



## IRAN'S ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

### February 2021

The following is a summary of open-source media reporting on Iran's presence and activities in Latin America and the Caribbean in February 2021. This is not a complete list of media reports on Iran's activities in Latin America but are some of the most relevant articles and reports selected by SFS researchers and fellows. The monitor does source a limited amount of media reports from state-owned or -controlled media outlets, which are carefully selected and solely intended to report on news that is not reported on by other media and is relevant for understanding VRIC influence in the region. This report is produced as part of our VRIC Monitor published monthly by the Center for a Secure Free Society (SFS), a non-profit, national security think tank based in Washington D.C.



- The United States has completed the sale of 1.116 million barrels of gasoline that Iran tried to ship to Venezuela last year, U.S. Department of Justice spokesman Marc Raimondi told Reuters, while the Administration is looking to detain another tanker it believes is part of an Iranian scheme to covertly ship Iranian oil to a foreign customer. - [Oil Price on 11-FEB](#)
- U.S. Border Patrol agents arrested 11 Iranian citizens on Monday night after they illegally entered the United States from Mexico. Border Patrol agents arrested the group on a bridge near San Luis, Arizona. - [The Blaze on 05-FEB](#)
- State media reports Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araqchi and his Brazilian counterpart Kenneth Nobarga held tenth round of bilateral negotiations via

video conferencing. Iranian envoy to Brazil Hossein Gharibi and Governor of the State of Paraná Ratinho Júnior discussed the ways of improving bilateral ties in the fields of agriculture, petrochemicals and technology. - [Fars News on 26-JAN](#)

- The Iranian and Panamanian-flagged vessels seized by Indonesian authorities for suspected illegal oil transfers are making their way to dock at Batam island in the country's Riau Islands Province for further investigation, an Indonesia coast guard spokesman told Reuters. - [Reuters on 26-JAN](#)
- The U.S. is trying to seize around 2 million barrels of what it thinks is Iranian oil, according to people familiar with the matter, in Washington's latest attempt to block the Islamic Republic's energy exports. The crude is on board the Liberia-flagged Achilles, which is sailing to the U.S. after the Department of Justice issued a seizure order, said the people, who asked not to be identified as they're not authorized to speak to media. - [Bloomberg on 26-JAN](#)
- A Spanish translation of "My Uncle Soleimani", a book that reflects Martyr Qassem Soleimani's affection for children, has recently been published in Venezuela. Published by the El Faro International Publishing House, the book was introduced in capital Caracas during a ceremony attended by Mayor Erika Farias Pena, the head of the Capital District Government, Jacqueline Faria and Iranian Ambassador Hojjatollah Ansari. - [Tehran Times on 17-JAN](#)
- The island nation of Palau says a tanker that recently loaded Venezuelan crude was using a false signal to disguise its identity, potentially putting the Pacific country in the crosshairs of U.S. sanctions. - [World Oil on 14-JAN](#)
- Iran and Cuba have begun trials of a joint Covid-19 vaccine, as Tehran pledges not to use vaccines from the U.S. and U.K. The Cuban vaccine, called Soberana 02, is the most advanced of Cuba's four vaccine candidates and will be developed in cooperation between Cuba's Finlay Vaccine Institute and Iran's Pasteur Institute, authorities from both countries said. - [Wall Street Journal on 12-JAN](#)
- Communist-run Cuba said it had signed an accord with Iran to transfer the technology for its most advanced coronavirus vaccine candidate and carry out last-stage clinical trials of the shot in the Islamic Republic. - [Reuters on 09-JAN](#)

## HEZBOLLAH

- Hezbollah will oversee elections for state governors in Venezuela, a "den" for terrorist groups, according to exiled former mayor of the capital Caracas. Antonio Ledezma, who fled house arrest in 2017 and now resides in Spain, tweeted his claims. He said: "The heads of the FARC [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia], ELN [National Liberation Army of Colombia] and Hezbollah will be the 'international observers' that Maduro will authorize to supervise his regional elections," referring to the Iran-backed terrorist group alongside Colombian rebel forces. - [Al Arabiya on 09-FEB](#)

## NISMAN/AMIA CASE

- On the fifth anniversary of the death of AMIA prosecutor, Alberto Nisman, the former head of the DAIA and current congressman, Waldo Wolff, who closely followed Nisman's complaint for the signing of the Memorandum with Iran, is one of those calling for justice to be carried out. - [Cronista on 16-JAN \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- A month after the prosecutor Alberto Nisman was found dead in his Puerto Madero apartment on January 18, 2015 - Monday will be six years old - it was known that he had an undeclared bank account in the United States, with 600 thousand Dollars. His former partner, federal judge Sandra Arroyo Salgado, took the information to court and a money laundering case was started. In that file, federal judge Marcelo Martínez De Giorgi ordered at the end of November a series of measures that until now were not known. - [Infobae on 14-JAN](#)

## TURKEY

- The Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) has gifted 7000 copies of religious books, including the Holy Quran translated into Spanish, to Muslims in Argentina. According to dailysabah.com, the books were gifted to the Islamic Center of Argentina in a ceremony after the Friday prayers at Al Ahmad Mosque in Buenos Aires, the capital. The program was attended by the ambassador of Turkey to Argentina, head of the Islamic Center of Argentina and director general of the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs. - [ABNA 24 on 26-JAN](#)

## QATAR

- Panama will continue to forge robust ties with Qatar as both nations celebrate 19 years of diplomatic relations on February 8th, according to Panama ambassador Musa Asvat. According to Asvat, Qatar and Panama have signed seven agreements in various areas since both countries established relations 19 years ago. He said Panama expects that during the administration of President Laurentino Cortizo, “diplomatic relations can be identified with the 16 draft agreements pending signing.” - [Gulf Times on 07-FEB](#)