

Venezuela Crisis

Security Implications for NGOs and
Media Outlets




In early 2026, Venezuela reached an unprecedented inflection point with the removal and capture of President Nicolás Maduro during a U.S. military operation.

The resulting political, humanitarian, and security impacts are unfolding rapidly within the country and across the region.

For humanitarian organisations, rights activists, and media outlets, the crisis heightens existing risks and introduces new threats, requiring robust security risk management and adaptive planning.

What are the key issues?

1. Escalation of Direct Security Threats

-  Political upheaval and potential state fragmentation heighten risks of violence, arbitrary arrests, unlawful detentions and harm to aid workers and journalists.
-  The interim regime is likely to sustain repression and impose transport restrictions.
-  Possible new, and increased, threats from state actors, criminal networks and regime-aligned militias.

2. Humanitarian Access & Legal Risk Environment

- Venezuela's regulatory environment is highly restrictive, with stringent registration rules, funding oversight, and broad powers to suspend or dissolve organisations.
- Shifts in legality of humanitarian import/export and cross-border movements.
- These conditions are likely to worsen as this year's Parliamentary and Regional elections draw near.

3. Information Vacuum and Disinformation Risks

- Restriction of official information channels and media.
- A surge of unverified content - **including deepfakes and manipulated social media narratives** - significantly complicating the information environment for journalists and humanitarian actors.
- Increased threat of cyberattacks and digital compromise - **Hostile actors may target organisations based on false narratives.**

4. Regional Displacement and Cross-Border Dynamics

- The crisis is driving internal displacement and cross-border movements, notably along the Colombia-Venezuela border, where armed clashes and humanitarian outflows are increasing.



Venezuela - Recent Incident Map over the last month as of 13th Jan 2026.

Source: <https://acleddata.com/country/venezuela>

5. Personal Security and Well-Being of Personnel

- Teams in Venezuela already face constrained movement and communications, unpredictable violence, and limited medical support.
- The operating environment increases psychological strain and operational stress - ***negatively affecting team performance and decision-making.***

What are the recommended actions?

Direct Security Threats:

- Reassess threat levels utilising multi-source intelligence and local networks.
- Develop bespoke hibernation, relocation and evacuation plans for each operating location.
- Ensure proper documentation and provide negotiation support to mitigate detention risk

Legal Risks:

- Reinforce legal risk assessments and compliance monitoring as core components of planning.
- Engage local legal counsel to interpret evolving regulatory actions and advise on mitigation.
- Establish contingency budgets and protocols for abrupt suspension of operations.

What are the recommended actions ? (cont.)

Digital Risks:

- Implement stronger digital security hygiene, encryption, and operational anonymity tools.
- Partner with trusted local civil society networks for verification and context.
- Train teams on disinformation recognition and secure communication practices.

Cross-border and Regional Risks:

- Conduct cross-border security assessments with host-state partners and UN agencies.
- Integrate refugee protection, camp safety, and logistics security into planning.
- Advocate for safe humanitarian access protocols with regional authorities.
- Provide accessible and contextualised safety awareness training for staff.

What are the recommended actions ? (cont.)

Mental Health and Well-being Risks:

- Prioritise mental health and resilience programmes in staff support plans.
- Engage specialist security advisors with expertise in humanitarian security, access negotiation, and the protection of human rights defenders and media professionals.
- Maintain robust medical evacuation protocols and trauma care readiness.

Adaptation requires dynamic threat modelling, legal and operational agility, deeper contextual intelligence, and continuous dialogue with local and international partners.

For organisations planning or engaged in responding to the highly volatile, multi-layered, and quickly evolving Venezuela crisis, an urgent review of security protocols is essential.

👉 **Let's talk.** ILS is supporting organisations operating in response to recent regional developments. Get in touch to learn how we can support your work.