



One killed in US 'narco' strike as Trump's Latin America shadow war builds steam

## Description

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Trump

One person was killed and two injured in the [latest](#) 'narco' boat strike in the eastern Pacific on 17 June. While all eyes are on US-Iran peace talks, US president Donald Trump's administration is [still terrorising](#) Latin America.

The US has killed over 200 people in the Caribbean and Pacific [under the guise](#) of stopping 'narco-terrorist' boats. The US military's southern command posted on X:

On June 16, at the direction of [#SOUTHCOM](#) commander Gen. Francis L. Donovan, Joint Task Force Southern Spear conducted a lethal kinetic strike on a vessel operated by Designated Terrorist Organizations. Intelligence confirmed the vessel was transiting along known routes. [pic.twitter.com/UGBRt9Mbdm](https://pic.twitter.com/UGBRt9Mbdm)

'U.S. Southern Command (@Southcom) [June 17, 2026](#)

Trump's [shadow war](#) has been raging throughout 2026. The most aggressive phase was the kidnapping of Venezuelan president Nicolas Maduro on 3 January. Maduro is still being held in New York awaiting trial.

## Trump's strategy for an American empire

French paper *Le Monde* [pointed to](#) Trump's ambitions for a subservient Latin America as a matter of US policy:

We want a hemisphere whose governments cooperate with us against narco-terrorists, cartels and other transnational criminal organizations (â?) we want to ensure our continued access to key strategic locations.

The new drug war, like the old one, is fundamentally a neocolonial project. As US-based Latin America Studies professor Michelle D. Paranzino [pointed out](#) on 11 June:

The history of that war on drugs, however, especially during the presidency of Ronald Reagan, shows that the narco-terrorism label has always been politicized.

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Then, as now, this collaboration appears to be aimed at the leftist and communist governments in the Western Hemisphere.

In many cases, the drug war has an explicit rationale for action.

The US has been remarkably aggressive

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Bolivia is the latest country to sign up to US â??anti-drugâ?? plans. The *BBC* [reported](#) on 17 June:

The foreign ministry said that under the agreement, the US would provide up to \$20m (Â£15m) to train and equip Bolivian forces as part of a joint fight against drug smuggling.

Bolivia recently [enlisted](#) Trumpâ??s centrepiece colonialist alliance:

Under a new centrist president, Rodrigo Paz, Bolivia has joined the Shield of the Americas, the US-led security initiative in the Western Hemisphere.

*NPR* interviewed left-wing historian of the Americas Greg Grandin on Trumpâ??s remaking of the hemisphere. Grandin [warned](#) the new US strategy was â??remarkable in its aggressionâ?\*

Itâ??s remarkable in the sense that it feels no need to legitimate itself in terms of any kind of moral or normative justification. In Latin America and the Western Hemisphere, you have quite a remarkable, cohesive and, I would say, efficient application of all of the different applications of hard power â?? of U.S. hard power â?? to Latin America under the rubric of the war on drugs.

### [Adding](#)

I would say that, maybe with the exception of Uruguay, Washington is meddling in Latin American politics to different degrees of intensity in almost every Latin American nation.

Trump seemed poised to push harder against Latin American resistance before he blundered into a war with Iran in February. He lost that war. But with global attention on new peace talks, it is easy to forget that the dirty war in the western hemisphere is still underway.

*Featured image via the Canary*

By [Joe Glenton](#)

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