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## Drug Allegations Against Venezuela Questioned Amid Escalating US Pressure



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Caracas / Washington — Questions have emerged over the strength of drug-trafficking allegations linked to Venezuela as political and military tensions with the United States rise.

According to the 2023 World Drug Report by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, global cocaine production reached a record 3,708 tonnes, with coca cultivation mainly in Colombia, followed by

Peru and Bolivia. The report indicates Venezuela plays only a limited role, mainly as a transit route for Colombian drugs toward the eastern Caribbean.

Data for 2023–2024 shows most trafficking routes into the United States passed through Colombia, Peru, and Ecuador rather than Venezuela.

President Nicolas Maduro, 63, in office since 2013, was declared winner of the 2024 presidential election. The results were rejected by the US and several independent observers, including the Carter Center, while a UN expert panel said the vote did not meet international standards. Nine Latin American countries later called for an independent review.

Maduro rejected criticism, accusing foreign powers of interfering in Venezuela's sovereignty.

Since returning to office, US President Donald Trump has expanded sanctions and deployed naval forces in the Caribbean, carrying out air strikes on alleged drug-smuggling vessels.

Maduro has mobilized Venezuelan forces while also expressing willingness to engage in dialogue.

His wife, Cilia Flores, former head of Venezuela's National Assembly, has also been named in related legal actions.