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- Education
- <u>Terror</u>
- <u>Immigration</u>
- Economy
- Personal Freedoms • Fox News Investigates
- Digital Originals

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- Executive
- Senate
- House
- Judiciary Foreign Policy
- Polls
- Elections

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- <u>U.N.</u>
- Conflicts
- <u>Terrorism</u>
- <u>Disasters</u>
- Global Economy
- Environment
- Religion
- Scandals

Opinion

Media

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- Celebrity News
- Country Music
- Royals
- Game Shows
- CouplesExclusives

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- NFLCollege Football
- <u>MLB</u>
- <u>NBA</u>
- NHL
- Golf

- Tennis
- Soccer
- <u>UFC</u>
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- Health
- Food & Drink
- Auto
- Travel & Outdoors
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- Style & Beauty
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- Economy
- Markets
- Watchlist
- <u>Lifestyle</u>
- Real Estate
- <u>Tech</u>

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- Security
- <u>Innovation</u>
- Video Games
- Military Tech
- Planet Earth
- Wild Nature

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- Programming Schedule
- On Air Personalities
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- Show Clips
- News Clips

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- FOX Noticias
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- Mini Crossword Puzzle
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Colombian leader quickly caves after Trump threats, offers presidential plane for deportation flights Gustavo Petro initially refused to accept deportation flights



By Andrea Margolis, Bill Melugin, Lorraine Taylor Fox News

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Colombian President Gustavo Petro offered his presidential plane to repatriate migrants coming back from the U.S. on Sunday in response to stern warnings made by President Donald Trump.

The move came after Trump hit the South American country with retaliatory measures in response to Petro's refusal to accept deportation flights. A former member of the M-19, which was a Marxist guerilla terrorist group that killed hundreds, Petro caved-in to Trump's demands with remarkable speed.

In a statement translated from Spanish, the Colombian government said that the plane will help facilitate a "dignified return."

"The Government of Colombia, under the direction of President Gustavo Petro, has arranged the presidential plane to facilitate the dignified return of the compatriots who were going to arrive in the country today in the morning, coming from deportation flights," the translated statement read.

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President Donald Trump issued stark warnings to Colombian President Gustavo Petro over the weekend. (Getty Images)

"This measure responds to the Government's commitment to guarantee decent conditions."

This weekend, American officials sent two flights of Colombian illegal aliens as part of <u>Trump's ongoing deportation program</u>. Petro rejected the flights, writing that the U.S. cannot "treat Colombian migrants as criminals."

"I deny the entry of American planes carrying Colombian migrants into our territory," Petro said. "The United States must establish a protocol for the dignified treatment of migrants before we receive them."

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Colombian President Gustavo Petro speaks at the International Workers' Day march in Bogota, Colombia, Wednesday, May 1, 2024. (AP Photo/Fernando Vergara)

In response, Trump unleashed a slew of punishments, including ordering a 25% tariff on all goods coming into the U.S. from Colombia.

"I was just informed that two repatriation flights from the United States, with a large number of Illegal Criminals, were not allowed to land in Colombia," Trump wrote on Truth Social. "This order was given by Colombia's Socialist President Gustavo Petro, who is already very unpopular amongst his people."

"Petro's denial of these flights has jeopardized the National Security and Public Safety of the United States, so I have directed my Administration to immediately take the following urgent and decisive

The tariff would rise to 50% after one week, Trump said. The president also ordered a travel ban and visa revocations for all Colombian government officials, plus "allies and supporters."

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Former President Donald Trump headlines a Republican National Committee spring donor retreat, in Palm Beach, Florida on May 4, 2024 (Donald Trump 2024 campaign)

"These measures are just the beginning. We will not allow the Colombian Government to violate its legal obligations with regard to the acceptance and return of the Criminals they forced into the United States!" Trump warned.

Fox News Digital's Anders Hagstrom contributed to this report.

Andrea Margolis is a writer for Fox News Digital and Fox Business. Readers can send story tips to andrea.margolis@fox.com.

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- Executive
- Senate
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- Foreign PPolls
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- <u>U.N.</u>
- Conflicts
- <u>Terrorism</u>
- <u>Disasters</u>
- Global Economy
- Environment
- Religion
- Scandals

Opinion

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- Crazy Crystals Match 3 Game
- Word Search
- Mini Crossword Puzzle
- Stack and Match Block Puzzle
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