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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0923

June 26, 2026

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Secretary of State
U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

The Honorable Pete Hegseth
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Rubio and Secretary Hegseth,

I am writing to urge you to deploy the USNS Comfort or the USNS Mercy in response to the devastating earthquakes that caused mass destruction in Venezuela. While it is my understanding that the U.S. military is already participating in rescue efforts, I believe that the U.S. Navy's hospital ships are uniquely equipped to treat the thousands of people that have been injured in a nation with already deteriorated and strained emergency and health systems.

Wednesday's rare seismic doublet event, with the first earthquake measuring at 7.2 Mw and the second earthquake measuring at 7.5 Mw, have had devastating consequences in Northern Venezuela. In the region of impact, buildings collapsed, structures were reduced to rubble, and public facilities and services suffered severe damage. As of Friday evening, reports show at least 920 fatalities and 3,300 injuries with tens of thousands still unaccounted for. While rescue operations for those trapped under the rubble are still under way, we must recognize that the Venezuelan emergency and health services are already in a fragile state and will quickly be overwhelmed by the large number of injuries from the earthquakes.

Throughout history, our nation has responded to humanitarian crises by providing lifesaving aid to those in need, reflecting the values of compassion, generosity, and global leadership that define the American people. The USNS Comfort and USNS Mercy are uniquely equipped to provide that assistance. Their ability to deliver advanced surgical care, emergency medicine, intensive care services, diagnostic capabilities, and inpatient treatment would significantly augment local medical capacity. Beyond direct patient care, these ships have repeatedly served as effective platforms for coordinating humanitarian relief and supporting international response efforts.

Historically, the United States has sent these hospital ships to areas of need, including to Haiti following the 2010 earthquakes. At the time, Haiti's health systems were severely strained and the USNS Comfort was able to provide much needed care and perform hundreds of life saving surgery. I recognize that any deployment would require careful coordination with the

Government of Venezuela, international humanitarian organizations, and regional partners to ensure the mission can be carried out safely and effectively. Nevertheless, given the magnitude of this disaster, I believe it is appropriate for the Administration to utilize one of the Navy's hospital ships as part of the United States' humanitarian response.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this important matter. I appreciate your consideration and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Jared Moskowitz
Member of Congress