



IRAN'S ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

March 2021

The following is a summary of open-source media reporting on Iran's presence and activities in Latin America and the Caribbean in March 2021. 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.



- "It is public knowledge that several members of the military have been arrested after smuggling uranium from Venezuela, and we believe Iran is one of the main destinations," would-be Venezuelan leader Juan Guaido, told Israel Hayom over the weekend in an exclusive interview. - [Israel Hayom on 07-MAR](#)
- On February 28th, the IRGC linked Fars Air Qeshm 747 (EP-FAB) from Tehran descended into Caracas, Venezuela. The plane had departed the day prior from Belgrade, Serbia. - [Conflicts News Worldwide via Twitter on 28-FEB](#)

- Venezuela and Iran, both sanctioned by the United States, have found a way to help each other as shipping companies stay away from dealings with the two oil-producing countries for fear of running afoul of the U.S. Venezuela is shipping jet fuel to Iran in the same tankers in which Iran delivers gasoline and spare parts for the refineries in Venezuela, Reuters reported, citing sources familiar with the matter and documents of Venezuela's state oil firm PDVSA it had seen. - [OilPrice on 24-FEB](#)
- State media reports after submitting her credentials to Iranian President Hassan Rouhani at a meeting on February 24th, the new ambassador of Bolivia to Tehran said her country regards Iran as a strategic partner. - [Tasnim News Agency on 24-FEB](#)
- Minister of Tourism of Venezuela, Ali Padrón Paredes has traveled to Iran to participate in the opening ceremony of the Tehran International Tourism and Handicrafts Exhibition. Attending the Tehran International Tourism and Handicrafts Exhibition, holding meeting Iran's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Minister Ali-Asghar Mounesan, signing the 2024-2020 Tourism agreement, and holding a meeting with a number of private tourism activists are among his plans on the first day of his trip. - [Mehr News on 23-FEB](#)
- An Iranian state newspaper, taking aim at hardline lawmakers' intervention in Tehran's nuclear row with the West, warned that overly radical actions may lead to Iran's isolation after a new law ended snap inspections by U.N. inspectors. Iranian lawmakers protested against the government's decision to permit "necessary" monitoring by the International Atomic Energy Agency for up to three months, saying the move broke a new law they passed that mandated an end to IAEA snap inspections. - [Reuters on 23-FEB](#)
- State media reports a shipment of around 44 million liters of gasoline secretly arrived at El Palito, Venezuela from Iran aboard handysize tanker FOREST, according to a 6-week long tracking investigation by TankerTrackers. FOREST is the 3rd tanker we were expecting after FORTUNE & FAXON. - [Mehr News on 21-FEB](#)
- Iran's ambassador Alireza Ghezili submitted the credentials to Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the President of Mexico. During the meeting, Ghezili announced Iran's readiness to develop bilateral relations with Mexico. He has been appointed as the new Ambassador to Mexico replacing Mohammad Taqi Hosseini. Ghezili was also Iran's ambassador to Bolivia and Head of the European Office and Head of the Western Europe Office at Iran's Ministry of Foreign Affairs. - [Mehr News on 14-FEB](#)
- Venezuela has begun to receive a second round of airlifts of materials from ally Iran to help its troubled oil refineries to produce fuel, according to three people familiar with the matter and publicly-available flight-tracking data. The shipment of catalysts to the 955,000 barrel-per-day (bpd) Paraguana Refining Complex (CRP) in western Venezuela comes after Iran sent more than a dozen flights to the area last year to help restart the 310,000 bpd Cardon refinery and alleviate acute gasoline shortages in the OPEC nation. - [Reuters on 12-FEB](#)

HEZBOLLAH

- Eduardo Bolsonaro, a member of the Chamber of Deputies for São Paulo and the son of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, told Israel Hayom in an exclusive interview that he will work to designate Hezbollah a terrorist organization. Several hours before flying back to Brazil, he discussed his three-day visit to Israel—as part of a delegation that included Foreign Minister Ernesto Araujo—that focused on combating the coronavirus pandemic. - [Jewish News Syndicate on 10-MAR](#)

THE NISMAN/AMIA CASE

- Judge Eduardo Farah, a new member of the Federal Chamber after his return to Comodoro Py at the beginning of the month, urged to speed up the investigation of the cause for the death of Alberto Nisman, who appeared with a shot in the head in the bathroom of his department four days after having denounced the then president Cristina Kirchner - today vice president - for covering up the attack on the AMIA through the Pact with Iran. - [Infobae on 19-FEB \(content in Spanish\)](#)

UAE

- Venezuela sent gold to Mali in 2020 via Russian-owned planes to exchange for euros and U.S. dollars that Maduro's regime used to remain afloat despite U.S. sanctions, an opposition representative said. Julio Borges, designated by opposition leader Juan Guaido as his chief overseas envoy, told reporters that the gold was refined in Mali and then resold primarily in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to allow for Maduro's administration to obtain the equivalent of at least \$1 billion in euros in particular. - [Reuters on 05-MAR](#)

QATAR

- Vice-President of the Republic of Costa Rica, H E Marvin Rodriguez Cordero, has met with Ambassador of the State of Qatar to Costa Rica, H E Khamis bin Rashid Al Kaabi. During the meeting held in San Jose, the capital of Costa Rica, they reviewed the cooperation relations between the two countries. - [The Peninsula on 11-MAR](#)
- State media reports the Chilean Vice Minister of Trade at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Rodrigo Yanez stressed that his country is keen on enhancing economic ties with Qatar. Speaking exclusively to Qatar News Agency, he said that the visit was part of the priority assigned by the Chilean government to strengthening economic ties with Qatar and countries in the Gulf, given the great potential that exists between Chile and the Gulf region for bilateral trade and reciprocal investment. - [Gulf Times on 26-FEB](#)