Note: *This briefing is a collection of news articles that involve news, from multiple sources, of events circulating throughout the countries in Latin America. The inclusion of particular stories is not intended to endorse any particular viewpoints included in the news coverage. The links lead to translated articles where spelling and grammar could be slightly off.*

Date: July 08, 2026

Executive Summary:

Regional risk across Latin America and the Caribbean is evolving and intensifying, driven by the convergence of transnational organized crime, political polarization, infrastructure fragility, sanctions exposure, and disaster-related governance stress. The most significant trend this week is the regional securitization of organized crime. From Haiti's Gang Repression Force roadmap to U.S. terrorist designations targeting gangs in Ecuador, Brazil, and Mexico, criminal networks are increasingly being treated not only as law enforcement problems but as strategic threats affecting financial systems, trade, extractives, logistics, and state stability.

A second major trend is the expansion of criminal economies into legitimate sectors. Fuel smuggling, illegal mining, agribusiness extortion, logistics infiltration, and financial laundering are creating heightened exposure for insurers, banks, commodity traders, port operators, exporters, and investors. This is especially relevant in Mexico, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, and Venezuela, where illicit actors are exploiting weak governance, border gaps, and high-value commodities.

Third, political transitions and governance disputes are raising business uncertainty. Colombia's contested transition and the expected reversal of security policy could trigger protests, armed-group recalibration, and investor caution. Venezuela's earthquake response is also becoming politically sensitive, with humanitarian access, opposition activity, and state capacity under scrutiny.

Fourth, critical infrastructure risk remains acute. Cuba's repeated national blackouts and Venezuela's earthquake damage highlight the vulnerability of energy grids, airports, healthcare systems, communications, and transportation networks. These disruptions have direct implications for business continuity, supply chain planning, insurance exposure, and crisis response.

Overall, the regional risk environment is not uniformly deteriorating, but it is becoming more complex. Businesses operating in the region face a higher burden of due diligence, sanctions screening, contingency planning, executive protection, and supply chain traceability. Clients should expect more regulatory scrutiny, more security-driven policy decisions, and greater disruption risk across sectors tied to energy, mining, agriculture, finance, ports, and cross-border logistics.

Regional Risk Dashboard:

Risk Area	Trend	Outlook	Key Drivers
Political Stability	↑	Elevated volatility in Colombia, Venezuela, and Haiti	Contested transitions, weak institutions, humanitarian stress, opposition mobilization

Organized Crime & Security	↑↑	Immediate attention required	Gang territorial control, extortion, illegal mining, fuel smuggling, terrorist designations
Economic Stability	↑	Pressure rising in fragile economies	Cuba energy crisis, Venezuela disaster costs, illicit market penetration, fiscal leakage
Critical Infrastructure Risk	↑↑	High disruption risk	Cuba blackouts, Venezuela earthquake damage, attacks on Ecuador mining regulator, airport and energy vulnerabilities
Compliance & Sanctions	↑↑	Rapidly expanding obligations	U.S. sanctions/FTO designations targeting CJNG, PCC, CV, Chone Killers, and illicit financial networks
Supply Chain & Investment Risk	↑	Increasing sector-specific exposure	Banana production disruption, fuel market manipulation, illegal mining, border smuggling
Social Unrest	↑	Elevated protest potential	Colombia transition dispute, Venezuela disaster response, Cuba shortages, Peru mining conflicts
Geopolitical Competition	↑	Security partnerships becoming more strategic	U.S. counterterrorism tools, Brazil sovereignty concerns, Mercosur security architecture, Haiti force planning
Cyber Risk	↑	Financial sector exposure increasing	Latin American banking malware expanding into Europe, phishing, credential theft, remote-access fraud

Executive Snapshot:

- Highest-Risk Markets This Week:
    - Haiti
    - Colombia
    - Venezuela

- Sectors Requiring Increased Attention:
    - Banking and financial services
    - Energy and fuel distribution
    - Mining and extractives
    - Agriculture and food exports
    - Ports, logistics, and transportation
    - Insurance and reinsurance
    - Critical infrastructure operators
    - Executive travel and corporate security

- Recommended Client Actions:
    - Conduct enhanced sanctions and counterparty screening across Mexico, Brazil, Ecuador, and Venezuela exposure.
    - Reassess business continuity plans for energy, communications, fuel, and transport disruptions.
    - Review supply chain exposure to illegal mining, fuel smuggling, extortion, and criminal taxation.
    - Update executive travel protocols for Colombia, Haiti, Ecuador, Venezuela, and high-crime border regions.

- Strengthen crisis monitoring around Colombia’s transition and Venezuela’s earthquake recovery.
- Engage local security intelligence support before expanding operations in high-risk corridors.

Editor’s Assessment:

The Big Picture

The current reporting cycle shows a region where security risk is becoming more strategic, more financial, and more operationally disruptive. Organized crime is no longer confined to street-level violence or narcotics trafficking. Criminal groups are embedding themselves into fuel markets, mining, agriculture, transportation, real estate, ports, and financial systems. This creates direct exposure for companies that may not view themselves as operating in traditionally high-risk sectors.

At the same time, governments are responding with increasingly militarized, cross-border, and sanctions-based tools. U.S. terrorist designations, Mercosur security coordination, Haiti’s planned Gang Repression Force, and bilateral security agreements indicate a regional shift toward treating organized crime as a national security threat. This will create opportunities for cooperation, but also new compliance burdens and sovereignty tensions.

Political risk is also rising. Colombia’s transition dispute could reshape the country’s security posture and increase protest activity. Venezuela’s earthquake recovery is exposing state capacity constraints and may become a catalyst for renewed political confrontation. Cuba’s energy crisis continues to erode economic resilience and social stability.

The business implication is clear: companies need to move beyond standard country-risk monitoring. The emerging risk environment requires integrated political, security, sanctions, infrastructure, and supply chain intelligence.

Key Themes

1. Organized Crime as a Strategic Business Risk

Criminal groups are expanding from drug trafficking into fuel, mining, agriculture, logistics, and financial services. This matters because companies may face extortion, supply disruptions, sanctions exposure, and reputational damage even without direct criminal contact. Businesses should treat organized crime exposure as an enterprise risk issue, not only a security issue.

2. Sanctions, Terrorism Designations, and Compliance Expansion

The U.S. is increasingly using sanctions and terrorist designations against Latin American criminal organizations. This raises the risk of blocked assets, material-support exposure, correspondent banking concerns, and enhanced due diligence obligations. Companies with exposure to Brazil, Mexico, Ecuador, and Venezuela should reassess customers, vendors, intermediaries, and beneficial ownership structures.

3. Political Transition and Governance Stress

Colombia’s transition crisis, Venezuela’s disaster response, Haiti’s fragile stabilization effort, and Cuba’s infrastructure decline show governance systems under pressure. Political volatility can quickly translate into protests, security policy reversals, contract uncertainty, and operating disruptions. Investors should monitor institutional stability and policy continuity more closely.

4. Critical Infrastructure Vulnerability

Power grids, airports, mining regulators, healthcare systems, and transportation networks are under strain from blackouts, earthquakes, sabotage, and weak maintenance. For businesses, this increases the importance of redundancy planning, emergency communications, fuel access, local evacuation options, and supplier resilience.

5. Illegal Mining and Resource-Sector Conflict

Illegal mining is emerging as a regional security and compliance challenge from Peru and Ecuador to Venezuela and Brazil's border areas. It threatens communities, cultural heritage, water systems, and formal mining investment. Enhanced due diligence should be considered for gold, minerals, logistics providers, fuel suppliers, and security contractors.

Operational Implications

Companies with exposure to high-risk markets should reassess personnel security, particularly for executives, field teams, auditors, logistics personnel, and employees operating near ports, mines, farms, fuel corridors, and border zones.

Supply chains require greater traceability. Organizations should review whether suppliers, transport firms, fuel vendors, mining intermediaries, or agricultural producers may be exposed to extortion, illegal taxation, sanctions, or criminal infiltration.

Investment teams should reassess political and security risk assumptions in Colombia, Haiti, Venezuela, Ecuador, Peru, Brazil, and Mexico. Country-level ratings may not be sufficient; risk is increasingly corridor-specific, sector-specific, and counterparty-specific.

Business continuity plans should account for blackouts, fuel shortages, airport closures, civil unrest, armed-group activity, and cyber-enabled financial fraud. Companies relying on single-source suppliers or weak local infrastructure face elevated disruption exposure.

Compliance teams should update sanctions screening, beneficial ownership reviews, transaction monitoring, and third-party due diligence. This is especially important for financial institutions, insurers, commodity traders, logistics companies, and investors with Latin America exposure.

Executive travel should be reviewed for Colombia during the transition period, Haiti amid security operations, Venezuela during earthquake recovery, and Ecuador amid anti-crime enforcement and retaliatory attacks.

Reputational risk is also increasing. Companies linked to illicit mining, criminal fuel markets, sanctioned entities, or weak humanitarian responses may face scrutiny from regulators, investors, insurers, and media.

Indicators to Watch

- Colombia's August 7 transfer of power and protest activity before and after inauguration
- Implementation pace and deployment footprint of Haiti's Gang Repression Force
- New U.S. sanctions or FTO/SDGT designations targeting Latin American criminal groups

- Criminal retaliation against mining, energy, government, or law enforcement targets in Ecuador and Peru
- Cuba's power restoration timeline and frequency of renewed national blackouts
- Venezuela humanitarian access, airport operations, and opposition-government confrontation
- Mercosur and bilateral security agreements translating into operational enforcement activity

Bottom Line: Three Immediate Action Areas

1. Compliance Reviews

Review sanctions, counterparty, beneficial ownership, and transaction-monitoring exposure across Mexico, Brazil, Ecuador, Venezuela, and high-risk commodity chains.

2. Political Risk Monitoring
Monitor Colombia's transition, Venezuela's disaster response, Haiti's security deployment, and regional policy shifts on organized crime.

3. Business Continuity Planning
Update contingency plans for blackouts, fuel shortages, civil unrest, transport disruption, cyber fraud, and emergency evacuation scenarios.

Secrisk's Watchlist:

Markets to Watch

Market	Why it Matters	Outlook	Risk Rating
Haiti	Gang-control reduction effort will shape humanitarian access, infrastructure security, and investor confidence	Security operations likely to expand gradually, but full stabilization remains unlikely near term	CRITICAL
Colombia	Political transition dispute and security-policy reversal may trigger unrest and armed-group recalibration	Volatility likely through inauguration and early policy implementation	HIGH
Venezuela	Earthquake recovery is straining state capacity and creating humanitarian, political, and infrastructure risk	Recovery phase may expose governance gaps and worsen political confrontation	HIGH
Cuba	Repeated nationwide blackouts threaten business continuity, healthcare, transport, and food systems	Energy instability likely to persist without major fuel or infrastructure relief	HIGH
Mexico	Cartel fuel smuggling and sanctions exposure create major risks for energy, finance, transport, and trade	Enforcement pressure likely to increase on both sides of the border	ELEVATED
Brazil	U.S. criminal-terror designations create compliance and sovereignty tension	Financial institutions and exposed sectors face increased scrutiny	ELEVATED

Ecuador	Gang designations and attacks on mining regulators indicate escalation around organized crime and illegal gold	Retaliatory violence and enforcement operations likely	HIGH

Emerging Issues

Topic	Potential Impact	Time Horizon	Risk Rating
Criminal infiltration of fuel markets	Sanctions exposure, tax loss, supply chain contamination, reputational risk	30–90 days	HIGH
Illegal mining expansion	Violence, environmental damage, regulatory enforcement, supply chain risk	30–90 days	HIGH
Regional terrorist designations	Expanded compliance burden and possible diplomatic friction	Immediate–90 days	HIGH
Critical infrastructure disruption	Operational shutdowns, insurance claims, emergency response strain	Immediate	HIGH
Cyber-enabled banking fraud	Financial losses, credential theft, cross-border fraud exposure	30–90 days	ELEVATED
Colombia transition unrest	Protests, political violence, policy uncertainty	Immediate–30 days	HIGH
Regional security coordination	Stronger enforcement, new data-sharing, cross-border investigations	60–90 days	MODERATE

Overall Regional Risk Rating: HIGH

Latin America and the Caribbean are entering a more complex risk cycle where political instability, criminal diversification, infrastructure fragility, sanctions pressure, and strategic competition are increasingly interconnected. Companies should not wait for direct disruption before acting. The current environment favors proactive intelligence monitoring, enhanced due diligence, security reviews, and business continuity planning.

News Articles:

Caribbean

- **The FRG presents its objectives to the Security Council** https://www.haitilibre.com/article-47929-haiti-security-the-frg-presents-its-objectives-to-the-security-council.html

Jack Christofides, head of Haiti's Gang Repression Force (FRG), presented a roadmap through September 30, 2028, focused on dismantling gang control, securing critical infrastructure, and strengthening the Haitian National Police and the Armed Forces of Haiti. The mission will initially prioritize the West, Artibonite, and Centre departments before expanding nationwide as the force reaches its target strength of 5,550 personnel. Christofides said the objective is to create the minimum security conditions needed for Haiti's long-term recovery rather than achieve full national stabilization by 2028.

- **Cuba slowly getting power back after third nationwide blackout in 6 months: “This is agony”**
  https://www.cbsnews.com/news/cuba-slowly-getting-power-back-after-third-nationwide-blackout-in-6-months-this-is-agony/

Cuba is gradually restoring electricity after its third nationwide blackout of 2026, the eighth since late 2024, as an ongoing fuel shortage continues to strain the country's aging power grid. Authorities attributed the slow recovery to limited fuel supplies, while President Miguel Díaz-Canel blamed U.S. sanctions and fuel restrictions for worsening the energy crisis. The prolonged outages have disrupted transportation, healthcare, communications, and businesses, with many areas receiving only a few hours of electricity per day. The blackout comes amid worsening shortages of food, water, and medicine, despite the government's recent announcement of market-oriented economic reforms.

- **Drones Used in Cuba’s Granma Province to Plant Rice, Although the Harvest Is Minimal**
  https://translatingcuba.com/drones-used-in-cubas-granma-province-to-plant-rice-although-the-harvest-is-minimal/

Cuba's Fernando Echenique Agroindustrial Company has launched a drone-assisted rice planting program in Granma province, planting 240 hectares as part of the Vietnam-Cuba TB Agri cooperation project to improve agricultural productivity. Production continues to face major obstacles, including electricity shortages that have forced farmers to dry rice naturally in the open air and persistent fuel shortages affecting transportation. Despite the adoption of drone technology, current production remains far below historical levels, with yields of only 2–2.5 tons per hectare compared with about 5 tons in the past and more than 7–9 tons achieved in Vietnamese-supported projects elsewhere in Cuba.

North America

- **Mexico’s Strategic Push to Modernize its Air Force**
  https://dsm.forecastinternational.com/2026/07/07/mexicos-strategic-push-to-modernize-its-air-force/

The Mexican Air Force (FAM) has announced it will retire its aging fleet of Northrop F-5E/F Tiger II fighters after more than 40 years of service and begin evaluating replacements, with plans to acquire 12 new combat aircraft by 2028. Leading contenders include the Lockheed Martin F-16 Block 70/72, Saab JAS 39 Gripen E/F, KAI FA-50, and Leonardo M-346. The modernization effort is driven by the F-5's declining reliability, limited spare parts, and maintenance challenges, while also reflecting Mexico's broader goal of strengthening its air defense capabilities and enhancing its role as a regional security partner amid evolving threats from organized crime and changing regional security dynamics.

- **Cartels reverse smuggling routes to net billions sneaking gasoline from Texas into Mexico** https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2026/jul/6/cartels-reverse-smuggling-routes-net-billions-sneaking-gasoline-texas/

U.S. authorities say Mexican drug cartels, particularly the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), have expanded fuel smuggling into one of their largest revenue streams by importing cheaper U.S. fuel into Mexico, avoiding taxes, and selling it at market prices. The U.S. Department of the Treasury estimates illicit fuel may account for up to one-third of Mexico's fuel market, costing the Mexican government tens of billions of dollars annually in lost tax revenue. The scheme relies on shell companies, fraudulent invoices, mislabeled shipments, and cross-border financial transactions, while cartels also continue stealing oil from Petróleos Mexicanos (Pemex) for export to the United States. In response, the U.S. recently sanctioned two individuals and nine companies linked to CJNG and has identified fuel smuggling as the cartel's second-largest source of income after drug trafficking.

- **U.S. announces new bank alert targeting powerful Jalisco New Generation Cartel** https://www.cbsnews.com/news/us-bank-alert-jalisco-new-generation-cartel-sanctions/

The U.S. Treasury Department imposed new sanctions on two Mexican nationals and nine companies linked to the Jalisco New Generation Cartel, targeting a fuel theft and smuggling network that allegedly generates millions of dollars annually by evading Mexican taxes. At the same time, the Treasury's financial crimes unit issued an alert to banks highlighting indicators of cross-border fuel smuggling schemes between the United States and Mexico. U.S. officials said the sanctions reflect the cartel's expansion beyond drug trafficking into fuel theft, transportation, financial services, and real estate. Authorities estimate CJNG now operates in 21 of Mexico's 32 states, making it the country's most geographically widespread cartel. The action follows the cartel's designation as a foreign terrorist organization and comes amid continued U.S.-Mexico efforts to dismantle its leadership after the death of its leader, Nemesio Oseguera Cervantes, and the April arrest of senior commander Audias Flores Silva.

South America

- **Brazil warns of U.S. military intervention risk after terror designation** https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2026/07/07/1551783444555/

Brazil has formally opposed the U.S. decision to designate the Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) and Comando Vermelho (CV) as Foreign Terrorist Organizations, warning that the move could create risks to Brazil's sovereignty and potentially justify U.S. military action under American counterterrorism laws. Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira told Congress that the designation offers little benefit for bilateral law enforcement cooperation while exposing Brazilian citizens and businesses to financial, immigration, and legal consequences. Brazil continues to classify both groups as organized crime organizations rather than terrorist groups, despite recent U.S. sanctions targeting individuals and companies accused of laundering PCC-linked funds.

- **Colombia’s president-elect suspends transition, accuses Petro of attempting a coup**
  https://en.mercopress.com/2026/07/07/colombia-s-president-elect-suspends-transition-accuses-petro-of-attempting-a-coup

Colombia's presidential transition has been thrown into crisis after president-elect Abelardo de la Espriella suspended transition meetings with the outgoing administration of Gustavo Petro, accusing the government of attempting a coup and refusing to recognize the election results. De la Espriella also urged the armed forces to uphold the Constitution and called on supporters to resist until his August 7 inauguration. Although Petro initially disputed the election outcome, he later said he would transfer power at the end of his term while denying any effort to undermine the transition. The dispute has further heightened political tensions after left-wing candidate Iván Cepeda announced plans for peaceful civil disobedience and continued to question the legitimacy of the election.

- **Armed groups halt banana production in Colombia’s Magdalena region**
  https://www.fruitnet.com/eurofruit/armed-groups-halt-banana-production-in-colombias-magdalena-region/272051.article

The Association of Banana Growers of Magdalena and La Guajira (Asbama) has warned that escalating violence and extortion by the Clan del Golfo and the Autodefensas Conquistadoras de la Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (Los Pachencas) have forced several banana farms in northern Colombia to suspend operations and exports. The groups have threatened workers, disrupted business activity, and demanded extortion payments from producers in exchange for "security." Asbama also criticized the government's response, stating that promised security measures, including the creation of a new police district in the Zona Bananera, have not been implemented.

- **Colombia’s De la Espriella vows to dismantle peace policy from his first day in office**
  https://www.intellinews.com/colombia-s-de-la-espriella-vows-to-dismantle-peace-policy-from-his-first-day-in-office-453100/

Colombia's president-elect, Abelardo de la Espriella, announced that upon taking office on August 7 he will immediately dismantle Gustavo Petro's "Total Peace" policy, reinstate suspended arrest warrants for members of illegal armed groups, and pursue legal action over alleged irregularities uncovered during the government transition. De la Espriella also pledged to replace negotiations with armed groups through a tougher security strategy, including expanded military operations, while raising concerns about the country's healthcare system and public finances. The announcement has further intensified political tensions as Petro and his allies prepare public mobilizations ahead of the transfer of power.

- **Venezuela earthquake death toll rises to 3,535 as international teams withdraw**
  https://en.mercopress.com/2026/07/06/venezuela-earthquake-death-toll-rises-to-3-535-as-international-teams-withdraw

Venezuela's June 24 twin earthquakes have killed at least 3,535 people and injured 16,740, according to the latest official figures, with authorities cautioning that the toll may continue to rise. The disaster has displaced nearly 18,000 people, destroyed or severely damaged hundreds of buildings, and prompted the deployment of almost 30,000 security personnel alongside thousands of volunteers. While the government reports 157 people remain missing, citizen-led efforts have recorded more than 30,000 individuals who have not yet been located. As international rescue teams withdraw, operations have largely shifted from search and rescue to debris clearance and humanitarian assistance in the hardest-hit areas, particularly La Guaira.

- **Illegal mining fuels new conflicts in Peru, threatens ancient dig site**
  https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2026/07/06/3391783363240/

Peru's Ombudsman's Office has warned that illegal mining is fueling a growing number of social conflicts, threatening communities, water resources, ecosystems, and the country's cultural heritage, including the Nazca Lines. The report identifies six active conflicts involving illegal mining networks, which are more difficult to address than traditional mining disputes because they lack formal leadership and are often linked to organized crime. Illegal mining operations have also expanded near the Nazca Lines, with more than 130 unauthorized mineral processing plants operating in the surrounding area. In response, Peruvian authorities have intensified enforcement operations, destroying illegal mining camps and equipment worth hundreds of millions of dollars, but officials warn the issue has evolved into a major governance and security challenge.

- **France lifts visa requirement for Brazilians to Guiana**
  https://agenciabrasil.ebc.com.br/en/internacional/noticia/2026-07/france-lifts-visa-requirement-brazilians-guiana

France and Brazil have signed an agreement eliminating visa requirements for Brazilian citizens traveling to French Guiana, with the new policy taking effect on July 31. The agreement allows Brazilians to visit for up to three months without obtaining a visa and is intended to strengthen cross-border mobility, trade, tourism, and economic cooperation between the neighboring territories. The visa waiver is also accompanied by a bilateral security initiative aimed at improving cooperation against transnational organized crime along the Brazil–French Guiana border, including efforts to combat smuggling, illegal mining, drug trafficking, and human trafficking. The agreement marks a significant easing of long-standing travel restrictions between the two countries while maintaining a coordinated focus on border security.

- **U.S. designates Ecuador's "Chone Killers" gang a terrorist organization** https://www.cbsnews.com/news/us-designates-chone-killers-gang-terrorist-organization-ecuador/

The United States has designated Ecuador's Chone Killers gang as a Foreign Terrorist Organization and Specially Designated Global Terrorist group, exposing its leaders, members, and supporters to U.S. sanctions and potential criminal prosecution. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the group has carried out attacks against civilians, police, and government officials, including high-profile assassinations. Ecuador welcomed the move, framing it as support for President Daniel Noboa's broader crackdown on criminal organizations. The designation comes as Ecuador continues to battle escalating gang violence, drug trafficking, and extortion involving groups linked to Mexican and Colombian cartels, with the U.S. increasingly using terrorism designations and joint security operations to target Latin American criminal networks.

- **Uruguay and Chile agree to coordinate against organized crime after an Orsi-Kast summit** https://en.mercopress.com/2026/07/02/uruguay-and-chile-agree-to-coordinate-against-organized-crime-after-an-orsi-kast-summit

Uruguayan President Yamandú Orsi and Chilean President José Antonio Kast agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation against transnational organized crime during a meeting in Montevideo, highlighting security as a shared priority despite their political differences. The two countries signed agreements on the mutual recognition of digital signatures and cooperation between their diplomatic academies, while announcing that additional agreements on security and infrastructure are expected in the coming months. Kast also invited Uruguay to join the Santiago Agreement, a Chile-led regional initiative to coordinate efforts against organized crime, emphasizing that criminal networks require a unified regional response. The meeting also advanced cooperation on fisheries, Antarctica, the bi-oceanic corridor, and economic integration, underscoring both countries' commitment to deeper regional collaboration.

- **Brazilian Gang Terrorist Designations: What U.S. Financial Institutions Need to Know About the CV and PCC** https://www.jdsupra.com/legalnews/brazilian-gang-terrorist-designations-8709008/

The U.S. designation of Brazil's Comando Vermelho (CV) and Primeiro Comando da Capital (PCC) as Foreign Terrorist Organizations (FTOs) and Specially Designated Global Terrorists (SDGTs) significantly expands compliance obligations for U.S. financial institutions with exposure to Brazil. The designations trigger OFAC asset-blocking requirements, criminal prohibitions on providing material support, and heightened FinCEN anti-money laundering expectations, requiring banks to strengthen sanctions screening, customer due diligence, transaction monitoring, and suspicious activity reporting. Given the alleged infiltration of sectors such as fuel, logistics, agribusiness, mining, ports, fintech, and real estate by these groups, financial institutions are urged to reassess Brazilian counterparties, correspondent banking relationships, and cross-border transactions. The designations also increase potential civil liability under the U.S. Anti-Terrorism Act and raise the risk of regulatory enforcement or loss of access to the U.S. financial system for institutions that fail to adequately detect or prevent transactions benefiting CV or PCC. Overall, the move extends U.S. counterterrorism authorities into Brazil's financial sector, making enhanced compliance and risk management an immediate priority for banks and businesses operating in or with Brazil.

- **Tren de Aragua's 'Johan Petrica': Fugitive and Potential Heir** https://insightcrime.org/news/tren-de-araguas-johan-petrica-fugitive-and-potential-heir/

The death of Héctor "Niño Guerrero" leaves Yohan José Romero, alias "Johan Petrica," as the last original Tren de Aragua founder still at large and the most likely successor to the group's leadership. A co-founder of the gang alongside Niño Guerrero and the imprisoned Larry Changa, Petrica has long controlled the powerful Las Claritas Sindicato, an illegal mining organization operating in Venezuela's Bolívar state that extorts miners, businesses, and workers in one of the country's richest gold-producing regions. However, the joint U.S.-Venezuelan operation that killed Niño Guerrero also disrupted Petrica's mining stronghold, making it more difficult for him to consolidate power. With Tren de Aragua weakened by the 2023 raid on Tocorón prison, arrests of senior leaders across South America, and sustained international law enforcement pressure, Petrica now faces the challenge of leading a fragmented transnational criminal organization while remaining a fugitive wanted by U.S. authorities for illegal mining and arms trafficking.

- **Brazilian Banking Trojan Ousaban Targets Spain and Portugal** https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/ousaban-banking-trojan-spain/

The Ousaban banking trojan, previously focused on victims in Brazil, has expanded its operations to target online banking customers in Spain and Portugal through a sophisticated phishing campaign. The malware uses fake PDF documents, geofencing, VPN detection, sandbox evasion, and steganography to ensure only intended victims receive the malicious payload while avoiding security researchers. Once installed, Ousaban monitors for users accessing major banks, including Santander, BBVA, CaixaBank, Revolut, and Caixa Geral de Depósitos, and employs keylogging, screenshots, clipboard manipulation, remote access, and fake banking screens to steal credentials. Security researchers note that while Ousaban builds on long-established Latin American banking trojan techniques, its enhanced evasion methods make detection significantly more difficult, highlighting the continued evolution of financially motivated cyber threats targeting the banking sector.

- **Bomb attack damages Ecuador mining agency probing illegal gold** https://www.mining.com/web/bomb-attack-damages-ecuador-mining-agency-probing-illegal-gold/

A suspected bomb attack targeted Ecuador's mining regulator (Arcom) in Quito early Monday, shattering windows across several floors of a government building that also houses the Ministry of Agriculture and public media offices. No injuries were reported. Authorities believe the attack is linked to the government's intensified efforts to combat illegal mining, following a similar bombing of an Arcom office in Machala on June

12. The incident comes as Ecuador increases funding for Arcom amid a broader security campaign against criminal organizations that profit from both drug trafficking and illegal gold mining.

- **Mercosur leaders push for a regional security architecture against organized crime** https://en.mercopress.com/2026/07/01/mercosur-leaders-push-for-a-regional-security-architecture-against-organized-crime

At the 68th Mercosur Summit in Luque, Paraguay, regional leaders identified transnational organized crime as a top priority, calling for stronger security cooperation alongside economic integration. Bolivian President Rodrigo Paz, Chilean President José Antonio Kast, Ecuadorian President Daniel Noboa, and Uruguayan President Yamandú Orsi all advocated for a regional security architecture focused on intelligence sharing, border management, arms trafficking, illicit financial flows, and enhanced police coordination. As Uruguay assumed Mercosur's rotating presidency, Orsi pledged to strengthen regional security information sharing and cross-border law enforcement cooperation. The summit also addressed trade issues, with Paraguay seeking a larger share of EU export quotas, while leaders expressed solidarity with Venezuela following its devastating earthquakes and Brazil pledged $100 million annually for ten years to Mercosur's development fund aimed at reducing regional inequalities.

- **Cepeda threatens 'civil disobedience' unless Colombia's president-elect renounces US citizenship** https://en.mercopress.com/2026/06/30/cepeda-threatens-civil-disobedience-unless-colombia-s-president-elect-renounces-us-citizenship

Colombian left-wing senator Iván Cepeda announced that he will lead a campaign of peaceful civil disobedience against President-elect Abelardo de la Espriella unless he renounces his U.S. citizenship and addresses questions regarding his past professional ties to U.S. security agencies and businessman Alex Saab. Cepeda argues that dual U.S. citizenship is incompatible with Colombia's presidency, although constitutional experts note that Colombian law permits dual nationals to serve as president if they meet the constitutional requirements. He also called for investigations into De la Espriella's past legal work involving Saab and demanded an end to any efforts to prosecute or extradite outgoing President Gustavo Petro. The announcement signals the beginning of a confrontational opposition strategy by Petro's political coalition, which is expected to challenge the incoming administration through Congress and public mobilization.

- **Venezuela's María Corina Machado accuses the government of blocking her return after the earthquake** https://en.mercopress.com/2026/06/30/venezuela-s-maria-corina-machado-accuses-the-government-of-blocking-her-return-after-the-earthquake

Venezuelan opposition leader María Corina Machado accused the government of acting President Delcy Rodríguez of attempting to prevent her return to Venezuela by restricting air travel as the country responds to the devastating June 24 earthquakes. Machado, currently in Panama, said she wanted to return to support victims and alleged the government was using state institutions to block her arrival and limit information about the disaster. However, her claims coincide with the closure of Caracas' Maiquetía International Airport, which suffered significant earthquake damage and is operating only limited humanitarian flights. The government has not publicly responded to her allegations. Machado and other opposition figures have also called for unrestricted international humanitarian assistance as Venezuela continues recovery efforts following the disaster.