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Jeremy Paner Discusses US Seizure of Oil Tankers Near Venezuela

Articles & Press

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Dec. 12, 2025 – Jeremy Paner spoke to [The Washington Post](#) about the Trump administration’s campaign to seize more oil tankers near Venezuela, an effort that signals a new phase in their efforts to oust President Nicolás Maduro.

As part of the campaign, the U.S. is likely to capture more sanctioned oil vessels off the Venezuelan coast, which will increase sanctions and military pressure on the Venezuelan economy, which relies heavily on overseas oil sales, primarily to China.

In the article, Paner said that it is “relatively easy” for the Justice Department to obtain a judicial seizure order. However, obtaining permanent possession of the vessel and oil are more complicated.

“Yes, the vessel and its cargo have been seized,” Paner said. “The question is will they go through the forfeiture process to actually legally take the stuff.”

According to Paner, that would require filing a civil action in court, which could be challenged by the owners of the vessel and its cargo – a process that could take years. If the administration proceeds with forfeiture, he said, it will likely attempt to show a connection between the property and terrorism as a threat to the United States.

Venezuelan oil is currently not sanctioned, but the Trump administration has designated Venezuela’s leadership and its state-owned oil company as terrorist entities.

The legal argument of a connection to terrorism could also be used in forfeiture claims against sanctioned and non-sanctioned vessels and their cargos in the future, Paner said.

[Read the article.](#)

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Jeremy P. Paner

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