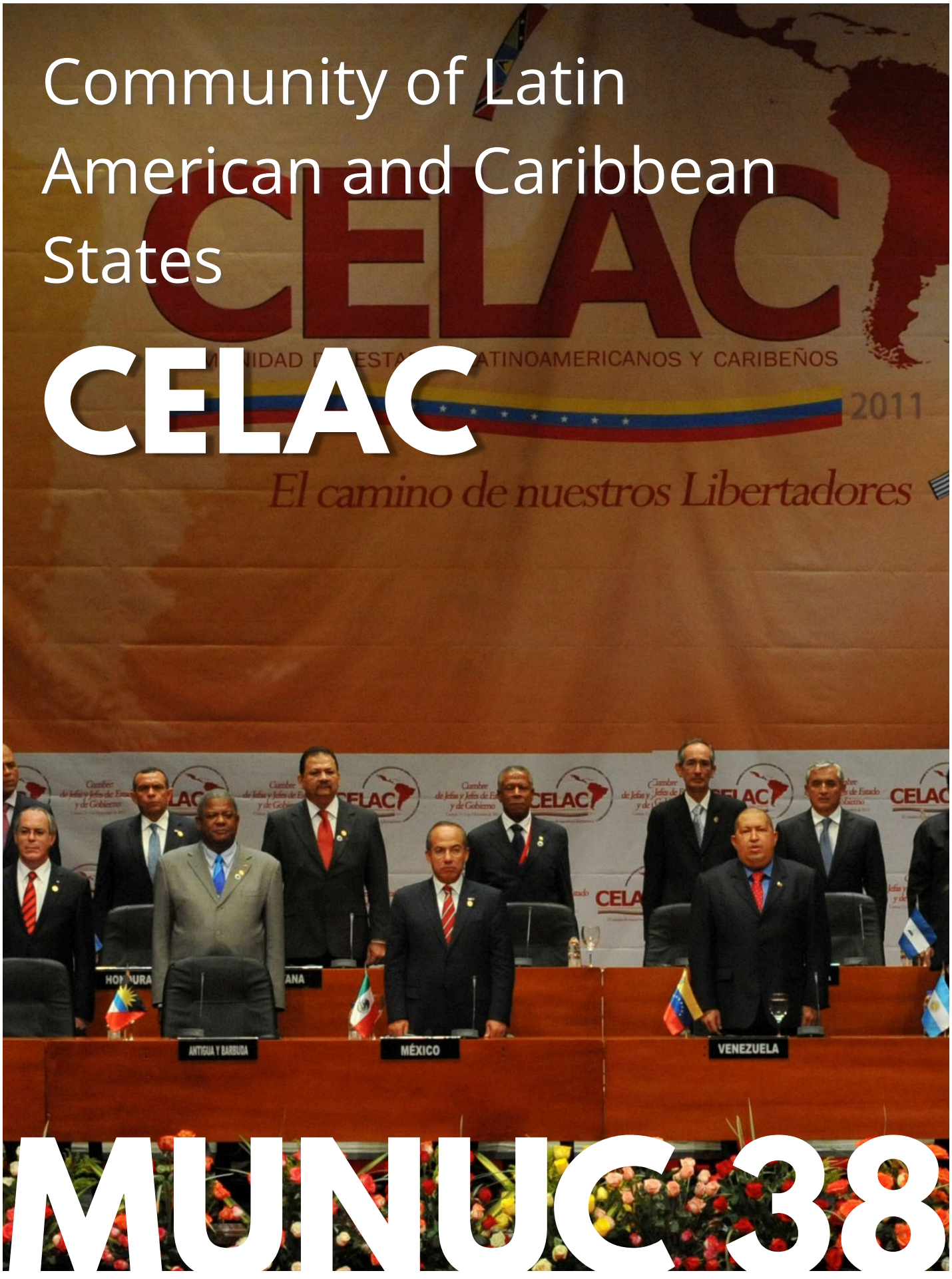
Community of Latin American and Caribbean States

CELAC



MUNUC 38

Model United Nations of the University of Chicago

Chair Letters

Dear Delegates,

My name is Christopher Rios, and I am excited to welcome you all to MUNUC 38 and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) regional body! I will be one of your Chairs, along with Isaac. A bit about me: I'm a fourth-year student from Austin, Texas, currently majoring in public policy. I was an Assistant Chair (AC) on the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees committee (UNHCR) at MUNUC 36, and then I was a Chair for the World Meteorological Organization committee (WMO) at MUNUC 37. Outside of Model UN, I work in the Student Advocacy Office as a financial aid caseworker. I also enjoy running along Chicago's Lakefront Trail and trying different restaurants in various neighborhoods.

We are thrilled to lead you through the essential work that the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) works on. From natural disasters to addressing maritime security, we are excited to see how the committee progresses as you make strategic decisions both independently and as a team with your fellow delegates. We aim to make CELAC at MUNUC exciting, engaging, and inclusive. You'll learn about critical issues with real-world impacts while having fun. Our topics include the resistance and relief to natural disasters and maritime security, both of which are important issues that must be addressed for the well-being of those in the region. If you have any questions about MUNUC, the committee, or anything else, please don't hesitate to reach out. We can't wait to see you all at the conference!

Your Chair,

Christopher Rios

rios2@uchicago.edu

Dear delegates,

Welcome to MUNUC 38 and the beautiful, windy city of Chicago! My name is Isaac Yoo, and I'm honored to serve as one of your co-chairs for the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC). This committee presents an incredible opportunity to explore the challenges and strengths of regional cooperation in a part of the world that is as diverse as it is interconnected.

A little about me: I'm a fourth-year student at the University of Chicago majoring in history and economics, and this is my fourth and final year with MUNUC. Unlike you all, I actually had no prior MUN experience before joining MUNUC my first year as an Assistant Chair for EPCOT and chairing UNHCR my second year, and WMO last year—experiences that I enjoyed a whole lot more than I anticipated. While I've had the privilege of chairing and assistant chairing a range of committees like UNHCR and WMO, this one holds a special place in my heart. As my final MUNUC conference, I'm especially excited to close this chapter with a committee that reflects everything I've come to love about Model UN: inclusive collaboration, bold ideas, and a devout commitment to thoughtful diplomacy. I can't wait to see what you all bring to the table!

As part of CELAC, we'll tackle one of two urgent and interconnected topics: resistance and relief to natural disasters, and maritime security and anti-trafficking cooperation. The first issue will have you consider how to facilitate disaster preparation, arrange relief operations, and strengthen long-term resilience to climate change in the presence of deep inequalities of economic capacity and technological infrastructure. The second will have you balance national sovereignty and greater regional security as you figure out how to confront illegal maritime

activity like drug trafficking, illegal fishing, and smuggling, all without compromising the rights and freedoms of all affected communities.

Both topics touch on broader themes like climate change, economic inequality, regional identity, and the role of CELAC in promoting independent, cooperative solutions free from external interference. We hope and expect that you all approach these debates with both ambition and nuance, developing policies that are practical, ethical, and responsive to the realities of the region.

My excitement for this committee cannot be overstated, and I look forward to meeting and getting to know each and every one of you throughout conference weekend. Feel free to reach out with any questions or concerns!

Best of luck,

Isaac Yoo

isaacyoo@uchicago.edu

History of the Committee

As one of the most influential regional organizations in the Western Hemisphere, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) represents a major effort towards political unity, economic cooperation, and regional autonomy. CELAC was formed in 2011 as a continuation of the 1986 Rio Group, a diplomatic initiative aimed at combatting regional and domestic conflicts in Central America, and the 2008 Latin American and Caribbean Summit on Integration and Development (CALC), a regional effort to support sustainable development and human rights across Latin American nations.[1,2] A key principle of both of these precursor organizations was the explicit and intentional exclusion of the United States and Canada, which led to an expressed desire and need for a larger, international body with greater enforcement powers and diplomatic influence amongst regional powers—sentiments that established the core foundation of CELAC. The organization opted to have an organizational structure with a set of presidencies that rotates annually, representative summits of member heads of states, and a unique organ known as the "Troika," which consists of the current president, their direct predecessor, and future successor, along with the current president of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM).[3,4]

[1] "Permanent Mechanism for Consultation and Political Coordination | UIA Yearbook Profile | Union of International Associations." n.d. https://uia.org/s/or/en/1100002961.
[2] Altmann, Josette, and Francisco Rojas Aravena. 2012. *América Latina*. https://books.google.com/books?id=SUB7BGN3ry4C.
[3] Bernal-Meza, Raúl. 2013. *Modelos O Esquemas De Integración Y Cooperación En Curso En América Latina (UNASUR, Alianza Del Pacífico, ALBA, CELAC): Una Mirada Panorámica*. https://biblioteca.clacso.edu.ar/Alemania/iai/20161117032353/pdf_1393.pdf.
[4] "CARICOM – Caribbean Community." 2025. August 5, 2025. https://caricom.org/.

The organization's early efforts were very ambitious, like with the establishment of formal relations with the European Union prior to the 2013 Santiago Summit, declaring Latin America and the Caribbean as a "Peace Zone," and condemning external foreign intervention at the landmark 2014 Havana Summit.[5,6] Yet, despite this promising start, CELAC was soon confronted by various conflicts amongst its member states; the most notable of these was Brazil's formal withdrawal from the organization in early 2020, which significantly weakened the regional body.[7]

Nevertheless, CELAC's importance increased significantly due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a medical emergency that critically hampered the region. In response, the organization launched multiple initiatives to provide consolidated medical support across the region, consisting of funding, vaccination supplies, and medical professionals. The largest of these projects was spearheaded by the Mexican government.[8] This effective collaboration helped provide further support for CELAC and their collective efforts, leading to reinvigorated action like the EU-CELAC 2023 Summit in Brussels and Brazil rejoining the body in early 2023.[9,10]

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[5] "Santiago de Chile, 27 January 2013 SANTIAGO DECLARATION." 2013. January 27, 2013. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/pres_13_31.
[6] CELAC. 2014. "Havana Declaration." https://scm.oas.org/pdfs/2014/CP32211DE.pdf.
[7] Feliciano, Dorah. 2020. "Brazil Terminates Participation in CELAC Regional Alliance - the Rio Times." The Rio Times. January 25, 2020. https://www.riotimesonline.com/brazil-news/rio-politics/brazil-terminates-cooperation-in-celac-regional-alliance.
[8] De Relaciones Exteriores, Secretaría. n.d. "CELAC Promotes Solidarity and Equitable Access to Vaccines and Supplies to Combat Covid-19." gob.mx. https://www.gob.mx/sre/prensa/celac-promotes-solidarity-and-equitable-access-to-vaccines-and-supplies-to-combat-covid-19?tab=.
[9] "EU-CELAC Summit, 17-18 July 2023." 2023. July 18, 2023. https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/international-summit/2023/07/17-18.
[10] *Ministério Das Relações Exteriores*. 2023. "Return of Brazil to CELAC," March 8, 2023. https://www.gov.br/mre/en/contact-us/press-area/press-releases/return-of-brazil-to-celac.

Now, CELAC remains integral to the future development of Latin America and the Caribbean as the region rapidly changes, which was on full display at recent events like the fourth CELAC-EU Summit hosted in Colombia in November 2025.[11]

[11] "IV CELAC-EU Summit 2025." 2025. EU-LAC Foundation. September 1, 2025. https://eulacfoundation.org/en/iv-celac-eu-summit-2025.

Topic A: Resistance and Relief to Natural Disasters

Statement of the Problem

From Hazards to Disasters

Latin America and the Caribbean are the second most disaster-prone region in the world, experiencing hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, droughts, and other **natural hazards**. Although CELAC has launched initiatives to address climate change, extreme weather events have still intensified across the region. They are now more frequent, more destructive, and increasingly difficult to manage. In many countries, limited infrastructure, poor preparation, and inadequate emergency systems have allowed these weather events to escalate into full-scale **natural disasters**. Between 2002 and 2022, over 190 million people in the region were affected by natural disasters, which also resulted in billions of dollars in economic damage.[12]

Natural disasters in the region are not solely the result of nature, but also of inadequate preparation to manage natural hazards. As the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) explains, not all natural hazards result in disasters: a hazard becomes a disaster when it impacts a community that is insufficiently protected and whose population is vulnerable due to poverty, exclusion, or social disadvantage. The UNDRR also states that disasters emerge from the intersection of three key factors: hazard, vulnerability, and exposure.[13] Without proper safety

[12] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2023* (Geneva: UNDRR, 2023), https://www.undrr.org/media/89900/download?startDownload=20250617.
[13] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), "There Are No Natural Disasters," *UNDRR*, accessed June 20, 2025, https://www.undrr.org/our-impact/campaigns/no-natural-disasters.

measures or the economic stability necessary for an effective response, countries are left vulnerable, increasing the likelihood that a natural hazard will escalate into a disaster. While natural hazards may lie beyond direct human control, the factors that contribute to a disaster can be mitigated.

A flood in Guatemala.[14]

Worsening Effects

The Latin American and Caribbean region is experiencing an alarming rise in the intensity and frequency of natural hazards due to climate change. Coastal communities and low-lying island nations in the Caribbean are increasingly vulnerable to tropical cyclones as a

[14] Leonel Mijangos, *Aftermath of the Mud Flow Coming down the Slopes of the Agua Volcano into San Miguel Escobar, Ciudad Vieja, Guatemala. 31 May 2010, Two Days after the Mud Flow Caused by Tropical Storm Agatha*, May 31, 2010, Online image, *Wikimedia Commons*, May 31, 2010, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:San_Miguel_Escobar_Tormenta_Agatha_2010_01.jpg.

result of ocean warming and sea level rise. In areas like Amazonia and the Pantanal, rainfall dropped 30-40% below average, leading to record low water levels in major river systems, including the Negro River in Manaus and the Paraguay River in Asunción. At the other extreme, in Brazil's Rio Grande do Sul, heavy rainfall in 2024 resulted in intense floods, causing more than 180 fatalities and an estimated 8.5 billion reais in agricultural losses. While early warnings and evacuations limited further casualties, the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said that the disaster highlights the urgent need for improved understanding of disaster risks by authorities and the general public.[15] In light of this worsening climate reality, adequate resilience to natural disasters is imperative.

Destruction in Haiti after Hurricane Matthew.[16]

[15] World Meteorological Organization, "Extreme Weather and Climate Impacts Bite Latin America and Caribbean," press release, March 28, 2025, accessed June 20, 2025, World Meteorological Organization, https://wmo.int/news/media-centre/extreme-weather-and-climate-impacts-bite-latin-america-and-caribbean.
[16] CDC Global, *Destruction in Haiti after Hurricane Matthew*, October 13, 2016, Online image, *Wikimedia Commons*, October 13, 2016, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Destruction_in_Haiti_after_Hurricane_Matthew_%2831712004491%29.jpg.

As natural hazards intensify, **disaster resilience** in the region is limited due to economic disparities and poor infrastructure. In particular, Haiti is vulnerable to the region's most frequent and intense hazards—storms, floods, and droughts.[17] Nearly 60% of Haitians live in poverty, lacking access to essential services such as clean water, adequate food, sanitation, and electricity.[18,19] This insecurity severely limits the country's capacity to prepare for or recover from disasters. When everyday survival is not assured, then the resources and infrastructure needed for disaster preparedness simply do not exist, leaving communities exposed and unsupported when crises strike.

Obstacles to Preparation and Relief

A major challenge to effective relief and resilience in Latin America and the Caribbean is the underinvestment in disaster prevention and risk reduction. As the UNDRR highlights, the region continues to prioritize emergency response over proactive measures, leaving countries increasingly vulnerable to hurricanes, floods, droughts, and earthquakes. This lack of investment undermines long-term resilience by failing to strengthen infrastructure or enhance early warning systems. Without sufficient funding for prevention, countries remain trapped in a cycle of disaster and recovery, jeopardizing development and regional stability. Additionally, low-income countries have disproportionately low insurance coverage, with only about 3% of disaster losses

[17] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), *Global Assessment Report on Disaster Risk Reduction 2023* (Geneva: UNDRR, 2023), https://www.undrr.org/media/89900/download?startDownload=20250617.
[18] Human Rights Watch, *World Report 2025: Haiti*, accessed June 20, 2025, Human Rights Watch, https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2025/country-chapters/haiti.
[19] UNICEF, *Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) Appeal: Haiti, 2023* (New York: UNICEF, 2023), accessed June 20, 2025, https://www.unicef.org/media/132191/file/2023-HAC-Haiti.pdfunicef.org+5unicef.org+5unicef.org+5.

insured compared to nearly 50% in high-income countries, making them far more susceptible to economic setbacks after disasters.[20]

The UN Secretary-General meets the Brazilian president at a CELAC summit.[21]

At the CELAC summit in 2024, the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, emphasized to CELAC members that the extreme weather events driven by climate change destabilize developing member countries socially and economically, threatening their existence.[22]

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[20] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, "RAR24: Lack of Investment in Disaster Prevention Threatens Latin America and the Caribbean's Future," *UNDRR*, February 11, 2025, https://www.undrr.org/news/rar24-lack-investment-disaster-prevention-threatens-latin-america-and-caribbeans-future

[21] Ricardo Stuckert, *Reunião Com O Secretário-Geral Das Nações Unidas*, António Guterres, March 1, 2024, Online image, *Flickr*, March 1, 2024, https://www.flickr.com/photos/palaciodoplanalto/53562473095/.

[22] United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, "Remarks at the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) Summit," Kingstown, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, March 1, 2024, United Nations Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean (press release), accessed June 20, 2025, https://easterncaribbean.un.org/en/262066-un-secretary-generals-remarks-community-latin-american-and-caribbean-states-celac-summit-all instagram.com+8easterncaribbean.un.org+8easterncaribbean.un.org+8.

Natural disasters damage the physical environment and public health, and they leave a heavy cost for relief which often far exceeds what affected countries can provide. The longer relief is delayed, the more devastating the consequences. Before funding arrives, residents bear the burden of disasters' impact, often resulting in deepened poverty, worsening health conditions, and psychological trauma from displacement and distress.[23] Timely access to funding and resources is critical, yet support is frequently delayed or insufficient. CELAC must address this systemic issue to ensure its member states have both resilience and relief.

[23] The Borgen Project, "How Natural Disasters Are Worsening Poverty in Haiti," accessed June 20, 2025, The Borgen Project, https://borgenproject.org/natural-disasters-are-worsening-poverty-in-haiti.

History of the Problem

Natural disasters have affected Central and South America for thousands of years, as the ancient Mayans also had to deal with these events. Climate change had altered the weather patterns at the time, causing intense droughts, which may have been a factor in the Mayan society's collapse.[24] At the time, they had no easy access to today's resources and the technology needed to stay resilient during a natural hazard.

The ancient civilizations' method of resilience was predicting and monitoring natural disasters through observation of animal behavior, weather changes, and lunar patterns. These methods were accessible to everyone, as they required only keen observation and no need for technology. This widespread accessibility reflects a time when everyone faced the same challenges posed by natural disasters. There was no inequality in access to methods for resilience to natural disasters like there is today.

As technology has advanced, so has natural disaster resilience; today, societies no longer collapse from natural disasters. Significant progress has been made in predicting and monitoring natural disasters. Advances in meteorology, seismology, volcanology, and hydrology, along with the development of new technologies and communication methods, laid the foundation for modern disaster prediction and management systems. These innovations enhanced the ability to forecast natural events, communicate warnings, and implement measures to mitigate the impact of natural disasters, ultimately saving lives and reducing economic losses.

The benefits of technological advancements in disaster resilience are weaker in poorer countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, where limited resources prevent improvements to

[24] L. C. Peterson and G. H. Haug, "Climate and the Collapse of Maya Civilization," *American Scientist* 93, no. 4 (2005): 322–29, https://www.americanscientist.org/article/climate-and-the-collapse-of-maya-civilization.

systems and infrastructure. When a country struggles to provide its citizens with basic necessities such as clean water, healthcare, and stable housing, investing in disaster preparedness and mitigation becomes even more difficult. As a result, there is a clear inequality in resilience and relief to natural disasters today. Preparing for natural hazards is expensive, and so is recovering from their impacts. This financial burden is compounded by the frequency of natural hazards in the region, which demands not only an urgent response to disasters as they occur but also continuous investment in preparation for the next inevitable event. The cycle of frequent hazards combined with limited resources leaves many communities in the Latin American and Caribbean region trapped in a state of vulnerability.

The Caribbean

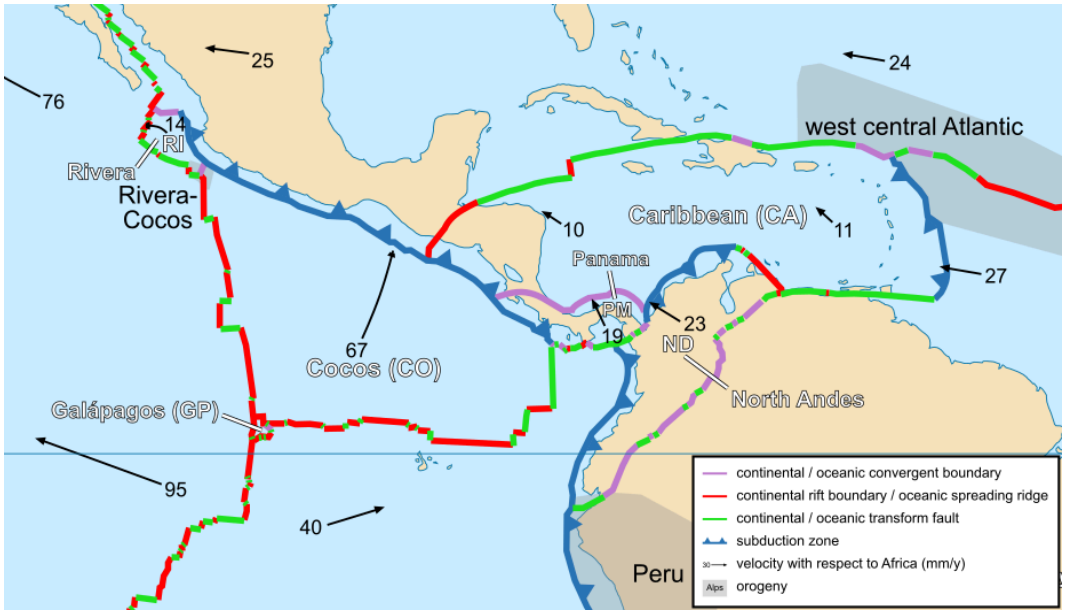

Plate tectonics in the Caribbean.[25]

[25] Sting and Woudloper, *Caribbean Plate Tectonics*, June 2007, Online image, *Wikimedia Commons*, June 2007, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Caribbean_plate_tectonics-en.png.

The location of the Caribbean has always made it prone to natural hazards. Due to being on the edge of the Atlantic Basin, Caribbean countries experience tropical cyclones regularly from June through November, which results in frequent mudslides and floods.[26] Being located at the point where multiple tectonic plates meet also makes the region highly susceptible to earthquakes, as 75 percent of the world's earthquakes occur at convergent plate boundaries.[27]

Haiti is one of the Caribbean countries most impacted by natural disasters due to its geographic location and vulnerability. While the region regularly experiences tropical cyclones, floods, and earthquakes, Haiti's 2010 earthquake stands out for its devastating impact as one of the worst natural disasters in the region. On January 12, 2010, a magnitude 7.0 earthquake struck near Port-au-Prince, Haiti's capital, destroying over 250,000 homes and 30,000 commercial buildings, and leaving more than a million people without shelter. Entire neighborhoods were reduced to rubble, and critical infrastructure—including hospitals, schools, and government offices—collapsed, making it extremely difficult to coordinate relief efforts. The earthquake killed an estimated 200,000 to 300,000 people and injured hundreds of thousands more, overwhelming the country's limited healthcare system and emergency services.[28]

The disaster's impacts did not end with the initial destruction. In the following weeks, survivors faced further challenges as the rainy season approached, threatening to flood makeshift camps and spread disease.[29] Many people were forced to live in temporary shelters with poor sanitation, increasing the risk of cholera outbreaks and other illnesses. Access to food, clean

[26] Tania López-Marrero et al., *Hazards and Disasters in the Insular Caribbean: A Systematic Literature Review* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies, Mona, Caribbean Disaster Information Network, 2013), https://www.mona.uwi.edu/cardin/sites/default/files/cardin/hazards_and_disasters_in_the_insular_caribbean.pdf.
[27] University of the West Indies Seismic Research Centre (UWI SRC), *Eastern Caribbean Earthquakes* (St. Augustine: UWI SRC, accessed July 2025), https://uwiseismic.com/earthquakes/eastern-caribbean-earthquakes.
[28] "2010 Haiti Earthquake," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, last updated [April 2025], accessed July 19, 2025, https://www.britannica.com/event/2010-Haiti-earthquake.
[29] "Quake-torn Haiti hit by floods," *The Guardian*, by Rory Carroll, March 1, 2010, accessed July 19, 2025, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/mar/01/quake-haiti-floods.

water, and medical care became limited, deepening the crisis for those who had already lost their livelihoods. This earthquake revealed how deeply poverty, inadequate infrastructure, and lack of preparedness can worsen the consequences of natural disasters. Unlike ancient societies, which relied on community-based observation for resilience, Haiti's vulnerability in 2010 reflected systemic inequalities that left its population with few resources to recover and rebuild. The country's experience demonstrates that while natural hazards are unavoidable, their impacts are shaped by the social and economic conditions of the communities they strike.

Mexico

Mexico frequently experiences devastation from hurricanes and floods due to its proximity to large bodies of water, which makes these natural hazards both frequent and severe.[30] Between 2019 and 2021, the country faced powerful storms each year that brought destructive winds, heavy rainfall, and widespread flooding. In 2019, Hurricane Lorena combined with Tropical Storm Mario to cause severe mudslides and floods, damaging crops and resulting in economic losses of over $50 million. In 2020, Hurricane Genevieve, although it did not make landfall, produced strong winds and heavy rain that killed six people. The following year, Mexico was struck by both Hurricane Pamela and Hurricane Grace, storms that caused power outages, flooding, and fatalities across multiple regions.[31] These recurring disasters have prompted the Mexican government to develop programs aimed at strengthening the country's resilience to natural hazards.

[30] United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs (UNOOSA), *The Force of Nature in Mexico, as seen from space*(Vienna: UNOOSA, October 5–9, 2015), https://www.unoosa.org/oosa/en/informationfor/articles/the-force-of-nature-in-mexico--as-seen-from-space.html.
[31] Muskan Shah, "Vulnerability and Resilience: Disaster Profile of Mexico 2022," *Medium*, February 11, 2024, accessed July 19, 2025, https://medium.com/@muskan.shah/vulnerability-and-resilience-disaster-profile-of-mexico-2022-edffa4d413d7.

In addition to hurricanes and floods, Mexico also faces frequent earthquakes due to its location along the Pacific Ring of Fire. The 1985 Mexico City earthquake was a turning point in the nation's disaster preparedness. The earthquake caused massive destruction and led to the deaths of over 10,000 people, exposing weaknesses in infrastructure and emergency response.[32] In its aftermath, the government prioritized investments in earthquake-resistant infrastructure and disaster management systems to better protect communities from future seismic events.

Central America

Central America is heavily affected by storms, hurricanes, mudslides, and floods due to its geographic location, which makes these natural hazards a persistent threat. In 2020, the region was struck by two powerful hurricanes—Eta and Iota—that demonstrated the devastating impact of natural disasters on the lives of residents, particularly when relief is limited. According to a report by the International Organization for Migration, many migrants at the United States border shared that they had been forced to leave their homes in Central America after these hurricanes.[33] Interviewees described how they already owned very little before the storms, and after the disasters, they were left with nothing. For many, staying was no longer an option, as rebuilding seemed futile when future disasters threatened to take everything away again. Their stories reflect the broader reality for residents across Central America, where low national gross domestic products and limited resources make it difficult to provide adequate relief and recovery efforts, leaving communities vulnerable and without a path to long-term resilience.

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[32] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR), *Mexico: Lessons from 1985 Earthquake* (Geneva: UNDRR, March 13, 2016), accessed July 19, 2025, https://www.undrr.org/news/mexico-lessons-1985-earthquake.
[33] International Organization for Migration (IOM), *"Central America: Disasters and Climate Change Are Defining Migration Trends"* (Geneva: IOM, accessed July 19, 2025), https://environmentalmigration.iom.int/blogs/central-america-disasters-and-climate-change-are-defining-migration-trends.

South America

South America is a vast region that experiences a wide range of natural hazards due to its diverse geography and climate. Countries along the Pacific coast, such as Chile and Peru, are particularly vulnerable to earthquakes because they are located on the boundary of the South American and Nazca tectonic plates. Chile, for example, experienced a powerful 8.8 magnitude earthquake in 2010 near Concepción, which killed over 500 people and displaced nearly 2 million residents. This earthquake also triggered a tsunami that affected coastal communities, highlighting the multiple risks faced by countries in tectonic plate zones.[34]

In contrast, northern South America and Brazil often contend with floods and droughts. The Amazon basin experiences seasonal flooding that can displace communities and disrupt transportation and food systems. However, in recent years, droughts have also become more common due to climate change, affecting water availability and threatening agriculture and food security in the region.[35] These varied natural hazards demonstrate how South America's size and geographic diversity expose its countries to multiple risks. While some areas face the destructive force of earthquakes, others struggle with the economic and social impacts of water-related disasters, leaving millions vulnerable and in need of stronger resilience and preparedness systems.

[34] "Chile Earthquake of 2010," *Encyclopædia Britannica*, accessed July 19, 2025, https://www.britannica.com/event/Chile-earthquake-of-2010.
[35] Abdulaziz I. Almulhim et al., "Climate-Induced Migration in the Global South: An In Depth Analysis," *npj Climate Action*3, no. 1 (June 14, 2024): Article 47, https://doi.org/10.1038/s44168-024-00133-1.

Past Actions

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (2015–2030)

The **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction** was established in 2015 to create an action-oriented and forward-looking global framework for reducing disaster risks.[36] It is an improvement on and continuation of the former Hyogo Framework for Action, which pushed to substantially reduce disaster losses by 2015, to build resilience and reduce losses.[37] The Sendai Framework incorporates experiences from regional and national disaster risk strategies, aiming to strengthen cooperation among countries. Additionally, it sets up a system for ongoing monitoring and periodic review to ensure the framework's goals are implemented effectively over time. This framework is intended to dramatically reduce losses and build resilience for member nations by 2030.

Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA)

The Caribbean islands all face the same challenge of natural disasters, so they established a regional intergovernmental agency in 1991.[38] The agency was first called the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA), and it bore the responsibility of coordinating emergency response and relief for member states. However, it was rebranded in 2009 as the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA) in order to align its principles

[36] United Nations. 2015. "Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015 - 2030." https://www.undrr.org/media/16176/download?startDownload=20250808.
[37] PreventionWeb. 2014. "Hyogo Framework for Action." 2014. https://www.preventionweb.net/sendai-framework/Hyogo-Framework-for-Action.
[38] Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), *About CDEMA* (Bridgetown: CDEMA, 2024), https://www.cdema.org/index.php/about.

around the approach of **Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM)**.[39] This approach consists of six steps: prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and rehabilitation.[40] CDEMA's rebrand and emphasis on CDM came from an understanding that natural disasters damages do not only need to be mitigated, but should also be prevented. Previously, CDERA was focused on the moments during and after a disaster, while CDEMA now directs some attention to the time before a natural disaster. Governments in the region now focus on collaborating to invest in technology and initiatives that will reduce risks and loss, aligning their missions with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

Humanitarian mission by CDEMA and other organizations to Dominica after Hurricane Maria in 2017.[41]

[39] Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), *The Regional Response Mechanism (RRM) Booklet*(Bridgetown: CDEMA, August 2016), ISBN 978-976-8243-10-2, https://www.cdema.org/RRM_Booklet_Final_PDF_version.pdf

[40] Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), *What is Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM)* (Bridgetown: CDEMA, 2009), https://www.cdema.org/what_is_CDM.pdf

[41] Russell Watkins, *Humanitarian Experts from the Department for International Development, CDEMA and the United Nations Receive a Briefing ahead of a Humanitarian Needs Assessment Mission to Dominica*, September 20, 2017, Online image, *Wikimedia Commons*, September 20, 2017,

Mexico's National Disaster Fund: Fideicomiso Fondo de Desastres Naturales (FONDEN)

In Latin America and the Caribbean, national funds for **disaster relief** and resilience are often underfunded or non-existent, leaving many countries reliant on external aid and emergency loans. In an attempt to create a reliable national fund for disasters, Mexico created a formal disaster relief fund in 1999 known as the Fideicomiso Fondo de Desastres Naturales (FONDEN), to institutionalize disaster financing. FONDEN was designed to allocate a portion of the national budget specifically for disaster response, reconstruction, and risk reduction, allowing Mexico to arrange funding before disasters occurred. This proactive approach enabled the Mexican government to respond more quickly and efficiently to hurricanes, earthquakes, floods, and other natural hazards without resorting to ad hoc emergency spending.[42]

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Humanitarian_experts_from_the_Department_for_International_Development,_CDEMA_and_the_United_Nations_receive_a_briefing_ahead_of_a_humanitarian_needs_assessment_mission_to_Dominica._%2837218118401%29.jpg.

[42] "Wilson Center, *Adiós to FONDEN: Mexico's Approach to Natural Disaster Financing, Risk Reduction, and Reconstruction* (Washington, D.C.: Wilson Center, 2023), https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/adios-fonden-mexicos-approach-natural-disaster-financing-risk-reduction-and-reconstruction.

Aftermath of the destructive Hurricane Otis in Acapulco, Mexico.[43]

FONDEN was widely recognized as a model for disaster risk financing in the region, combining domestic funding with innovative financial instruments such as catastrophe bonds to transfer some of the disaster risk to international markets.[44] However, despite its successes, FONDEN was dismantled in 2020 under the current administration, which cited corruption concerns and a shift toward centralized federal management of resources.[45] FONDEN was important because it provided an effective way to budget funds for disaster. In Latin America and the Caribbean region, most resources are directed towards response and reconstruction, with

[43] ProtoplasmaKid, *Impacto Del Huracán Otis En México - Boulevard de Las Naciones*, November 4, 2023, Online image, *Wikimedia Commons*, November 4, 2023, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Impacto_del_hurac%C3%A1n_Otis_en_M%C3%A9xico_-_Boulevard_de_las_Naciones_-_2.jpg.
[44] World Bank. 2012. "Mexico's Natural Disaster Fund – A Review." https://www.gfdrr.org/sites/default/files/publication/FONDEN_paper_M4.pdf.
[45] Staff, Mnd. 2020. "Disaster Relief Fund Was 'Petty Cash Box' for Corrupt Officials: AMLO." Mexico News Daily. October 7, 2020. https://mexiconewsdaily.com/news/disaster-relief-fund-was-petty-cash-box-for-corrupt-officials-amlo.

around six percent on disaster risk reduction.[46] Without proper financing in the budget, the countries in the region will continue to overspend in one area and overlook others.

[46] UNDRR. 2025. "RAR24: Lack of investment in disaster prevention threatens Latin America and the Caribbean's future." February 11, 2025. https://www.undrr.org/news/rar24-lack-investment-disaster-prevention-threatens-latin-america-and-caribbeans-future.

Possible Solutions

Interregional Collaboration

Strengthening interregional collaboration is critical to improving disaster resilience across Latin America and the Caribbean. CELAC member states should work together to share resources, coordinate emergency responses, and harmonize disaster risk reduction policies. A regional disaster task force could facilitate joint preparedness exercises, manage shared data platforms for hazard monitoring, and develop mutual aid agreements for rapid response. By collaborating, member states can pool expertise and reduce costs, especially for small island nations and low-income countries with limited capacity.

Improve Access to International Climate and Disaster Funds

Many CELAC nations face significant hurdles in accessing global climate finance, such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and the Loss and Damage Fund. These include complex application processes, limited technical expertise, and long bureaucratic delays, which often bar smaller or lower-income countries from receiving timely support.[47] To overcome these barriers, CELAC should launch a regional technical assistance hub that helps member states prepare joint funding proposals, ensures compliance with legal and fiduciary standards, and prioritizes the needs of marginalized and small island communities. A regional climate finance strategy can also push for simplified application processes, guarantee direct funding to vulnerable populations, and lobby collectively for faster and more equitable disbursement. Strengthening

[47] The Energy and Resources Institute. n.d. "Operationalization of the Loss and Damage Fund: Challenges and Opportunities." https://www.teriin.org/sites/default/files/2023-11/Loss%20and%20Damage%20Discussion%20Paper%20-%20updated.pdf.

access to these funds not only accelerates disaster response but also advances climate justice, acknowledging the disproportionate burden on Global South nations.

Invest in Climate-Resilient Infrastructure

Wetlands in Massachusetts.[48]

Building climate-resilient infrastructure is essential to reduce the risk of natural hazards escalating into full-scale disasters. CELAC member states should prioritize the development of infrastructure that can withstand hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and droughts—such as reinforced hospitals, resilient housing, elevated roads, and improved water management systems. Investments should also include nature-based solutions, like restoring wetlands and mangroves to act as natural flood barriers, and reforestation projects to reduce landslide risks.[49] A regional

[48] Kelly Fike and United States Fish and Wildlife Service Northeast Region, *Coastal Wetlands at Parker River National Wildlife Refuge in Newburyport, MA*, October 9, 2012, Online image, *Flickr*, October 9, 2012, https://www.flickr.com/photos/usfwsnortheast/8070749192.
[49] World Bank. 2023. "Cities Look to Nature for Climate Solutions." March 16, 2023. https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2022/12/12/cities-look-to-nature-for-climate-solutions.

resilient infrastructure initiative could help coordinate funding applications, share technical expertise, and promote best practices across countries. By embedding disaster risk reduction into infrastructure planning, CELAC nations can break the cycle of costly reconstruction after each disaster, promote sustainable development, and protect vulnerable communities from the worst impacts of climate change.

Bloc Positions

Countries with High Vulnerability and Inefficient Response

This bloc includes countries such as Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Guatemala, which face some of the most severe impacts of natural hazards in the region due to their geographical location. Additionally, the impacts are worsened by high poverty levels, limited infrastructure, and fragile institutions. These countries often rely on international aid for both immediate relief and long-term recovery.[50] Expansion of these aid programs would be an important demand from this bloc, as it would create opportunities to recover and improve infrastructure to withstand natural hazards. Along with infrastructure improvement comes sanitation assurance to also improve resilience and reduce the need for relief in some areas. As 72 million people in Latin America and the Caribbean lack basic sanitation services, this poses the risk for a second crisis on top of the initial natural disaster.[51] These countries need to focus on a solution that would improve the systems, institutions, and funding issues that contribute to the bottleneck in their resilience and response.

[50] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction. 2024. "Regional Assessment Report on Disaster Risk in Latin America and the Caribbean." https://www.undrr.org/media/105782/download?startDownload=20250808.
[51] UNICEF. 2022. "PROGRESS ON DRINKING WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE IN LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN." https://washdata.org/sites/default/files/2022-11/jmp-2022-regional-snapshot-LAC.pdf.

Destruction caused by floods in Venezuela.[52]

Countries with Infrastructure but Uneven Resilience

Countries like Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina have stronger economies and relatively advanced disaster response systems. This is evident with Mexico's Fund for Natural Disasters where there was funding available within the government's budget for relief and resilience. Additionally, Brazil's National Civil Protection System showcases how these countries with stronger institutions are able to generate a strong framework for natural disaster response.[53] There are strengths among these countries to invest in the systems and programs needed to stay resilient during natural disasters. However, a problem is that all of these programs, along with funding in general, are targeted at major cities, leaving rural communities vulnerable to natural

[52] Voz de América, *Tragedia de Las Tejerías*, October 9, 2022, Online image, *Wikimedia Commons*, October 9, 2022, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Tragedia_de_Las_Tejer%C3%ADas.png.
[53] Schadeck, Rafael. n.d. "The Brazilian National System of Civil Protection and Disaster Response: From Planning to Implementation of a National Strategy." https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/331a3e47f54e4971a1e959b7cbb9ee4d-0070012022/original/B-Brazil-Study-Case-v4.pdf.

disasters.[54] These countries need to focus on generating a sustainable fund for resilience and relief and creating an equitable distribution plan of said funds.

Caribbean Islands and Coastal States with Repeated Exposure to Hurricanes

The Caribbean islands, Mexico, Central America, Venezuela, and Colombia are all geographically located in hurricane-prone areas.[55] This exposure requires a strong system that can provide plans for response and preparedness as the hurricanes also contribute to the large amount of flooding that occurs. Since all of these countries in different sub-regions experience similar natural disasters, steps must be taken to engage inter-regional collaboration to find the most effective measures to prepare for disasters and respond afterward. The Caribbean islands have already taken action with their inter-regional program, the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), that provides inter-regional support with funds for response strategies and resilience measures. Collaboration between countries with the same challenge could produce an optimal solution as it draws together multiple countries' different backgrounds and experiences.

[54] Trust. 2017. "Latin America Needs to Climate Proof Infrastructure – World Bank." April 12, 2017. https://floodlist.com/america/latin-america-needs-climate-proof-infrastructure-world-bank.
[55] NOAA. n.d. "Hurricane Climatology." https://www.weather.gov/media/tbw/1921/Climatology.pdf.

Graphic showing hurricane risk across the region.[56]

[56] Fleck, Anna. 2022. "The Hurricane Risk in Latin America and the Caribbean." *Statista Daily Data*, September 22, 2022. https://www.statista.com/chart/28317/hurrican-risk-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean.

Glossary

Disaster resilience - The ability of communities and systems to anticipate, prepare for, respond to, and recover from the impacts of natural hazards without long-term damage to well-being and development.

Disaster relief - Emergency aid—including food, shelter, medical care, and logistical support—that is immediately available following a natural disaster to reduce human suffering and stabilize affected communities.

Natural Hazard - A naturally occurring event, such as a hurricane and earthquake, that has the potential to cause damage to life, property, and the environment.

Natural Disaster - A natural hazard that severely affects communities due to their vulnerability, causing injury, loss of life, economic damage, or human displacement.

Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM) - An all-encompassing approach to disaster risk management that integrates prevention, mitigation, preparedness, response, recovery, and rehabilitation across all sectors of society.[57]

Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction - A global agreement adopted by the United Nations in 2015 that outlines strategies for reducing disaster risks and losses through improved planning, risk awareness, and resilience building.[58]

[57] Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency, "What Is Comprehensive Disaster Management (CDM)," *CDEMA*, accessed July 2025, https://www.cdema.org/what_is_CDM.pdf.
[58] United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, "What Is the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction?," UNDRR, accessed July 2025, https://www.undrr.org/implementing-sendai-framework/what-sendai-framework.

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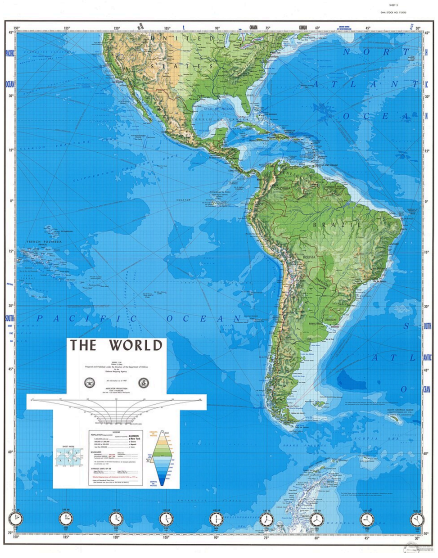
Topic B: Maritime Security and Anti-Trafficking Cooperation

Statement of the Problem

As Latin America borders three main bodies of water (the Caribbean Sea, the Atlantic Ocean, and the Pacific Ocean), key maritime corridors like the Panama Canal and Drake Passage, and numerous overlapping **exclusive economic zones (EEZs)**, **maritime security** is paramount for CELAC. The region is intrinsically linked to the sea, and these bodies of water have become a key arena for matters of national defense, environmental conservation, and economic activity. Tourism, human trafficking, unregulated illegal fishing, organized drug smuggling, offshore oil drilling, and several other issues have made Latin American waters among the most contested and important in the entire world.



Map of Latin America, including major maritime bodies.[59]

[59] United States Defense Mapping Agency, *The World - South America*, 1987, Online image, *Wikimedia Commons*, 1987, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:The_World_-_South_America.jpg.

Maritime Criminal Activity

Control over the region's maritime domain is imperative for CELAC members. About 90% of trade in Central America, for instance, is conducted via ocean freight and enabled by key maritime infrastructure like ports and canals.[60,61,62] Many of these routes operate under threat of illicit activities. Additionally, Latin America is one of the fastest-growing seafood consumption markets in the world, fueling a burgeoning **illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU)** fishing industry that has continually threatened local fisheries and environments.[63,64] Some sources estimate that Latin America accounts for as much as 20% of the 15 to 26 billion dollar IUU fishing market.[65] All the while, maritime crime continues to surge in the form of drug smuggling, piracy, and arms trafficking, all of which threaten regional and national security.[66] Elaborate maritime trafficking networks exploit ungoverned or poorly monitored waters to move vast quantities of cocaine and weapons through Central America and the Caribbean.[67]

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[60] Colantuoni, Steve, and Steve Colantuoni. 2021. "Ocean Freight in Central America." *The Central American Group* (blog). January 8, 2021. https://www.thecentralamericangroup.com/ocean-freight-in-central-america.
[61] "Exploring Port Security Threats in South and Latin America - Intelligence Fusion." 2023. Intelligence Fusion. September 7, 2023. https://www.intelligencefusion.co.uk/insights/resources/article/exploring-port-security-threats-in-south-and-latin-america.
[62] InSight Crime. 2024. "Panama Profile." InSight Crime. March 26, 2024. https://insightcrime.org/panama-organized-crime-news/panama.
[63] "SEAFOOD EXPO EURASIA." n.d. https://seafoodexpoeurasia.com/en/news/latin_america-_the_fast-growing_seafood_market_offers_promising_perspectives-_how_to_benefit_from_em.
[64] American University Center for Latin American and Latino Studies. 2022. "Adverse Consequences of IUU Fishing." American University. https://www.american.edu/centers/latin-american-latino-studies/upload/adverse-consequences-of-iuu-fishing.pdf.
[65] Alessandro Ford. 2021. "GameChangers 2021: How IUU Fishing Plundered Latin America's Oceans." InSight Crime. December 23, 2021. https://insightcrime.org/news/gamechangers-2021-iuu-fishing-plundered-latin-americas-oceans.
[66] "Spotlight Reports | Neptune P2P Group." 2022. Neptune P2P Group. April 11, 2022. https://neptunep2pgroup.com/intelligence-reports/south-america-maritime-crime.
[67] UNODC. 2012. "Transnational Organized Crime in Central America and the Caribbean." https://www.unodc.org/documents/data-and-analysis/Studies/TOC_Central_America_and_the_Caribbean_english.pdf.

United States Coast Guard conducting patrols for IUU fishing.[68]

There have been multinational partnerships to combat these maritime security issues, such as bilateral naval patrols, **joint task forces**, and participation in international forums like CELAC.[69,70] However, disparities in economic power, military capabilities, and legal coordination have hampered these efforts. Many smaller island nations, especially those in the Caribbean, lack the military might and economic leverage to adequately patrol and surveil their EEZs for illicit activity.[71] Furthermore, many of these activities have recently grown so large in

[68] Shannon Kearney and United States Coast Guard, *Coast Guard Cutter Stone Conducts Illegal, Unreported, Unregulated Fishing Patrols*, January 8, 2022, Online image, *Flickr*, January 8, 2022, https://www.flickr.com/photos/coastguardnews/51807826446.
[69] U.S. Southern Command. n.d. "USS Normandy and GDFS Shahoud Conduct Maritime Exercise." https://www.southcom.mil/MEDIA/NEWS-ARTICLES/Article/4141934/uss-normandy-and-gdfs-shahoud-conduct-maritime-exercise.
[70] Fiiapp. 2023. "SEACOP V, Port Cooperation Project Against Maritime Trafficking - FIAP." FIAP. October 5, 2023. https://www.fiap.gob.es/en/proyectos_fiiapp/seacop-v-port-cooperation-project-against-maritime-trafficking.
[71] CNA. 2022. "Assessment of CBSI Partner Nation Capabilities for Maritime Security and Law Enforcement." https://www.cna.org/reports/2022/08/Assessment-of-CBSI-Partner-Nation-Capabilities-for-Maritime-Security-and-Law-Enforcement.pdf.

scale that even large regional powers like Brazil have struggled to handle them as well.[72] Countries with overlapping economic zones also may have inconsistent legal procedure and enforcement policies regarding maritime security. These variations create a fractured regional security network that leads to vulnerability of the region's maritime domain to foreign or domestic exploitation and illegal activity, especially in key corridors like canals and ports.[73]

Climate Considerations

Also amplifying the call for action global warming, which poses existential dangers to maritime stability within Latin America and the Caribbean. Rising sea levels, more frequent storms, and warmer waters not only directly harm coastal towns and infrastructure but also destabilize fish populations, alter migration routes, and increase competition for marine resources.[74] This pressure escalates the risk of maritime clashes and ecological disruption, particularly in exposed environments like coral reefs and mangroves. Without scientifically backed maritime governance, the region may suffer further environmental degradation, economic turmoil, and political disintegration.

[72] Proinde. 2024. "Shipborne drug trafficking in Brazil." https://www.ics-shipping.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/PROINDE-shipborne-drug-trafficking-in-Brazil-Practical-Guidance_.pdf.
[73] OEA and CICAD. 2022. "GROUP OF EXPERTS ON MARITIME NARCOTRAFFICKING." https://www.oas.org/en/sms/cicad/maritime-narcotrafficking/docs/Final%20Report_GoE%20Maritime%20Narcotrafficking_2022-Approved.pdf.
[74] "Climate Change 2022: Impacts, Adaptation and Vulnerability." n.d. IPCC. https://www.ipcc.ch/report/ar6/wg2/.

Aftermath of a tropical storm in the region. These natural disasters will only intensify as global warming continues.[75]

To this end, CELAC will play an important role in the creation of a unified regional maritime security framework. The organization can provide the political platform and regional credibility required to coordinate maritime governance initiatives. CELAC's tasks may include: standardizing port security, fishery management, and maritime security regulations; campaigning for the creation of shared maritime monitoring facilities; or urging cooperation with international bodies such as the International Maritime Organization (IMO), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the UN. Furthermore, CELAC should maintain a balance between sovereignty and solidarity, treat maritime security as a cooperative effort, and focus on sustainable development rather than militarization.

[75] alljenji, *Orient Beach after Hurricane Gonzalo, St Martin*, October 21, 2014, Online image, *Wikimedia Commons*, October 21, 2014, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Orient_Beach_after_Hurricane_Gonzalo,_St_Martin.jpg.

First China-CELAC meeting in 2014.[76]

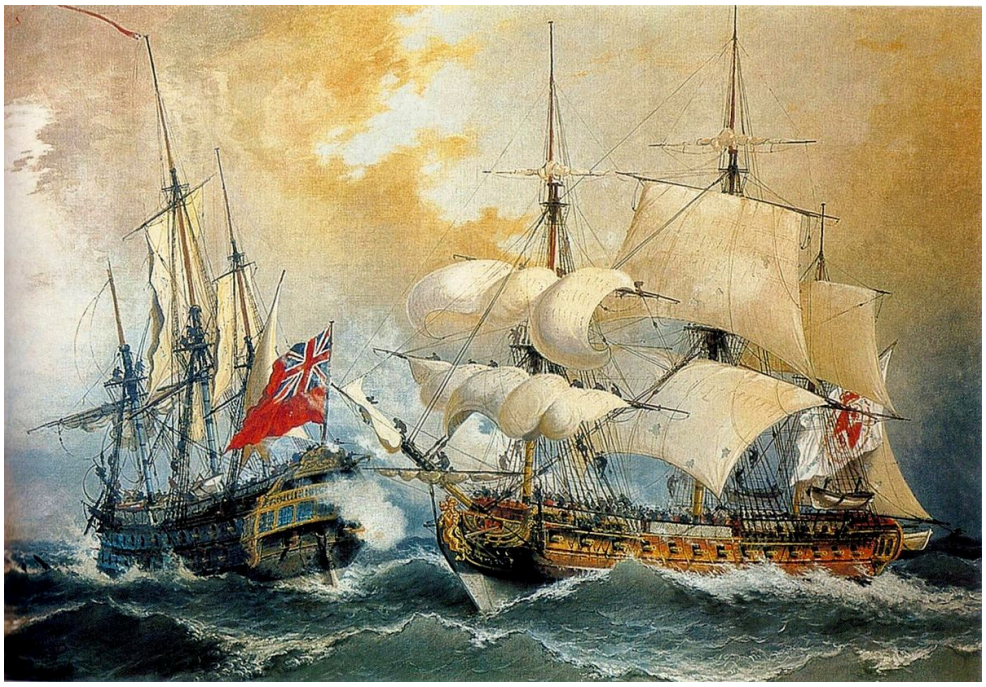
[76] Government of Chile, *Foro China-Celac 2014*, July 17, 2014, Online image, *Wikimedia Commons*, July 17, 2014, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Foro_China-Celac_2014_%2814661316116%29.jpg.

History of the Problem

Early European Hegemony

The history of maritime security in Latin America and the Caribbean begins with the arrival and expansion of European colonial empires in the region as early as the late 15th century. Focusing primarily on protecting critical trade routes and ports from pirates and foreign states, these early maritime powers utilized rudimentary naval patrols, port fortifications, and strategic alliances. Much of this came to a head during the Golden Age of Piracy (1650s–1730s), when colonial powers began to leverage hired pirates to attack foreign powers and steal their valuable cargo. It is during this tumultuous era of maritime history that key fortified ports and pirate havens like Nassau and Port Royal were formed, and naval military forces like the Spanish Armada de Barlovento were established to protect European colonial possessions in the Americas.[77,78,79] Overall, these security measures were centered around economic interests for these colonial powers and generally disregarded any humanitarian or environmental interests in the maritime domain.

[77] "History of the Bahamas | Bahamas | Official Site." n.d. The Islands of the Bahamas. https://www.bahamas.com/our-history.
[78] UNESCO World Heritage Centre. n.d. "The Underwater City of Port Royal - UNESCO World Heritage Centre." https://whc.unesco.org/en/tentativelists/5430.
[79] Texas State Historical Association. n.d. "The History and Impact of the Armada De Barlovento." https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/entries/armada-de-barlovento.



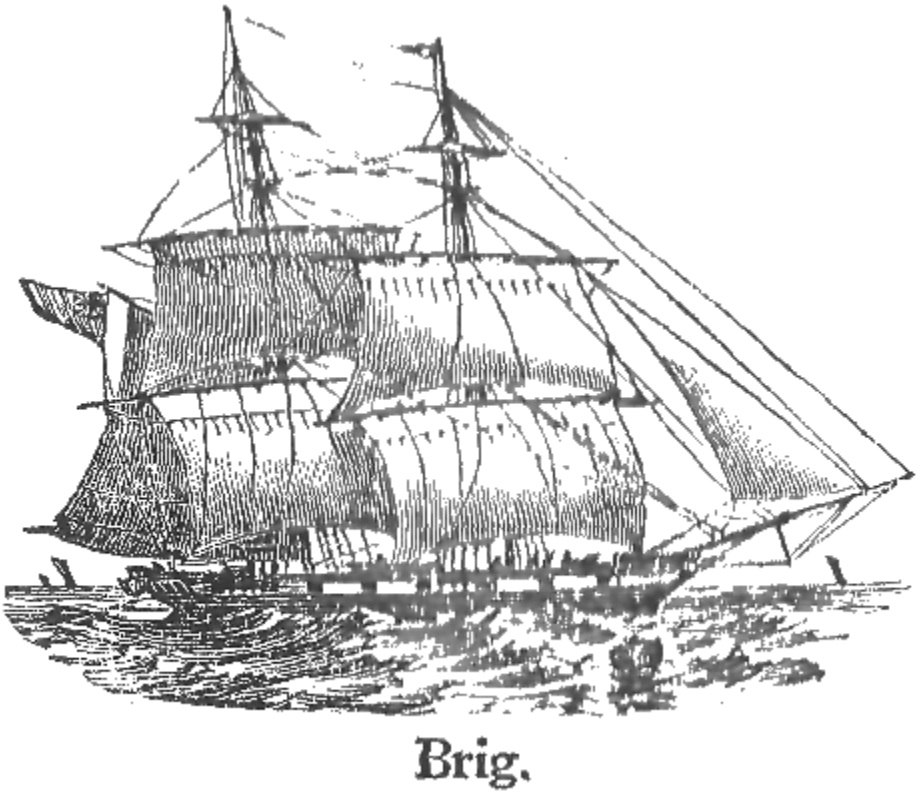
Artist's rendition of a Spanish Armada de Barlovento galleon capturing the British ship "Standhope" in 1710.[80]

Maritime security in the region became even more paramount with the outbreak of the Spanish American Wars of Independence in the early 19th century. Weakened and preoccupied by Napoleon's advances in Europe, the Spanish crown became susceptible to domestic revolts and civil wars being fought in its American colonial territories. New independence movements in Mexico, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Argentina, and various other Spanish colonies throughout

[80] Angel Cortellini y Sánchez and Naval Museum of Madrid, *La Captura Del Stanhope*, 1901, Online image, *Wikimedia Commons*, c. 1901, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:La_captura_del_Stanhope.jpg.

modern-day Latin America arose and soon came into conflict with Spanish royal forces.[81,82,83,84,85] In these military efforts, many of these revolutionary forces hired **insurgent privateers**. Most of these privateers were American sailors who sailed for insurgent republics like Mexico and Venezuela, as well as Cartagena, the United Provinces, and the Banda Oriental (modern-day Colombia, Argentina, and Uruguay, respectively).[86] These naval mercenaries would target Spanish merchant vessels to disrupt key trade routes and supply lines but would avoid direct conflict with Spanish naval forces, acting more as a disruptive guerilla force rather than a traditional combat unit.[87]

[81] "Today in History - September 16." n.d. The Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/item/today-in-history/september-16.
[82] University of Kent. 2020. "1811 Miranda Declares Independence in Venezuela and Civil War Begins." War And Nation: Identity and the Process of State-Building in South America (1800-1840). September 10, 2020. https://research.kent.ac.uk/warandnation/1811-miranda-declares-independence-in-venezuela-and-civil-war-begins.
[83] Bateman, Jason. 2019. "Costa Rica Independence - September 15th, 1821 - a Historic Moment." *CostaRica.Org* (blog). February 7, 2019. https://costarica.org/events/holidays/independence.
[84] Britannica Authors "Argentina and Its Independence From Spain | Britannica." *Encyclopedia Britannica*. https://www.britannica.com/summary/Argentina.
[85] Chasteen, John. 2008. *Americanos: Latin America's Struggle for Independence*. Oxford University Press. https://books.google.com/books/about/Americanos.html?id=U1BnDAAAQBAJ.
[86] Prado, Fabricio. 2016. "Review of Book: Privateers of the Americas: Spanish American Privateering From the United States in the Early Republic. By David Head. Early American Places." *The William and Mary Quarterly* 73 (4): 753. https://doi.org/10.5309/willmaryquar.73.4.0753.
[87] Head, David. 2015. *Privateers of the Americas: Spanish American Privateering from the United States in the Early Republic*. University of Georgia Press. https://books.google.com/books/about/Privateers_of_the_Americas.html?id=iMVgEQAAQBAJ.



A traditional brig that many insurgent privateers used to attack Spanish vessels.[88]

Post-Colonial Era and Increasing American Influence

As these new nations gained their independence and the European colonial grip in the region began to slip throughout the 19th century, hired pirates still lingered even after their services were no longer beneficial for the young nations. These newfound nations struggled to form and maintain navies to patrol and control their maritime territories and were particularly

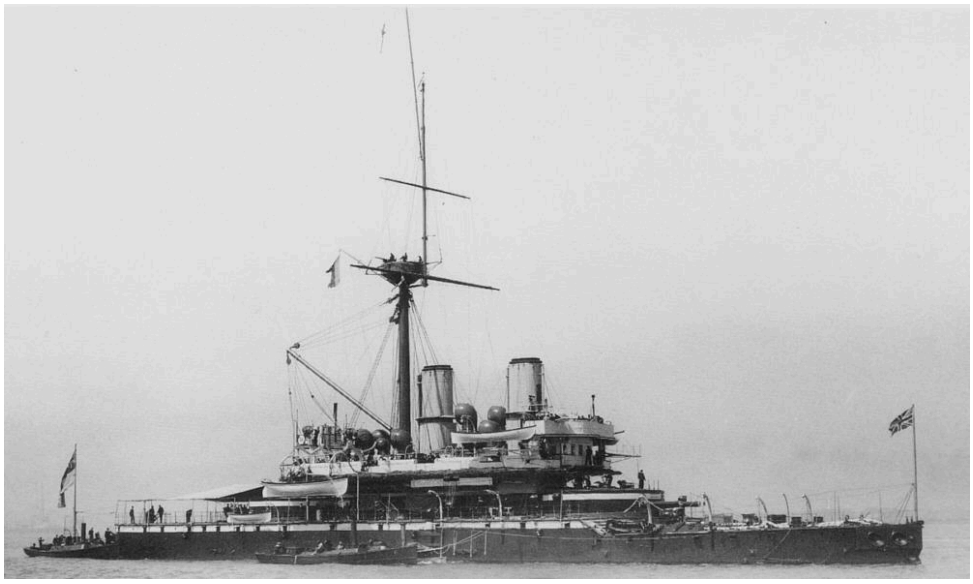
[88] Wikipedia contributors. 2025. "Insurgent Privateers." Wikipedia. May 28, 2025. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Insurgent_privateers.

vulnerable to the actions of the now rogue mercenary pirates, who often forced these nations to rely on foreign intervention.[89,90]

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, new technologies from the Second Industrial Revolution emerged, such as steam-powered turbines, sonar surveillance technology, and the first modern battleships, like the British-made *Devastation*-class turret ships.[91,92,93] Additionally, conflicts like the Spanish–American War in 1898 and the construction of the US-backed Panama Canal—a cornerstone maritime corridor—from 1903–1914 led to a stark increase in the United States' presence in the region, especially in the maritime arena.[94,95] These new factors drastically altered the maritime domain of the region with new military and economic implications. The increased US naval presence, buttressed by such policies as Roosevelt's corollary to the Monroe Doctrine, established the Caribbean as a de facto sphere of influence for American strategic interests.[96] It was also at this time that foreign coaling stations and naval bases were installed permanently throughout the region, like at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, further consolidating

[89] Kittleson, Roger A, Lockhart, James, Bushnell, and David. 2025. "History of Latin America | Meaning, Countries, Map, & Facts." Encyclopedia Britannica. June 23, 2025. https://www.britannica.com/place/Latin-America/Disorder-and-caudillismo.
[90] McCarthy, Matthew. *Privateering, Piracy and British Policy in Spanish America, 1810-1830*. NED-New edition. Boydell & Brewer, 2013. http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7722/j.ctt31nhv0.
[91] Brown, Les. 2023. *Royal Navy Torpedo Vessels, 1870-1914*. https://books.google.com/books/about/Royal_Navy_Torpedo_Vessels_1870_1914.html?id=OV7BEAAAQBAJ.
[92] "SONAR - Ages of Exploration." 2022. Ages of Exploration. July 22, 2022. https://exploration.marinersmuseum.org/object/sonar.
[93] Jane, Fred T., and W. L. Wyllie. 1915. *The British Battle Fleet: Its Inception and Growth throughout the Centuries to the Present Day. Vol. 1*. London: Library Press Limited. https://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/75616.
[94] HISTORY.com Editors. 2025. "Spanish-American War: Causes, Battles & Timeline | HISTORY." HISTORY. May 28, 2025. https://www.history.com/articles/spanish-american-war.
[95] "Milestones in the History of U.S. Foreign Relations - Office of the Historian." Accessed July 2025. https://history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/panama-canal.
[96] TeachingAmericanHistory.org. 2025. "Roosevelt Corollary to the Monroe Doctrine | Teaching American History." Teaching American History. April 15, 2025. https://teachingamericanhistory.org/document/roosevelt-corollary-to-monroe-doctrine.

foreign powers' grip on strategic sea lanes.[97] These impacts still resonate and shape maritime security dynamics and power distributions throughout Latin America and the Caribbean today.



HMS Devastation, one of the first modern battleships.[98]

In the mid-to-late 20th century, early American interventionism and strategic presence in the region had evolved into more complex Cold-War-driven maritime security understandings based on a shifting world order. With the decline of overt military occupations, the United States sustained a formidable naval presence in the Caribbean region through its intricate network of naval bases, intelligence-sharing agreements, and island operations conducted in conjunction with specific Latin American navies. The Cold War also opened new dimensions of naval security, as concerns with Soviet submarine deployments and Cuban political ties with Moscow—as part of the Cuban Missile Crisis—added to the pressure on the United States to

[97] "Platt Amendment (1903)." 2022. National Archives. February 8, 2022. https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/platt-amendment.
[98] Wikipedia contributors. 2024. "HMS Devastation (1871)." Wikipedia. December 15, 2024. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/HMS_Devastation_%281871%29.

patrol seas within the region and screen marine traffic through such chokepoints as the Windward Passage and the Panama Canal Zone.[99,100,101]

The looming (at the time) threat of the Cuban Missile Crisis.[102]

[99] "Office of the Historian." n.d. https://history.state.gov/milestones/1961-1968/cuban-missile-crisis.
[100] "Historical Documents - Office of the Historian." n.d. https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1961-63v10-12mSupp/d358.
[101] Utz, Curtis A. 1993. *Cordon of Steel: The U.S. Navy and the Cuban Missile Crisis*. https://www.history.navy.mil/content/dam/nhhc/research/publications/Publication-PDF/CordonOfSteel.pdf.
[102] John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, *Map of the Western Hemisphere Showing the Full Range of the Nuclear Missiles under Construction in Cuba, 1962*, May 23, 1978, Online image, *World History Commons*, May 23, 1978, https://worldhistorycommons.org/map-range-nuclear-missiles-cuba-1962.

After the Cold War

The final cession of the Panama Canal to Panama in 1999 under the 1977 Torrijos-Carter Treaties was a partial end to direct US rule over one of the hemisphere's most sensitive nautical corridors.[103] Even with renewed formal sovereignty in Panama, American control over the maritime geometry of the region persisted through security assistance programs and naval diplomacy. Latin American nations, though, began to play more of an independent role in defending their sea spaces, but with most still hamstrung by underdeveloped naval resources, outdated fleets, and surveillance capabilities too modest to seriously patrol large Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs).[104]

Signing of the Torrijos-Carter Treaty in 1977.[105]

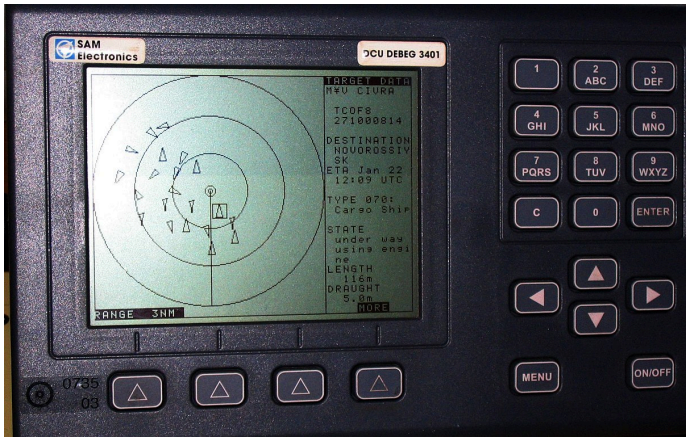
[103] "Office of the Historian." Accessed July 2025. https://history.state.gov/milestones/1977-1980/panama-canal.
[104] Sanchez, Wilder Alejandro. 2025. "Latin America | Center for International Maritime Security." April 28, 2025. https://cimsec.org/category/latin-america.
[105] National Archives and Records Administration, *Jimmy Carter and Omar Torrijos Signing the Panama Canal Treaty*, September 7, 1977, Online image, *National Security Archive*, September 7, 1977, https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/sites/default/files/2025-01/24-0805a.gif.

Post-Cold-War maritime threats began to shift away from ideological warfare and towards transnational threats. By the 1990s and early 2000s, maritime drug trafficking organizations grew, turning the Caribbean and Pacific coastlines into high-risk areas for illicit activity. **Narco-submarines**, go-fast boats, and floating cocaine caches became testaments to the region's vulnerability to non-state actors that exploited loopholes in maritime governance and enforcement.[106,107] At the same time, illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing by large distant-water fleets began to undermine food security, biodiversity, and coastal livelihoods, particularly in nations with small navies and poorly funded maritime enforcement agencies.[108]

A captured narco-submarine.[109]

[106] Woolston, Sam, Henry Shuldiner, Sam Woolston, and Henry Shuldiner. 2025. "Under the Radar: What Hundreds of Narco Sub Seizures Tell Us About Global Cocaine Routes." InSight Crime. June 17, 2025. https://insightcrime.org/news/under-radar-what-hundreds-ofnarco-sub-seizures-tell-us-about-global-cocaine-routes.
[107] Saiz, Mario. 2024. "Narco-Subs Sail the Caribbean." InSight Crime. November 22, 2024. https://insightcrime.org/news/caribbean-traffickers-narco-subs-beat-drug-busts.
[108] American University Latin American and Latino Studies. 2022. "IUU Fishing Crimes in Latin America and the Caribbean." https://insightcrime.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/SSRN-IUU-Fishing-Crimes-in-Latin-America-and-the-Caribbean-American-university-InSight-Crime-2022.pdf.
[109] Peru Ministry of Defense, *Peru Narco-Submarine*, February 1, 2020, Online image, *Wikimedia Commons*, February 1, 2020, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Peru_Narco-submarine.jpg.

Regional governments, often with international support, thus began to invest in collaborative frameworks for the sake of enhancing maritime domain awareness and collective enforcement capability. Multilateral initiatives such as the Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism and the Central American Maritime Security Strategy, as well as US-led programs like the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI), arose to support efforts to address these new threats.[110,111,112] At the same time, the increasing importance of digital technology, such as satellite tracking of ships, **automatic identification system (AIS)** monitoring, and maritime **fusion centers**, has begun to push the capabilities of countries in the region to detect and react to illicit maritime activity.[113,114,115]



Example of an AIS on a naval vessel.[116]

[110] Abramytchev, Vladimir. n.d. "CRFM - Caribbean Regional Fisheries Mechanism." https://www.crfm.int.
[111] The Secretariat General of the Central American Integration System (SG-SICA). 2011. "CENTRAL AMERICAN SECURITY STRATEGY." https://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2009_2014/documents/dcam/dv/ca_security_s_/ca_security_s_en.pdf.
[112] United States Department of State. 2012. "The Caribbean Basin Security Initiative: A Shared Regional Security Partnership." https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/201704.pdf.
[113] "Ship & Container Tracking - VesselFinder." Accessed July 2025. https://www.vesselfinder.com.
[114] Turgeon, Travis. 2024. "AIS Data Providers for Maritime Vessel Tracking." *Dark Shipping* (blog). August 11, 2024. https://www.darkshipping.com/post/ais-data-providers.
[115] CENTRO DE FUSIÓN DE LA INFORMACIÓN MARÍTIMA. 2023. "MARITIME INFORMATION FUSION CENTRE FOR LATIN AMERICA." https://www.dicapi.mil.pe/storage/ifc-documents/en/8GKNGMeV1726158956.pdf.
[116] Clipper, *AIS DCU*, 2006, Online image, *Wikimedia Commons*, 2006, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Ais_dcu_bridge.jpg.

Nonetheless, there remain inequalities of capacity and infrastructure. Where wealthier or strategically sympathetic countries can afford to buy advanced patrol vessels, radar suites, and surveillance drones, smaller island nations and coastal states too frequently depend on bilateral aid or external enforcement support. This disparity is an inheritance of past decades of strategic dependency, and continues to shape relations of power in the manner that maritime security is conceptualized and executed in the region.

Latin America and the Caribbean are at a crossroads today. As the impacts of climate change heighten the effects of sea-level rise and ocean-based natural disasters, and as the seas become more contested with intensifying overfishing and geopolitics, the maritime security context of the region has never been more relevant. Governments must now map a future in which aging legacy infrastructure, new technology, and strategic partnerships can be coordinated in a harmonized way in order to create a more sovereign, cooperative, and resilient maritime order that finally matches the ambitions and self-interest of the region.

Group photo of the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI) in 2019.[117]

[117] United States Department of State. "Caribbean Basin Security Initiative." 2019. May 16, 2019. https://2017-2021.state.gov/caribbean-basin-security-initiative.

Past Actions

Individual CELAC nations and the organization as a whole have taken several actions to combat increasing maritime security concerns, especially international criminal activity like drug smuggling and illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing. These early efforts include bilateral and multinational agreements and initiatives like the Maritime and Port Security Program launched by the Organization of American States (OAS) in 2022, which focuses on strengthening port and maritime infrastructure across 24 member states, including many coastal CELAC member nations like Belize, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, and Panama.[118,119] Much of this involves technical upgrades to equipment and infrastructure, but also includes various workshops and programming to standardize security protocols and measures across member nations.

Members of Port Security Unit 311 of the United States, a member of the OAS.[120]

[118] "Maritime and Port Security." Accessed July 2025. https://www.oas.org/ext/en/security/maritime-terrorism.
[119] Organization of American States (OAS). 2022. "CICTE PROGRAM: MARITIME AND PORT SECURITY." https://www.oas.org/ext/DesktopModules/MVC/OASDnnModules/Views/Item/Download.aspx?type=1&id=892&lang=1.
[120] United States Coast Guard, *Port Security Unit 311 Return*, December 11, 2013, Online image, *Defense Visual Information Distribution Service*, December 11, 2013, https://www.dvidshub.net/image/1071670/port-security-unit-311-return.

Another major breakthrough was the advent of Global Fishing Watch, a platform supported by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that utilizes advanced satellite AIS data and vessel monitoring systems (VMS) to publicly track fishing fleets.[121,122,123] Growing regional participation from CELAC member countries, including Chile, Brazil, Peru, Panama, Ecuador, and Costa Rica, by publishing tracking data has helped expand this key database, which in turn has enabled local maritime authorities to better enforce fishing regulations and track down and suppress illegal fishing and smuggling activity.[124] For example, Chile published key VMS data on more than 800 of their industrial and small-scale fishing vessels in 2020 and helped expand regional fishing transparency and enforcement.[125]

Individual member nations have also adopted new technological innovations like maritime fusion centers to dictate maritime policy and to consolidate key satellite, radar, and intelligence data into coordinated enforcement efforts. The most notable of these was launched by the Peruvian Coast Guard in 2019, enabling more efficient and effective inter-agency data sharing and cooperation.[126]

Nevertheless, despite these advancements, many of these challenges continue to persist. For instance, a 2022 study conducted by American University highlighted vast disparities in

[121] Global Fishing Watch. 2025. "Home." July 10, 2025. https://globalfishingwatch.org.
[122] Spire. 2024. "Satellite AIS Tracking: Everything You Need to Know - Spire: Global Data and Analytics." Spire: Global Data and Analytics. June 27, 2024. https://spire.com/wiki/satellite-ais-tracking-everything-you-need-to-know.
[123] Fisheries, Noaa. n.d. "Enforcement: Vessel Monitoring | NOAA Fisheries." https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/topic/enforcement/vessel-monitoring.
[124] De Lemos, Nancy. 2023. "Latin America." Global Fishing Watch. October 4, 2023. https://globalfishingwatch.org/transparency-program-latin-america.
[125] Poortvliet, Dave. 2024. "Chile Publishes Vessel Tracking Data." *Global Fishing Watch* (blog). December 11, 2024. https://globalfishingwatch.org/success-story/chile-publishes-vessel-tracking-data
[126] CENTRO DE FUSIÓN DE LA INFORMACIÓN MARÍTIMA. 2023. "MARITIME INFORMATION FUSION CENTRE FOR LATIN AMERICA." https://www.dicapi.mil.pe/storage/ifc-documents/en/8GKNGMeV1726158956.pdf.

naval enforcement capacity.[127] According to the study, while larger countries like Argentina field over 250 vessels and 64,000 personnel, smaller ones like Guyana, Suriname, and many Caribbean islands operate only a handful of vessels with limited crews. This gap in maritime intelligence and enforcement capabilities proves to be a lingering issue that continues to hamper larger, region-wide enforcement efforts and creates key vulnerabilities that many illicit smuggling, trafficking, and fishing operations aim to exploit.

An Argentinian battleship, forming part of the country's expanded maritime patrol fleet.[128]

[127]American University. 2022. "Law Enforcement Capacity to Address IUU Fishing." https://www.american.edu/centers/latin-american-latino-studies/upload/law-enforcement-capacity.pdf.
[128] Juan Kulichevsky, *Destructores ARA "Sarandí" Y ARA "Almirante Brown,"* May 14, 2017, Online image, *Wikimedia Commons*, May 14, 2017, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Destructores_ARA_%E2%80%9CSarand%C3%AD%E2%80%9D_y_ARA_%E2%80%9CAlmirante_Brown%E2%80%9D_%2834635698546%29.jpg.

Possible Solutions

With the rising prominence of these maritime security issues, it is essential that CELAC consider solutions addressing both immediate threats and deeper structural challenges. Since this organization cannot directly enforce policy on sovereign nations, most of its potential actions will likely involve providing recommendations, promoting coordination, and offering incentives.

Drug Trafficking

One prominent short-term issue is that of narco-submarines and high-speed boats being used for illegal drug smuggling. These vessels have a unique capability to maneuver past maritime security forces and have proven to be a major issue for many national governments and enforcement agencies in the region. One possible solution to combat this issue is the creation and implementation of a **joint maritime interdiction network (JMIN),** which would be a coordinated task force that utilizes a centralized intelligence base to plan out security patrols, analyze real-time satellite tracking data, and navigate legal authorities across different nations. A hypothetical network could consist of the establishment of shared maritime surveillance zones in high-risk trafficking corridors like the Caribbean Sea, the Panama Canal, and the northern Pacific off the coast of Peru and Ecuador. Maritime tracking data collected in these regions can be consolidated and shared across CELAC members by connected national maritime fusion centers and through support from external NGOs like the **Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC)**, **InSight Crime**, or commercial providers such as **Spire Maritime**.[129,130,131]

[129] Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. 2025. "Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime (GI-TOC)." Global Initiative. July 18, 2025. https://globalinitiative.net.
[130] Crime, InSight. 2025. "InSight Crime - Investigation and Analysis of Organized Crime." InSight Crime. July 18, 2025. https://insightcrime.org.
[131] Spire Maritime. 2025. "Marine AIS Data - Maritime AIS Vessel Tracking Solutions." Spire : Global Data and Analytics. July 1, 2025. https://spire.com/maritime.

To this end, the United States government utilizes the Joint Interagency Task Force South (JIATF South), which has proven to be a successful measure at combatting cocaine and narcotic smuggling operations in the Caribbean.[132,133] A similar task force unit or agency launched by CELAC could also prove effective.

Emblem of JIATF South.[134]

Illicit Fishing Operations

Another major issue that this organization must grapple with is that of illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing, which has proven to be a growing issue in the region. A solution to this issue might be the establishment of a regional fisheries enforcement agency or compact

[132] JOINT INTERAGENCY TASK FORCE SOUTH. n.d. "Home." https://www.jiatfs.southcom.mil.
[133] "U.S. ANTI-DRUG INTERDICTION EFFORTS AND THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE DRUG ELIMINATION ACT." Accessed July 2025. https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-105shrg51088/html/CHRG-105shrg51088.htm.
[134] Wikipedia. 2025b. "Joint Interagency Task Force South." Wikipedia. June 24, 2025. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joint_Interagency_Task_Force_South.

that would be responsible for maintaining a joint surveillance and response mechanism. Such an agency would monitor existing tracking data through partners like Global Fishing Watch to supervise fishing vessel movements and activity in divided sectors across the region—a similar idea to a JMIN with a direct focus on combatting illicit fishing. This body and framework would also encourage non-participating member nations to start sharing data for improved tracking and allow CELAC members to coordinate illicit fishing patrols in national and international waters. These methods could also be expanded to larger environmental issues like coral reef degradation, mangrove destruction, and overall marine pollution through data sharing initiatives with organizations like the Environmental Justice Foundation (EJF).[135,136,137,138]

In addition to this centralized body, CELAC could create a collaborative economic fund with contributions from all member nations which would be geared towards transitioning small-scale fishing operations from illicit practices towards more sustainable livelihoods and aquaculture methods. This would not only help combat IUU fishing through direct enforcement but also address many of the root causes of IUU fishing, focusing more on rehabilitative measures rather than punitive ones.

CELAC member states can also deploy a suite of new technological innovations. For example, **Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)** satellites can offer all-weather, day-and-night detection of "dark vessels" that disable AIS transponders. Providers like Ursa Space have

[135] Mar, Staff Coral, and Staff Coral Mar. 2023. "Coral Reef Restoration Efforts in Latin American Countries and Territories - RRA-SAM/ MAR-RRN - Red De Restauración Del Sistema Arrecifal Mesoamericano." *RRA-SAM/ MAR-RRN - Red de Restauración Del Sistema Arrecifal Mesoamericano - RRA-SAM/ MAR-RRN* (blog). August 15, 2023. https://coralmar.org/en/coral-reef-restoration-efforts-in-latin-american-countries-and-territories.
[136] The Guardian. 2025. "The Vanishing Mangroves of El Salvador: 'All Our Efforts May Only Slow the Destruction.'" *The Guardian*, April 2, 2025. https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/article/2024/sep/05/mangroves-el-salvador-forests.
[137] World Bank Group. 2024. "Addressing Marine Plastics in Latin America and the Caribbean." World Bank. https://www.worldbank.org/en/region/lac/brief/addressing-marine-plastics-in-latin-america-and-the-caribbean.
[138] "Homepage." Accessed July 2025. Environmental Justice Foundation. https://ejfoundation.org.

demonstrated success in this feat, identifying unreported fishing boats using SAR imagery alongside artificial-intelligence-based data analysis.[139] Additionally, autonomous wind- and solar-powered drones known as **Uncrewed Surface Vessels (USVs)** have been shown to be effective in long-term persistent monitoring in remote marine areas, which could help track narco-submarines and illegal fishing ships.[140,141]

An Uncrewed Surface Vessel (USV).[142]

Another technological advancement that CELAC could use is **blockchain-based catch documentation**, which can help provide step-by-step documentation for the seafood supply

[139] "Use Case Explained: Illegal Fishing Monitoring." 2021. Ursa Space Systems. September 14, 2021. https://ursaspace.com/blog/use-case-explained-illegal-fishing-monitoring.
[140] "Uncrewed Surface Vessels." n.d. https://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/technology/usv/usv.html.
[141] Patterson, Ruth G., Meghan F. Cronin, Sebastiaan Swart, Joana Beja, Johan M. Edholm, Jason McKenna, Jaime B. Palter, et al. 2025. "Uncrewed Surface Vehicles in the Global Ocean Observing System: A New Frontier for Observing and Monitoring at the Air-sea Interface." *Frontiers in Marine Science* 12 (March). https://doi.org/10.3389/fmars.2025.1523585.
[142] XOCEAN-XO-450, *Uncrewed Surface Vessel (USV) at Sea Surveying Offshore Windfarm*, March 11, 2021, Online image, *Wikimedia Commons*, March 11, 2021, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:XOCEAN_XO-450_Uncrewed_Surface_Vessel_%28USV%29_at_Sea_Surveying_Offshore_Windfarm.jpg.

chain that cannot be altered retroactively, from catch to sale.[143] This process can help prevent fish caught illegally from entering the market, severely discouraging IUU fishing—an effort that has proven fruitful in efforts taken by the European Union and the Thai Union.[144,145] Other technologies like **smart acoustic buoys** can be useful for detecting engine noise and determining when unauthorized vessels encroach onto restricted fishing or environmental conservation areas.[146] These buoys can detect sound waves and relay signals to satellites, which then can send data to centralized fusion centers, seamlessly integrating into existing technological infrastructure.

An acoustic buoy.[147]

[143] "Blockchain Application in Seafood Value Chains | IMCS." n.d. http://imcsnet.org/resource/blockchain-application-seafood-value-chains.
[144] "TRACE4EU Seafood Tracing - EBSI -." n.d. https://ec.europa.eu/digital-building-blocks/sites/display/EBSI/TRACE4EU%2BSeafood%2BTracing.
[145] Ledger Insights. 2022. "Major Seafood Producer Thai Union Launches Shrimp Blockchain Traceability Pilot." Ledger Insights - Blockchain for Enterprise. February 24, 2022. https://www.ledgerinsights.com/major-seafood-producer-thai-union-launches-shrimp-blockchain-traceability-pilot.
[146] "NOAA Smart Buoys - Captain John Smith Chesapeake National Historic Trail (U.S. National Park Service)." Accessed July 2025. https://www.nps.gov/cajo/learn/noaa-smart-buoys.htm.
[147] Australian Institute of Marine Science, *Australian Scientific Buoy*, Online image, *Australian Government*, accessed July 2025, https://www.aims.gov.au/research-topics/monitoring-and-discovery/coastal-and-ocean-observing.

Bloc Positions

Many of the most prominent issues of maritime security, like IUU fishing, drug trafficking, and environmental damage, often cross maritime borders and require multilateral support and cooperation, making national sovereignty, resource disparities, and geopolitical alignments key factors in regional responses.[148] Therefore, it is of great importance that CELAC, as an institution, is attuned to the geopolitical, socioeconomic, cultural, and environmental priorities and interests of every member state when making essential decisions. The following bloc positions are an effort to lend contextual insight into the ways different CELAC regions may address maritime security. The list is offered for discussion purposes and is not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive.

Mexico and Central America

As a result of their proximity to key drug smuggling corridors, Mexico and its Central American peers—Guatemala, El Salvador, Belize, Nicaragua, Honduras, Costa Rica, and Panama—are often forced to deal with major international criminal networks and organizations within their borders and waters. Straddling the Caribbean and Pacific, IUU fishing and drug smuggling vessels often frequent Central American coastlines. These countries struggle with inadequate enforcement, frequently relying on international partnerships, like with the US Southern Command or Central America Regional Security Initiative (CARSI), for support.[149,150,151] Panama also controls one of the most important shipping corridors in the world,

[148] Morris, Michael A. 1986. "Maritime Geopolitics in Latin America." *Political Geography Quarterly* 5 (1): 43–55. https://doi.org/10.1016/0260-9827(86)90010-8.
[149] "Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean." n.d. United Nations : Office on Drugs and Crime. https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/drug-trafficking/mexico-central-america-and-the-caribbean.html.
[150] U.S. Southern Command. n.d. "SOUTHCOM Enhanced Counter Narcotics Operations." https://www.southcom.mil/EnhancedCounterNarcoticsOps/.
[151] US Department of State. 2011. "The Central America Regional Security Initiative: A Shared Partnership." https://2009-2017.state.gov/documents/organization/183768.pdf.

the Panama Canal, which heightens its potential risk and need for enforcement. This bloc would heavily support joint patrols and intelligence sharing.

Caribbean Islands

As hotbeds for fishing and tourism, smaller Caribbean island nations like Jamaica, the Bahamas, the Dominican Republic, Trinidad and Tobago, and Barbados tend to prioritize regional cooperation to combat narcotics trafficking and preserve their pristine marine ecosystems and environments.[152] Efforts like Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and Regional Security System (RSS) are key international initiatives that are essential to this bloc.[153,154]

Caribbean Coast of South America

Similarly to their island nation counterparts, South American nations on the Caribbean coast like Venezuela, Suriname, Guyana, and Colombia also deal with drug trafficking and environmental degradation, along with large tourism booms. Colombia has taken greater action to combat narco-submarines in its Caribbean waters while Guyana and Suriname have begun cooperating with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) to combat IUU fishing along their coast.[155,156] Additionally, offshore oil deposits discovered off the coast of Guyana have been a major economic driver, but also a significant source of environmental pollution and concern.[157]

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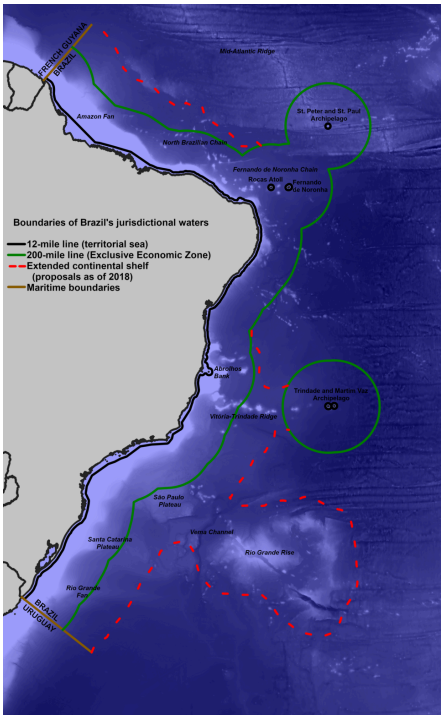
[152] Domergue, Sylvain. 2024. "Maritime Security in the Caribbean: Causes and Impacts of the Regionalism of Small and Micro-States." *Geopolitics*, October, 1–39. https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2024.2407596.
[153] "CARICOM – Caribbean Community." 2025. July 21, 2025. https://caricom.org/.
[154] "Regional Security System | Strength Through Unity." n.d. Regional Security System | Strength Through Unity. https://www.rss.org.bb/.
[155] Ozberk, Tayfun. 2025. "Colombian Navy Captures Unmanned Narco Submarine in Caribbean Sea." Naval News. July 3, 2025. https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2025/07/colombian-navy-captures-unmanned-narco-submarine-in-caribbean-sea.
[156] Oceans 5. n.d. "Combatting IUU Fishing in Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana (the Guianas) | Oceans 5." https://www.oceans5.org/project/combatting-iuu-fishing-in-guyana-suriname-and-french-guiana-the-guianas/.
[157] "Guyana Project Overview." n.d. ExxonMobil. https://corporate.exxonmobil.com/locations/guyana/operations/guyana-project-overview.

Atlantic Coast of South America

South American countries on the southern Atlantic coast—Brazil, Argentina, and Uruguay—are often focused on deterring rampant IUU fishing in the South Atlantic and improving naval capabilities, especially with respect to their more expansive maritime territories. Brazil, in particular, would have a major role in maritime security and geopolitics in this bloc, with its Blue Amazon initiative and ATLASUR, a biennial joint military exercise between Argentina, Brazil, Uruguay, and South Africa.[158,159]



Map detailing Brazil's Blue Amazon proposal.[160]

[158] Damasio, Kevin. 2024. "Explainer: The Blue Amazon, and the Promise and Perils of Marine Mining." Dialogue Earth. April 12, 2024. https://dialogue.earth/en/ocean/59952-explainer-blue-amazon-marine-deep-sea-mining-promise-perils/.
[159] Martin, Guy. 2018. "Exercise Atlasur Scheduled for August/September." defenceWeb. June 26, 2018. https://www.defenceweb.co.za/sea/sea-sea/exercise-atlasur-scheduled-for-augustseptember/.
[160] Serraria, *Boundaries of Brazil's Jurisdictional Waters*, December 3, 2024, Online image, *Wikimedia Commons*, December 3, 2024, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Boundaries_of_Brazil%27s_jurisdictional_waters.png.

Pacific Coast of South America

Much like their Atlantic counterparts, South American Pacific nations—Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and Colombia—are also tasked with surveying and patrolling a large area of maritime territory. Major drug smuggling routes, IUU fishing operations, and environmental destruction are all significant concerns. The Colombian Navy has long championed Operation Orion, a major anti-drug-trafficking effort in partnership with institutions from over 60 different countries, while Ecuador and Chile have established environmental protection zones within their maritime territory with the Galapagos Marine Reserve and the Pisagua Sea Marine Protected Area, respectively.[161,162,163]

Andean and Landlocked States

Despite lacking direct sea access, landlocked member states Bolivia and Paraguay still play a major role in maritime security with their strong connection to major river networks. For instance, Paraguay controls much of the vital Paraguay-Paraná waterway, which has become a major shipping lane for cocaine smuggling operations due to a lack of adequate surveillance technology and enforcement capabilities.[164] Bolivia, on the other hand, has a significant naval

[161] Appleby, Peter, and Peter Appleby. 2024. "After Historic International Crackdown, Are Multinational Drug Ops the Future?" InSight Crime. December 6, 2024. https://insightcrime.org/news/after-historic-international-crackdown-are-multinational-drug-ops-the-future/ .
[162] Galápagos Conservancy. 2022. "Strengthening Marine Protection | Galápagos Conservancy." November 30, 2022. https://www.galapagos.org/projects/rewilding-galapagos/strengthening-marine-protection/.
[163] Oceana. 2023. "Chile Creates a New Marine Protected Area in Pisagua Bay Following Four Oceana Expeditions | Oceana." March 1, 2023. https://oceana.org/press-releases/chile-creates-a-new-marine-protected-area-in-pisagua-bay-following-four-oceana-expeditions/.
[164] Brach, Samantha Schmidt Jon Gerberg, Júlia Ledur, Sebastián López. 2024. "The Surprising Route of South America's Cocaine Superhighway to Europe." *Washington Post*, December 28, 2024. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/interactive/2024/south-america-cocaine-route-europe

presence in its nearly 5000 miles of navigable waterways like the Mamoré, Paraguay, and Ibaré Rivers with its large patrol force and "Diablos Azules" specialized task force.[165]

Bolivian naval march.[166]

[165] Pike, John. n.d. "Bolivia Navy." https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/bolivia/navy.htm.
[166] Israel_soliz, *Policía Militar Naval de Bolivia*, August 7, 2008, Online image, *Wikimedia Commons*, August 7, 2008, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Polic%C3%ADa_Militar_Naval_de_Bolivia.jpg.

Glossary

Automatic Identification System (AIS) - An automatic tracking system that collects information on the locations of maritime vessels and relays it to satellites and information centers, often in conjunction with marine radar technology.[167]

Blockchain Catch Documentation - A digitized record-keeping system that is used to track harvested seafood from catch to vendor, often in an effort to crack down on illicit fishing.[168]

Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) - A UN-mandated territorial zone of 200 nautical miles (about 230 miles) off a country's coast where that country has exclusive rights to organic and inorganic resources and economic activity.[169]

Fusion Center - Centralized nexus where information and intelligence is collected and shared among multiple enforcement agencies.[170]

Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) Fishing - Fishing activity that is either done in violation of national regulations and laws, is misreported or not reported at all to proper authorities, or is under no proper legal purview or regulatory oversight.[171]

Joint Task Force - A specialized group of military or law enforcement personnel from different branches or agencies that collaborate together for a specific goal or policy.

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[167] Turgeon, Travis. 2024. "AIS Data Providers for Maritime Vessel Tracking." *Dark Shipping* (blog). August 11, 2024. https://www.darkshipping.com/post/ais-data-providers.
[168] "Blockchain Application in Seafood Value Chains | IMCS." n.d. http://imcsnet.org/resource/blockchain-application-seafood-value-chains.
[169] National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, "What Is the 'EEZ'?," NOAA Ocean Exploration, accessed July 2025, https://oceanexplorer.noaa.gov/ocean-fact/useez/.
[170] CENTRO DE FUSIÓN DE LA INFORMACIÓN MARÍTIMA. 2023. "MARITIME INFORMATION FUSION CENTRE FOR LATIN AMERICA." https://www.dicapi.mil.pe/storage/ifc-documents/en/8GKNGMeV1726158956.pdf.
[171] American University Center for Latin American and Latino Studies. 2022. "Adverse Consequences of IUU Fishing." American University. https://www.american.edu/centers/latin-american-latino-studies/upload/adverse-consequences-of-iuu-fishing.pdf.

Maritime Security - The protection and maintenance of a country's marine domain, like its ports, exclusive economic territory, and environmental conservation areas.

Narco-submarine - A small, custom made submarine or submersible that is used to smuggle narcotics undetected.[172,173]

Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) - Specialized form of radar technology that is capable of creating two- or three-dimensional images and renderings of landscapes.[174]

[172] Woolston, Sam, Henry Shuldiner, Sam Woolston, and Henry Shuldiner. 2025. "Under the Radar: What Hundreds of Narco Sub Seizures Tell Us About Global Cocaine Routes." InSight Crime. June 17, 2025. https://insightcrime.org/news/under-radar-what-hundreds-ofnarco-sub-seizures-tell-us-about-global-cocaine-routes.
[173] Saiz, Mario. 2024. "Narco-Subs Sail the Caribbean." InSight Crime. November 22, 2024. https://insightcrime.org/news/caribbean-traffickers-narco-subs-beat-drug-busts.
[174] National Aeronautics and Space Administration, "Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR)," NASA EarthData, accessed July 2025, https://www.earthdata.nasa.gov/learn/earth-observation-data-basics/sar.

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