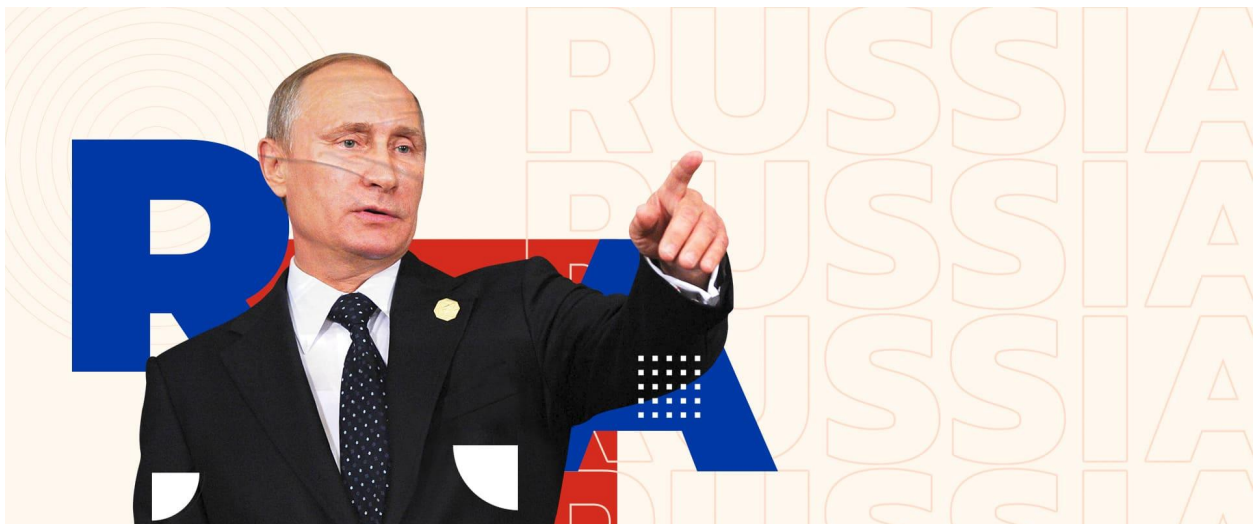




RUSSIA'S ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

May & June 2022

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



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- The international community should explore all options to alleviate a Russian squeeze of energy supplies that has spiked prices, including talks with producing nations like Iran and Venezuela, a French presidency official said. - [Reuters on 27-JUN](#)
- There are among hundreds of Russians estimated to have relocated to Latin America in recent months, as a combination of relaxed entry rules and an ambivalence towards western sanctions makes it an increasingly attractive destination. - [Financial Times on 24-JUN](#)
- Nicaragua's finance minister Iván Acosta has announced that a further 300 buses will arrive from Russia following the renewal of economic agreements between Russia and Nicaragua. This follows a bilateral inter-governmental meeting which took place on June 17 between the two governments in Russia in which various cooperation programmes were discussed, including the supply of wheat, vaccines against the coronavirus and fertilizers as well as the possibility of joint investment projects in areas such as infrastructure, agro-industry and renewable energy. - [LatinNews Daily on 24-JUN](#)
- A renowned Mexican scientist who led a double life with two families on separate continents has been sentenced to more than four years in prison for spying for Russia on an FBI informant in Miami. - [New York Post on 23-JUN](#)
- After Gustavo Petro's victory in the elections, Russian President Vladimir Putin sent a message to the leader of the Historical Pact congratulating him and highlighting the relations between Colombia and Russia, which, as he mentioned, "traditionally have a friendly character." - [El Tiempo on 22-JUN \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- Russian president Vladimir Putin used his address at the International Economic Forum in St. Petersburg on Friday to sharply denounce the West's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. "A year and half ago, speaking at the Davos forum, I once again emphasized that the era of the unipolar world order is over — I want to start with this, it is an inescapable fact. - [National Interest on 18-JUN](#)
- A Russian spy tried and failed to secure an internship at the international criminal court (ICC) using the false identity of a Brazilian citizen that he had built up over more than a decade, according to Dutch intelligence. Sergey Vladimirovich Cherkasov, 36, accused of being an agent of Russia's GRU military intelligence, flew to the Netherlands in April believing he had succeeded in an extraordinary attempt to gain inside access to the war crimes court, using the false identity of Viktor Muller Ferreira, 33. - [The Guardian on 18-JUN](#)
- State media reports Russia is allegedly en route to create a "new G8" in response to its ruptured economic ties with the United States and western allies such as Canada. "The economies of the United States, Japan, Germany, Britain, France, Italy, and Canada continue to collapse under the pressure of sanctions against Russia," asserted the Duma's head of state, Vyacheslav Volodin, on Telegram. - [National Post on 15-JUN](#)

- Mexico's president slammed NATO's policy on the Russian invasion of Ukraine, calling it "immoral." President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador did not mention NATO or the United States by name, but his comments were the latest example of his party's ambiguous stance on the invasion. Mexico has voted to condemn the invasion, but refused to join in sanctions on Russia. - [Globe and Mail on 13-JUN](#)
- The government of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega has authorized Russian troops, planes and ships to deploy to Nicaragua for purposes of training, law enforcement or emergency response. Ortega will allow Russian troops to carry out law enforcement duties, "humanitarian aid, rescue and search missions in emergencies or natural disasters." The Nicaraguan government also authorized the presence of small contingents of Russian troops for "exchange of experiences and training." - [CBS News on 11-JUN](#)
- A new agreement between Russia and Nicaragua to provide Russian troops for and in Nicaragua represents what Thomas Jefferson called a "fire bell in the night." But the importance of this agreement goes much further. It marks the first significant appearance of Russian forces in Central America, an appearance that promises to be important because it has the potential to serve as the basis for a more enduring Russian military presence in Nicaragua and beyond. - [The Hill on 11-JUN](#)
- Brazil's Agriculture Minister Marcos Montes said the 2022/23 grain crop is "saved" as Russia is still sending fertilizers to the South American nation. - [Successful Farming on 07-JUN](#)
- Alejandro Zelaya, Treasury minister of El Salvador, explained that the conflict happening currently between Ukraine and Russia has influenced the price of bitcoin on international markets, disrupting it. Due to this disruption, Zelaya also stated that it was not feasible to issue the volcano bonds yet, which are to finance the construction of the Bitcoin City announced last year by President Nayib Bukele. - [Bitcoin.com on 03-JUN](#)
- Colombian President Iván Duque Márquez condemned Russia's "most brutal genocide" in Ukraine, and also warned that other autocracies are interested in disrupting democracies around the world, in order to attack and dismantle values that make democracies strong. - [Fox News on 03-JUN](#)
- Russia's invasion of Ukraine has limited the supply of the key agricultural supplement throughout Latin America. Some 80 percent of the 180,000 metric tons of fertilizers used annually in Venezuela are imported, mostly from Russia but also from Ukraine and Belarus, according to the Fedeagro union of agricultural producers. "Thank God we managed to buy Russian fertilizers in business talks in October and November, paid in December and they were able to arrive in February and March," said Celso Fantinel, the Fedeagro president. - [Buenos Aires Times on 20-MAY](#)
- Maduro announced Carlos Faría, who was serving as ambassador to Moscow, is becoming the Latin American nation's new foreign minister. The diplomat's appointment reinforces evidence of Venezuela's close ties with Russia after the two nations' leaders

discussed their shared fears about the threats posed by the United States and NATO and the conflict in Ukraine over the phone in March. - [Express on 19-MAY](#)

- The west must not backslide into aiding Nicolás Maduro, or it will hand victory to an autocratic alliance led by Vladimir Putin and weaken the democratic cause in Europe and Venezuela, the country's deputy foreign minister, Isadora Zubillaga, has warned. A delegation of Venezuelan opposition politicians have been touring Europe in an attempt to reassure the west that despite recent divisions and setbacks, they have a viable strategy to secure new presidential elections. - [The Guardian on 14-MAY](#)
- President Alberto Fernández cast doubt over the worth of economic sanctions against Russia, highlighting their fierce global impact on food and energy prices. Speaking after a bilateral meeting with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz in Berlin, Argentina's president described Russia's invasion of Ukraine as "immoral" and called on all parties to work towards "a solution to the armed conflict." - [Buenos Aires Times on 11-MAY](#)
- State media reports Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and Argentinian President Alberto Fernandez met in Madrid and discussed the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine. In a Twitter post, Sanchez said: "Spain and Argentina firmly condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine and show our total respect for international legality and the multilateral order." "We can be a stable supplier of energy and also contribute not only raw materials, but also applied biotechnology. We took the first step toward it," the Argentinian president said. Fernandez said they also agreed on the need to promote policies for greater equality and to continue strengthening the Ibero-American agenda. - [Anadolu Agency on 10-MAY](#)

BELARUS

- State media reports Ambassador of Venezuela to Belarus Franklin Ramirez Araque expressed interest in organizing deliveries of agricultural products to the Belarusian market via the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) as he visited BUCE's central office as part of a delegation of heads and personnel of foreign diplomatic missions. - [BelTA on 09-JUN](#)
- State media reports Belarus and Venezuela have agreed to cooperate to promote bilateral trade. Director of the National Center for Marketing and Price Study Nikolai Borisevich met with Ambassador of Venezuela to Belarus Franklin Ramirez Araque. The Venezuelan diplomat was shown the possibilities of the center to intensify bilateral cooperation. - [BelTA on 13-MAY](#)

COSTA RICA CYBER ATTACKS

- As consumed as Russia is with trying to overpower Ukraine, the Kremlin has still found time and talent to launch an all-out cyberwar against Costa Rica — the rain-forested

Central American nation with a population just over 5 million, and no army, navy, air force or heavy weapons. - [NewsMax on 21-JUN](#)

- For two months now, Costa Rica has been reeling from unprecedented ransomware attacks disrupting everyday life in the Central American nation. It's a situation raising questions about the United States' role in protecting friendly nations from cyberattacks when Russian-based criminal gangs are targeting less developed countries in ways that could have major global repercussions. - [NBC News on 17-JUN](#)
- Costa Rica's public health service, known as the Costa Rican Social Security Fund (CCSS), has been forced to take its systems offline after being hit by Hive ransomware. In a statement on Twitter, the CCSS said the attack started early on Tuesday morning on May 31 and that an investigation was being conducted. In an address to local media, the CCSS added that the Hive ransomware was deployed on at least 30 out of 1,500 government servers and that any estimation of time to recovery remains unknown. - [TechCrunch on 01-JUN](#)
- The Costa Rican government declared a state of emergency on May 8, following cyberattacks by the Russian Conti ransomware gang "on more than 20 public institutions and more than a dozen high-profile private institutions," Esteban Jiménez, chief technology officer of the Costa Rican cybersecurity firm Atticyber, told *Diálogo*. The Ministry of Finance's digital services have been down since April 18. - [Diálogo Américas on 27-MAY](#)
- The number of Costa Rican institutions hit in a wave of cyber attacks in the past month has grown to 27, President Rodrigo Chaves said, in one of the earliest challenges to face the new leader during his first month in office. He added that nine of the institutions struck, mostly government agencies, are considered "very affected." - [Reuters on 16-MAY](#)