



## IRAN'S ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

September & October 2022

The following is a summary of open-source media reporting on Iran's presence and activities in Latin America and the Caribbean in September & October 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 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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- Argentina called on Qatar to arrest a visiting Iranian vice president over his alleged responsibility for the deadly 1994 bombing of a Buenos Aires Jewish center. Iran's vice president for economic affairs, Mohsen Rezai, is wanted by Argentinian special prosecutors for alleged participation in the planning of the bomb attack against AMIA. - [i24 News on 18-OCT](#)
- State media reports El Palito, the first Iranian-built overseas refinery opened in Venezuela. Iranian oil Minister announces that the Islamic Republic of Iran has launched its first Iranian-made refinery in a foreign country in Venezuela with a capacity to refine 100,000 barrels per day of crude oil. - [Al Mayadeen on 16-OCT](#)
- State media reports Bolivia's Foreign Ministry requested the country's Ambassador to the Islamic Republic of Iran to submit a report following press reports that she might have made remarks irritating Tehran. Ambassador Perez reportedly disqualified the protest of Iranian women during a visit to a tractor factory in the city of Tabriz. Perez released a video in which she assures that her statements were “manipulated in a biased manner.” - [MercoPress on 11-OCT](#)
- State media reports Iranian Foreign Ministry Spokesman Nasser Kanaani sympathized with the Venezuelan government and people over the deadly earthquake and landslide which caused the missing and death of scores of people. Kanaani condoled with the Venezuelan government, people, and families of the victims. Heavy rain in Aragua on Saturday resulted in a landslide killing 22 people and missing over 50. - [IRNA on 11-OCT](#)
- State media reports the Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Iraq Mohammad Kazem Al-e Sadeq in a meeting with his Venezuelan counterpart in Iraq discussed the latest international developments. Al-e Sadeq met and held talks with Arturo Anibal Gallegos Ramirez at the Venezuelan Embassy in Baghdad, Iraq. While reviewing the latest international developments, the two sides stressed further strengthening mutual ties. They discussed the capacities of joint trade, transportation, and tourism cooperation in Iraq. - [Mehr News on 10-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. The OPEC-member nation's oil exports were volatile earlier this year due to a lack of diluents required to produce exportable grades and unstable output amid processing outages and scarce drilling equipment. But oil production and exports regained their footing in the third quarter, helped by Iran's supplies of condensate and crude to state-run oil company PDVSA, and deliveries of Venezuelan heavy crude and fuel oil to Iranian state companies. - [Reuters on 04-OCT](#)
- State media reports Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian and his Cuban counterpart Bruno Rodriguez, in a meeting in New York, reviewed the ways the two countries can cooperate on economic cooperation and the fight against US unilateral

sanctions. The two foreign ministers met in the US city on the sidelines of a UN General Assembly meeting. They also expressed views on medical cooperation between the two countries on making a joint coronavirus vaccine. Amirabdollahian accompanied President Ebrahim Raisi who addressed the world leaders at the 77th UNGA meeting on September 21. - [IRNA on 26-SEP](#)

- State media reports Iran's Foreign Minister Hossein Amirabdollahian met with his Nicaraguan counterpart Denis Moncada on the sidelines of the 77th United Nations General Assembly in New York. Amirabdollahian highlighted the progress made in the ties between Iran and Nicaragua and said that Tehran's foreign policy in Latin America, including Nicaragua, is focused on expanding and deepening cooperation and implementing the agreements made. - [IRNA on 25-SEP](#)
- Tankers carrying about 1.22 million barrels of Iranian crude and 2 million barrels of condensate are scheduled to discharge at Venezuela's Jose terminal in the coming days, according to a document from state oil company PDVSA. Venezuela relies on Iran for a large portion of the diluents that PDVSA uses to convert its heavy oil to exportable grades. Iranian crude also is being refined in the South American country to produce motor fuels. One of the tankers that arrived this month in Venezuelan waters is the Iran-flagged very large crude carrier (VLCC) Huge, operated by National Iranian Tanker Company (NITC), according to the document. - [Reuters on 26-SEP](#)
- State media reports President Raisi in his meeting with President Arce at the hotel residence of the Iranian president in New York emphasized that the Iranian foreign minister is commissioned to activate the Joint Cooperation Commission of the two countries, whose activities need to be tangible in both countries. President Arce, for his part, said in the meeting that Iran and Bolivia have had relations as of remote past, and expressed hope that the statement on Iran-Bolivia cooperation in the past, that has been approved by the two countries, will lead to the continuation and further deepening of mutual cooperation and satisfactory results. - [IRNA on 21-SEP](#)
- State media reports Iranian and Venezuelan businesses signed 60 memorandums of understanding on the sidelines of the exhibition of Iranian technological products. The four-day event opened in the Venezuelan capital Caracas. More than 200 business roundtables were held between Iranian and Venezuelan companies with the aim of signing agreements and strengthening cooperation, Venezuelan Minister of Science and Technology Gabriela Servilia Jimenez said. Emphasizing the importance of strengthening relations with Iran, Jimenez cited "mutual understanding, creating complementary links, strategic alliances, technology exchange, and transfer, trade, and cooperation" as examples. - [Tehran Times on 20-SEP](#)
- State media reports as the Iranian government under President Ebrahim Raisi is seeking a change in the country's absolute raw sale of oil, reports say that Iran has begun a strategic refinery owning a project in Venezuela. Iran daily newspaper quoted an informed source in the Ministry of Petroleum that Iran's first overseas refinery has begun operating in the

Latin American country. The source said that, after receiving technical and engineering services, the capacity of the refinery has increased by several times from 15,000 b/d to 90,000 b/d. The project aims to thwart unilateral sanctions on Iran, the official said, adding that by means of such measures, Iran has been able to find new markets for more oil sales. - [IRNA on 20-SEP](#)

- State media reports Iranian Ambassador to Brazil and the President of the Brazilian Agricultural Research Corporation (EMBRAPA) Celso Moretti discussed expanding cooperation between the two countries in the field of agriculture. - [Mehr News on 19-SEP](#)
- State media reports the Iranian ambassador to Brazil said that giant steps were taken for developing mining and economic cooperation between the two countries of Iran and Brazil. Hossein Gharibi made the remarks in "IBRAM" Mining Congress held in Belo Horizonte city in Brazil through video conference. "With the coordination made in this regard, the mining and economic cooperation between the two countries of Iran and Brazil will be strengthened more than before," he added. - [Mehr News Agency on 14-SEP](#)
- MP Mohammad-Reza Mirtajodini told Tasnim that the Iranian Oil Ministry has signed contracts with Venezuela and Uruguay to build refineries in the two Latin American states. He said Iran will deliver input to those refineries, hold a stake in the plants, and provide technical and engineering services for running them. - [Eurasia Review on 14-SEP](#)
- State media reports Venezuelan Minister of Transportation Ramón Velásquez invited Iranian experts and investors to participate in the mining and mineral sector of his country. According to the Public Relations Department of Iranian Mines and Mining Industries Development and Renovation Organization (IMIDRO), the visiting Transport Minister of Venezuela in a meeting with a member of Board of Directors of IMIDRO Jamshid Molla Rahman, held at the compound of the Organization in Tehran, invited Iranian investors to attend the mining and mineral sector of this country. - [Mehr News on 12-SEP](#)
- Peru's foreign minister, Miguel Rodriguez, has resigned after just one month in office, the country's foreign ministry said, after public clashes between the official and leftist president Pedro Castillo. Earlier this week, Castillo undermined Rodriguez's August announcement that Peru was breaking diplomatic ties with the partially recognised Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic in Western Sahara. On Thursday, Castillo tweeted that Peru reaffirmed the defense of the Sahara state's "self determination." The two politicians also disagreed on the Escazu Agreement, a regional environmental treaty, and Peru's participation in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. - [Reuters on 10-SEP](#)

- State media reports a former official with Iran's ministry of oil says Europe is pinning its hopes on gas supplies from Iran and Venezuela, both under US-speared sanctions, to replace the Russian gas before the winter. In an interview with Iran's Labor News Agency (ILNA), Mahmoud Khaghani, the former director general of the Caspian Sea and Central Asia Department at Iran's Ministry of Oil, said in case Europe fails to reach an agreement with either Iran or Venezuela, Europeans will have to go through a frigid winter. - [Iran Front Page on 01-SEP](#)
- State media reports Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs said that the Islamic Republic of Iran is seriously determined to enhance its relations with Brazil. Ali Bagheri Kani made the remarks in his meeting with the Deputy Foreign Minister of Brazil for the Middle East, Europe, and African Affairs Kenneth Nóbrega in Tehran within the framework of the 11th round of the Political Consultations between Iran and Brazil. During the meeting, the two sides discussed bilateral, regional, and international ties and also issues of mutual interests. - [Mehr News on 30-AUG](#)
- Iran and Bolivia emphasize the need to expand cooperation and pledged to increase bilateral trade in various fields, the Iranian news agency IRNA reported. Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdullahian, in a meeting held with Bolivian Deputy Foreign Minister Freddy Mamani, highlighted the importance that Tehran attaches to the development of cooperation with the Andean country. - [Rio Times on 29-AUG](#)
- State media reports Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mehdi Safari has announced the holding of the first session of the Iran-Bolivia Joint Economic Commission with the aim of expanding economic cooperation with Latin American countries. In this event, the two sides agreed on a broad range of issues including trade, customs, visa, scientific and educational, technical and engineering fields, cooperation among industrial companies, automakers, tractor manufacturers, energy, transportation as well as technological cooperation. - [ISNA on 29-AUG](#)
- State media reports While Russia is holding joint military exercises with Iran's Revolutionary guard and other Moscow allies in central Iran, Venezuela is also hosting sniper military exercises with these countries. Both of these joint military drills, which started on Monday, August 15, are held in Iran and Venezuela within the framework of Russia's 2022 International Military Exercises, which was initiated by Moscow. Venezuela has been hosting the "Sniper Frontiers." - [Iran International on 16-AUG](#)

## IRAN-VENEZUELA CARGO PLANE

- The last crew members of the Iranian-Venezuelan plane held in Ezeiza are leaving the country. These three Iranians and two Venezuelans were staying at a hotel in Canning. Venezuelan ambassador to Argentina Stella Lugo stated, "there was no evidence and today these five people are leaving. They are workers of a Venezuelan company who were working. Justice was served today." - [Todo Noticias \(content in Spanish\) on 17-OCT](#)



- An Argentine court has granted permission to the final five crew members of a Venezuelan plane grounded since June in Argentina on suspicion of potential terrorism links to leave the country, local media reported late on Friday, October 14. - [Reuters on 15-OCT](#)
- Threats and photos of weapons were found on the pilot's mobile. The pilot could have some link with terrorist organizations, according to the FBI. - [ABC Internacional on 06-OCT \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- Of the 19 crew members who arrived in Buenos Aires on the Emtrasur plane last June 6, only five were summoned for questioning under the accusation of having financed possible terrorist acts. In the next few days, the federal judge Federico Villena has to resolve their procedural situation. - [Infobae on 04-OCT \(content in Spanish\)](#)
- Twelve crew members from a Venezuelan plane linked to Iran's elite Quds Force returned home after being held for three months in Argentina. They were welcomed at Simon Bolivar International Airport near Caracas by dozens of family members and government officials. An Argentine appeals court authorized the 12 crew members to leave the country, while the seven remaining members were barred from joining them. Those seven included four Iranians, one of whom is accused of belonging to the Quds Force, a group within the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps that the US classifies as a terror organization. - [Times of Israel on 27-SEP](#)
- The president of the National Assembly of Venezuela, Jorge Rodríguez, attacked Clarín for the coverage on the Venezuelan-Iranian plane that is being held in Argentina due to international sanctions and alleged links between the crew and Islamic terrorism. "They are producers of lies," the Chavismo official accused this newspaper and other Argentine media. - [Clarín on 09-AUG \(content in Spanish\)](#)

## TURKEY

- State media reports Venezuela aims to increase trade relations with Turkey. Maduro made the remarks at the Iran-Venezuela Scientific, Technological and Industrial ExpoFair held from September 14-18 in the capital Caracas. "We have to learn from the technological model of the rebirth of China, Russia, Iran, India, our brothers in Turkey, the rebirth of the powers and superpowers and the emerging powers of the emerging world," he said. In June, Maduro visited Turkey as part of an 11-day international tour. Maduro and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan signed eight cooperation agreements in science and technology, agriculture and land, transportation and tourism. - [Daily Sabah on 16-SEP](#)