



VRIC MEDICAL DIPLOMACY

August 2021

The following is a summary of open-source media reporting on the VRIC's medical diplomacy in Latin America and the Caribbean in August 2021. This is not a complete list of media reports on the VRIC's medical diplomacy 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.

- Chilean authorities said China's Sinovac had begun evaluating potential sites for the construction of a vaccine plant in Chile that could begin producing doses of the Chinese shot as early as the first half of 2022. - [Reuters on 23-JUL](#)
- The COVAX vaccine-sharing facility is aiming to overcome roadblocks to the shipment of coronavirus shots to Venezuela “as soon as possible,” a spokesman for the GAVI alliance said. The comments from GAVI, the Vaccine Alliance which runs COVAX with the World Health Organization, came after Maduro said he was giving the COVAX system an “ultimatum” to send doses to the crisis-stricken South American country or return the money Venezuela had already paid. - [Reuters on 06-JUL](#)
- State media reports the Qatar Embassy in El Salvador has provided medical assistance to the National Children's Hospital, which included medical equipment and supplies, recreational materials for children and basic health products. El Salvador's Vice-Minister of Health, Carlos Alvarenga, received the aid at a ceremony, organised by the health ministry. - [Gulf Times on 04-JUL](#)
- Venezuela is the first country outside of Cuba to include the Cuban-made Abdala vaccine in its national program. It's done so under heavy criticism from local medical associations and NGOs, with the Medical Federation urging people not to take it, saying there's not enough public information about it. The country received the first shipment of around 30,000 doses on June 24 meant to immunize 10,000 people since it requires three

shots. However, the Maduro regime expects to eventually have enough to fully vaccinate 4 million people. - [Bloomberg on 02-JUL](#)

- Guatemalan Health Minister Amelia Flores said that the government had asked Russia to return money already paid for doses of the Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine because of non-delivery. The government of President Alejandro Giammattei paid some \$80 million in early April for a supply of 8 million doses of the vaccine. So far, it has received just 150,000 of those, the government said, while COVID-19 infections in the Central American country have risen to a peak. - [Reuters on 29-JUN](#)
- State media reports a new batch of Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine has arrived in Venezuela, Russian Ambassador to the Latin American country Sergei Melik-Bagdasarov said. - [Sputnik on 12-JUN](#)
- Argentina and Russia's joint production of the Sputnik V vaccine's active ingredient was announced on June 4 at a video conference by Presidents Alberto Fernández and Vladimir Putin. The new Laboratorios Richmond plant under construction in Pilar has the capacity to turn out half a million complete doses weekly of Sputnik V (which will be named Sputnik Vida in its local version), the lab's president Marcelo Figueiras said. - [Buenos Aires Times on 07-JUN](#)
- State media reports Chile is interested in using Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine to inoculate its population, Deputy Foreign Minister Rodrigo Yanez Benitez said. - [TASS on 04-JUN](#)
- Venezuela has reached a deal to purchase doses of Russia's EpiVacCorona vaccine, as well as manufacture the inoculation locally, Vice President Delcy Rodríguez said. - [Reuters on 05-JUN](#)
- Argentina and Russia's president formally announced that a pharmaceutical company in the South American nation will start producing the Sputnik V COVID-19 vaccine. Presidents Vladimir Putin and Alberto Fernández spoke in a webcast event to kick off the vaccine's production at Laboratorios Richmond S.A. in Buenos Aires. Ties between the two nations have deepened after Fernandez agreed to buy the Sputnik vaccine, developed by Russia's Gamaleya Institute. - [BNN Bloomberg on 04-JUN](#)
- The Nicaraguan Ministry of Health has approved the Russian single-dose vaccine against the coronavirus, Sputnik Light, as reported today by the Russian Direct Investment Fund in a statement. - [Swiss Info on 20-MAY](#)
- A total of 25 tons of medical supplies arrived at the Maiquetía Simón Bolívar International Airport, from the People's Republic of China, which are destined for the states with the highest rate of patients infected by COVID-19 in the country. - [Efecto Cocuyo on 17-MAY](#)

- Mexico received the sixth batch of the Russian vaccine against COVID-19, Sputnik V, the country's Foreign Secretary, Marcelo Ebrard, reported today from his Twitter account. The load, of 500,000 doses of the Russian immunizer, brings the figure to a total of 2,400,000, the Russian Foreign Ministry also detailed from Twitter. In this way, the publication specified, both countries "strengthen ties of friendship" and continue to cooperate in the fight against COVID-19. - [TeleSUR on 17-MAY](#)