

'WEAKENS INTERNATIONAL ORDER'

'US. OP SETS DANGEROUS PRECEDENT'

Unusual move to capture Maduro is clear violation of international law, says Anwar

KUALA LUMPUR

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has criticised the United States for its military operation that captured Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores.

Expressing grave concern, Anwar said the operation, which he described as unusual in scope and nature, constituted a clear violation of international law and

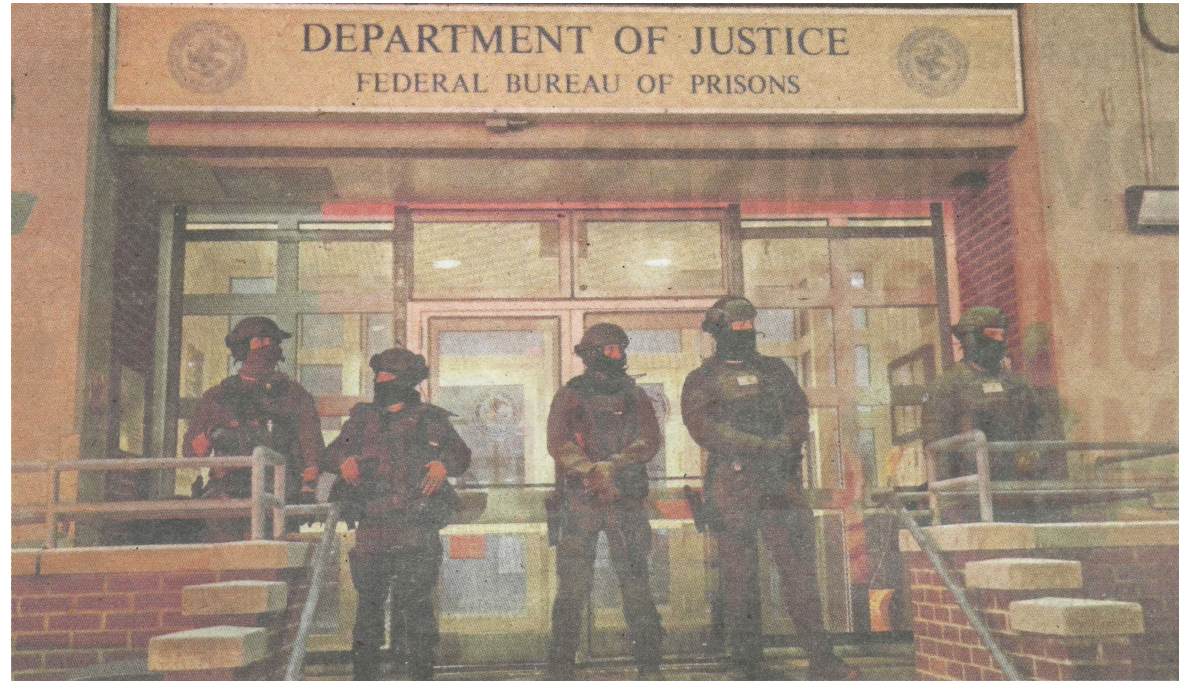
amounted to an unlawful use of force against a sovereign state.

"President Maduro and his wife must be released without any undue delay. Whatever the reasons may be, the forcible removal of a sitting head of government through external action sets a dangerous precedent.

"It erodes fundamental restraints on the use of power between states and weakens the legal framework that underpins international order," he said in a social media post.

Anwar said the political future of Venezuela must be determined solely by its own people.

"As history has shown, abrupt changes in leadership brought about through external force will do more harm than good, especially in a country already grappling with prolonged economic hardship and deep social strain."



Armed police officers standing in front of the Metropolitan Detention facility in the Brooklyn borough of New York on Saturday before the arrival of Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro. AFP PIC

Reaffirming Malaysia's principles, Anwar said respect for international law and national sovereignty remained central to peaceful relations between states.

"Constructive engagement, dialogue and de-escalation remain the most credible paths towards outcomes that protect civilians and allow Venezuelans to pursue their legitimate aspirations without further harm."

On Saturday, US President Donald Trump said his military forces struck Venezuela and captured its long-serving president after months of pressuring him over accusations of drug traffick-

ing and illegitimacy in power.

"The United States of America has successfully carried out a large-scale strike against Venezuela and its leader, President Nicolas Maduro, who has been captured along with his wife and flown out of the country," Trump said in a Truth Social post.

The US had accused Maduro of running a "narco-state" and rigging last year's election, which the opposition claimed it won overwhelmingly.

The Venezuelan leader, who succeeded Hugo Chavez in 2013, had said Washington wanted to take control of Venezuela's oil re-

serves, the largest in the world.

Maduro and his wife were taken to New York City, where he is expected to be indicted on drug trafficking charges.

Meanwhile, Trump said the US would "rim" Venezuela and its forces will stay until "such time as the proper transition can take place".

Page 1 pic: Venezuelans in Colombia celebrating the capture of President Nicolas Maduro by the United States on Saturday. (Inset) A picture posted by US President Donald Trump showing Maduro in custody.