



## IRAN'S ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

**August 2021**

The following is a summary of open-source media reporting on Iran's presence and activities in Latin America and the Caribbean in August 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.



- Iran's largest warship is now in the Baltic Sea – a first for the Iranian Navy – according to photos from ship spotters provided to USNI News. Oil-tanker-turned-warship IRINS Makran transited the Great Belt early Thursday, July 22 in the morning entering the Baltic Sea under escort by Royal Danish Navy patrol vessels. - [U.S. Naval Institute News on 22-JUL](#)
- State media reports Iran's outgoing president Hassan Rouhani received the credentials of new Brazilian ambassador to Tehran Laudemar Gonçalves de Aguiar Neto, on Tuesday, July 20. Rouhani described the relations between Iran and Brazil as good and long-standing and said that the Islamic Republic of Iran has always intended to develop

relations and cooperation with Latin American countries, including Brazil. - [Trend News Agency on 20-JUL](#)

- An Iranian intelligence officer and three alleged members of an Iranian intelligence network have been charged in Manhattan with plotting to kidnap a prominent Iranian opposition activist and writer in exile and take her back to Tehran, authorities said. - [Iran on 14-JUL](#)
- State media reports the Iranian Ambassador to Brazil Hossein Qaribi and Speaker of Lower House of National Congress of Brazil Parliament Arthur Lira in a meeting in Brasilia underlined the need to develop bilateral relations in economic and trade fields. During the meeting in the Brazilian capital. Qaribi and Lira exchanged their views on the outlook of economic relations between the two countries. During the meeting, the Iranian ambassador emphasized the important role of the two countries' parliaments in helping the development and diversification of trade between the two countries. - [Fars News on 11-JUL](#)
- Iran has started to increase its illegal sales of oil despite the sanctions that were imposed on it in 2018 by the administration of President Trump. Over the last three years, the Iranian tanker fleet consisting of 123 ships has smuggled oil to countries such as China, North Korea, Syria, Lebanon, the UAE and Venezuela. Each day Iranian ships can deliver about 100 million barrels of oil, worth more than \$7.6 billion. - [Israel Defense on 28-JUN](#)
- State media reports five artists from Iran, Turkey, Nigeria, and Mexico will showcase their latest works in an exhibition entitled “Polychromatic” at the Daniel Raphael Gallery in London. - [Tehran Times on 27-JUN](#)
- State media reports the new Iranian Ambassador to Havana Mohammad Hadi Sobhani submitted his credentials to President of Cuba Miguel Díaz-Canel. Miguel Díaz-Canel conveyed his greeting to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and also congratulated Iran President-elect Ebrahim Raisi on his victory in the 13th presidential election. - [IRNA on 26-JUN](#)
- State media reports representatives of Iran and Cuba parliaments in an online meeting reviewed developing bilateral relations in international fields like fighting US sanctions, boosting economic ties, fighting COVID19 and producing vaccines. Both sides stressed the continuation of parliamentary relations. They also criticized US sanctions against two nations and slammed 240 sanctions imposed by Washington against Havana. - [IRNA on 29-JUN](#)
- State media reports phone talks with Iran's president-elect Seyed Ebrahim Rayeesi and Maduro the two sides underlined determination to further develop relations and cooperate in fighting against the western sanctions. - [Fars News on 24-JUN](#)
- Guyana has become the latest identified registry from Caribbean, African, or Pacific countries targeted by flag-hopping tankers engaged in sanctioned Venezuelan and Iranian

oil trades. A 2000-built Aframax tanker *Winsome* (IMO: 9192260) moved to the registry earlier this month. The tanker, which has been changed names four times and reflagged three times in the past 13 months, is the second of 160 vessels tracked by Lloyd's List shipping US-sanctioned oil from Venezuela and Iran without penalty to use Guyana's registry. - [Lloyd's List on 21-JUN](#)

- State media reports Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif met with his Venezuelan counterpart Jorge Arreaza in Antalya, a Turkish city on the Mediterranean coast. The meeting was held on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum slated for June 18-20 in Turkey. - [IRNA on 18-JUN](#)
- The Iranian navy ships believed to be originally headed toward Venezuela changed course early this week and are now steaming north up the west coast of Africa, US officials said. The ships, which US officials believe may have been preparing to conduct an arms transfer, have appeared to change course several times during their journey from Iran — and could do so again. - [Politico on 17-JUN](#)
- Over the past couple of weeks, a large Iranian navy transport ship, the Makran, has been lumbering through the Atlantic, reportedly headed to the Caribbean. Strapped to the top of this warship is a very lethal cargo: seven high-speed missile attack boats, probably headed to Venezuela. - [Bloomberg on 11-JUN](#)
- The Biden administration is warning Venezuela and Cuba to turn away Iranian ships believed to be carrying arms to Caracas, Venezuela, vowing to take "appropriate measures" to deter the "threat" to America and its allies in the West. US intelligence has evidence one of the ships, the Makran, is carrying fast-attack boats for Venezuela, and satellite images in May showed seven such vessels loaded on to the Makran, according to intelligence and defense officials, Politico reported. - [Newsmax on 09-JUN](#)
- Two Iranian Navy ships rounded the Cape of Good Hope for the first time and appear to be headed across the Atlantic, continuing a journey US officials believe could ultimately end in Venezuela, according to a defense official with direct knowledge. - [Politico on 04-JUN](#)
- Representatives of the Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce office in Dubai were received at the Ras Al Khaimah Chamber of Commerce and Industry and discussed how to bring business people from Brazil and the emirate together. - [Arab-Brazilian Chamber of Commerce News Agency on 27-MAY](#)
- India could make diplomatic efforts to organize oil-consuming countries against the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries and its Allies (OPEC +), as producers keep crude prices artificially high by limiting supplies and also plans to resume imports of cheaper energy from countries like Iran and Venezuela to counter the oil cartel, two officials said. - [CWV on 23-MAY](#)

## HEZBOLLAH

- In a message to the US Congress regarding Lebanon on July 20, President Joe Biden referred to Iran's "continuing arms transfers to Hizballah," as undermining Lebanese sovereignty. Biden's short message was a routine notification the President must submit every 90 days to renew a National Emergencies Act, which in this case is the Executive Order 13441 of August 1, 2007. But Biden cited Iran's military support for Hezbollah as the main reason for extending the Emergency Act. - [Iran International on 21-JUL](#)
- Hezbollah has jumped in league with drug trafficking groups operating in South America's "Tri-Border Area," a lawless region which bridges the frontiers of Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay, a new report by the Israeli think-tank, the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Research (BESA). - [Organized Crime and Corruption Project on 21-JUL](#)

## THE NISMAN/AMIA CASE

- Families of the victims of the 1994 bombing of a Jewish center in Argentina's capital Buenos Aires that left 85 dead and hundreds wounded, renewed their demands for justice as they marked the anniversary of the attack. - [Times of Israel on 18-JUL](#)
- Argentine Vice President Cristina Kirchner demanded the annulment of the case against her for alleged cover-up of Iranian leaders, accused of the attack against the Jewish mutual AMIA, calling it "a nonsense, a judicial and political scandal." - [Infobae on 16-JUL \(content in Spanish\)](#)

## QATAR

- State media reports forging stronger partnerships is a significant factor that would help further bolster Panama's diplomatic and economic relationship with Qatar, according to ambassador Musa Asvat. Asvat said the embassy of Panama in Qatar is working to facilitate a high-level meeting between the ministers of his country and Qatar. The initiative was from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry (MoCI) and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA), the ambassador noted. - [Gulf Times on 25-JUL](#)
- State media reports Minister of Foreign Relations of the Republic of Paraguay H E Euclides Acevedo met with Acting Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of the State of Qatar in Paraguay Saeed bin Hamad Al Marri. During the meeting, they reviewed bilateral cooperation relations between the two countries. - [The Peninsula Qatar on 07-JUL](#)
- State media reports Qatar's embassy in Panama participated in the Parliamentary Intelligence-Security Forum, which was held in the Parliament of Latin America and the Caribbean, QNA reported. A large number of parliamentarians and governmental officials participated. During the Forum, Qatar's ambassador in Panama Saad bin Mubarak al-Nuaimi delivered a speech on Qatar's efforts to confront international security challenges and combat terrorism. - [Gulf Times on 04-JUL](#)

- Qatar Airways is planning to operate a fifth route between Doha and Mexico City, with a stop in Milan, Italy. While the flight is far from a done deal, as the Qatar Embassy in Mexico told Simple Flying, it is definitely on the cards. - [Simple Flying on 25-JUN](#)
- Conviasa announced on Twitter that it arrived for the first time ever at Doha International Airport. The Airbus A340-300, registration YV3507, departed from Maiquetía International Airport on Monday, June 14 at 22:04. Following nearly 15 hours in the air, the plane landed in Qatar at 19:55 local time, on June 15. This plane is the latest Conviasa has received. The Venezuelan carrier took delivery of this A340-300 on December 31, after being reconditioned and painted in Tehran, Iran. - [Simple Flying on 17-JUN](#)
- Qatar's ruler hosted Venezuela's vice president for an official visit. Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani met with Vice President Delcy Rodríguez and her delegation at the Al Bahr Palace. They discussed ways to improve bilateral relations, according to the official Qatar News Agency. - [Al-Monitor on 16-JUN](#)

## ALEX SAAB

- The Constitutional Court of Cape Verde rejected the appeal of the defense of Alex Saab, indicated by being the front man of the dictator Nicolás Maduro, with which it was requested that the extradition process be suspended, in accordance with the request of the UN Human Rights Committee. - [Diario Las Americas on 22-JUL](#)
- Britain sanctioned one of Maduro's envoys, Alex Saab, in connection with an allegedly corrupt deal to obtain supplies for Maduro's government-run food subsidy programme. - [Reuters on 22-JUL](#)
- A Colombian businessman close to Maduro is appealing a US court decision to disregard his diplomatic immunity in a last-ditch effort to block his extradition to American soil over corruption charges. - [BNN Bloomberg on 06-JUL](#)