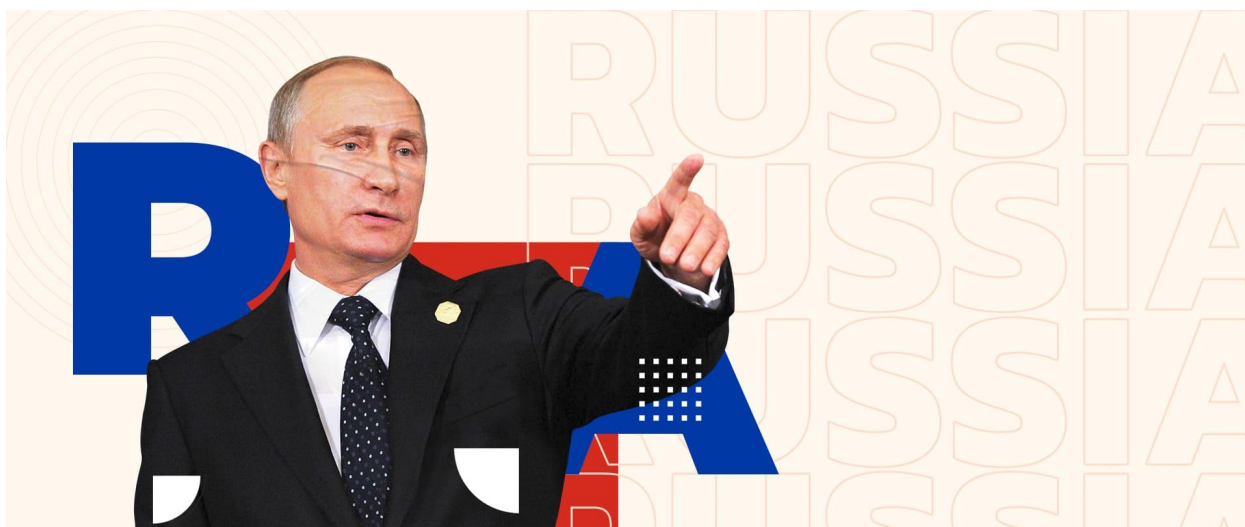




RUSSIA'S ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

September & October 2022

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



- Today we fulfill a fruitful agenda of work with the Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov. We reviewed the progress of joint projects, we stand in solidarity with the Russian people and pledged to continue raising the strategic level of our relations. - [Carlos Faria on Twitter on 11-OCT \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- The government of Ukraine recently appointed a top diplomat whose primary goal is to counter Russian disinformation about the war reaching audiences in Latin America, Ambassador Ruslan Spirin told the Miami Herald and el Nuevo Herald in an exclusive interview. - [Miami Herald on 11-OCT](#)
- According to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Russia continues to support Latin American countries in food and energy security despite Western sanctions. He pointed out that Russian companies supplied US\$3.7 billion in fertilizer between January and June alone. He added that trade between Russia and Latin America increased by 27% in the first six months of this year compared to the same period last year and amounted to US\$11 billion. He pointed out that trade exchange between Moscow and Brasilia increased by 50.6% between January and May, compared to the same period in 2021. - [Rio Times on 10-OCT](#)
- President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) confirmed that Mexico signed an agreement with Russia to use the Glonass satellite system "for peaceful purposes", for which he denied that the action had espionage purposes. - [Infobae on 10-OCT \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- State media reports the delegations of Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico were among those who refused to sign a statement from the Organization of American States (OAS) condemning Russia's military deployment in Ukraine as the continental group's 52nd General Assembly kicked off in Lima. A total of 24 American countries signed a declaration of support for Ukraine over the Russian invasion and condemnation of Moscow's actions. The document drafted by Guatemala notes the "immense concern over the indifference and disregard by the Russian Federation to the calls by the OAS for the withdrawal of its military forces from Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders." It also calls on Russia to "cease hostilities and withdraw its military forces from Ukraine within internationally known borders." - [Merco Press on 07-OCT](#)
- The Wagner Group, Russia's state-backed private military organization, has increased its recruitment efforts outside of Russia, liaising with organized crime groups in Latin America and Europe, after suffering heavy losses in southern Ukraine, two sources familiar with the paramilitary group told Middle East Eye. - [Middle East Eye on 06-OCT](#)
- Brazil and Russia are tightening energy relations amid the geopolitical turbulence and energy insecurity associated with the latter's invasion of Ukraine. Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro announced that around 35Ml of Russian diesel arrived in Santos port, São Paulo state, so far this year, which is 15% more than diesel imports from Russia last year, according to local oil and gas watchdog ANP. Bolsonaro highlighted that new diesel shipments are expected for this month and that the imports will increase local competition and lower fuel prices. - [Competition Policy International on 04-OCT](#)

- State media reports, after months of blockades to Russian commercial flights, the first batch of tourists arrived this weekend at Venezuela's Margarita Island on a Nordwind charter service, it was reported. A total of 417 Russian travelers landed Saturday at Margarita in northeastern Venezuela after seven months of restrictions following President Vladimir Putin's military deployment in Ukraine. - [MercoPress on 03-OCT](#)
- Venezuela's state oil company seized a minority stake in a key joint oil venture from GPB Global Resources, a private energy firm founded by former Gazprom PJSC officials, taking full control of the asset. - [Bloomberg on 30-SEP](#)
- Petrozamor, a one-time joint venture oil project with Russia's Gazprombank, is now a 100pc PdV-owned subsidiary, PdV workers were told. Russian companies like Rosneft and Lukoil were once regular partners with PdV on a number of projects, but they began pulling out of Venezuela when the US started to impose sanctions on PdV and companies doing business with it. In 2020 Russia created Roszarubezhneft to take over Rosneft's Venezuelan business, but it has been slowly unwinding the partnerships. - [Argus Media on 27-SEP](#)
- Russia has voiced its support for India and Brazil as “worthy candidates” for permanent membership in the UN Security Council, calling them “key international actors.” During the 77th Session of the UN General Assembly, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov expressed his support for India, becoming a permanent member of the Security Council. - [Times of India on 25-SEP](#)
- Russia announced its plans to install a GLONASS satellite navigation ground station in Venezuela. The GLONASS system is similar to the GPS of the United States and the Galileo system of Europe. According to the Russian space agency Roscosmos, the deployment of the station is part of the agreement between Moscow and Caracas on cooperation in the exploitation and use of outer space, ratified in June 2022. - [Dialogo Americas on 22-SEP](#)
- In his address to the high-level debate at the UN General Assembly, Marcelo Ebrard, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, proposed the creation of a diplomatic caucus of global leaders that would support the Secretary General's mediation and promote trust-building measures between Russia and Ukraine. - [UN News on 22-SEP](#)
- After two weeks on the run, authorities in Venezuela arrested former defense contractor Leonard “Fat Leonard” Francis as he attempted to board a plane to Russia, officials said. Francis was detained by Venezuelan authorities at the Simon Bolivar International Airport in Maiquetía. Interpol Venezuela Director General Carlos Garate Rondon said in a post on Instagram. Francis “had entered the country from Mexico with a stopover in Cuba to then proceed... [to the] Federal Republic of Russia,” Rondon said in a translation of the post from the original Spanish. - [US Naval Institute News on 22-SEP](#)
- State media reports Moscow plans to expand cooperation with Caracas in all areas, including energy and pharmaceuticals sectors, Russian President Vladimir Putin said at a meeting with newly-appointed foreign ambassadors. “Venezuela is our strategic partner

and reliable ally in Latin America and in the world in general. We maintain an active dialogue with President [Nicolas] Maduro. The positions of Russia and Venezuela on the main issues on the global agenda are close or in complete accord. We intend to continue boosting bilateral cooperation in all areas, first of all in energy, industry, infrastructure, transport and the pharmaceutical industry,” he said. - [TASS on 20-SEP](#)

- Russian state TV's Vladimir Solovyov says his country should form an international coalition for its war in Ukraine including Venezuela, Iran, North Korea, Cuba and Nicaragua. - [Francis Scarr via Twitter on 15-SEP](#)
- Nicolás Maduro, congratulated Vladimir Putin for the victory of his party in the regional elections that were held last weekend with little presence of opposition candidates and little citizen interest, amid the invasion of Ukraine. “On behalf of the Venezuelan people, I congratulate President Vladimir Putin for the resounding victory of the United Russia Party in the regional and municipal elections last weekend. A strong support from the Russian people that ratifies his undisputed leadership,” Maduro said through his Twitter account. - [Infobae on 14-SEP \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- Under a new deal between the governments of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega and Russian President Vladimir Putin, Russian-produced media content will now be broadcast across Nicaragua. The contract between the Communication and Citizenry Council of Nicaragua, the country's state media conglomerate, and the Sputnik radio network will make Russian content available to more than 20 Nicaraguan state channels, broadcasting to 6.6 million people. - [Voice of America on 14-SEP](#)
- Russia and Nicaragua have discussed prospects for Russian wheat supply to the Latin American country. Representatives of the Russian Federal Service for Veterinary and Phytosanitary Supervision (Rosselkhoz nadzor) took part in a meeting of the Russia-Nicaragua Intergovernmental Commission co-chairs at the Eastern Economic Forum. “The sides discussed certain aspects of the bilateral strategic partnership, including the delivery of Russian wheat to the Nicaraguan market,” the service said in a statement. - [Interfax on 08-SEP](#)
- Daniel Ortega gave a speech at the celebration ceremony of the 43rd anniversary of the founding of the Army. Ortega and Army chief Julio Cesar Aviles did not mention the military maneuvers that take place in Nicaragua with the participation of foreign troops, or the participation of Nicaraguan troops in the Vostok 2022 military exercises being held in Russia, which ended on September 7. Thursday, September 1, Russia began large-scale military maneuvers with the participation of 50,000 troops, 5,000 heavy weapons units, 140 aircrafts and 60 ships, the Ministry of Defense said in a statement quoted by the EFE news agency. - [Confidencial on 05-SEP](#)
- Efforts by the government of Luis Arce to industrialize lithium have produced initial results, putting Bolivia on the world map of lithium suppliers. According to a report by a private institute, nearly half of the amount mined has been exported to Russia. The Bolivian Institute of Foreign Trade (IBCE) reported that the country finally made it to the top 10 lithium exporters. - [Rio Times on 02-SEP](#)

- Russia has launched a week of war games involving forces from China and other nations in a show of growing defense co-operation between Moscow and Beijing as they face tensions with the US. Russian General Staff chief General Valery Gerasimov will personally oversee the drills that will involve troops from several ex-Soviet nations, China, India, Laos, Mongolia, Nicaragua and Syria. The Defense Ministry said the Russian and Chinese navies in the Sea of Japan will “practice joint action to protect sea communications, areas of marine economic activity and support for ground troops in littoral areas.” - [Leading Britain's Conversation on 01-SEP](#)
- Russia and China have launched large-scale military exercises involving several allied nations, in a show of growing defense cooperation between Moscow and Beijing as they both face tensions with the US. The Russian defense ministry said the Vostok 2022 (East 2022) exercise would be held until 7 September at seven firing ranges in Russia's far east and the Sea of Japan and involve more than 50,000 troops and 5,000 weapons units, including 140 aircraft and 60 warships. - [The Guardian on 01-SEP](#)
- State media reports Venezuela is ready to start supplies of buffalo meat and milk to Russia, Maduro said in his address. “I have been told presently that Russia is highly interested in buffalo meat and derived products and that they are sold well. If Russia needs, Venezuela is ready [to supply],” the regime leader said in his speech streamed by the Venezolana de Television. - [TASS on 31-AUG](#)
- Teams from Venezuela, Russia, and China showed off their military might at the annual Army International Games organized by the Russian Ministry of Defense. The squads competed for the title of the “Best Road Paver” team, the “Best Engineering and Assault Squad” and the “Best Heavy Mechanized Bridge” team at the event hosted at a training ground in Korla, the second largest city in the province of Xinjiang in China. - [Newsweek on 26-AUG](#)
- Snipers from Russia and other countries hostile to the United States are competing in war games being held in Venezuela in events described as Olympic games for soldiers. The international war games have been held yearly since 2015, following Russia's annexation of Crimea, and Venezuela has participated from their beginning, but this year's games are the first held in Latin America, and include participants from Cuba, Bolivia and Nicaragua. Forces from Burma, Belarus, Abkhazia, Uzbekistan, China, India, Pakistan and Indonesia, among others, also participate in the competitions. These are nations that “daily condemn imperialist aggression against the peoples,” Venezuelan Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino López declared as he inaugurated the games on Monday. - [Miami Herald on 19-AUG](#)
- The Brazilian army withdrew from participating in an annual competition between military forces organized by Russia. The Force's Social Communication Center confirmed that there would be no Brazilian delegation. According to officials with knowledge of the matter, the decision was a political one: taking part in such an event organized by a country at war could suggest that Brazil has a side in the dispute. Brazil participated as an observer in the 2015 and 2019 editions and competed last year in the

category of countries without the use of armored vehicles. - [Folha De S.Paolo on 16-AUG](#)

- Deputy Prime Minister Alexander Novak has been appointed co-chairman of the Russia-Venezuela High-Level Intergovernmental Commission. Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin has signed an order on the appointment and it has been posted on the official website for legal information. Novak will replace Yury Borisov on the commission, as the latter stepped down from the position of deputy prime minister in mid-July. - [Interfax on 11-AUG](#)

BELARUS

- State media reports Russia and Latin America countries assist with the investigation into the genocide of the Belarusian people. Prosecutor General of Belarus Andrei Shved mentioned it during a ceremony to rebury over 1,000 residents of Belarus, who were shot during the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, BelTA has learned. - [BelTA on 30-AUG](#)

RUSSIAN DISINFORMATION

- The alliance between Russia and Venezuela transcends the diplomatic circles, the cold headquarters of the United Nations Organization, it goes beyond the military forts where the Venezuelan soldiers wield modern Russian weapons and goes beyond the joint work in the oil wells. In terms of propaganda, there is also a joint effort. - [Transparencia Venezuela \(content in Spanish\) in OCT](#)
- Canada is imposing sanctions on 34 individuals and one entity that it says are complicit in dissemination of Russian disinformation and propaganda, the Canadian foreign ministry said on Monday, October 17. - [Reuters on 17-OCT](#)
- Russia uses new ways to spread disinformation. The mechanisms were revealed by Nisos, a US-based intelligence firm that monitors disinformation and other digital threats. Russia has devised another way to spread disinformation about its invasion of Ukraine, using digital tricks that allow its wartime propaganda videos to bypass restrictions imposed by governments and tech companies. - [Voice of America \(content in Spanish\) on 05-OCT](#)
- Facebook parent Meta says it has disrupted a large Russian network of fake accounts impersonating European news outlets to push a pro-Kremlin view of the war in Ukraine. Separately, the social media giant says it also took down a network originating in China targeting the U.S. midterm elections and criticizing the Czech government. While the campaigns were not connected, the dual takedowns underscore how social media platforms continue to be ripe targets for efforts to shape the narratives around high-profile events, said Ben Nimmo, Meta's global threat intelligence lead. - [NPR on 27-SEP](#)
- Venezuela has become a conduit for Russian Spanish-language propaganda in Latin America, according to a media watchdog that is releasing a new tool that seeks to dispel misinformation in the country and region. NewsGuard, an organization created by

journalists to monitor disinformation and assess the credibility of news and information websites, launched a Venezuela misinformation tracker to debunk what it says are widely shared conspiracies in the Americas. - [Miami Herald on 22-SEP](#)

- According to the United States, Russia is using disinformation to influence Latin America and Spanish-speaking communities in general, as a political weapon amid the war in Ukraine and three months before the U.S. midterm elections. - [Dialogo Americas on 14-SEP](#)
- After Russia invaded Ukraine last February, the European Union moved to block RT and Sputnik, two of the Kremlin's top channels for spreading propaganda and misinformation about the war. Nearly six months later, the number of sites pushing that same content has exploded as Russia found ways to evade the ban. They've rebranded their work to disguise it. They've shifted some propaganda duties to diplomats. And they've cut and pasted much of the content on new websites — ones that until now had no obvious ties to Russia. - [Voice of America on 09-AUG](#)
- As Russia continues to shell neighboring Ukraine, the Kremlin also pushes its false narrative on Latin American social networks, pointing to the United States as the bigger problem, and portraying Russians as victims of the war, the AP news agency reported April 1. "Though many of the claims have been discredited, they're spreading widely in Latin America and helping to make Kremlin-controlled outlets some of the top Spanish-language sources for information about the war," AP said. The Department of State further asserts that Russian military and intelligence agencies are involved in Moscow's entire disinformation and propaganda machine. In addition, Russian state-funded and state-run media *RT* and *Sputnik* play an important role in all this. - [Diálogo Americas on 22-APR](#)
- Russian state media were a major force in Latin America before the war in Ukraine. Promoting populist content to lure their audience, they are an established presence — not just in countries with authoritarian regimes. The Spanish-language offshoot of Russia Today, Actualidad RT, has been a runaway success since it was founded in 2009. With more than 18 million followers on Facebook and almost six million on YouTube, this "offshoot" far outstrips the English-language version. - [DW on 13-APR](#)