territorial sovereignty protection.