

The Virgin Islands Consortium

U.S. Escalates Maritime Enforcement With Second Venezuelan Oil Tanker Seizure

U.S. officials say the tanker Centuries was seized while carrying sanctioned PDVSA oil as part of Venezuela's shadow fleet, with another vessel under judicial seizure order approaching the coast as Caracas denounces the actions.

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The second oil tanker seized by the USCG off the Venezuelan coast as U.S. authorities escalate enforcement actions against vessels accused of transporting sanctioned PDVSA oil as part of Venezuela's so-called shadow fleet.

A second oil tanker has been seized off the Venezuelan coast, with U.S. officials reportedly closing in on a third.

As they did earlier this month, the United States Coast Guard led the operation to seize the ship “Centuries” over the weekend, a Panamanian-flagged ship reportedly owned by China. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem [posted a video of the capture](#) to social media. The motor tanker was not on the list of sanctioned vessels, however White House deputy Press Secretary Anna Kelly said that its cargo, reportedly oil from Venezuela's state run company PDVSA, was in fact sanctioned.

According to Ms. Kelly, the tanker was “operating as part of the Venezuelan shadow fleet to traffic stolen oil and fund the narcoterrorist Maduro regime.”

The tanker currently in the cross hairs of the Coast Guard is another member of Venezuela's so-called “shadow fleet,” authorities say. Reuters reports that the vessel is the “Bella 1”, which on Sunday was spotted approaching Venezuela. The vessel, according to reporting from Reuters, is under a judicial seizure order.

Venezuela has denounced the recent seizures, and reiterated that the country's land and resources – including oil – belong to its citizens. Nicolas Maduro, whose recognition as president of Venezuela is disputed, has vowed to continue shipping oil, despite the blockade by the United States.