



By: TA | AP Brief

# Canada may reopen its embassies in Iran and Venezuela



Prime Minister Mark Carney said Thursday Canada should reopen its embassies in Iran and Venezuela that his predecessors closed.

Carney argued the lack of a diplomatic presence hampers Ottawa's ability to help Canadians abroad and respond to **humanitarian crises** despite deep disagreements with the two governments.

"Engagement is not endorsement," Carney said. "Having an embassy, having consular services in a country, does not mean we endorse the policies of that country."

Carney said not having a diplomatic presence creates challenges, citing Venezuela where Canada could be providing more immediate earthquake assistance..

He stressed a decision has not been made but said it needs to change.

"Moving towards that, in my judgement, a decision to be made, is what we need to do," Carney said of reopening the embassies.

Former Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper shut Canada's embassy in Tehran in 2012, severing diplomatic relations and ordering Iranian diplomats to leave, accusing the Islamic Republic of being the most significant threat to world peace.

## Need to act quickly

Canada suspended operations at its embassy in Venezuela in 2019, saying the regime of then Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro regime would not renew visas for its diplomats.

"There are series of countries with whom we don't see eye to eye, to put it mildly, where we don't have representation in the country," Carney said. "And that puts us as a disadvantage, first and foremost, to helping Canadians that are in these countries."

## There is a humanitarian crisis in Venezuela and there is a need to act very quickly - Mark Carney

Carney said on one level there's very good reasons for that, but it means Canada is not fulfilling a basic responsibility of government.

"There is a humanitarian crisis in Venezuela and there is a need to act very quickly so in my opinion we must change the way we are doing things," Carney said.

Carney also said U.S. President Donald Trump called him on Wednesday to **discuss the NATO summit** next month as well as the situation in Iran and the Middle East. He said U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and others were on the call.