

# *Venezuela issues arrest warrant against Argentinian President Javier Milei*

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Caracas, September 24 (RHC)-- The Venezuelan Supreme Justice Court (TSJ) has issued an arrest warrant against the Argentine President Javier Milei in connection with the case of the Venezuelan plane owned by the Southern Aerocargo Transport Company (EMTRASUR).

The TSJ Criminal Chamber approved a detention order against the president, who will be prosecuted in Venezuela for the commission of seven crimes, including aggravated theft of a Venezuelan aircraft. The Venezuelan court also ordered the arrest of Karina Elizabeth Milei, Secretary of the Presidency, and Patricia Bullrich, Minister of Security.

According to Venezuelan Attorney General Tarek William Saab, the measure is based on an investigation into Milei's involvement in crimes of "Money Laundering, Falsification of Criminal Acts, Unlawful

Deprivation of Liberty, Illicit Interference in Civil Aviation Operational Security, Aircraft Sabotage, and Conspiracy.”

The case dates back to June 2022, when a plane from the Venezuelan company EMTRASUR landed in Argentina. The controversy escalated in February 2024, when the Milei administration handed the aircraft over to the United States, where it was subsequently dismantled. The U.S. Department of Justice justified the action, claiming that the plane previously belonged to Mahan Air, an Iranian airline under sanctions.

A report from the research group Mission Truth, however, described the case as one of the “most striking thrillers about violations of international law in recent times.” It highlighted the events as acts of “kidnapping, theft, and destruction,” and criticized them for revealing “the servility of certain Latin American governments and the arbitrariness of Washington’s foreign policy.”

“The case demonstrates how U.S. laws operate extraterritorially as universal laws of mandatory compliance, challenging public international law, international civil aviation regulations, and human rights,” Mission Truth pointed out.

Here is a timeline of the main events in this case:

- June 8, 2022: Argentinian authorities detain a Boeing 747-300M owned by EMTRASUR, a Venezuelan company, along with its 19 crew members, which included 14 Venezuelans and five Iranians.
- June 2022 – January 2024: Venezuela fights for the release of the crew and the recovery of the aircraft. Multiple searches found no violations.
- May 3, 2023: A U.S. court issues a final forfeiture order. During this period, the crew is released after months of detention, having been proven innocent.
- December 2023: Javier Milei assumes the presidency of Argentina, promising a more U.S.-aligned stance.
- February 11, 2024: Under the new Argentinian government, judicial permits are expedited to extradite the aircraft to the United States. Argentina transfers custody of the plane to the U.S. authorities.
- February 12, 2024: The U.S. officially announces the seizure. Later, images were released showing the dismantling of the aircraft at an airport in Florida.

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