



¡Bienvenidas y bienvenidos to El CC, CCLATAM's newsletter!. Every other week you'll find the main events shaking up Latin America, from Ushuaia in the south to Los Algodones in the north. Sign up [here](#) to stay updated on the region. Get in touch with us, we may feature an excerpt of your response in the next newsletter.

The Plan B Issue



Mercosur-Singapore trade talks

[Martin Varsavsky](#)– argentinian/spanish serial tech entrepreneur and philanthropist– has a phrase for the times we live in: it's good to [have a Plan B](#). In his case, Argentina and the entire Southern Cone region could save complex human societies facing the threat of a global conflict. We argue the same idea is now playing out on a much bigger scale, across all South America.

For most of its history, the [Mercosur](#) trade bloc — **Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay, Uruguay**, and soon Bolivia — mostly just traded with itself. That worked fine when the world felt stable. It doesn't work so well now. The old system of global trade rules isn't as

dependable as it used to be, and a region that only knows one way of doing business has nothing to fall back on if that way stops working.

So Mercosur is building its own Plan B. The region produces huge amounts of oil, minerals, and farm products — exactly the things the world needs more of now that wars in Ukraine and the Middle East have disrupted global energy and food supplies. However, the bloc still sells less than a fifth of what it produces to the rest of the world, far below the global average.

[Mercosur signed a major trade deal with the European Union](#) after 25 years of talks, plus one with [Switzerland, Norway, Liechtenstein, and Iceland](#). A deal with **Canada** could be signed by the end of 2026. Talks with **Japan** began in June, an agreement with **Singapore** is already active, and more talks are underway with the **United Arab Emirates, India, Vietnam, Indonesia, South Korea, and El Salvador**. None of this protects against any one crisis the way a personal backup plan might. But it does something similar for the whole region: it means South America's economic future no longer rests on any single partner or market. In a world that keeps getting less predictable, having somewhere else to turn isn't just a hedge anymore. It's just good planning.

CCLATAM Editorial Board

Latin America Is Already Living the AI Election Story



Supreme Electoral Court HQs in Brasilia

Everyone worries about AI messing with elections in the US or Europe. But that's already happening in Latin America — and it's worth paying attention to what's gone wrong so far.

Back in 2023, someone used AI to fake an audio clip of an Argentine minister, timed to hurt a presidential campaign. In Colombia, candidates got hit with fake AI videos and images the same year and most recently in the 2026 Presidential elections. But the real test is happening in Brazil right now — and as of this week, the country's top election court can't even agree on the rules.

On August 18, [Brazil's electoral court held a closed-door meeting to decide what to do about a deepfake video](#) of former President Jair Bolsonaro, shown at a political convention in July. **The judges couldn't reach a decision** and haven't set a date to try again. **That's not a minor delay — it's a sign that a country with some of the world's toughest-sounding AI election rules** still doesn't know how to apply them, less than two months before voters go to the polls in October. [Brazil banned deepfakes of candidates back in 2024](#), and this year added stricter measures: campaigns must label anything AI-made, deepfakes can get a candidate disqualified, and platforms can be held responsible for not removing illegal content in time. On paper, that sounds airtight. In practice, judges are stuck.

Is a video “Dona Maria” — a fake AI persona spreading political content that ordinary users made, not a candidate — covered by rules written for candidates and parties? Nobody's sure. One legal expert flatly called banning it “evident.” Others worry that banning it goes too far and starts limiting free speech. Meanwhile, disinformation researchers say false content has already tripled in Brazil between 2024 and 2025.

This isn't just a Brazil problem — it's a preview. Legal experts say whatever Brazil's court decides will influence how courts in Argentina, Mexico, and Colombia treat AI-generated political content going forward. So this one unresolved case matters far beyond Brazil's borders.

At the same time, a totally separate story is unfolding with businesses and AI, and it's easy to mix the two up — which is a mistake. **There's no single AI law covering Latin America. Instead, countries are quietly updating old privacy laws to squeeze AI in.** Mexico added a rule letting people opt out of AI-driven decisions. Chile updated its privacy law in a way that happens to cover AI too. It's a patchwork, built country by country, moving on a completely different timeline than the election fight.

Here's why this matters for companies, not just governments: election season is exactly when both problems collide. The news gets flooded with fake content, tension runs high, and a company's normal marketing — a sponsorship, a timely social post — can

accidentally look like it's part of the chaos. Businesses need to treat these as two separate risks, not one blurry "AI in Latin America" story.

There is one hopeful sign. [Data regulators in Brazil, Argentina, and Ecuador have started comparing notes through a shared regional network.](#) It's very early — nowhere close to a unified law — but it's a start. Whether that cooperation can move faster than the next deepfake is the real question. And right now, with Brazil's own judges unable to agree, the answer isn't looking good.

The 41st edition of Latin America's most influential business and technology conference, [Andicom](#) kicks off next week. See you there. More to come.

Elsewhere in Latam

 [OAS Secretary General Albert Ramdin traveled to Port-au-Prince alongside CARICOM's leadership on August 17](#), warning that Haiti needs more personnel, equipment, and funding for the UN-backed gang suppression force ahead of December 13 elections, the country's first since 2016. The visit produced an agreement to fund 350,000 biometric identification cards, update the voter roll, and expand access to social services, even as armed groups continue to hold much of the capital and surrounding communes.

 [Colombia formally joined the Coalition of the Americas Against the Cartels on August 12](#), signing on as the nineteenth member at a coalition forum in Panama City where Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth announced that Bogotá had requested joint military operations against narcoterrorism. The accession came days after de la Espriella's inauguration and reversed the previous government's distance from the initiative, which Peru has also said it intends to join.

 [Chile's government sent a constitutional security reform to the Senate on August 17 under maximum urgency](#), proposing eight amendments that would create a new state of exception lasting up to 120 days, permanently bar those convicted of organized crime offenses from public office, and expand the armed forces' role in public security. A poll released this week found that 51 percent of Chileans want the executive to withdraw the bill, negotiate, and reintroduce it.

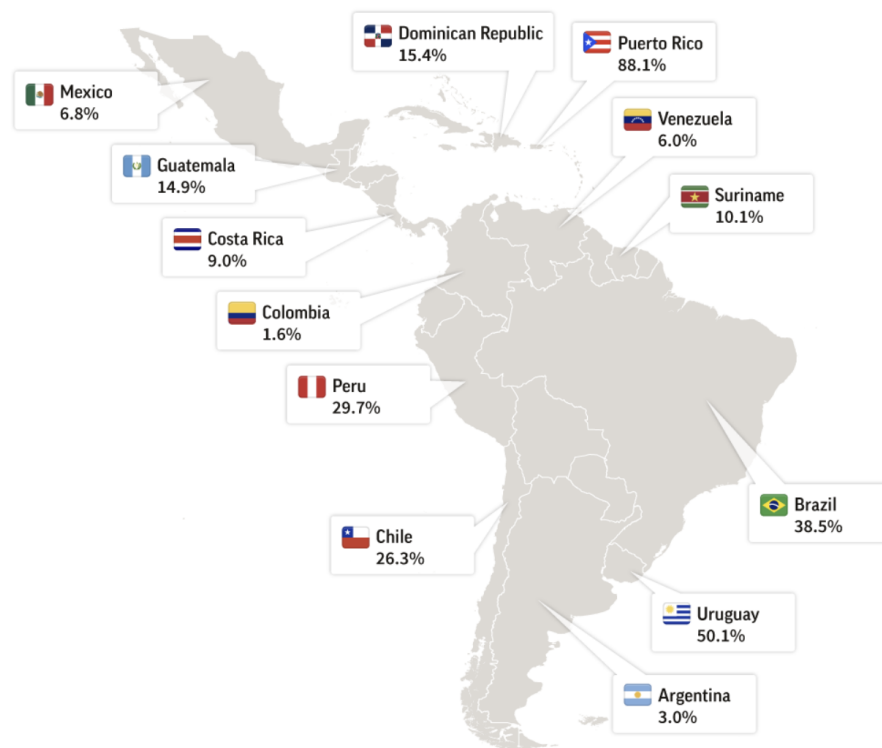
 [Rubén Rocha Moya retook the Sinaloa governorship on August 21 and requested an indefinite leave thirty four hours later](#), after Morena, the interior ministry, and President Sheinbaum all publicly distanced themselves from his return. Rocha has been under indictment in the Southern District of New York since April, alongside nine other current and former Sinaloa officials, over alleged ties to the Chapitos faction of the Sinaloa Cartel, charges he denies.

 Brazil's first presidential debate of the cycle aired on Band on August 23 with three of six lecterns empty, after Lula and Flávio Bolsonaro both stayed away and Romeu Zema withdrew the same day. The broadcaster had already moved the debate from August 16 in an attempt to secure Lula's participation, and the president gave a television interview scheduled to begin half an hour into the broadcast.

 Venezuela's talks between the acting government and the 2015 National Assembly delegation have produced no agreed agenda after two rounds held on August 1 and August 6 in Caracas, with nothing settled on political prisoners or on the conditions for restoring electoral rules. María Corina Machado and Edmundo González Urrutia remain in exile and outside the process, and Foro Penal counted 382 political prisoners still held as of August 3.

El Gráfico

5G Implementation Across Latin America, 2025



[Ookla, "5G Availability in Select Latin American Countries" January 2026. Chart based on Speedtest Intelligence data, Q3 2025.](#)

“You are never too old to set another goal or to dream a new dream”

C.S. Lewis, British Author

La Lectura

[Forgotten Continent: A History of the New Latin America](#) by Michael Reid is a survey of the region by the Economist's longtime Americas editor, arguing that Latin America is neither the failed periphery nor the perpetual almost-power it is usually cast as, but one of the world's most consequential laboratories for democratic capitalism. Reid's book moves through independence, caudillos, import substitution, the debt crisis, the commodities boom and its exhaustion, and the swing from left populism toward the hard right, treating each country as its own political system rather than a variation on a single continental theme.



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