



By: TA | AP Brief

US lifts sanctions on Venezuela's acting President



The U.S. on Wednesday lifted sanctions on Venezuela's acting President **Delcy Rodríguez**, according to an Office of Foreign Assets Control entry on the Treasury Department website.

The newly announced sanctions relief is the latest U.S. recognition of Rodríguez as a legitimate authority in Venezuela ever since the U.S. military captured her predecessor, Nicolás Maduro, and his wife on Jan. 3 in Venezuela's capital, Caracas.

The pair have since been taken to New York to face drug trafficking charges and both have **pleaded not guilty**.

The move allows Rodríguez to more freely work with U.S. companies and investors. Without explicitly mentioning the sanctions targeting her, Rodríguez, in a statement, expressed hope for U.S.-Venezuela relations.

"We value President Donald Trump's decision as a step toward normalizing and strengthening relations between our countries," she said on her Telegram channel after the Treasury's announcement. "We trust that this progress will allow for the lifting of current sanctions against our country, enabling us to build and guarantee an effective bilateral cooperation agenda for the benefit of our people."

Rodríguez and her brother, Jorge Rodríguez, were hit with U.S. sanctions during Trump's first term for their role in allegedly undermining Venezuelan democracy.

The siblings — along with other members of Maduro's inner circle — were added to the Treasury's list in September 2018, months after Maduro won re-election in a contest widely considered a sham because opposition politicians and parties were banned from participating.

"Maduro has given Delcy Eloina Rodríguez Gomez and Jorge Jesus Rodríguez Gomez senior positions within the Venezuelan government to help him maintain power and solidify his authoritarian rule," Treasury said in

a statement at the time.

The "sole Head of State"

The current Trump administration, however, chose to work with Delcy Rodríguez, instead of Venezuela's political opposition, after Maduro's ouster.

She has since led Venezuela's cooperation with the administration's phased plan to turn the country around, pitching her oil-rich nation to **international investors** and opening the nation up to private capital, international arbitration, and scrutiny.

Last month, the administration recognized her as the "sole Head of State" of Venezuela in an ongoing civil case in U.S. federal court.

The court ordered Rodríguez to take office for up to 90 days with the possibility of extending it to six months

The U.S. has lifted sanctions on major Venezuelan industries. In March, Treasury issued a broad authorization allowing the state-owned *Petróleos de Venezuela S.A.*, or PDVSA, to directly sell Venezuelan oil to U.S. companies and on global markets, a massive shift after Washington for years had largely blocked dealings with Venezuela's government and its oil sector.

Meanwhile, Maduro legally is still Venezuela's president.

In the hours after the Jan. 3 operation, the country's ruling-party-loyal high court declared his absence "temporary," effectively eliminating the need for a speedy election and preserving the protections the office grants him under international law.

The court ordered Rodríguez to take office for up to 90 days with the possibility of extending it to six months if approved by the National Assembly, which is also controlled by the

ruling party and presided over by her brother.

The 90-day period ends Friday.