

Russia Condemns Excessive U.S. Use of Military Force in Caribbean



The aircraft carrier USS Gerald R. Ford, along with eight Navy ships, a special operations vessel, and a nuclear-powered submarine deployed to an area near Venezuela.

MOSCOW (Dispatches) - Russia strongly condemns the United States for the excessive use of military force during counter-narcotics missions in the Caribbean, the Russian Foreign Ministry said.

Such actions violate both U.S. domestic and international law, ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova said, adding that the position is recognized by representatives of a number of countries and international organizations, including UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk.

“We reaffirm our firm support for the Venezuelan leadership in its efforts to defend national sovereignty.”

“We advocate for preserving the Latin American and Caribbean region as a zone of peace,” added the spokesperson.

Steps are needed to de-escalate the situation and facilitate constructive solutions to existing problems in line with international law, she said.

The U.S. military forces stationed in the Caribbean have conducted yet another strike on a ship, leaving at least three men dead.

In a statement posted on the social

media platform X on Saturday (local time), U.S. Secretary of War Peter Brian Hegseth announced that the U.S. Southern Command has carried out a deadly strike on what he claimed was a drug-smuggling vessel.

“This vessel, like EVERY OTHER, was known by our intelligence to be involved in illicit narcotics smuggling, was transiting along a known narcotics-trafficking route, and carrying narcotics,” Hegseth declared, without offering any evidence to substantiate the claim.

He added that the operation, “carried out in international waters,” had been launched under the direct order of U.S. President Donald Trump.

The Southern Command has conducted at least fifteen such assaults in the Caribbean or eastern Pacific since early September, killing at least 61 individuals in total.

The frequency of these attacks has risen sharply in recent days, escalating from one strike every few weeks to two assaults on passing vessels within the past three days.

The U.S. military escalation in the Caribbean and near Venezuelan waters began in August, involving 6,000 personnel, several destroyers, anti-subma-

rine aircraft, battleships, nuclear submarines, and F-35 squadrons.

On October 24, the Pentagon announced the deployment of Carrier Strike Group Twelve (CSG-12) to the Southern Command in the Caribbean, claiming it aimed solely to “detect, monitor, and interdict illicit activities that threaten the security and prosperity of the United States.”

The arrival of CSG-12, led by the USS Gerald R. Ford, the world’s largest aircraft carrier, will increase the number of U.S. military personnel in the region to roughly 10,000.

On October 15, Trump stated that he had authorized CIA operations in Venezuela and was weighing the possibility of ground operations in the country.

“We have almost totally stopped it by sea. Now we will stop it by land,” Trump said, referring to what he called drug trafficking.

This growing military presence has intensified concerns about an imminent attempt by Washington to destabilize or even invade Venezuela under fabricated pretexts.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said that Russia is closely monitoring the situation in Venezuela in connection with U.S. military pressure.

“We are closely monitoring the situation in Venezuela,” he said, commenting on The Washington Post report saying that Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro had sent a request to Russian leader Vladimir Putin for the supply of missiles, radars, and aircraft against the backdrop of U.S. threats to his country.

Earlier, the Miami Herald reported the U.S. administration had decided to attack military targets in Venezuela. According to the newspaper, these strikes could be carried out in the coming days or even hours. Meanwhile, U.S. President Donald Trump denied in a conversation with reporters that he was considering strikes on Venezuela or had made a decision on the matter.

UK MPs Call for Gov’t Adoption of New Islamophobia Definition After Hate Crime Surge



Muslim demonstrators have cited Islamophobia in many of their protests.

LONDON (The Guardian) - Prominent UK politicians have written to Steve Reed, secretary of state for housing, communities and local government, urging him to adopt a new definition of Islamophobia.

Recent statistics in England and Wales have shown a 19 percent rise in hate crimes against Muslims in the last year.

In a letter, the group of 40 MPs said adopting the new definition would be an “important step” in curbing anti-Muslim prejudice.

An independent working group of MPs was established in February to determine the new definition of Islamophobia to address “unacceptable treatment, prejudice, discrimination and hate targeting Muslims or anyone who is perceived to be Muslim.”

It was chaired by the former attorney general for England and Wales, Dominic Grieve, and included the co-chair of the British Muslim Network, Akeela Ahmed.

The letter said the new definition

“comes at a time when unfortunately, Islamophobia continues to increase rapidly, with devastating consequences. In 2025, 45 percent of religious hate crimes were directed towards Muslims.”

It added: “This means Islamophobic hate crimes have risen 92% since 2023 and the adoption of a definition by the government becomes more important than ever.”

Signatories urged Reed to adopt the definition in November during Islamophobia Awareness Month, after the working group submitted their report in October for consultation.

Supporters of a new definition have pointed out that under the 2010 Equality Act, Muslims are not protected from racial discrimination as they are not defined as a racial group.

A previous definition of Islamophobia from the all-party parliamentary group on British Muslims stated: “Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.”

Trump Threatens Military Strikes on Nigeria on Pretext of Protecting Christians

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – U.S. President Donald Trump has said that Washington may launch military action in Nigeria, claiming he has ordered the Department of War to prepare strikes over alleged anti-Christian violence.

The U.S. “may very well go into that now disgraced country, ‘guns-a-blazing,’ to completely wipe out the Islamic Terrorists who are committing these horrible atrocities”, Trump added, without specifying which groups or alleged “atrocities” he was referring to.

“I am hereby instructing our Department of War to prepare for possible action. If we attack, it will be fast, vicious, and sweet, just like the terrorist thugs attack our CHERISHED Christians! WARNING: THE NIGERIAN GOVERNMENT BETTER MOVE FAST!” he wrote.

The Nigerian government did not immediately respond to Trump’s threat.

The social media post comes a day after the U.S. president announced that Nigeria would be added to the Department of State’s list of “Countries of Particular Concern,” which is set up to monitor religious persecution around the world.

On Friday, Trump claimed Christians in Nigeria faced an “existential threat.”

U.S. Secretary of War Pete Hegseth replied to Trump’s social media post with a “Yes sir.”

In recent months, right-wing lawmakers and other prominent figures in the U.S. have claimed that violent disputes in Nigeria are part of a campaign of “Christian genocide”.

While human rights groups have urged the Nigerian government to do more to address unrest in the country, which has experienced deadly attacks by Boko Haram and other armed groups, experts say that claims of a “Christian genocide” are false and simplistic.

A few hours before Trump’s threat, Nigerian President Bola Ahmed Tinubu released a statement stressing that his government “continues to address security challenges which affect citizens across faiths and regions”.

“The characterization of Nigeria as religiously intolerant does not reflect our national reality, nor does it take into consideration the consistent and sincere efforts of the government to safeguard freedom of religion and beliefs for all Nigerians,” Tinubu said on Saturday.

“Nigeria opposes religious persecution and does not encourage it. Nigeria is a country with constitutional guarantees to protect citizens of all faiths,” the statement continued.

“Our administration is committed to working with the United States government and the international community to deepen understanding and cooperation on protection of communities of all faiths.”

Kimiebi Ebienfa, a spokesperson for Nigeria’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs, stressed his country’s commitment to protecting all of its citizens.

“The Federal Government of Nigeria will continue to defend all citizens, irrespective of race, creed, or religion,” Ebienfa wrote in a statement on Saturday.

“Like America, Nigeria has no option but to celebrate the diversity that is our greatest strength.”



WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Former U.S. president Barack Obama touted Democratic candidates for governor in two states at campaign rallies on Saturday, urging voters in next week’s election to reject what he called the “lawlessness and recklessness” of President Donald Trump’s administration. Obama, laid out a biting indictment of the Trump administration at rallies for Virginia gubernatorial candidate Abigail Spanberger and New Jersey candidate Mikie Sherill. “Let’s face it, our country and our policy are in a pretty dark place right now,” Obama told a roaring crowd of Spanberger supporters at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia. “It’s hard to know where to start,” he said, “because every day this White House offers people a fresh batch of lawlessness and recklessness and mean-spiritedness and just plain craziness.” Obama blasted what he called Trump’s “shambolic” tariff policy and deployment of National Guard troops to U.S. cities. He criticized Republicans in Congress for failing to check Trump “even when they know he’s out of line.”

HUNTINGDON (Reuters) - British police said on Sunday that a knife attack on a train was not being treated as a terrorist incident and two British men had been arrested on suspicion of attempted murder. Officer John Loveless said of the nine people who were treated for life-threatening injuries on Saturday, four had been released from hospital and two remained with life-threatening injuries. “Counter-terrorism policing were initially supporting our investigation. However, at this stage, there is nothing to suggest that this is a terrorist incident,” Loveless told a news conference. He said the men arrested were a 32 year-old Black British national and a 35 year-old British national of Caribbean descent.

MANILA (Reuters) - The Philippines and Canada signed a pact on Sunday for their armed forces to train on each other’s soil, boosting defense cooperation to tackle common security concerns in the Indo-Pacific region. Canada’s first such deal in the region, the Status of Visiting Forces Agreement (SOVA) takes to five the number of accords on troops Manila has concluded with allies. The deal broadens the Philippines’ network of security ties while complementing a long-standing alliance with its treaty partner, the United States. The pact sets up a framework for expanded military and defense cooperation, to improve coordination of operations by both armed forces.

MEXICO CITY (Reuters) - A festive holiday weekend turned tragic for families in northwestern Mexico on Saturday when a deadly blaze engulfed a discount store in the city center of Hermosillo, killing at least 23 people and injuring a dozen. Mexico is celebrating the Day of the Dead this weekend with colorful festivities in which families honor and remember deceased loved ones. “I have ordered a thorough and transparent investigation to clarify the causes of the accident,” Alfonso Durazo, governor of the state of Sonora home to the city, said in a video on social media, adding that children were among the victims. Most of the deaths appeared to have been from inhalation of toxic gases, said Gustavo Salas, the state’s attorney general, citing its forensic medical service.

PARIS (AFP) - Nearly 20,000 asylum seekers have arrived in Britain on small boats so far in 2025, a record high for the first six months of the year, adding pressure on Prime Minister Keir Starmer as the government works to reduce the numbers. Data from Britain’s interior ministry showed that 879 migrants arrived on Monday, taking the total for the first half of 2025 to 19,982, a 50% jump from a year earlier. Starmer is under pressure to deal with the thousands of people who cross the Channel each year on dangerous, inflatable dinghies, a key issue for voters as he pledges to “smash the gangs” behind the people smuggling trade. The government says more than 24,000 people with no right to be in the UK had been returned since it took office last July, and that good weather and new techniques to pack more people into boats were helping more migrants make the crossing. In 2024, 73 people died trying to cross the Channel in small boats.

Euractive: NATO Would Need Several Weeks to Respond to ‘Russian Threat’

MOSCOW (RT) - NATO member states would need several weeks to deploy troops to Ukraine in the event of an escalation of the conflict with Russia. European bureaucracy reportedly stands in the way of stationing forces in the country.

Moscow strongly opposes any NATO troop presence in Ukraine, saying Kyiv’s aspiration to join the bloc was one of the key causes of the conflict. The Russian Foreign Ministry has warned that the presence of NATO forces in the neighboring state could trigger an “uncontrollable escalation with unpredictable consequences.”

A spokesperson for the Portuguese Armed Forces told Euractiv that moving tanks across the continent requires diplomatic permits from every country they cross. The transfer of heavy equipment is a “highly complex logistical operation” involving transportation on platforms and heavy trucks along both maritime and land routes, the spokesperson said.

Troop movements depend on existing relationships between national armed forces and the speed at which permits are granted, the outlet noted, adding that the authorities process these requests slowly.

An unnamed EU country requires 45 days’ notice to issue cross-



NATO has about 4,000 troops in multinational battalions in Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland.

border permission, according to a 2025 report from the European Court of Auditors, as cited by Euractiv. In 2018, the European Council set a standard time frame of five working days for these procedures.

NATO Defense College researcher Yannick Hartmann told the outlet that additional delays could result from mandatory security checks. Although NATO members could use a special customs declaration for military transport when entering or exiting the EU, it is up to the national authorities to process these types of requests.

Maxime Corday, a senior research-

er at the French Institute for International and Strategic Affairs, told the outlet that the absence of a unified legal framework within the EU leaves procedures inconsistent across member states.

EU and NATO officials have repeatedly cited the ‘Russian threat’ to justify increasing defense spending, boosting weapons production, and reintroducing military conscription. President Vladimir Putin has said Russia has “no reason and no interest – geopolitical, economic, political, or military – to fight NATO countries.”

Maldives Becomes First Country to Impose Generational Smoking Ban

LONDON (AFP) - The Maldives began implementing a smoking ban on anyone born after January 2007, becoming the only country with a generational prohibition on tobacco, according to its health ministry.

The move, which was initiated by the president, Mohamed Muizzu, earlier this year and came into effect on 1 November, will “protect public health and promote a tobacco-free generation”, the ministry said.

“Under the new provision, individ-

uals born on or after 1 January 2007 are prohibited from purchasing, using, or being sold tobacco products within the Maldives,” it added.

“The ban applies to all forms of tobacco, and retailers are required to verify age prior to sale.”

The measure also applies to visitors to the nation of 1,191 tiny coral islets scattered some 800km (500 miles) across the equator and known for its luxury tourism.

The ministry said it also maintains a comprehensive ban on the import,

sale, distribution, possession and use of electronic cigarettes and vaping products, applicable to all individuals regardless of age.

Selling tobacco products to an underage person carries a penalty of 50,000 rufiyaa (\$3,200), while using vape devices carries a fine of 5,000 rufiyaa (\$320).

New Zealand – the first country to enact such a law against smoking – repealed it in November 2023, less than a year after it was introduced.