



RUSSIA'S ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

May 2021

The following is a summary of open-source media reporting on Russia's presence and activities in Latin America and the Caribbean in May 2021. This is not a complete list of media reports on Russia'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.

RUSSIA

- According to information circulating on social networks, the leaders Vladimir Putin of Russia and Xi Jinping of China will visit President Nayib Bukele in El Salvador. - [Radio YSKL on 21-MAY \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- State media reports El Salvador is very keen to bolster cooperation with Russia, President Nayib Bukele said during the presentation of the letter of credence ceremony. "We are very enthusiastic about strengthening the relationship with Russia, we are facing a world with new challenges and opportunities, and we want to take advantage of those opportunities," Bukele told Russian Ambassador Alexander Khokholikov, adding that El Salvador recognizes "the importance of Russia in the world." - [Urdu Point on 20-MAY](#)

- On Friday, May 14, the Venezuelan State carrier, Conviasa, launched its newest route, connecting Caracas with Moscow's Vnukovo International Airport. The airline used its A340-300 to fly between the two cities on a service that mainly carries a political perspective rather than a commercial strategy. - [Simple Flying on 17-MAY](#)
- Russian oil company Gazprom has signed a confidentiality agreement with Argentina's Pampa Energia to join the Gas Ar Plan and the Vaca Muerta deposit in Neuquén province. - [Ambito on 12-MAY \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- The visit of Jorge Rodríguez, president of the National Assembly of Venezuela, announced by Moscow, will take place on May 18. - [Al Navío on 11-MAY \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- The Director General of the Vice Ministry of Fight Against Smuggling, Dr. Bladimir Orellana, informed that a new plan is in the works to combat drug trafficking and contraband. It was coordinated with the Bolivian Customs Agency, SENASAG, the armed forces, and other institutions where strategic institutional alliances are created, in addition to support from Russia. - [Defensa on 10-MAY](#)
- Maduro received a samurai sword as a gift from actor Steven Seagal, who was visiting the South American country as a representative of Russia, state television images showed. - [Reuters on 05-MAY](#)
- The inaugural flight of the newly created Caracas-Moscow route, carried out by the Venezuelan airline Conviasa, arrived in Venezuela with a contingent of Russian tour operators, investors, 'influencers' and journalists, the Venezuelan Tourism Minister, Ali Padrón, reported through Twitter. - [Market Research Telecast on 04-MAY](#)
- Russia's Ambassador to Buenos Aires Dmitry Feoktistov has confirmed his country's intention to build two nuclear power plants in Argentina and press sources at the Casa Rosada presidential palace have not denied it, although the project is yet to be officially endorsed by the administration of President Alberto Fernández. - [MercoPress on 04-MAY](#)
- Governor of Piauí, PT Wellington Dias, is also the president of the Northeast Consortium, a group that is the biggest enthusiast of the Russian vaccine Sputnik-V, until then rejected by Anvisa. PT de Dias posted a video in which he says: "I became governor having to negotiate with China, with Russia. In other words, doing something typical of Brazilian diplomacy". And it did. But it doesn't mean you did it well. - [Paralelo 39 on 03-MAY \(content in Portuguese\)](#)
- State media reports Paraguayan Foreign Minister Euclides Acevedo might visit Russia at the end of 2021 if the situation allows. - [Sputnik on 30-APR \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- State media reports Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Mexican Foreign Secretary Marcelo Ebrard began official talks in Moscow. Ebrard will also meet with

representatives of the Gamaleya Scientific Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology and the Russian Direct Investment Fund. The Mexican foreign secretary will also meet with senior Russian officials about the possibility of strengthening scientific and technological collaboration. - [Prensa Latina on 28-APR](#)

- After five days in Nicaragua, a part of the 40 Russian troops had returned to Russia that had been in the country since April 19--and that since that date it is unknown the motive of their visit. One source close to the Daniel Ortega regime confirmed to La Prensa that at least 20 of those abandoned Nicaragua this morning. - [La Prensa on 23-APR \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- Cuba received a donation of food sent by Russia through the representation of the World Food Program (WFP). The donation, which includes 253 tons of oil and 430 tons of wheat flour, is valued at one million dollars according to the official press and will go to more than 77,000 people who receive assistance through the Family Attention System (SAF). - [14ymedio on 23-APR \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- State media reports Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel called for stronger exchange with Russia after a telephone call with his counterpart, Vladimir Putin. Both leaders reaffirmed their mutual willingness to comprehensively strengthen the strategic partnership between Russia and Cuba, the communique stated. They also highlighted the importance of joint work in the implementation of agreed projects in the commercial and economic areas, among others. - [Prensa Latina on 21-APR](#)
- Colombia is protesting “repeated and systematic violations” of its airspace by Russian aircraft, the latest sign of rising tensions on the border with Venezuela. The flight that crossed over from neighboring Venezuela was conducted by a Russian government-owned Il-96 passenger jet from a squadron of aircraft typically used to transport VIPs, which appeared to have turned off its transponder after leaving Colombian airspace yesterday, according to flight tracking service Flightradar24. - [Argus Media on 20-APR](#)
- The Russian company Rosatom announced that it will deliver this year the first two phases of the Center for Development Research in Nuclear Technology (Cidtn) in the city of El Alto. The last stages of the building will be completed in 2024. - [Página Siete on 27-MAR \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- The technical commissions of the Russia-Venezuela High-Level Intergovernmental Commission were set up at the PDVSA headquarters in Caracas. These commissions include the Trade and Economic Commission, the Transport Commission, the Industrial Commission, the Credit and Financial Commission and the Technical-Military Commission. The Venezuelan and Russian Co-Chairs of the High-Level Intergovernmental Commission, Tareck El Aissami and Yuri Borisov, will hold a meeting to strengthen Moscow-Caracas agreements in the areas of energy and transport to move

forward with cooperation and bilateral relations between the two countries. - [Venezuelan Government Press Release on 30-MAR](#)

- In an exclusive interview with Sputnik, Bolivian Foreign Minister Rogelio Mayta stressed that resuming ties with China and Russia was key to the vaccination campaign against COVID-19. In addition, he revealed how the link with Russia will allow Bolivia to develop nuclear technology. - [Rosatom on 15-FEB \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- Maximilien Sánchez Arveláiz, the intermediary between Alberto Fernández and Vladimir Putin's government to destroy the sending of millions of vacuums to Argentina, dragged a complicated line of services. It was the link between the Brazilian builders of the "Lava Jato" and the campaign for Hugo Chávez's reelection, with millions of black dollars circulating in valijas, according to official documents of the Brazilian Justicia that collated LA NACION. - [La Nación on 30-NOV](#)