



Written by [Warren Mass](#) on January 14, 2019

Venezuela Legislature Wants Maduro Out; Brazil Recognizes Guaidó as President

Venezuela's opposition-controlled legislature is calling for a mass protest against President Nicolás Maduro in an attempt to remove the Marxist leader from the presidency. Maduro was sworn in for a second six-year term on January 10, even though his presidency has been declared null and void by 13 of Venezuela's neighbors. Brazil's government issued a statement on January 12 saying it recognized Juan Guaidó, the president of the National Assembly of Venezuela, as the country's rightful president and welcomed Guaidó's readiness to "constitutionally assume the Venezuelan presidency."



Guaidó, speaking to a crowd of around 1,000 opposition supporters in Caracas on January 11, said that the nation's constitution gives the legislature the right to assume transitional power after declaring Maduro a "usurper," but that removing Maduro would need military backing, and people taking to the streets to demand change.

"Is it enough to lean on the constitution in a dictatorship? No. It needs to be the people, the military, and the international community that lead us to take over," said Guaidó.

The *New York Times* reported on January 13 that Guaidó was briefly arrested two days after delivering his speech to supporters. A video recorded by a motorist appeared to show masked, heavily armed agents from the Bolivarian National Intelligence Service pulling Guaidó from his vehicle and pushing him into a van and then driving away.

However, Guaidó was released shortly afterward, according to Edward Rodriguez, the head of communications for the National Assembly.

Jorge Rodriguez, the Venezuelan communications minister, said that Guaidó's arrest was "arbitrary" and was not been ordered by the government. "We have learned that there has been an irregular situation where a group of officials, acting unilaterally, initiated an irregular procedure against congressman Juan Guaidó," said the minister, adding that the matter had been "solved."

AFP reported that U.S. National Security Advisor John Bolton said that the Trump administration "resolutely supports the Venezuelan National Assembly, the only legitimate branch of government duly elected by the Venezuelan people," and especially supports "the courageous decision" by Guaidó to "declare that Maduro does not legitimately hold the country's presidency."

In Washington, Organization of American States Secretary General Luis Almagro recognized Guaidó as head of state, tweeting: "We welcome the assumption of @jguaido as interim President of Venezuela."

Image of Nicolas Maduro: [Government of Venezuela](#)



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