



## **BOLIVARIAN THREAT NETWORK**

**September & October 2022**

The following is a summary of open-source media reporting on the Bolivarian Threat Network's activities in Latin America and the Caribbean in September & October 2022. This is not a complete list of media reports on the Bolivarian Threat Network'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 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.



- The Biden administration announced moves this week to tackle a surge in Venezuelan migration across the southern border, but the combination of an expansion of Title 42 expulsions and a new humanitarian parole path has upset lawmakers and activists on both the right and the left. The Department of Homeland Security announced that it is launching a new large-scale border enforcement operation with Mexico combined with an expansion of removals of Venezuelan nationals. - [Fox News on 15-OCT](#)
- Nicolás Maduro, expressed his solidarity this Wednesday, October 12, with the Mapuche people, who he said are “so repressed, so tortured and so martyred” in Chile, two days after a demonstration in Santiago that ended in clashes with the police and 10 arrested. - [Semana on 12-OCT \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- The crush of migration at the southern border and the energy war against Russia has created renewed urgency within the Biden administration to reshape the relationship with oil-rich Venezuela. - [The New York Times on 12-OCT](#)
- Thousands of migrants, mostly Venezuelans, are stuck in a village in northwest Colombia, waiting for boats to take them across the Gulf of Uraba, before traversing through treacherous jungle as they make their way to the United States, Colombia's human rights ombudsman said. - [U.S. News on 12-OCT](#)
- Thousands of Venezuelan migrants will be offered a legal path into the U.S. The humanitarian parole program would be available to up to 24,000 Venezuelans who have a U.S. sponsor. However, a pandemic-era rule will be extended to expel Venezuelans who enter the country illegally. - [The New York Times on 12-OCT](#)
- The South American country of Guyana has asked Facebook and Twitter to remove from their platforms maps that place the disputed territory of Essequibo in Venezuela, an official told AFP. - [Barron's on 12-OCT](#)
- In a sharp reversal of strategy, Venezuela's main opposition parties plan to compete in 2024 presidential elections no matter what conditions the government agrees to beforehand. Emboldened by this year's gubernatorial victory in the Chavista stronghold of Barinas, a cattle-raising state in western Venezuela, opposition parties plan to unite behind a single leader, according to interviews with seven officials in the parties. - [Miami Herald on 11-OCT](#)
- Venezuela has lost its seat on the United Nations Council of Human Rights — a development hailed by activists and human rights defenders in Venezuela as cause for celebration. - [CNN on 11-OCT](#)
- The National Assembly of Venezuela rejected the “interfering acts” of the United States in the territorial dispute between the Caribbean country and Guyana over 160,000 square kilometers west of the Essequibo River. Assistant Secretary of State for Western Hemisphere Affairs, Brian Nichols, assured that the North American nation supports the

1899 arbitration award that determined the border between territories and that Venezuela rejects. - [Yahoo on 11-OCT \(content in Spanish\)](#)

- Panama's National Migration Service (SNM) said that 151,582 migrants made the crossing between January and September, fleeing poverty and violence with the hope of reaching the United States. This includes some 21,570 minors. - [National Post on 10-OCT](#)
- Nicolas Maduro is asking the International Monetary Fund's members to restore recognition of his government, which would put it a step closer to accessing billions of dollars in reserves. Vice President Delcy Rodriguez sent a letter addressed to IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva and the institution's governors, mostly finance ministers from the fund's 190 member nations. She argues that there's no doubt among the international community that efforts to oust Maduro have failed, and that Venezuela enjoys political stability. - [BNN Bloomberg on 10-OCT](#)
- Venezuela's state oil company is pushing to revive a defunct energy pact with the Caribbean under different terms as it seeks markets that are willing to pay cash for oil and refined products. - [Financial Post on 07-OCT](#)
- The US is willing to reconsider Venezuela sanctions only if President Nicolas Maduro takes "constructive steps" to restore democracy, Secretary of State Antony Blinken said, reiterating that he's seen no such progress so far. - [Bloomberg on 06-OCT](#)
- Venezuelan opposition leader Juan Guaido asked the United States for details of Chevron Corp's expanded license request to operate in the South American country, according to a letter sent to a senior U.S. official that also asked to be consulted before any U.S. decisions. - [Reuters on 05-OCT](#)
- More shipments to Asia through intermediaries and growing cargo swaps with Iran drove Venezuela's oil exports in September to their third highest level this year, internal documents and tanker tracking data showed. - [Reuters on 04-OCT](#)
- President Joe Biden released two nephews of the wife of Nicolás Maduro convicted of drug trafficking, in exchange for the release of seven Americans detained in Venezuela, government sources from both countries reported. - [DW on 01-OCT \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- The Venezuelan opponent Juan Guaidó said that "if necessary" help will be requested from the United Nations, the Organization of American States (OAS) or the European Union (EU) to participate as observers in the presidential primaries, in the that a candidate will be chosen to compete with Chavismo in 2024. - [AlNavío on 30-SEP \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- Nicolás Maduro, indicated that the country is on the right path to overcome the sanctions imposed by the U.S. and recover its economy. His words come in a context of high

economic growth that reached almost 20% in the first two quarters of 2022. - [El Universal on 29-SEP \(content in Spanish\)](#)

- Analyst Luis Vicente León stated that Venezuela's economy will grow about 8% in 2022, a figure that would please any country, although the figure is moderate compared to the initial projections that estimated between 12 and 20%. - [AlNavío on 27-SEP \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- House Republicans are urging the Biden administration to take “every possible step” to stop illegal migration from Venezuela, as the U.S. southern border has seen a spike in migration from the authoritarian nation – something that has overwhelmed border towns and cities. - [Fox News on 27-SEP](#)
- Gabriel Boric upped the ante against Venezuela. During a presentation at Columbia University in New York, the president of Chile criticized the human rights violations committed by Nicolás Maduro and also in Nicaragua. “It makes me angry when you are from the left and you can condemn human rights violations in Yemen or El Salvador, but you cannot talk about Venezuela or Nicaragua... or Chile. In Chile we had serious human rights violations in the social outbreak [of 2019], we cannot have a double standard,” he said. Before the UN General Assembly, Boric had accused Venezuela of causing “tremendous pressure” on Chile, as a result of the thousands of Venezuelans who entered the country fleeing the humanitarian crisis. - [El País on 23-SEP \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- A fugitive defense contractor nicknamed “Fat Leonard” who claims to have incriminating sex photos of U.S. Navy brass could become the latest bargaining chip in Maduro’s efforts to win official recognition from the Biden administration, according to experts. But it’s unclear how hard the U.S. government will fight for the return of Leonard Glenn Francis, the Malaysian owner of a ship servicing company in Southeast Asia who is the central character in one of the largest bribery scandals in Pentagon history. - [Associated Press on 23-SEP](#)
- The deputy and number two of the Chavista regime, Diosdado Cabello, insulted President Gabriel Boric after the latter named him in his speech before the General Assembly of the United Nations (UN), over the humanitarian crisis that Venezuela is experiencing. In his program, the Venezuelan leader called the Chilean president “silly,” and a “little puppy.” - [CNN Chile on 22-SEP \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- Once a hub for wealthy Venezuelan oil and gas professionals, Houston is increasingly the final destination of thousands of poor and middle class Venezuelans who are fleeing poverty, political instability and persecution in their home country. Circumstances have deteriorated to such an extent that nearly 70,000 Venezuelans have risked their lives traversing the uninhabitable jungle within Central America's Darién Gap in 2022 to make it to the U.S.-Mexico border. - [Houston Chronicle on 22-SEP](#)
- Venezuela's monthly inflation rate increased to 8.2% in August from 7.5% in July, according to data released by the country's central bank. According to Reuters

calculations, this takes Venezuela's year-on-year figure to 114.1%, the highest in Latin America. Inflation figures had improved briefly in July, which analysts attributed to an orthodox approach from Maduro's socialist government, hinging on stabilizing foreign exchange rates and helped by surging oil prices that provided needed revenues. - [Reuters on 14-SEP](#)

- In Venezuela's El Callao mining region, countless small, artisanal miners that once sold gold to the government have left the area in the last year because accessible local supplies are depleted and Maduro has been striking deals with bigger miners, seeking more production and more revenue for the treasury. Nationalizations in 2011 pushed out private miners and gold production stagnated. Now, Maduro wants to ramp up production by building “strategic alliances” with select private companies, a dozen sources told Reuters. - [Reuters on 12-SEP](#)
- The Venezuelan refugee crisis has for years been among the world’s largest but has recently ballooned, with more than 6.8 million refugees and migrants leaving the country since 2015 to avoid political chaos and economic collapse, according to an August 5 estimate by R4V, an interagency platform led by the Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees and the International Organization for Migration. - [Washington Post on 04-SEP](#)
- The Venezuelan financier in the middle of a Puerto Rican bribery scandal that led to the indictment of the island’s former governor has declared himself not guilty to a laundry list of federal corruption charges. Julio Martin Herrera Velutini, the founder of Bancredito International Bank & Trust Corp., appeared before a judge in San Juan. He was subsequently released on a \$1 million bond and will await trial at his home in New York. - [Bloomberg on 31-AUG](#)
- Nicolas Maduro named the country's envoy to China as the new foreign minister in a cabinet shakeup that comes amid political negotiations with the opposition meant to ease a political stalemate. Felix Plasencia will serve as Venezuela's top diplomat, while outgoing foreign minister Jorge Arreaza will serve as industry and production minister, Maduro wrote on Twitter. - [Reuters on 19-AUG](#)
- Venezuelan opposition politician Freddy Guevara has been released from jail two days after the Maduro regime and opposition representatives met in Mexico. Mr. Guevara had been arrested in July and charged with treason and terrorism. The release of political prisoners was one of the demands made by the opposition at the start of talks aimed at ending Venezuela's political crisis. Mr. Guevara is expected to form part of the opposition's negotiating team. - [BBC News on 16-AUG](#)
- Six people have been arrested after the apparent assassination attempt on Maduro in the Venezuelan capital of Caracas, the nation’s interior minister said on national TV. Maduro survived the assault after several drones armed with explosives flew toward him during a speech at a military parade, an attack he blamed on far-right elements and Colombia’s



outgoing president, Juan Manuel Santos. Those arrested are accused of “terrorism and assassination,” Interior Minister Néstor Reverol said. - [CNN on 06-AUG](#)

- A former governor of Puerto Rico was arrested on bribery charges related to the financing of her 2020 campaign. According to the indictment, from December 2019 through June 2020, then-Governor of Puerto Rico Wanda Vázquez Garced, 62, of San Juan, allegedly engaged in a bribery scheme with various individuals, including Julio Martín Herrera Velutini, Frances Díaz, Mark Rossini, and John Blakeman to finance Vázquez Garced’s 2020 gubernatorial election campaign. - [U.S. Department of Justice on 04-AUG](#)
- On July 29, the UK’s High Court of Justice ruled against the Maduro regime’s claim to US\$1.9bn in Venezuelan gold reserves stored in the Bank of England (BoE), in a verdict that reinvigorated opposition leader Juan Guaidó’s claim to be the legitimate president of Venezuela. - [LatinNews Daily on 01-AUG](#)

## BOLIVARIAN THREAT NETWORK

- Peru's attorney general filed a constitutional complaint accusing embattled President Pedro Castillo of criminal organization and corruption, an action that could lead to the suspension of the leftist leader. - [Barron’s on 12-OCT](#)
- Ecuador is planning to offer, most likely in 2024, blocks for offshore exploration and production of natural gas at the Gulf of Guayaquil, following auctions for onshore areas to be completed next year, Energy Minister Xavier Vera said. Ecuador expects to boost crude production to 750,000 barrels per day (bpd) by 2025 from a current 490,000 bpd. A large portion of the increase is planned to come from onshore areas awarded as part of its Intracampes oil round, whose second phase is currently on offer. - [Natural Gas World on 10-OCT](#)
- Daniel Ortega intends to use Interpol to persecute opponents beyond its borders, seeking to intimidate dissidents who have sought protection in exile. Article 3 of the statute of the International Criminal Police Organization (Interpol) “strictly” prohibits any activity or intervention in questions or matters of a political nature. - [Infobae on 09-OCT \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- Thousands of Dominicans have been mobilizing in increasingly frequent peaceful marches to alert their authorities and the international community about what they consider a “serious risk” to the sovereignty and stability of the Antillean country: the excessive immigration of the Haitian population to the Dominican Republic. - [Diario Las Americas on 09-OCT \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- On October 6, Guatemala’s foreign ministry (Minex) denounced an “intrusion” of its “technological infrastructure.” - [LatinNews Daily on 07-OCT](#)
- In recent days, it became known that an audio document had been leaked -among many others that have put the Arce government, his party and Evo Morales in trouble- that

reveals the way in which at least nine legislators, MAS leaders and even a governor held meetings to appoint judges in the country in November 2021. - [La Gaceta on 07-OCT \(content in Spanish\)](#)

- Daily life in Haiti began to spin out of control last month just hours after Prime Minister Ariel Henry said fuel subsidies would be eliminated, causing prices to double. Gunshots rang out as protesters blocked roads with iron gates and mango trees. Then Haiti's most powerful gang took a drastic step: It dug trenches to block access to the Caribbean country's largest fuel terminal, vowing not to budge until Henry resigns and prices for fuel and basic goods go down. - [Associated Press on 05-OCT](#)
- A U.S. Government report validates audits that detected irregularities in the 2019 elections in Bolivia. This report, prepared by the State Department, urges Bolivia to comply with its conclusions. - [Unitel on 29-SEP \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- The United Nations is ordering the evacuation of all non-essential international workers from Haiti, citing ongoing violence that has left workers vulnerable to kidnapping and attacks last week on U.N.-backed food warehouses across the country. The United States is floating a resolution that would establish a new framework for sanctioning Haiti's gang leaders, as well as those who supply financing and arms to gangs. - [Miami Herald on 23-SEP](#)
- An investigation led by former Attorney General Raúl Melara found that the government of Nayib Bukele held negotiations in maximum-security prisons in 2020 with El Salvador's three main gangs: the Mara Salvatrucha 13, Barrio 18 Revolucionarios, and Barrio 18 Sureños, criminal organizations classified in Salvadoran law as terrorists. In exchange for their commitment to holding the national homicide rate at a historic low, the gangs demanded, among other conditions, improved prison conditions and increased employment opportunities for their members outside of prison. - [El Faro in 22-SEP](#)
- A report submitted to the UN Human Rights Council this week on Nicaragua's human rights situation condemns what it calls the further deterioration of civil and political rights by a government seeking to keep its people in check. The report presents a withering account of the lengths to which the government of Ortega will go to maintain its iron grip on power. It accuses the government of silencing critical and dissenting voices in Nicaragua, deepening the political crisis which is tearing the country apart. - [Voice of America on 15-SEP](#)
- After the meeting between government authorities and peasant leaders in Asunción, the groups managed to close some agreements, which is why the peasants were mobilizing in the city in the first place. However, they clarified that some will stay in the capital to join the working groups made up of representatives of state institutions. - [ABC on 14-SEP \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- Chile's President Gabriel Boric announced a major overhaul of his cabinet after voters overwhelmingly rejected a new constitution that was key to his ambitious agenda. Just six months into his presidency, Boric announced replacements for his ministers of mining,

energy and the interior. He also replaced the minister secretary-general, who oversees the president's legislative agenda. - [Reuters on 06-SEP](#)

- State media reports Uruguayan Foreign Minister Francisco Bustillo is off on a European tour seeking to further develop his country's trade ties as the last inflation index showed the government of President Luis Lacalle Pou was already above its 2022 targets. Bustillo will reportedly seek to advance in the signing of the Mercosur-European Union agreement, which has been stalled for around five years now. - [MercoPress on 06-SEP](#)
- Peruvian lawmakers ousted Lady Camones, the head of Congress, just a day after the country's prime minister publicly demanded her removal over leaked audio that showed her discussing how to use the legislature to benefit her party. Camones had been in the role for less than two months and her ouster underscores how the administration of President Pedro Castillo is pushing back aggressively against a hostile Congress that has already twice impeached him. - [Reuters on 05-SEP](#)
- Chileans have voted comprehensively against a new, progressive constitution that had been drafted to replace the 1980 document written under Gen Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship. With 99.9% of the votes counted in Sunday's plebiscite, the rejection camp had 61.9% support compared with 38.1% for approval amid what appeared to be a heavy turnout with long lines at polling states. Voting was mandatory. - [The Guardian on 04-SEP](#)
- Thousands of Argentines gathered in Buenos Aires and cities and towns around the country to show support for controversial Vice President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner hours after a man pointed a handgun in her face and, authorities say, pulled the trigger. The gun did not fire and Kirchner, a former president, first lady and senator, escaped the confrontation outside her home physically unharmed. President Alberto Fernández called it the "most serious incident to happen since we recovered democracy" four decades ago. - [Washington Post on 02-SEP](#)
- On September 1, Ecuador's armed forces announced that they had bolstered their presence along the northern border due to concerns over escalating guerrilla activity in Colombia. - [LatinNews Daily on 02-SEP](#)
- Thousands of protesters have rallied in Argentina in support of Vice-President Cristina Fernandez de Kirchner, who denies corruption charges. They gathered outside her home in the capital Buenos Aires, tearing down barriers and clashing with police. At least five police officers were injured, and four protesters were arrested, local media report. Prosecutors want the former president to be given 12 years in prison and to be banned from public office. The 69-year-old is accused of defrauding the state and being involved in a scheme to divert public funds while she was president between 2007 and 2015. - [BBC News on 29-AUG](#)
- The sister-in-law of Peruvian President Pedro Castillo was given 30 months of pre-trial detention on Sunday, the most serious escalation so far of a host of criminal investigations that have targeted the leader's inner circle. Prosecutors allege she was part



of a group that engaged in influence peddling to assign public contracts to allies of Castillo in their home region of Cajamarca, in the Peruvian Andes. - [Reuters on 29-AUG](#)

- Chile voted on a new constitution on September 4, and indigenous issues are at the forefront of debate. The draft charter defines Chile as “plurinational” and refers to the people of Chile as being “composed of various nations.” It also contains provisions on Indigenous consultation, autonomous territories for Indigenous groups and recognition of Indigenous justice. Chile’s population is 12.8% Indigenous, according to the most recent census figures. - [Americas Quarterly on 29-AUG](#)
- Chile’s President Gabriel Boric announced his first cabinet change less than six months into his administration after reports that one of his ministers tried to contact a radical indigenous activist. Boric said he accepted the resignation of Social Development Minister Jeanette Vega after local news service Ex Ante reported that one of her advisers had spoken with Hector Llaitul, leader of the CAM indigenous organization. - [Bloomberg on 25-AUG](#)
- Prosecutors asked a judge to sentence Argentine Vice President Cristina Fernández to 12 years in prison and bar her from holding public office for life for allegedly leading a criminal conspiracy that irregularly awarded public works contracts to a friend and ally. The alleged fraud against the state cost the country’s coffers around \$1 billion, Luciani said. - [Associated Press on 22-AUG](#)
- Thousands of frustrated Argentines clogged downtown Buenos Aires in raucous street protests, demanding government action to boost salaries and unemployment benefits battered by surging consumer prices and a weakening peso currency. The South American nation's economic crisis has seen the ranks of the poor swell to 40% of the population as President Alberto Fernandez struggles to find solutions to an annual inflation rate hovering around 70%. - [Reuters on 17-AUG](#)
- On August 9, various civil society organizations, including Asamblea Social y Popular de Guatemala, blocked at least 11 highways at key points in Guatemala as part of a protest over the arrest of journalist José Rubén Zamora Marroquín, government corruption, and the high cost of living. - [LatinNews Daily on 10-AUG](#)
- Colombia's first leftist president was sworn into office, promising to fight inequality and heralding a turning point in the history of a country haunted by a long war between the government and guerrilla groups. Senator Gustavo Petro, a former member of Colombia's M-19 guerrilla group, won the presidential election in June by beating conservative parties that offered moderate changes to the market-friendly economy, but failed to connect with voters frustrated by rising poverty and violence against human rights leaders and environmental groups in rural areas. - [NPR on 07-AUG](#)
- Mexico’s foreign minister met with Bolivian officials this week to discuss lithium collaboration. Mexico has been working to nationalize lithium deposits in the country, including in neighboring Sonora. Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard arrived in Bolivia,

where he met with high-level officials. The leaders say they want to collaborate not only to mine the mineral, but to process lithium and build lithium batteries. AMLO said he hoped to team up with other Latin American nations to capitalize on the region's lithium resources. The president has been working to nationalize the country's lithium. However, concessions for a major deposit in Sonora are currently controlled by the Chinese company Ganfeng. - [Fronteras Desk on 05-AUG](#)

- Peruvian President Pedro Castillo reshuffled his cabinet, naming a new finance minister but stopping short of a full revamp by keeping Prime Minister Anibal Torres in his role. The president tapped Kurt Burneo, a center-left economist who served as an economy vice minister in the early 2000s under President Alejandro Toledo, to replace Oscar Graham in the key finance minister post. Burneo is a former director of Peru's central bank and former president of the Bank of the Nation. - [Reuters on 05-AUG](#)
- On August 4, Honduras's transparency ministry officially called on civil-society to elect its representatives to the nominating board for the appointment of new magistrates to the 15-member supreme court. - [LatinNews Daily on 05-AUG](#)

## COLOMBIA

- In Villavicencio, Colombian authorities detained Eliécer Palomeque Córdoba, alias "Negro Juan," leader of a FARC dissident group known as the Armando Ríos Front and right-hand man of alias "Iván Mordisco," the top leader of the groups of ex-combatants who have not welcomed the peace agreement, signed in 2016. - [Swiss Info on 10-OCT \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- Delegations of Colombia's government and the ELN will restart negotiations after the first week of November, the parties said in a statement signed by guerrilla commanders Antonio Garcia and Pablo Beltran as well as the country's high commissioner for peace, Danilo Rueda. "For Colombia's government and the ELN, society's participation in this process is essential in the changes that Colombia needs to build peace," said the statement, which was released during a news conference in Venezuela's capital, Caracas. - [Reuters on 04-OCT](#)
- Nicolás Maduro asked the Bolivarian National Armed Forces (FANB) to make contact with the police and military bodies of Colombia to cooperate with Colombian President Gustavo Petro's plan for "total peace" in the country. - [Yahoo News on 29-SEP \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- The first Bogotá-Caracas flight operated by Conviasa was going to certify in the air the reestablishment of relations between Venezuela and Colombia after three years of blackout. However, the United States deployed all its diplomatic power to stop it, despite the fact that Gustavo Petro and Nicolás Maduro had agreed to do so. This has been the first time that Washington has warned a country for scheduling flights with the Venezuelan state airline. "People and entities that materially help, sponsor or provide financial, material or technological support, goods or services, in support of Conviasa,

may be exposed to sanctions. We encourage the Government of Colombia to deny landing rights,” the U.S. made known. - [El País on 28-SEP \(content in Spanish\)](#)

- Trucks loaded with aluminum and medications crossed a bridge linking Colombia and Venezuela for the first time in seven years following restoration of diplomatic relations, giving regional businesses hope for growing trade. Petro, who took office in August, was on hand as the trucks rolled across the Simon Bolivar International Bridge between Cucuta, Colombia, and San Antonio, Venezuela. It was once one of the busiest crossings between the two South American nations. - [Newsmax on 26-SEP](#)
- Maduro regained control of the Monómeros fertilizer company, which his opponents had managed since 2019. The Colombian government certified and communicated the decision. The Colombian Superintendent of Companies, Billy Escobar, met with the Venezuelan ambassador in Bogotá, Félix Plasencia, and the president of the Venezuelan state petrochemical company, Pedro Tellechea Ruiz, with whom he signed a document. - [Voice of America on 20-SEP \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- Venezuela and Colombia restored full diplomatic relations after a three-year break, as a new leftist government in Bogota takes shape. A new Colombian ambassador, Armando Benedetti, arrived in Caracas and said on Twitter: “Relations with Venezuela should never have been severed. We are brothers and an imaginary line cannot separate us.” He was welcomed by Deputy Foreign Minister Rander Pena Ramirez, who tweeted that “our historical ties summon us to work together for the happiness of our peoples.” - [Voice of America on 28-AUG](#)
- The feared gang known as “Tren de Aragua,” of Venezuelan origin and which has some of its leaders imprisoned in different Latin American countries, is today the main focus of the authorities in Bogotá who have documented its presence and brutal way of acting, in the capital of the country, where torture, murders and how bodies are left lying wrapped in garbage bags have been documented. - [La Semana on 24-AUG \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- Nicolás Maduro and Gustavo Petro have announced the return of ambassadors as part of the reestablishment of relations between Venezuela and Colombia. Given this, the president of the National Assembly elected in 2020, Jorge Rodríguez, announced that they will promote an investigation into the state of the Venezuelan diplomatic headquarters in Bogotá. - [Al Navío on 17-AUG \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- State media reports the investiture ceremony of the current President of the Republic of Colombia, Gustavo Petro, began in Colombia's Plaza de Bolivar, where he was sworn in as President of the nation. In this context, the president received the sword of Bolivar as a symbol of the continuity of peace. - [TeleSUR English on 07-AUG](#)

## BRAZIL ELECTIONS

- Brazilian presidential candidate Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva saw his lead over incumbent President Jair Bolsonaro slightly drop ahead of the Oct. 30 runoff vote, according to a survey by pollster IPEC published on Monday, October 17. - [Reuters on 17-OCT](#)
- Brazil's former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and incumbent Jair Bolsonaro clashed in their first one-on-one election debate on Sunday, October 16. They repeatedly called each other liars and alleged corruption. - [Euro News on 17-OCT](#)
- Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro mixed an Independence Day military parade with a political rally in the capital Brasilia, attended by tens of thousands of supporters less than a month before a heated election. - [Reuters on 07-SEP](#)
- On September 5, Brazilian supreme court justice Edson Fachin suspended several provisions implemented by President Jair Bolsonaro that facilitated the acquisition and bearing of firearms in Brazil, citing the "*risk of political violence*" ahead of the October 2 general election. - [LatinNews Daily on 06-SEP](#)
- Brazil's embattled former president Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, the front-runner in the country's election, will be struck from the ballot, an electoral court ruled on Friday, reshaping Brazil's election one month before voters cast their ballots. The much-anticipated decision brings some clarity to a chaotic campaign season in which the man who had been favored to win Latin America's largest election was sitting behind bars. - [Washington Post on 31-AUG](#)
- President Jair Bolsonaro managed to lift his popularity slightly among voters after a multibillion-dollar blitz to stimulate the Brazilian economy ahead of general elections, according to the latest DataFolha poll. His top challenger, former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, would win 47% of votes in the first round, unchanged from the last survey taken at the end of July. Bolsonaro would get 32%, up from 29%. - [Bloomberg on 18-AUG](#)
- On August 12, Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro became the target of yet another investigation led by the supreme court (STF) and related to his frequent attacks on the country's electoral system, after Justice Alexandre de Moraes admitted a criminal-notice filed by the supreme electoral court (TSE). - [LatinNews Daily on 13-AUG](#)
- Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro has suffered a defeat in Congress, after his plan to change the current electronic voting system in elections to one with a paper trail failed. The proposal fell well short of the three-fifth majority required for a constitutional amendment. Mr. Bolsonaro says there should be a mixed system in which a receipt is printed out for each vote cast electronically. He argues that a paper trail that can be publicly audited would make fraud more difficult. - [BBC News on 11-AUG](#)
- Brazil's former President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, who is campaigning to return to the job he held between 2003-2010, received an endorsement from moderate André Janones

who had been expected to run himself. Da Silva, who is commonly known as Lula, and Janones made the announcement in a live broadcast, shortly before they were scheduled to hold a press conference in Sao Paulo. - [ABC News on 04-AUG](#)

## BLINKEN SOUTH AMERICA TOUR

- During the week of October 4, U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken headed to Colombia, Chile, and Peru to meet presidents and discuss cooperation on drug policy, climate change, security, trade, and migration. He also attended the OAS General Assembly in Lima. The trip comes as observers note that China is making continued inroads in the region at Washington's expense. - [AS/COA on 07-OCT](#)
- U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken hailed a "shared approach and shared priorities" with Chile under President Gabriel Boric, one of a string of leftist leaders recently elected in Latin America. - [France24 on 05-OCT](#)
- The Biden administration launched a weeklong courtship of three of Latin America's newest leftist leaders in a bid to find pragmatic common ground — rather than ideological confrontation — on a host of issues, including immigration, drug trafficking and the widening influence of China. - [Los Angeles Times on 03-OCT](#)
- Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken will travel to Colombia, Chile, and Peru October 3-7, 2022. October 3-4, in Colombia, Secretary Blinken will meet with President Gustavo Petro, Vice President Francia Márquez, and Foreign Minister Álvaro Leyva. Secretary Blinken's meetings will focus on our shared priorities of supporting strong democratic governments and respect for human rights throughout the Western Hemisphere, [among others]. - [U.S. Department of State on 30-SEP](#)