



IRAN'S ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

March & April 2022

The following is a summary of open-source media reporting on Iran's presence and activities in Latin America and the Caribbean in March & April 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 Iran's Oil Minister Javad Owji began an official visit to Nicaragua with an intense agenda of activities in order to extend bilateral relations. “We have the vision to extend and develop relations in all possible areas with Nicaragua,” said Owji. The Iranian official will meet with the Nicaraguan authorities to address “different areas of energy, agriculture, parliamentary issues, and international relations, to give a new impetus and deepen bilateral relations.” - [TeleSUR on 05-MAY](#)
- Maduro and other high-ranking Venezuelan officials have met with the oil minister of Iran to discuss cooperation in energy matters. Officials from both oil-producing nations ratified agreements in this week's meetings in Venezuela, according to a statement from that country's Petroleum Ministry. Venezuelan Petroleum Minister Tareck El Aissami praised “the position assumed by the Persian nation in the construction of routes and mechanisms to overcome the unilateral coercive measures imposed by the government of the United States and allied countries.” - [Associated Press on 04-MAY](#)
- Israel's contention that its regional foe Iran is helping Venezuela build combat drones is raising concerns that the two anti-U.S. allies could enable such drones to be used for terrorism. Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz said on February 22 that his government determined that “Iranian precision-guided missiles are being delivered” to Venezuela to be fitted into “advanced Iranian Mohajer” drones and similar models. As Gantz spoke, a screen showed an image of Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro presenting a model of a drone on state TV. - [Diálogo Américas on 26-APR](#)
- Iran's trade with Latin America tops \$1.2 billion in Y2021-22. Iran's exports totaled 441,822 tons worth \$211.84 million during the period under review and imports reached 1.29 million tons worth \$1.03 billion. - [Financial Tribune on 26-APR](#)
- State media reports the ambassador of Cuba to Iran said that the country is set to host an exclusive exhibition of Iranian products and is also keen to attract Iranian investors. Alberto González Casals made the remarks after a recent tour of various pharmaceutical and food industry units in the northwestern city of Tabriz, capital of East Azerbaijan Province. The Cuban ambassador was in Tabriz heading a group of representatives from Cuban companies. - [Mehr News on 25-APR](#)
- State media reports the Chairman of the Iran-Brazil Joint Chamber of Commerce said that Iran made promises in the past to increase the volume of its exports to Brazil to more than 1 billion dollars, adding that “we anticipate this to happen soon.” Fakhroldin Amerian said in remarks to ILNA that “the volume of Iran's trade exchanges with Brazil is still the same as the past and Brazil exports 5 billion dollars worth of goods to Iran.” - [ILNA on 24-APR](#)
- State media reports Brazil is in discussions with the United States for a truce that would allow Brazilian companies to buy fertilizers from Iran. Because the United States has imposed sanctions on Iran, Brazilian firms are hesitant to purchase Iranian fertilizers as doing business with Iran might provoke a reaction from the US. - [Mehr News on 12-APR](#)

- State media reports Brazilian foreign minister, Carlos Franca who participated in the conference anticipated Brasilia is looking for a way to increase bilateral trade with Iran, which means discussions with the United States. "Since Iran is currently subject to US sanctions, a waiver mechanism of contractual clauses could pave the way for some of the product exclusions to be relaxed, particularly fertilizers," said the foreign minister. - [MercoPress on 30-MAR](#)
- State media reports Iranian Health Minister Bahram Einollahi said that the country has exported 200,000 doses of domestically-made vaccines for coronavirus to Nicaragua. "The ministry is ready to export four million doses of vaccine," IRNA quoted Einollahi as saying. Iran is among the pioneering countries in terms of vaccine production as six centers are currently producing kinds of vaccines, he explained. - [Tehran Times on 28-MAR](#)
- State media reports Iranian and Cuban officials in a meeting here held talks on expansion of scientific and social ties among women in both countries. The meeting was held on the sidelines of the sixty-sixth session of the Commission on the Status of Women in New York between Iran's Vice-President for Women and Family Affairs Ensieh Khazali and Secretary of the Federation of Cuban Women Teresa María Amarelle Boué. - [IRNA on 17-MAR](#)
- India, the world's third-largest energy-consuming and importing nation, is pinning hope on resumption of crude oil supplies from Venezuela and Iran as well as higher production from OPEC nations to help cool international oil prices that have hit multi-year highs. It will also evaluate the Russian offer to sell crude oil at discounted prices after considering aspects such as insurance and freight required to move the fuel from the non-traditional supplier. - [Eurasia Diary on 16-MAR](#)
- U.S. Senators Marco Rubio (R-FL), Dan Sullivan (R-AK), Steve Daines (R-MT), Kevin Cramer (R-ND), Roger Marshall (R-KS), Thom Tillis (R-NC), John Hoeven (R-ND), Rick Scott (R-FL), and James Lankford (R-OK) introduced the Preempting Misguided Appeasement and Financing of Destabilizing Regimes Act. The bill would prohibit the importation of Iranian and Venezuelan crude oil, petroleum, petroleum products, and liquefied natural gas into the United States. - [Senator Marco Rubio Press Release on 10-MAR](#)
- Colombians will vote to elect a new parliament, two months before they will choose a new president. This year, the mullahs have their own man on the legislative ballot. Meet Marlon Cantillo Borrero, No. 82 on the Senate list for the Fuerza Ciudadana. Fuerza Ciudadana is a left-wing political party closely aligned with former Marxist guerrilla and left-wing presidential candidate Gustavo Petro. Cantillo is a graduate of Iran's Al Mustafa International University, a religious seminar based in Iran's city of Qom that opened its doors in 2007 with the specific mission of proselytizing the non-Shiite, non-Muslim world and catering to converts in their native language. If Cantillo were

elected, the Tehran regime would have a loyal advocate in Colombia's next parliament. - [The Dispatch on 10-MAR](#)

- House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-CA) said that obtaining oil from Iran and Venezuela would benefit those countries' dictators. "Why would you take the billions of dollars you provide to [Russian President Vladimir Putin] and just give it to another dictator that funds terrorism around the world with Iran and Venezuela?" - [NewsMax on 09-MAR](#)
- State media reports Iranian Culture and Islamic Guidance Minister Mohammad Mehdi Esmayeeli in separate meetings with Azeri and Bolivian ambassadors to Tehran called for expansion of cultural cooperation. During the meeting with Azerbaijan's Ambassador in Tehran Ali Alizadeh, the Iranian culture minister stressed the importance of making efforts to upgrade and revive mutual agreements on cultural cooperation. - [Fars News on 09-MAR](#)
- Tennessee Rep. Mark Green, the top Republican on the House Foreign Affairs Western Hemisphere subcommittee, called for the ban on Russian oil to extend to Iranian and Venezuelan supplies. "The United States should not be directly or indirectly funding Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine by purchasing their oil and gas," Green said. "At the same time, it would be outrageous to even consider buying oil from Iran or Venezuela." - [The Hill on 08-MAR](#)
- State media reports the Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad-Mehdi Esmaili stressed reviving cultural relations between Iran and Bolivia and called for following up on the comprehensive cultural agreement between the two countries. Speaking in a meeting with Bolivian Ambassador to Iran Romina Guadalupe Pérez Ramos, Esmaili said that Iran's Islamic Revolution has a cultural nature and the Iranian leaders have always stressed cultural issues. - [IRNA on 08-MAR](#)
- For decades, Iran has patiently sought to export its Islamic Revolution to Latin America. Alongside Iranian embassies, one academic institution stands out as a bastion of Iran's influence operations in the region: Al Mustafa International University, which has branches in over 50 countries, and which the U.S. Department of the Treasury sanctioned in 2020 for its role in Iran's propaganda efforts, including the provision of material support for the training and indoctrination of Shiite militias. With an \$80 million annual budget, Al Mustafa is one of Iran's leading propaganda outlets. Its robust budget enables it to spread Iran's revolutionary message far beyond the walls of its campus. - [Tablet Mag on 23-FEB](#)
- State media reports Iran and Venezuela signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to further develop their cooperation in the oil sector and other relevant fields. The MoU was inked by Iranian Oil Minister Javad Owji and Venezuelan Foreign Minister Felix Plasencia on the sidelines of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum Summit in Doha. The cooperation agreement was signed in the field of exporting technical and engineering services, transferring technical know-how and knowledge, presenting quality training

services, training manpower and cooperating in the sector of developing oil refining industry. - [FARS News on 22-FEB](#)

- State media reports Brazil's Minister of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply Tereza Cristina is on her way to Iran, where she will carry out a business agenda in fertilizers for the agricultural sector, with a focus on importing Iranian urea. According to the ministry, she will meet with Iranian Agriculture Minister Seyed Javad Sadati Nejadi, and with the president of the Agriculture Commission of the Iranian parliament, deputy Muhammad Askari. Tereza Cristina shall also have meetings with members of the Brazilian-Iranian Chamber of Commerce, and the Business Forum for both countries. A visit to Shiraz Petrochemical, an important urea producer, and to the Shiraz Chamber of Commerce is also planned. - [Agencia Brazil on 17-FEB](#)
- State media reports the Governments of Venezuela and Cuba congratulated Iran on the anniversary of victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979. "I Salute President Seyed Ebrahim Raisi and the Iranian people who are standing up, resisting imperial threats. I ratify our commitment to strengthen the bonds of brotherhood," Maduro tweeted. In the meantime, the ministry of foreign affairs of Venezuela released a statement on the occasion, congratulating the Iranian government and people on the 43rd anniversary of victory of the Islamic Revolution. - [IRNA on 12-FEB](#)
- The company Meta, owner of the digital network Facebook, eliminated the page on that website of the Iranian news network HispanTV, without offering explanations in this regard, the news agency itself denounced. According to the HispanTV complaint, it is a "new attack against freedom of expression" and explains that Facebook has permanently canceled the HispanTV page with more than 1,400,000 followers, without prior notice. The chain is currently using another alternative page: www.facebook.com/nexolatino, where it publishes its outstanding news and other content from the Iranian news channel, aimed at the Spanish-speaking public. - [Today90 on 26-JAN](#)

HEZBOLLAH

- The Iranian regime's involvement in virtually all crises and hotspots in the Middle East is clear. Yet, the destructive operations of Tehran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and its extraterritorial Quds Force stretch throughout the globe. Their operatives work under different banners to implement the regime's "Universal Islamic Revolution" doctrine, which is essentially the creation of an Islamic Caliphate. One area that has become the Iranian regime's "zone of operation" is Latin America. - [National Council of Resistance of Iran on 07-MAR](#)

MARCELO PECCI

- According to what was reported by various media outlets in the country, the authorities of Paraguay, the United States and Colombia would have identified Kassed Mohamad Hijazi, Nader Mohamad Farhat and Mahmoud Ali Barakat as characters of interest as possible masterminds of the event that shocked the world and that It happened this

Tuesday, May 10, on the Cartagena island of Barú. - [Infobae on 12-MAY \(content in Spanish\)](#)

- “The murder of Paraguayan prosecutor Marcelo Pecci was linked to a transnational organized crime network with a high-level of planning and investment in resources,” Colombia’s police chief, Jorge Luis Vargas, wrote on Twitter on May 11. The president of Paraguay’s Senate, Oscar Salomón, told the press that intelligence from Colombian authorities indicated the assassination order came from Paraguay. - [InSight Crime on 12-MAY](#)
- The murder of a Paraguayan prosecutor known for fighting organized crime was likely the victim of "transnational" criminals working across borders, the head of Colombia's police, as both countries pledged to probe the high-profile hit. - [Swiss Info on 11-MAY](#)
- At 10.30am on May 10, Paraguay’s anti-drug prosecutor Marcelo Pecci collapsed on the white sand of Barú beach, on a paradisiacal island 45 minutes from the Colombian city of Cartagena. Moments earlier, two hitmen had showed up on a jet ski and approached the beach of Decameron Hotel, where Pecci and his wife, Claudia Aguilera, were staying. - [El País on 11-MAY](#)
- Pecci was a specialized prosecutor against organized crime, drug trafficking, money laundering and financing of terrorism. He was known for his participation in the case that put former soccer player Ronaldinho behind bars between March and August 2020 for entering Paraguay with false documents. According to General Vargas, his men had "no knowledge" of the investigator's stay in Colombia, despite being "one of the most protected people in Paraguay." - [El Mundo on 11-MAY \(content in Spanish\)](#)

AZERBAIJAN

- State media reports Azerbaijan’s Minister of Foreign Affairs Jeyhun Bayramov has met with Minister of People's Power for Foreign Affairs of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela Felix Placencia Gonzalez on the margins of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum. The ministers discussed issues of the bilateral cooperation agenda, as well as cooperation on multilateral platforms, including the Non-Aligned Movement. - [Azerbaijan State News Agency on 13-MAR](#)

SYRIA

- A delegation from the Arab Brazilian Chamber of Commerce (ABCC) in Dubai visited the Syria pavilion at Expo 2020 Dubai. The head of the ABCC office in Dubai, Rafael Solimeo, and international business executive Noury Dweidary took Brazilian businesspeople to the Syrian pavilion and were welcomed by chief commissioner Ghassan Abbas. They participated in a guided tour, met Syrian companies exhibiting there and talked about business and cooperation opportunities between the countries. - [Brazil-Arab News Agency on 11-MAR](#)

TURKEY

- The trade volume between Turkey and Colombia rose significantly last year to \$2 billion and the two countries still have a much greater commercial potential to explore, a top Turkish official said. “Colombia is our second biggest trade partner in the region, our trade volume of \$1 billion doubled in 2021,” Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said at a press conference in the capital Ankara with Colombian Vice President and Foreign Minister Marta Lucia Ramirez. - [Yeni Safak on 01-APR](#)
- State media reports Turkish parliament's Turkey-Chile Inter-Parliamentary Friendship Group head Orhan Kircali was awarded the Chilean Bernardo O'Higgins Order of Merit. Chile's Ambassador to Turkey Rodrigo E. Arcos Castro, Justice and Development (AK) Party Deputy Chairman Cigdem Karaaslan, AK Party Group Deputy Chairman Bulent Turan and guests attended the ceremony held at the residence of the Chilean Embassy in Ankara. - [Yeni Safak on 01-APR](#)
- State media reports Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu discussed trade with his Colombian counterpart Marta Lucia Ramirez in Ankara. Cavusoglu said that bilateral trade between Turkey and Colombia increased 100% from \$1 billion to \$2 billion in 2021, the official Anadolu Agency reported. “We have the potential to boost it (trade volume) to \$5 billion,” said Cavusoglu. - [Al-Monitor on 01-APR](#)

QATAR

- Cainiao Network, the logistics arm of Alibaba Group, announced the partnership with Qatar Airways Cargo to launch a weekly charter flight from Hong Kong (HKG) to São Paulo (GRU), Brazil, and serve one of Cainiao's fastest-growing e-commerce destinations in Latin America. - [Aviation24 on 07-MAR](#)