



## IRAN'S ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

### January & February 2022

The following is a summary of open-source media reporting on Iran's presence and activities in Latin America and the Caribbean in January & February 2022. 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.



- State media reports Argentina's Charge d'Affaires to Tehran Jorge Mariano Jordan and Head of Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA)

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Gholam-Hossein Shafeie met on Monday and discussed ways of expanding economic cooperation between the two countries. Speaking in this meeting, Jordan said his embassy will try to activate 20 companies between the chambers of commerce of Iran and Argentina and act as a linking bridge between producing sectors of the two countries. - [Tehran Times on 15-FEB](#)

- Direct flights between Iran and Venezuela will begin in March, a Venezuelan official told Iranian state media. The passenger flights from Tehran to Caracas will begin on March 21, the president of Conviasa airlines Ramon Velazquez told HispanTV. Venezuela's flagship airline wants to bring Iranian tourists to Venezuela via the 13-hour flights. Velazquez called Venezuela a "strategic destination" for Iran, saying "tourism is going to have big importance, above all else." - [Al-Monitor on 14-FEB](#)
- Panama's National Migration Service on Sunday detained 10 Iranian citizens, who came from Venezuela with false documentation. Authorities in the Central American country deported the people to their home country. - [Infobae on 13-FEB \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- State media reports Venezuelan Ambassador to Tehran Carlos Antonio Alcala Cordones underlined the need for the formation of a bloc, consisting of Iran, Venezuela, Russia and China against the US hegemony and sanctions. - [Fars News on 13-FEB](#)
- State media reports the Venezuelan Ambassador to Iran, Carlos Antonio Alcala Cordones, answers the Tehran Times questions in an interview at his office in Tehran. - [Tehran Times on 07-FEB](#)
- As U.S. officials have warned that the "window is closing" for the effective revival of the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), Iranian officials are softening their demands and hinting at a deal in the near future. Iran has refused to sit with the Americans in Vienna up until now, instead passing messages through other delegations to the talks. Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei even signaled the possibility of a direct dialogue with Washington earlier, noting that it was possible to "negotiate with the enemy" without surrendering to it. - [Atlantic Council on 07-FEB](#)
- State media reports Iranian vessels rescued 17 sailors of a Panamanian oil tanker which was hit by fire in the Persian Gulf, an official at the Ports and Maritime Organization of Iran announced. "Golden Tree tanker, which is owned by China and sails under the Panamanian flag, caught fire and immediately sent a message for help when it was 30 miles south of the Iranian Dayyer Port," Nader Pasandideh said. - [Fars News on 07-FEB](#)
- Venezuela has received this year's first cargo of the Iranian condensate that has proven critical to its crude production recovery. Data from analytics firm Vortexa show the very large crude carrier (VLCC) *Starla*, owned by Iranian state-controlled NITC, discharged roughly 2mn bl of condensate at Venezuela's Jose terminal on January 28-29. This follows at least three 1.85mn-2mn bl shipments in 2021, largely in September and mid-November, according to Vortexa. - [Argus Media on 01-FEB](#)

- State media reports the Vice President for Economic Affairs Mohsen Rezaei made the remarks on a visit to Nicaragua and in a meeting with the Ministers of Economy and Finance, Mines, and also Senior Assistant to the President of Nicaragua. During the meeting, Rezaei underlined the necessity of strengthening cooperation between Iran and Nicaragua, especially in the field of oil and energy, and called on the officials of the two countries to intensify work to increase the level of bilateral trade exchanges in line with the interests of the two nations. - [Mehr News on 01-FEB](#)
- The Maduro regime is closing new deals with the government Luis Arce for Venezuela to run the Bulo Bulu Urea and Ammonia Plant (PAU) in Bolivia. According to Lobbying Digital, the eldest son of the president, Luis Arce Mosqueira, arrived in Venezuela on private flight 3503, accompanied by an Iraqi, two Venezuelans and Nicolás Vincenti, son of the former hydrocarbons minister, Luis Fernando Vincenti; who is a director in the six subsidiaries of Bolivian Fiscal Oilfields (YPFB) to process the agreement. - [PanAm Post on 31-JAN \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- State media reports Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian in separate phone conversations with his Nicaraguan and Azeri counterparts called for the expansion of mutual cooperation. In his phone talk with Nicaraguan Foreign Minister Denis Moncada, Amir Abdollahian underlined that Iran attaches significance to the expansion of relations with Latin American countries, Nicaragua in particular. - [Fars News on 29-JAN](#)
- State media reports Iran will hold an exhibition in Brazil's São Paulo to showcase its petrochemical products in February while two other exhibitions are planned for later this year. The two other exhibitions, one on Iranian food products and the other on Iranian goods will open later this year in the summer. - [Mehr News on 26-JAN](#)
- Iran, China, and Russia held their third joint naval drills in the northern Indian Ocean, state TV reported. Navies from Iran's armed forces and Revolutionary Guards are taking part in the “2022 Marine Security Belt” exercise over an area of 17,000 square kilometres (6,560 square miles), Rear Admiral Mostafa Tajoldini, spokesman for the drills, told state TV. - [Reuters on 21-JAN](#)
- Venezuela has doubled its oil production in recent months thanks to Iran and other players that are helping it evade U.S. sanctions, but the country's industry is now running near the top of its capacity and it is unlikely it could go much higher than current output levels, according to industry analysts. - [Miami Herald on 21-JAN](#)
- United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres announced that the Islamic Republic of Iran and seven other countries have lost their right to vote in the UN General Assembly because of their failure to pay annual dues to the intergovernmental organization. Sudan, which has been rocked by protests following a military coup in October, Venezuela, which has faced an ongoing political crisis and the five other

countries stripped of their ability to vote were Antigua and Barbuda, the Republic of the Congo, Guinea, Papua New Guinea, and Vanuatu. - [National Interest on 14-JAN](#)

- State media reports the ambassador of Bolivia in Iran said that the Iran-Bolivia Joint Chamber of Commerce will be activated within the next couple of months by expansion of economic ties and MOUs will be signed. The ambassador also proposed cooperation in agricultural and mining fields with Iran, and also exporting such products to Iran. He said that the Central Province is an industrial pole in Iran, adding that his country is comprised of 9 provinces. - [IRNA on 12-JAN](#)
- State media reports the Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel Bermúdez, in the context of the presidential inauguration in Nicaragua, held a cordial working meeting with the Vice President for Economic Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mohsen Rezaei. Both leaders reviewed the positive state of political relations between the two countries and spoke out for further development and deepening of economic, commercial and cooperation ties, especially in areas such as Health and the medical-pharmaceutical industry. - [Granma on 10-JAN \(content in Spanish\)](#)

## HEZBOLLAH

- Maximiliano Dávila, former director of the Force to Fight Drug Trafficking in Bolivia, is among a select group of those most required by US justice. Not only the price assigned to him by one of the US reward programs is equal to that of the most important Mexican drug trafficker in recent years. The United States has also offered \$5 million to anyone who gives information on, for example, Amir Muhammad Sa'id Abdal-Rahma al-Mawla. He is the second leader of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, better known as ISIS by its acronym in English. - [Eju! On 14-FEB \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- A 51-year-old man who resided in Iran and Laredo has been ordered to prison following his conviction of conspiracy to commit money laundering in a scheme known as the “Black Market Peso Exchange (BMPE),” announced U.S. Attorney Jennifer B. Lowery. From October 2011 to October 2013, Mohammadi and others conspired to launder drug trafficking proceeds. They obtained monies from the sale of illegal drugs in the United States into Mexico using the BMPE, a form of trade-based money laundering. Co-conspirators would launder drug proceeds through international trade. As a result, Mexico-based drug dealers ultimately received their profits in Mexican pesos. - [Department of Justice Press Release on 09-FEB](#)
- A new and so-far undisputed news report has it that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) headquarters in Washington, D.C., ordered the release of a Lebanon-born Venezuelan named Issam Bazzi who swam the Rio Grande into Brownsville, Texas, and then was flagged as being on the FBI's terrorism watchlist. Instead of extended detention, investigation, and deportation that are all supposed to be in store for every FBI watch-listed migrant caught crossing the border, Bazzi is living free on his own recognizance in Dearborn, Mich., pending the outcome of an asylum case that

will take years to conclude because of a backlog. - [Center for Immigration Studies on 31-JAN](#)

- With an all-time number of people caught illegally entering the United States through its southern border in 2021, American citizens and law enforcement officers are left wondering who got away. Have potential terrorists managed to escape the long arm of the law? - [Deadline Detroit on 27-JAN](#)

## SYRIA

- Venezuela's Maduro has said he will visit Syria soon to celebrate “the peace and stability” achieved in the country, according to Syria’s official news agency Sana. During a ceremony honouring Syria's ambassador to Caracas, Khalil Bitar, for the end of his mission, Maduro said: “We praise the courage of Mr [Syrian] President Bashar al-Assad and salute his heroic stance as he has led a historic feat against the American terrorist aggression and its accomplices in the world.” - [Middle East Eye on 20-JAN](#)

## TURKEY

- El Salvador’s President Nayib Bukele has paid a visit to Turkey, where he met his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and discussed “*strategic investment*” and support in the areas of technology and education. President Bukele also announced cooperation to construct a new port as well as to send a Salvadorean satellite into space with Turkish technology. He also announced plans to open an embassy in Turkey and said that they had discussed the possibility of a “*dry canal*”, as well as investment in a geothermal plant and in the acquisition of military equipment such as drones. - [LatinNews Daily on 21-JAN](#)

## QATAR

- President of the Dominican Republic Luis Abinader has met at the Presidential Palace in Santo Domingo, HE the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad al-Muraikhi. During the meeting, HE al-Muraikhi conveyed the greetings of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani to the president of the Dominican Republic wishing him good health and happiness, and the government and people of the Dominican Republic further progress and prosperity. - [Gulf Times on 28-JAN](#)
- Qatar's embassy in Mexico organized Embassies Football Cup Tournament in Magdalena Mixhuca Sports City in Mexico City. This came during a press conference attended by Director of the Sports Diplomacy Department of the Mexican Foreign Ministry Erik Del Angel. - [Gulf Times on 10-JAN](#)

## NISMAN & AMIA

- Through her spokesperson, Cristina Kirchner sent confidential emails to media owners and journalists requesting, in mid-2016, that they interview the former director of DAIA,

former director of the Defense School and her former ambassador for the Holocaust Jorge Elbaum to involve former AMIA prosecutor Alberto Nisman with the vulture funds. - [Clarín on 22-JAN \(content in Spanish\)](#)

- The journalist and author of the book "Operación Pajarito", Carlos Gurovich, led a talk on Tuesday in which he provided details of the investigation he has been carrying out for 7 years on the attack on the AMIA and the death of Alberto Nisman. There he showed unknown photos of the case, recounted his meetings with the AMIA prosecutor, with key players in the world of intelligence, the ex-wife of the official and federal judge, Sandra Arroyo Salgado, and his theory about Argentina's relationship with Iran. - [Infobae on 18-JAN \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- The presence of a senior Iranian official at the investiture of Nicaragua's president has angered Argentina, which alleges the official was involved in the 1994 bombing of a Jewish center in Buenos Aires that killed 85 people. Argentina's Foreign Ministry said that the appearance of Mohsen Rezaei, the Iranian vice president for economic affairs, at the Nicaraguan ceremony on Monday was "an affront to Argentine justice and to the victims of the brutal terrorist attack" in the Argentine capital. - [Associated Press on 11-JAN](#)