

ENERGY

U.S. seizes oil tanker off the coast of Venezuela: Report

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KEY POINTS

U.S. forces have seized a sanctioned oil tanker off the coast of Venezuela, people familiar with the matter told Bloomberg News.

President Donald Trump has escalated pressure on Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro, saying his “days are numbered.”

Most of Venezuela’s oil exports go to China.



A Venezuelan flag in La Guaira, Vargas State, Venezuela, on Sunday, Nov. 30, 2025.
Bloomberg | Getty Images

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Oil prices rose slightly on the reported seizure. [U.S. crude oil](#) was up 28 cents, or 0.48%, at \$58.53 per barrel. Global benchmark [Brent](#) rose 31 cents, or 0.5%, to \$62.25 a barrel.

President Donald Trump has escalated pressure on Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro in recent weeks. Trump said Maduro’s “days are numbered” in an [interview with Politico](#) published Tuesday. The president would not rule out a ground invasion of the South American nation.

“I don’t want to rule in or out. I don’t talk about it,” Trump told Politico.

The White House has undertaken a large military buildup in the Caribbean and launched controversial, deadly strikes against boats that it claims were trafficking drugs to the U.S.

Venezuela is a founding member of OPEC and has the largest proven oil reserves in the world. It is exporting about 749,000 barrels per day this year with at least half that oil going to China, according to data from energy consulting firm Kpler.

Venezuela exports about 132,000 bpd to the U.S., according to Kpler.

“Shippers will likely be much more cautious and hesitant about loading Venezuelan crude going forward,” said Matt Smith, an oil analyst at Kpler.

CNBC has reached out to the White House and Pentagon.

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