



Research Papers

December 2025

Ukraine's Wartime Diplomacy in Latin America and the Caribbean

Francisco Lobo and Carlos Solar



Disclaimer

The content in this publication is provided for general information only. It is not intended to amount to advice on which you should rely. You must obtain professional or specialist advice before taking, or refraining from, any action based on the content in this publication.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors, and do not necessarily reflect the views of RUSI or any other institution.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, RUSI shall not be liable for any loss or damage of any nature whether foreseeable or unforeseeable (including, without limitation, in defamation) arising from or in connection with the reproduction, reliance on or use of the publication or any of the information contained in the publication by you or any third party. References to RUSI include its directors, trustees and employees.

© 2025 The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution – Non-Commercial – No-Derivatives 4.0 International Licence. For more information, see <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.

RUSI Research Papers, November 2025

ISSN 2977-960X

Publications Team

Editorial

Director of Publications: Alice Trouncer

Managing Editor: Sarah Hudson

Assistant Editor: Sophie Boulter

Design

Graphic Designer: Lisa Westthorp

Research Editorial

Head of Research Governance


and Editorial: Elias Forneris

Cover image: President Volodymyr Zelenskyy addresses the UN General Assembly in New York, 24 September 2025. Sipa US/Alamy

Get in touch

 www.rusi.org

 enquiries@rusi.org

 +44 (0)207 747 2600

The Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security
61 Whitehall, London
SW1A 2ET
United Kingdom

Follow us on

Contents

iii	Executive Summary
iii	Recommendations
1	Introduction
4	Methodology
5	Structure
6	Ukraine's Contemporary Foreign Policy
12	Assessing the LACCS
12	The LACCS
17	Potentially Counterproductive Narratives
21	Potentially Productive Narratives
27	Conclusions
28	Recommendations
30	About the Authors

Executive Summary

Russia has been waging a kinetic war against Ukraine since 2014. At the same time, it has also carried out other forms of hybrid warfare – not least information operations – across the globe, notably targeting audiences in regions including Latin America and the Caribbean. In response, Ukraine must urgently develop its own information operations with a communication strategy tailored to Latin America and the Caribbean, to counteract Moscow's efforts.

To develop its approach to diplomatic engagement in Latin America, Ukraine has thus far used the template of its 2023 Africa Communication Strategy, which was its first comprehensive diplomatic communication strategy to go beyond Europe. With its new 2024 Ukraine–Latin America and the Caribbean Communication Strategy (LACCS), Ukraine aims to engage public and private audiences in the region to counteract Russian influence, and garner support for a free and independent Ukraine as a reliable partner.

It is still too early to tell whether this new strategy will be effective. However, this paper argues that the LACCS is a positive first step towards strengthening relations between Ukraine and Latin America and the Caribbean, a region that Kyiv has hitherto mostly neglected. This endeavour must inevitably take into account the ongoing war that Russia is waging against Ukraine, since wartime diplomacy permeates every decision made by Kyiv to engage international audiences and seek new alliances and partners.

Recommendations

- Increase effectiveness of the LACCS through communicating about its existence and intentions to Latin American and Caribbean audiences.
- Focus political and communication efforts on developing productive narratives.
- Persevere in multi-vector diplomacy efforts.
- Open more honorary consulates alongside the planned new embassies to promote contact-diplomacy. This can pave the way for future diplomatic missions.
- Continue to develop strong diplomatic, political, economic, military and cultural relations with Latin America and the Caribbean beyond the war and regardless of the outcome of peace negotiations.

Introduction

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy opened his speech to the UN General Assembly on 24 September 2025 with the following words: 'Dear leaders, dear friends, and all those who can become our friends because you want safety and peace as much as we do'.¹ He went on to remark that 'international law does not work fully without powerful friends. ... There are no security guarantees, except friends and weapons. ... War has already reached too many people for you to pretend it has nothing to do with you'.

For the past decade, Ukraine has been actively looking for friends, and for good reason. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which started in 2014 with the illegal annexation of Crimea and the invasion of Donetsk and Luhansk, and expanded into a full-scale invasion in 2022, is a brutal conflict. It has caused great suffering and as yet unknown human cost. Yet, the war has not ended the need for diplomacy. In fact, during the past three years, Ukrainian diplomacy has morphed into what has been labelled 'wartime diplomacy'.² As the former minister of foreign affairs of Ukraine, Dmytro Kuleba, explained: 'Since February 2022, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's diplomatic team has been working in a special mode of wartime diplomacy — exhausting and risky, bold but thoughtful, all while changing the rules of the diplomatic game'.³

Such diplomatic endeavours in the service of military action and a wider war effort are, admittedly, not an entirely new concept, as shown, for instance, by the so-called 'warrior diplomats' who work in the field of civil-military cooperation.⁴ Furthermore, within

1. Office of the President of Ukraine, 'Speech by the President During the General Debate of the UN General Assembly in New York', 24 September 2025, <<https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/vistup-prezidenta-pid-chas-zagalnih-debativ-generalnoyi-asam-100349>>, accessed 17 November 2025.
2. Office of the President of Ukraine, 'Our Collective Efforts Determine What Weapons are in the Hands of Our Warriors', 19 August 2024, <<https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/vid-nashoyi-spilnoyi-roboti-zalezhit-yaka-zbroya-v-rukah-u-n-92669>>, accessed 17 February 2025.
3. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine (MFA), 'MFA Launches Wartime Diplomacy Website', 29 February 2024, <<https://mfa.gov.ua/en/news/mzs-stvorilo-storinku-pro-voyennu-diplomatiyu-wartime-diplomacy>>, accessed 10 February 2025.
4. 'Warrior diplomats' are military personnel assigned to civil affairs units who are tasked with understanding people by 'direct exposure to the communities inhabiting contested terrain, and who possess the requisite skills to untangle complex dynamics and build substantive local relationships'. See Arnel P David, Sean A Acosta and Nicholas Krohley, *Warrior Diplomats. Civil Affairs Forces on the Front Lines* (Amherst: Cambria Press, 2023), p. 12; Civil-Military Cooperation Centre of Excellence, <<https://www.cimic-coe.org/>>, accessed 10 February 2025.

traditional diplomacy, the line between war and peace has not always been so well-defined. As the scholar Tarak Barkawi pointed out: 'Diplomacy provides a permanent extraterritorial infrastructure crucial to military, security, and intelligence activities in other states and societies. ... The administration and conduct of war often require complex international coordination and facilitation across many different spheres'.⁵

Accordingly, Ukrainian wartime diplomacy has proven essential to the country's travails as it wages its war of self-defence by securing funds, weapons and support from international allies and partners. Indeed, Ukraine must compensate for the imbalance in military force with Russia by strengthening alliances, partnerships and diplomatic engagement worldwide. Furthermore, this unique approach to diplomacy in times of war also aims at securing goals beyond operational objectives related to the war effort, an approach otherwise known as an 'external manoeuvre' (a term coined by a French general, André Beaufre).⁶ As the Ukrainian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) remarks: 'Even during full-scale war, we open new horizons for our state, businesses and citizens in the world, widen our diplomatic presence and encourage investments into the development of our country'.⁷

Such new horizons can and must be found in faraway places. Latin America and the Caribbean have a population of 663 million, comprising both OECD countries (such as Mexico and Chile) and a BRICS founding member (Brazil, which is home to the largest Ukrainian diaspora in the region). It also benefits from the status of a distinct regional group at the UN (the 'GRULAC'⁸). In Latin America and the Caribbean Ukraine can find new partners and cultivate strong relationships for the present and the future. Even if Ukraine cannot obtain military aid from the region, it can obtain political support from international organisations, economic opportunities, cultural exchanges and its promotion as a sovereign nation to an even larger audience. As one Ukrainian interviewee who participated in this research noted, these efforts are aimed at 'securing votes and international support, in order to globalise the war'.⁹ Another Ukrainian interviewee also remarked about Latin America that 'the region can influence several decisions for the entire world. We cannot waste any more time'.¹⁰

5. Tarak Barkawi, 'Diplomacy, War, and World Politics', in Ole Jacob Sending, Vincent Pouliot and Iver B Neumann (eds), *Diplomacy and the Making of World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 57.

6. Michael Shurkin, 'Grand Strategy is Total: French Gen. André Beaufre on War in the Nuclear Age', *War on the Rocks*, 8 October 2020, <<https://warontherocks.com/2020/10/grand-strategy-is-total-french-gen-andre-beaufre-on-war-in-the-nuclear-age/>>, accessed 25 September 2025; Michael Shurkin, 'Gaza and the Imperative of Counter-External Maneuver Maneuvers', *Pax Americana*, 28 August 2025, <<https://shurkin.substack.com/p/gaza-and-the-imperative-of-counter>>, accessed 25 September 2025.

7. MFA, 'Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Launches Wartime Diplomacy Website'.

8. The GRULAC, or Group of Latin America and the Caribbean Countries, is a regional UN group composed of 33 member states from Central and South America and the Caribbean.

9. Author interview 9 with a think-tank scholar, online, 16 December 2024.

10. Author interview 11 with an expert in Latin America, online, 17 December 2024.

For this task, Ukraine already has a certain infrastructure in place, including diplomatic missions in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Cuba, Mexico and Peru, and plans to open more embassies and honorary consulates in the future. In addition, Ukraine is conducting multi-vector diplomacy efforts in the region, including at the interparliamentary level,¹¹ with the Organization of American States (where Ukraine has been a Permanent Observer since 2006¹²), universities and think tanks,¹³ and the Ukrainian diaspora (more than 1 million Ukrainians are mostly concentrated in Brazil and Argentina, but also live in other countries).¹⁴

Admittedly, Ukraine must do more with its diplomatic engagement in the region, which, in times of war, will entail trying to do 'more with less'. As one Ukrainian interviewee indicated: 'Lack of resources [creates] the obligation to be as effective as possible with every action',¹⁵ and, it may be added, to be as effective as possible with every word.

The new Ukraine–Latin America and the Caribbean Communication Strategy (LACCS), launched in May 2024¹⁶ and outlined at the 2025 RUSI Latin American Security Conference,¹⁷ builds on this concept of wartime diplomacy and must therefore be analysed. This strategy is the result of a deliberate diplomatic effort by Ukraine – even amid an existential fight to assert its independence and territorial integrity – to engage with a region of the world far from the frontlines and blessed with relative peace.

As demonstrated in this paper, the reasons for Ukraine's engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean are directly related both to Russia's political footprint in the region (a legacy of Soviet diplomacy augmented by the tools of hybrid warfare, and particularly information operations) and to the full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022. The invasion precipitated a trend to engage with other regions beyond Europe for

-
11. Press Service of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, « Голова Верховної Ради України Руслан Стефанчук закликав парламенти країн Латинської Америки та Карибського басейну до співпраці заради миру та відбудови України »[Chairman of the Unicameral Parliament of Ukraine Ruslan Stefanchuk Called on the Parliaments of Latin American and Caribbean Countries to Cooperate for the Sake of Peace and the Reconstruction of Ukraine'], 30 November 2024, <<https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/Top-novyna/256190.html>>, accessed 21 February 2025.
 12. Organization of American States, 'Permanent Observers', 2025, <https://www.oas.org/en/ser/dia/perm_observers/countries.asp>, accessed 21 February 2025.
 13. AthenaLab, 'AthenaLab y "Ukrainian Prism" Firman Acuerdo de Cooperación' [AthenaLab and "Ukrainian Prism" Sign Cooperation Agreement'], 29 November 2024, <<https://www.athenalab.org/noticias/2024/11/29/athenalab-y-ukrainian-prism-firman-acuerdo-de-cooperacion/>>, accessed 21 February 2025.
 14. Kateryna Vakarchuk, 'Ukraine's Interstate and Diaspora Relations with Argentina and Brazil', Борисфен Інтел, 4 December 2021, <<https://bintel.org.ua/en/analytics/zvyazki-ukraini-z-argentinoyu-i-braziliiyeyu/>>, accessed 22 October 2024.
 15. Author interview 26 with a strategic communications expert, online, 2 February 2025.
 16. MFA, 'MFA Presented the First-Ever Ukraine–Latin America and the Caribbean Communication Strategy [LACCS]', 28 May 2024, <<https://mfa.gov.ua/en/news/mzs-prezentovalo-pershu-v-istoriyi-komunikacijnu-strategiyu-ukrayina-derzhavi-latinskoyi-ameriki-i-karibskogo-basejnu>>, accessed 10 February 2025.
 17. RUSI, 'RUSI Latin American Security Conference 2025 – Session Recordings', 30 January 2025, <<https://my.rusi.org/events/rusi-latin-american-security-conference-2025/session-recordings.html>>, accessed 10 February 2025.

political support, which the Kremlin has been practising since 2014. As a result, during the past decade, Ukraine has had to learn – in real time – the benefits of having a cohesive communication strategy for international audiences. This strategy is all the more relevant considering the growing political fragmentation in Latin America and the Caribbean regarding the war in Ukraine.¹⁸ Diverging views on the conflict are emerging.

However, Ukraine's recent 'pivot to the south'¹⁹ is not only the product of wartime diplomacy. Indeed, these 'new horizons' are being explored not only to secure immediate survival – although that constitutes a significant motive – but also to harness all the economic and political benefits of being a full member of the international community, a status Ukraine reached in 1991. In a little over three decades, Ukraine has made considerable achievements as a sovereign nation. Yet, much remains to be done. Furthermore, if Ukraine wants its foreign policy strategy to be effective among its Latin American and Caribbean sovereign peers, it will have to be received by equivalent foreign policy strategies in the region wherever support for such efforts can be rallied.

Methodology

This paper relies on primary open sources, including formal texts of Ukrainian law, and 28 semi-structured interviews conducted with experts and stakeholders in person and online between November 2024 and February 2025.

The interviews are anonymous for safety considerations as the armed conflict is ongoing and many interviewees were more comfortable with anonymity. Fifteen of these interviewees were Ukrainian nationals either working in the private sector (as consultants, academics and think-tank researchers²⁰) or in the public sector (including diplomats and advisers directly or indirectly involved in the creation of the LACCS), in light of the fact that Ukrainian strategic communications have been described as a 'whole-of-society effort'.²¹ Ten interviewees were from the Americas, including experts in international relations and security from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico and the US; two interviewees were from Spain, due to its historical ties with Latin America; and one interviewee was from Poland, considering its proximity to Ukraine.

-
18. Rosendo Fraga, 'Las Naciones Unidas y el rol de América Latina en el conflicto ruso-ucraniano' ['The United Nations and Latin America's Role in the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict'], *Los Andes*, 4 March 2025, <<https://www.losandes.com.ar/columnistas/las-naciones-unidas-y-el-rol-america-latina-el-conflicto-ruso-ucraniano-n5940321>>, accessed 2 July 2025.
 19. Roman Kot and Viktor Nazarenko, 'Pivot to South: How Ukraine Counters the Russian Impact in India, Brazil, and Africa', *RBC-Ukraine*, 11 December 2024, <<https://newsukraine.rbc.ua/analytics/turning-south-how-ukraine-counters-russian-1733902738.html>>, accessed 19 December 2024.
 20. These experts can be highly influential diplomatic actors in their own right. See Vera Axyonova and Katsiaryna Lozka, 'Diplomacy Beyond the State: Ukrainian Think Tank Experts as Wartime Diplomacy Actors', *European Security* (Vol. 33, No. 4, 2024), pp. 557–75.
 21. Ivar Ekman and Per-Erik Nilsson, *Ukraine's Information Front: Strategic Communication During Russia's Full-Scale Invasion of Ukraine* (Stockholm: FOI, 2023), p. 7.

Secondary open sources included academic publications which refer to the LACCS and to Ukrainian and Russian activities in Latin America and in the Caribbean more broadly.

Structure

This paper offers the first comprehensive study of one of the most recent products of Ukrainian wartime diplomacy: the LACCS.²² The first chapter presents an overview of Ukraine's emerging approach to wartime diplomacy, taking into account the way Ukrainian law delineates the different policies underpinning this new strategy, in turn tracing its trajectory and highlighting Ukraine's preferred sequenced approach towards different regions. The second chapter offers a detailed analysis of the LACCS, analysing its nature and purpose. The third chapter summarises the main findings from this analysis and includes an assessment of potentially counterproductive or productive narratives. Last, several policy recommendations for Ukraine are formulated.

22. For a brief allusion to the LACCS, see Daniel F Runde, 'Ukraine's Narrative War: Combating Russian Disinformation in Latin America and the Caribbean', Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), 17 December 2024, <<https://www.csis.org/analysis/ukraines-narrative-war-combating-russian-disinformation-latin-america-and-caribbean>>, accessed 11 February 2025; Kateryna Vakarchuk, « Комунікаційна стратегія України щодо держав Латинської Америки та Карибського басейну » ['Ukraine's Communication Strategy Towards Latin America and the Caribbean'], Борисфен Інтел, 27 June 2024, <<https://bintel.org.ua/en/analytics/komunikacijna-strategiya-ukrayini-shodo-derzhav-latinskoyi-ameriki-ta-karibskogo-basejnu/>>, accessed 21 August 2024.

Ukraine's Contemporary Foreign Policy

With the annexation of Crimea and the invasion of Donbas in 2014, it became clear that Russia's intentions were openly hostile and actively belligerent. Since then, Ukraine's wartime diplomacy has been directed towards the creation of a foreign policy strategy that reflects the country's existential struggle and advances its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity. Ukraine is thus fighting a 'narrative war'²³ in the information space – alongside a traditional, kinetic war, as Russia has become undeniably proficient in all forms of hybrid warfare.²⁴ Ukraine's narrative war comprises the concept of 'strategic communication', which is analysed in this chapter.

'Strategic communication' is defined as 'the purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfil its mission'.²⁵ Beyond the negative connotations sometimes assigned to the term 'strategic',²⁶ the essence of this form of communication is persuasion, understood as the ability to influence and alter the behaviour of others without resorting to coercion (physical force, patronage or purchase). 'Strategic communication' can also be defined as 'the use of communication to promote the acceptance of ideas'.²⁷ This is where strategic communication differs from propaganda, as the former purports to deliver trustworthy information, while the latter manipulates audiences.²⁸ 'If your truth is weak, you require propaganda', one Ukrainian interviewed

23. Runde, 'Ukraine's Narrative War'; Juan Vallejos Croquevielle, *Crónicas desde la guerra en Ucrania* [Chronicles from the War in Ukraine] (Santiago: Trayecto, 2024), pp. 591, 1205.

24. Ofer Fridman, *Russian Hybrid Warfare: Resurgence and Politicisation* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018).

25. Kirk Hallahan et al., 'Defining Strategic Communication', *International Journal of Strategic Communication* (Vol. 1, No. 1, 2007), p. 3.

26. In the communicative action ethics fostered by German philosopher Jürgen Habermas, strategic action is aimed solely at manipulating another communicative agent. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action. Volume 1* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1984); Jürgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996), p. 272; James Johnson, 'Habermas on Strategic and Communicative Action', *Political Theory* (Vol. 19, No. 2, 1991), pp. 181–201. See also *ibid.*, p. 15.

27. Hallahan et al., 'Defining Strategic Communication', p. 24.

28. Per-Erik Nilsson and Ivar Ekman, "Be Brave Like Ukraine": Strategic Communication and the Mediatization of War', *National Security and the Future* (Vol. 25, No. 1, 2024), p. 26.

for this paper stated.²⁹ An interviewee from the Americas similarly remarked: 'Countering disinformation is not a thing that is possible, it is not a real outcome that you can get. The only outcome that you can get is [to] tell your own story, it has to be truthful and accurate, you cannot stop others from lying'.³⁰ Strategic communication further differs from public diplomacy in that it amounts specifically to 'the cultivation by governments of public opinion in other countries'.³¹

In the case of Ukraine's unique wartime diplomacy approach, strategic communication has become crucial to advancing the goals of a country fighting for its own survival.³² Furthermore, to strengthen its security policies, diplomacy and strategic communications, Ukraine has developed a new approach to its external policies through a series of key policy documents. In light of the radically changed geopolitical context following Russia's aggression in 2014, one of the first public documents the authorities in Kyiv produced was the 2016 'Concept of Popularising Ukraine in the World and Promoting Ukraine's Interests in the Global Information Space'.³³ Its purpose was to promote an accurate and positive image for the country built on 'up-to-date information about Ukraine in the global information space'³⁴ to counter Russian narratives. It was immediately followed in 2017 by the Information Security Doctrine of Ukraine,³⁵ which is considered as 'the birth of Ukrainian strategic communications'.³⁶ In 2019, Ukraine's Ministry of Culture and Strategic Communications was established,³⁷ and in 2021, an official Centre for Strategic Communication was set up under that ministry.³⁸

29. Author interview 28 with an expert in strategic communications, Kyiv, 4 March 2025.

30. Author interview 14 with an expert in international security, 19 December 2024.

31. This definition was originally formulated by Edmund Gullion, dean of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University and a distinguished retired foreign service officer, in 1965, as reported in Nicholas J Cull, "Public Diplomacy" Before Gullion: The Evolution of a Phrase, University of Southern California Center on Public Diplomacy, 18 April 2006, <<https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/public-diplomacy-gullion-evolution-phrase>>, accessed 26 September 2025. See also N Pipchenko and N Dovbenko, 'Public Diplomacy as a Tool of Shaping the Perceptions of Ukraine in the West Amid the Aggravation of Relations with Russia', *Actual Problems of International Relations* (No. 138, 2019), p. 16.

32. Nilsson and Ekman, "Be Brave Like Ukraine", p. 24.

33. Верховна Рада, «Про схвалення Концепції популяризації України у світі та просування інтересів України у світовому інформаційному просторі» ['On the Approval of the Concept of Popularising Ukraine in the World and Promoting Ukraine's Interests in the Global Information Space'], 11 October 2016, <<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/739-2016-%D1%80/>>, accessed 11 February 2025.

34. *Ibid.*, para. 2.

35. Office of the President of Ukraine, «Указ Президента України №47/2017: Про рішення Ради національної безпеки і оборони України від 29 грудня 2016 року «Про Доктрину інформаційної безпеки України»» ['Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 47/2017 on the Decision of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine of December 29, 2016 "On the Information Security Doctrine of Ukraine"'], 25 February 2017, <<https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/472017-21374>>, accessed 11 February 2025.

36. Nilsson and Ekman, "Be Brave Like Ukraine", p. 36.

37. Ministry of Culture and Strategic Communications of Ukraine, <<https://mcsc.gov.ua/en/>>, accessed 10 February 2025.

38. Centre for Strategic Communication, <<https://spravdi.gov.ua/en/>>, accessed 17 February 2025.

In 2020, Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council further approved the National Security Strategy,³⁹ which identified as a key aim the forging of strategic relations with foreign partners, primarily the EU and NATO, and specifically with the US, the UK, Canada, Germany and France.⁴⁰ The UN and other international (mainly European) organisations are also mentioned.⁴¹ Tellingly, and in a later section, the strategy only briefly alluded to other regions of the world – 'Asia, the Middle East, Africa and South America' – with which Ukraine aims to develop economic cooperation.⁴² As one Ukrainian interviewee noted: 'During the first twenty-five years of independence, Ukraine focused on allies – the EU, the US, Canada, Japan, Australia. Other regions did not receive much attention, but that is starting to change'.⁴³

Remaining consistent with this overarching strategy, the National Security and Defence Council adopted the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine in 2021.⁴⁴ The main purpose of this strategy was to establish Ukraine as a strong and legitimate European state that aims to join the EU and NATO while at the same time countering Russian aggression.⁴⁵ After mentioning strategic partnerships with individual countries such as Turkey, Georgia, Lithuania and China, the strategy eventually addressed political and security cooperation with Brazil.⁴⁶ Again, only after referring to other regions of the world, such as the Indo-Pacific, Asia, the Middle East and Africa, are a few paragraphs dedicated to Latin America and the Caribbean.⁴⁷ The foreign policy strategy further underscored the need to secure support from countries in the region for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity within the framework of the UN Charter.⁴⁸

Since the launch of Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Ukrainian strategic communication has gained a new urgency and geographical focus, as Russian diplomacy has gathered support for its positions in Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean. As the international diplomatic struggle has evolved globally, Kyiv has been forced to develop a diplomacy that reaches beyond its previous focus on the Euro-

39. Верховная Рада, «Про рішення Ради національної безпеки і оборони України від 14 вересня 2020 року 'Про Стратегію національної безпеки України'» [‘Decree of the President of Ukraine on the Decision of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine of September 14, 2020 “On the National Security Strategy of Ukraine”’], 14 September 2020, amended 6 January 2025, <<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/392/2020/>>, accessed 11 February 2025.

40. *Ibid.*, para. 4.

41. *Ibid.*, para. 5.

42. *Ibid.*, para. 37.

43. Author interview 1 with a Ukrainian diplomat, Santiago, 14 November 2024.

44. Office of the President of Ukraine, «Указ Президента України №448/2021 Указ Президента України №448/2021: Про рішення Ради національної безпеки і оборони України від 30 липня 2021 року «Про Стратегію зовнішньополітичної діяльності України»» [‘Decree of the President of Ukraine No. 48/2021: On the Decision of the National Security and Defence Council of Ukraine of July 30, 2021 “On the Foreign Policy Strategy of Ukraine”’], <<https://www.president.gov.ua/documents/4482021-40017>>, accessed 11 February 2025.

45. *Ibid.*, paras 1–3.

46. *Ibid.*, paras 124, 127.

47. *Ibid.*, paras 161–64.

48. *Ibid.*, para. 163.

Atlantic community. By the end of 2022, Ukraine's new foreign policy strategy crystallised during an ambassador's conference in Kyiv under the title 'War and New Horizons in the World'.⁴⁹ According to Ukraine's foreign minister at the time, Dmytro Kuleba, the underlying philosophy of this initiative was to approach Russia's war against Ukraine with a bold mindset by looking beyond a conventional horizon and incorporating a three-dimensional perspective from multiple disciplines such as science, law and history, as well as from different parts of the world, including Europe, North and South America, Africa and Asia.⁵⁰ In subsequent years, Ukraine has built on this strategy and adopted several communication strategies, beginning in 2022 with the Communication Strategy on Ukraine's European Integration for the period to 2026.⁵¹

Once Ukraine looked beyond Europe and other Western powers, Kyiv identified the next priorities in its sequenced foreign policy approach. This included key countries of the Global South in Asia, Africa and Latin America, regions that Ukraine did not prioritise before the war, but which were brought to the forefront of its diplomatic efforts due to Russia's aggression in Europe and the Kremlin's efforts to wage information warfare in the rest of the world, and particularly in those regions.

In 2022, Ukraine created the position of Special Representative of Ukraine for the Middle East and Africa aimed at providing coordination across the country's efforts to implement its new Africa strategy.⁵² Although Ukraine does not ostensibly have a communication strategy to engage with Asia as a whole, but rather tends to adopt focused bilateral approaches,⁵³ as a result of its diplomatic struggle for influence and control of the narrative of the war, Ukraine has developed dedicated communication strategies to Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean. In 2023, it published the Ukraine–African Countries Communication Strategy 2024–2026 (ACS),⁵⁴ followed in

49. *Odessa Journal*, 'Ukraine Ambassadors Conference 2022: War and New Horizons in the World', 23 December 2022, <<https://odessa-journal.com/public/ukraine-ambassadors-conference-2022-war-and-new-horizons-in-the-world>>, accessed 11 February 2025.

50. Dmytro Kuleba, « Передмова », in Dmytro Kuleba, *Війна і нові горизонти. Лідери думок про сьогодення та майбутнє України і світу* [War and New Horizons. Opinion Leaders on the Present and Future of Ukraine and the World] (Kyiv: Knigolove, 2024), pp. 11–15.

51. Верховная Рада, « Про схвалення Стратегії комунікації з питань європейської інтеграції України на період до 2026 року » [On the Approval of the Communication Strategy on Ukraine's European Integration for the Period to 2026], 9 December 2022, <<https://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/1155-2022-%D1%80>>, accessed 11 February 2025.

52. Alla Atamanenko and Natalia Konopka, 'Ukraine's African Strategy: Will It Succeed in Developing It?', *Krakowskie Studia Małopolskie* (Vol. 4, No. 44, 2024), p. 121.

53. I Krupenya, 'Policy of New Horizons of Ukraine in the Asian Direction', *Actual Problems of International Relations* (Vol. 1, No. 155, 2023), pp. 14–23.

54. MFA, 'Ukraine–African Countries Communication Strategy, 2024–2026', May 2024, <<https://mfa.gov.ua/storage/app/sites/1/ctrategiya-afrika-eng.pdf>>, accessed 11 February 2025.

May 2024 by the LACCS (see Chapter Two).⁵⁵ It is important to note several aspects of the ACS, since this provided the template for creating the LACCS.⁵⁶

The ACS states at the outset that the 2022 Strategy for the Development of Relations between Ukraine and African States was adopted within the framework of the New Horizons strategy.⁵⁷ As part of these two strategies, Ukraine significantly increased its diplomatic activity in Africa, opening 10 new embassies and conducting direct engagements at the highest level. It indeed seems that 'Ukraine is playing a game of diplomatic catch-up in Africa', as one scholar put it, in reaction to Russia's hybrid warfare (including kinetic and information warfare) on the continent.⁵⁸

One main driver behind the ACS was Ukraine's effort to highlight a common history with Africa of fighting for freedom and statehood, as post-colonial actors.⁵⁹ The main purpose of the strategy was to develop 'a clear, effective, coordinated architecture of the MFA's external communications aimed at strengthening support for Ukraine in the fight against Russian aggression and developing strategic long-term, mutually beneficial, and friendly relations with the countries of the African continent'.⁶⁰ The ACS detailed 13 objectives, including maintaining a strong presence, including media engagement, counteracting anti-Ukraine narratives and disinformation, and promoting the Ukrainian Peace Formula.⁶¹ These efforts included emphasising food security, holding Russia accountable, and promoting the independence and territorial integrity of African states.⁶²

The MFA expects the ACS to effectively deliver a message to both internal (Ukrainian) and external (African) audiences, including public and private actors, over a period of three years (2024–26).⁶³ However, Ukrainian officials have reportedly had difficulty implementing this strategy across African states that are already divided on the issue of the Russo-Ukrainian war,⁶⁴ notably due to the great political influence Russia still exerts in Africa, as well as to alleged Ukrainian military activities in places such as

-
55. MFA, 'Communication Strategy: Ukraine–Latin America and the Caribbean, 2024–2026', <<https://mfa.gov.ua/storage/app/sites/1/ukraine-latin-america-and-the-caribbean-eng-web.pdf>>, accessed 11 February 2025.
56. Author interview 27 with a strategic communications expert from Ukraine, online, 17 February 2025.
57. MFA, 'Ukraine–African Countries Communication Strategy 2024–2026', p. 2.
58. Richard Morrow, 'The Possibilities in Ukraine's African Diplomatic Asymmetry', Brenthurst Foundation, 9 September 2024, <<https://www.thebrenthurstfoundation.org/news/the-possibilities-in-ukraines-african-diplomatic-asymmetry/>>, accessed 1 November 2024.
59. MFA, 'Ukraine–African Countries Communication Strategy 2024–2026', pp. 2, 9.
60. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
61. Official website of Ukraine, 'What is Zelenskyy's 10-Point Peace Plan?', 17 September 2024, <<https://war.ukraine.ua/faq/zelenskyy-10-point-peace-plan/>>, accessed 27 November 2025.
62. MFA, 'Ukraine–African Countries Communication Strategy 2024–2026', pp. 8–9.
63. *Ibid.*, pp. 4, 10–11.
64. Hannah Ryder and Etsehiwot Kebret, 'Why African Countries Had Different Views on the UNGA Ukraine Resolution, and Why This Matters', CSIS, 15 March 2022, <<https://www.csis.org/analysis/why-african-countries-had-different-views-unga-ukraine-resolution-and-why-matters>>, accessed 3 December 2024.

Sudan and Mali to counter Russia-backed forces.⁶⁵ The Ukrainian government believes its political investment in the region has yet to yield the expected returns.⁶⁶

For many African states, memories of historical and contemporary experiences of Western dominance remain more salient than Russian imperialism, a perception Moscow has skilfully reinforced through decades of strategic communication and political engagement. A similar dynamic is observable in Latin America and the Caribbean, where scepticism towards Western narratives, enduring memories of US interventionism, and pressing domestic socioeconomic concerns complicate efforts to cultivate empathy for Ukraine's anti-imperial framing. Unless accompanied by sustained, tangible engagement and a nuanced sensitivity to regional historical experiences, Ukraine narratives strategy risk appearing selective or instrumental.

In short, Ukraine's approach to foreign policy for the past decade has been focused on countering disinformation emanating from the main threat to its national security and identity, namely Russia. As Zelenskyy put it at the latest UN General Assembly session in 2025, Ukraine is looking to engage with friends and with those who want to become its friends.⁶⁷

Ukraine has approached this by establishing relations with neighbours, allies and partners following a sequenced regional approach starting in Europe and North America and gradually expanding to other regions. The ACS was launched in 2023 in tandem with renewed diplomatic efforts, including the opening of new embassies and high-level meetings with state officials. Using the ACS as a model, in 2024 Ukraine looked for new horizons beyond the North Atlantic, setting its sights on Latin America and the Caribbean with the LACCS.

-
65. Morgane Le Cam, 'Ukraine Struggles to Implement its "African Strategy"', *Le Monde*, 7 August 2024, <https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2024/08/07/ukraine-struggles-to-implement-its-african-strategy_6711004_4.html>, accessed 19 December 2024.
66. Peter Fabricius, 'Ukraine Steps Up its Charm Offensive in Africa', Institute for Security Studies, 3 May 2024, <<https://issafrica.org/iss-today/ukraine-steps-up-its-charm-offensive-in-africa>>, accessed 19 December 2024.
67. Office of the President of Ukraine, 'Speech by the President During the General Debate of the UN General Assembly in New York', 24 September 2025, <<https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/vistup-prezidenta-pid-chas-zagalnih-debativ-generalnoyi-asam-100349>>, accessed 17 November 2025.

Assessing the LACCS

This paper situates Ukraine's diplomatic efforts within the context of the war with Russia, describing the way these efforts have evolved to cover an increasingly wider audience, starting with Europe and North America and expanding to the rest of the world, beginning with Africa. This chapter analyses the next step in this global communication strategy: Latin America and the Caribbean.

The LACCS

In its search for new friends, Ukraine has turned to Latin America and the Caribbean, a region with a population of 663 million, home to OECD member countries (such as Mexico and Chile) and a BRICS member (Brazil), and which is a member of a distinct UN regional group. If not military aid, Ukraine can obtain political support from the region at international organisations, as well as economic opportunities, cultural exchanges and the promotion of Ukraine as a sovereign nation to an even larger audience. However, it is a region where Russia already has a large footprint, making Ukraine's efforts for its cause even more challenging and necessary.

Since Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014, and especially after its invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Ukraine has been struggling to fend off Russian aggression not only on the battlefield, but also wherever Russia's hybrid warfare efforts manifest themselves – including in the information space. Latin America and the Caribbean is an important part of this Russian global effort. Parts of Latin America and the Caribbean have conserved a nostalgia for the myth of the USSR as a champion against 'Western imperialism', and Moscow has sought to draw on this nostalgia and build support by framing its actions in Ukraine as 'defensive' against Western expansion.⁶⁸ Anti-US sentiment in this hemisphere should not be underestimated. The Russian machine⁶⁹

68. Kot and Nazarenko, 'Pivot to South'.

69. Runde, 'Ukraine's Narrative War'; Iryna Shynkarenko, « «Інформаційна армія» Росії в Латинській Америці: навіщо Кремль витрачає гроші на антиукраїнську пропаганду в сусідньому до США регіоні? » ['Russia's "Information Army" in Latin America: Why is the Kremlin Spending Money on Anti-Ukrainian Propaganda in the Region Neighbouring the United States?'], VOA, 8 November 2023, <<https://www.holosameryky.com/a/jak-die-informacoina-armoia-rf-u-latynskii-ameryci/7343710.html>>, accessed 7 January 2025; Douglas Farah and Román D Ortiz, *Russian Influence Campaigns in Latin America* (Washington, DC: United States Institute for Peace, 2023).

and its public diplomacy efforts⁷⁰ have been very effective in exploiting it, in particular through media outlets such as *Russia Today* (RT)⁷¹ (especially RT in Spanish, which advertises itself as ‘the most watched international Spanish-language news channel in the world’⁷²) and *Sputnik Mundo*.⁷³ Such efforts draw on an anti-US and anti-colonial rhetoric that dates back to the early Cold War,⁷⁴ resulting in the need for Ukraine to develop a communication strategy to counter such efforts. *UA Español*,⁷⁵ the Ukrainian channel that is the answer to RT and *Sputnik Mundo*, could prove a powerful tool.

In 2024, the MFA’s Department General for Public Diplomacy and Communications created the LACCS, which comprises both regional and communications specialists, working in consultation with diplomats and other experts. The LACCS is also part of the New Horizons philosophy.⁷⁶ In addition, it is underpinned by a more comprehensive – but unpublished and potentially sensitive⁷⁷ – Strategy for the Development of Relations between Ukraine and Latin America and the Caribbean, which was approved in January 2024 and is aimed at resetting relations with the region.⁷⁸ Like the ACS, the concise communication strategy (14 pages long) was meant to be implemented at the embassy level as a guide for diplomats (as well as an invitation for the rest of Ukrainian society) to be more effective in their messaging.⁷⁹

The LACCS began by highlighting recent engagements between Ukrainian leadership and Latin American and Caribbean countries. Ukraine notably relaunched bilateral and multilateral relations through state visits by Guatemala’s President Alejandro Giammattei to Kyiv in 2022, and by Zelenskyy to Buenos Aires in 2023.⁸⁰ Unlike the ACS, the LACCS includes a ‘Vision’ section, which visualises Latin American and Caribbean countries supporting Ukraine’s independence and struggle for its sovereignty,⁸¹

70. Carlos Solar, ‘Moscow’s Other Offensive: Russian Public Diplomacy in Latin America’, *RUSI Commentary*, 19 March 2024, <<https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/moscows-other-offensive-russian-public-diplomacy-latin-america>>, accessed 20 August 2024.

71. RT, <<https://www.rt.com/>>, accessed 17 November 2025.

72. RT (Spanish language), <<https://actualidad.rt.com/>>, accessed 17 November 2025.

73. *Sputnik Mundo*, <<https://noticiaslatam.lat/>>, accessed 17 November 2025.

74. Dean Acheson, *Present at the Creation: My Years in the State Department* (New York, NY: W W Norton & Company, 1969), p. 499.

75. *UA Español*, <<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UClWkxQ62jgu-J7H-qrpMJXA>>, accessed 21 February 2025.

76. *Odessa Journal*, ‘Ukraine Ambassadors Conference 2022’.

77. Author interview 27 with a strategic communications expert from Ukraine, online, 17 February 2025.

78. MFA, ‘Communication Strategy: Ukraine–Latin America and the Caribbean, 2024–2026’, p. 2; Lolita Zhuk, ‘Reset of Ukrainian Diplomacy in Latin America’, Razumkov Centre, 24 January 2024, <<https://razumkov.org.ua/en/articles/reset-of-ukrainian-diplomacy-in-latin-america>>, accessed 17 February 2025.

79. Author interviews 26 and 27 with strategic communications experts from Ukraine, online, 4 and 17 February 2025.

80. MFA, ‘Communication Strategy: Ukraine–Latin America and the Caribbean, 2024–2026’, p. 2.

81. ‘Ukraine is a strong, independent, and sovereign state that enjoys unwavering support from Latin American countries. The countries of the region have recognized the illegality of Russian aggression, condemned Russia’s military invasion and war crimes as blatant violations of international law and are building partnerships with Ukraine on the path to peaceful and prosperous future’. See MFA, ‘Communication Strategy: Ukraine–Latin America and the Caribbean, 2024–2026’, p. 8.

although the basic guiding principles are fundamentally the same as those of the ACS.⁸² The main stated purpose of the LACCS is the 'Efficient development of a clear, viable, and coherent architecture of the MFA's external communications geared towards strengthening support for Ukraine as a sovereign and respected state in the fight against Russian aggression and developing strategic, long-term, mutually beneficial, and friendly relations with Latin American countries'.⁸³ One Ukrainian interviewee added: 'What the strategy gives us is a tool to allow us to disseminate our information, our truth [and] our point of view in the region, without hurting the feelings of Latin Americans'.⁸⁴

Like the ACS, the LACCS has two parallel sets of strategic and communication objectives (see Box 1). The expected outcomes resulting from these objectives amount to a clear understanding by target audiences that Ukraine is a free and sovereign state that can be a strong political and economic partner, and that it is the victim of a devastating war of aggression by Russia which is posing a major threat to the stability of the entire world.⁸⁵

The LACCS has several additional tasks to achieve the main objectives at a more operational level, including: maintaining a permanent presence in the information space in the region; countering anti-Ukrainian disinformation, propaganda and fake news; promoting the Formula for Peace and a Ukraine–Latin America summit; raising awareness of Russia's aggressive and genocidal war against Ukraine and the threat its imperialist actions pose to the entire world; advancing cultural diplomacy; and building a network of journalists and influencers in the region.⁸⁶ These tasks are aimed at reaching both internal (Ukrainian) and external (Latin American and Caribbean, including the Ukrainian diaspora) public and private audiences.⁸⁷

The LACCS also lists communication channels which can help to broadcast it on the internal level in Ukraine (for example, official government, NGO, university and civil society websites, social media sites and opinion leaders) and the external level in Latin America and the Caribbean (for example, official websites of Ukrainian diplomatic missions, local media, civil society information channels, and Ukrainian media broadcasting in foreign languages, such as *United24* and *Ukraine.ua*).⁸⁸

82. The basic principles are: Proactivity; Clarity; The One Voice Policy; Innovation; Adaptability; Credibility; Reciprocity; and Performance Focus. See MFA, 'Communication Strategy: Ukraine-Latin America and the Caribbean, 2024–2026', p. 3. MFA, 'Ukraine–African Countries Communication Strategy 2024–026', p. 3.

83. MFA, 'Communication Strategy: Ukraine–Latin America and the Caribbean, 2024–2026', p. 8.

84. Author interview 1 with a Ukrainian diplomat, Santiago, 14 November 2024.

85. MFA, 'Communication Strategy: Ukraine–Latin America and the Caribbean, 2024–2026', p. 9.

86. *Ibid.*, p. 9.

87. *Ibid.*, p. 10.

88. *Ibid.*, p. 11.

Box 1. The LACCS

As stated in the LACCS, the parallel strategic and communication objectives of this initiative are outlined below:

Strategic Objectives

1. Promote Ukraine's positive reputation in Latin America and the Caribbean as a free, sovereign, and powerful state.
2. Strengthen perception of Ukraine in Latin American countries, which will help boost their support for Ukraine in international cooperation settings.
3. Encourage as many Latin American countries as possible to officially condemn Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine.
4. Maintain favorable attitude of internal and external audiences to Ukraine's policy towards Latin American countries.

Communication Objectives

1. Strengthen and further promote a holistic image of Ukraine in Latin America as an independent and sovereign state with its own distinctive history, language, and culture.
2. Improve perception of Ukraine as a resilient, trustworthy, and desirable partner that both respects Latin American countries and understands their needs.
3. Convey to the target audiences in Latin America the truthful information about the consequences of Russia's armed aggression against Ukraine and help them realize the detrimental impact of this aggression on the Latin American region and the entire world.
4. Facilitate clear and convincing communication of Ukraine's foreign policy initiatives in Latin America among external and internal audiences.⁸⁹

89. *Ibid.*, p. 8.

One feature of the LACCS relating to external target audiences is its identification of 'Key countries', based on criteria such as economic capacity, political relevance, multilateral interaction, security cooperation, cultural and diplomatic ties to Ukraine, diverse media landscape, environmental and humanitarian engagement.⁹⁰ This follows the ACS,⁹¹ as both strategies seek to engage immense and diverse continents through a more selective approach. However, the LACCS does not single out any countries. It is worth noting that according to one Ukrainian interviewee, this is a considerable mistake, since the region is not a bloc and thus 'there should be a different message for each country, depending on its history, its relationship to the US and Russia, the presence of Ukrainian diaspora'.⁹²

The monitoring and evaluation of the LACCS and the ACS is entrusted to the MFA's Department General for Public Diplomacy and Communications,⁹³ the agency originally tasked with drafting both strategies. The LACCS lists several indicators of success: the share of target audiences who perceive Ukraine as an independent and sovereign country; the number of statements and decisions adopted by Latin American and Caribbean authorities (including at international organisations) in support of Ukraine and which condemn Russia's aggression; the number of international cooperation initiatives between Ukraine and the region; and the share of people who consider Russia's aggression to be politically and economically detrimental for Ukraine and for Latin America and the Caribbean. These metrics are to be measured using opinion surveys, online analytics, media monitoring, research output and public discourse, according to one Ukrainian interviewee,⁹⁴ through online and offline sources.⁹⁵

'In Ukraine we adopt a lot of strategies, but it doesn't mean they will work'.⁹⁶ This remark, made by a Ukrainian communications expert interviewee, demands an earnest assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the LACCS. Following a comprehensive analysis for this paper of the literature on Ukraine's diplomatic and strategic communication push, and a survey of the informed opinions of experts and stakeholders on both sides of the Atlantic, certain narratives currently promoted by the LACCS have the potential to be productive and others counterproductive. These are outlined below.

90. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

91. MFA, 'Ukraine-African Countries Communication Strategy 2024-2026', pp. 4-5.

92. Author interview 9 with a think-tank scholar, online, 16 December 2024.

93. MFA, 'Communication Strategy: Ukraine-Latin America and the Caribbean, 2024-2026', p. 12; MFA, 'Ukraine-African Countries', p. 12.

94. Author interview 27 with a strategic communications expert, online, 17 February 2025.

95. MFA, 'Communication Strategy: Ukraine-Latin America and the Caribbean, 2024-2026', pp. 12-13.

96. Author interview 4 with a Ukrainian strategic communications expert, online, 10 December 2024.

Potentially Counterproductive Narratives

The 'Global South'

The term 'Global South' has become a well-known expression and appears to be in tune with Ukraine's New Horizons diplomatic push to pursue a 'multi-vector' foreign policy.⁹⁷ It is indeed a concept with which all the expert interviewees for this paper were familiar. However, none believe that this term is helpful, viewing it as either artificial, too broad, too ideological (pertaining to a certain agenda of a reduced group of countries such as those in BRICS), or not nuanced enough. Two interviewees even characterised the expression as a new version of 'Orientalism'⁹⁸ (that is, the doctrine developed by Edward Said according to which the 'Orient' is a construct the West uses to simplify and subdue other cultures).

These assessments echo some of the most recent scholarship calling for a departure from the term 'Global South', since it does not capture the many diverging interests that these countries have and prevents them from being seen as operating as single entities.⁹⁹ The fact that under this label some G20 countries (for example, Russia, China and India) and some European countries (for example, Ukraine) are classified as 'Global South', whereas some Latin American countries (for example, Chile and Uruguay) are classified as 'Global North',¹⁰⁰ further calls into question the utility of the concept.

Such conceptual and practical shortcomings are arguably the reason why the term 'Global South' is not even mentioned in either the ACS or the LACCS, as both strategies reportedly preferred to exclude it from their glossary.¹⁰¹ Accordingly, when the MFA issued a statement on the 2024 BRICS Summit Declaration, it tellingly referred to the 'so-called Global South', as it highlighted Russia's failure to secure support for its policies among such disparate countries.¹⁰² Thus, it would be wise for the MFA to

97. Anastasiia Solohub-Kosenko, Ivan Fechko and Veronika Skorobogatko, *EU–Latin American Relations: Analyzing Cooperation from a Ukrainian Perspective* (Kyiv: Ukrainian Prism, 2024), p. 4; *Odessa Journal*, 'Ambassadors Conference'; Ukraine World, 'South Africa, India, and Ukraine: Time for Mutual Discoveries', podcast, 18 October 2024, <<https://ukraineworld.org/en/podcasts/ep-330>>, accessed 17 February 2025.

98. Author interview 12 with a practitioner familiar with Ukraine, online, 17 December 2024; author interview 13 with an expert in international security, online, 18 December 2024.

99. Comfort Ero, 'The Trouble With "the Global South": What the West Gets Wrong About the Rest', *Foreign Affairs*, 1 April 2024, <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/world/trouble-global-south>>, accessed 22 July 2024; Ukraine World, 'Can Ukraine Find Allies in the Global South? – with Omar Ashour', podcast, 30 October 2024, <<https://ukraineworld.org/en/podcasts/ep-331>>, accessed 17 February 2025.

100. Nicolás Véron, 'Much of the Global South is on Ukraine's Side', *Bruegel*, 13 March 2023, <<https://www.bruegel.org/first-glance/much-global-south-ukraines-side>>, accessed 4 December 2024.

101. Author interviews 26, 27 and 28 with strategic communications experts from Ukraine, online (interviews 26 and 27) and Kyiv (interview 28), 4 and 17 February and 4 March 2025.

102. MFA, 'Comment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine Regarding the Final Declaration of the BRICS Summit in Kazan', 23 October 2024, <<https://mfa.gov.ua/en/news/komentar-mzs-shchodo-pidsumkovoyi-deklaraciyi-samitu-briks-u-kazani>>, accessed 17 February 2025.

continue to refrain from using the term 'Global South' for the LACCS and other strategies, if it wishes to achieve its desired impact.

Anti-Colonialism

The anti-colonial/imperial narrative is explicitly included in both the ACS¹⁰³ and the LACCS.¹⁰⁴ Anti-colonialism can be further observed in several statements by Ukrainian authorities specifically aimed at non-Western countries,¹⁰⁵ and particularly at Latin American and Caribbean audiences.¹⁰⁶ As one Ukrainian interviewee put it: 'Ukraine is fighting against a new colonialism. ... Russia is an expansionist dictatorship. ... All countries that have fought against colonialism understand this'.¹⁰⁷

However, this anti-colonial rhetoric does not resonate as strongly in the region, as confirmed by many Latin American and Ukrainian interviewees. The former suggested that colonialism is perceived in the region more in a chronological sense (something that happened a long time ago) than in an ontological sense (something that defines their identity). On the one hand, their former colonial rulers, for instance *la madre patria* ('mother Spain'), are not viewed in an entirely negative light. They can even be perceived as connecting Latin America and the Caribbean to Europe (including Ukraine, as a gateway to the rest of the continent).¹⁰⁸ On the other hand, no Latin American or Caribbean country has ever been formally colonised by the USSR or Russia,¹⁰⁹ so it is more difficult for them to imagine what it means to suffer Russian imperialism. Hence, Ukraine's anti-colonial narrative does not adequately reflect the point of view of the region at this juncture in its history and thus should not be relied on.

103. MFA, 'Ukraine–African Countries Communication Strategy 2024–2026', p. 9.

104. MFA, 'Communication Strategy: Ukraine–Latin America and the Caribbean, 2024–2026', p. 9.

105. Yuliia Kurnyshova, 'Ukraine and the Global South: The Ambiguities of a Postcolonial Perspective', *New Perspectives* (Vol. 32, No. 3, 2024), pp. 272–89.

106. Office of the President of Ukraine, 'Andriy Yermak Held an Online Meeting with Political and Public Figures from Latin America', 14 September 2023, <<https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/andrij-yermak-proviv-onlajn-zustrich-iz-politichnimi-ta-grom-85613>>, accessed 6 January 2025; Office of the President of Ukraine, 'When Our Voices are Heard in Unison, We Will Prevail, and Peace, Justice and the Rule of Law Will be Restored – Address by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to Students and Professors of Universities in Mexico', 9 November 2023, <<https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/koli-nashi-golosi-lunatimut-v-unison-mi-peremozhemo-mir-spra-86853>>, accessed 6 January 2025; Верховна Рада, 'Ukraine Strengthens Cooperation with Latin American and Caribbean Countries by Deepening Work at the Inter-Parliamentary Level', 30 May 2024, <<https://www.rada.gov.ua/en/print/250092.html>>, accessed 6 January 2025; Office of the President of Ukraine, 'Speech by President to the Students of Colombian Universities', 15 November 2024, <<https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/yakim-bude-majbutnye-zalezhit-vid-kozhnogo-z-nas-sogodni-vis-94441>>, accessed 6 January 2025.

107. Author interview 1 with a Ukrainian diplomat, Santiago, 14 November 2024.

108. Solohub-Kosenko, Fechko and Skorobogatko, *EU–Latin American Relations*, p. 9.

109. Kurnyshova, 'Ukraine and the Global South', p. 280. Nevertheless, Latin America was marked by USSR and communist presence during much of the 20th century and Soviet competition with the US was indeed strong in the strategic, economic and social dimensions. Since the Cold War, the US has sought to keep the Western Hemisphere free from extra-hemispheric ideologies and influence. See, for example, Cole Blasier, 'Soviet Impacts on Latin America', *Russian History* (Vol. 29, Nos 2–4, 2002), pp. 481–97; Thomas C Field Jr, 'US and the Cold War in Latin America', *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Latin American History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

'Pro-West'

Latin American and Caribbean countries have been colonised by Western powers – the very same powers which Ukraine wishes to partner with today. This aspect can be problematic. As Ukrainian international security expert Yuliia Kurnyshova puts it:

“The Ukrainian version of postcolonialism is more about underscoring Ukraine's European credentials. ... However, for many countries of the global South, it is US imperialism and the entire Euro-Atlantic international order that are seen as the center of postcolonial domination of the global scale, which creates a niche for accepting Putin's narrative of Russia as an anti-colonial force challenging the American hegemony.”¹¹⁰

As indicated previously, Soviet nostalgia and anti-US sentiment in Latin America and the Caribbean should not be underestimated. In addition, Latin Americans often demand consistency from the West, whereby every transgression of the rules-based order should be resisted: not only Russia's aggression against Ukraine, but also the war in Gaza and other conflicts in the Middle East.¹¹¹ Moreover, Ukraine itself has not publicly denounced President Donald Trump's brazen neo-imperialist designs on Panama, which could undermine its anti-colonial narrative and hurt its image in the region, since Panama has been one of the most active supporters of Kyiv.¹¹²

Certainly, Latin America and the Caribbean could benefit from more engagement with Europe,¹¹³ and particularly with Ukraine, as the world seemingly moves back to a bipolar era. However, due to the complexities of adopting an openly and inflexible 'pro-West' stance, Ukraine should eschew this notion in the LACCS if it wishes to be effective while addressing Latin American and Caribbean audiences.

Non-Alignment

Perhaps one of the most formidable challenges to Ukraine's LACCS is the proclivity of Latin America and the Caribbean to be non-aligned in international affairs, pursuant to the principle of non-intervention and grounded in an understandable fear of great power predation, an approach dating back to the heyday of the Cold War. Ukraine shares this same proclivity. As one Ukrainian interviewee put it: 'We have something similar to

110. Kurnyshova, 'Ukraine and the Global South', p. 277.

111. Mykola Riabchuk, 'Ukraine's (Im)Possible Engagement with the Global South', 29 July 2024, <<https://platformraam.nl/artikelen/2643-ukraines-im-possible-engagement-with-non-allied-countries>>, accessed 4 December 2024; Francis Ghilès, 'Global South Does Not Buy Western Stance on Ukraine', *CIDOB Opinion* (No. 765, 2023), pp. 1–3.

112. Office of the President of Ukraine, 'Ukraine and Panama Will Develop Cooperation in Agriculture', 25 September 2024, <<https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/ukrayina-ta-panama-rozvivatimut-spivpracyu-v-silskomu-gospod-93497>>, accessed 18 February 2025.

113. *El País*, 'La UE y Mercosur: Una Tercera Vía' ['The EU and Mercosur: A Third Way'], 7 December 2024, <<https://elpais.com/opinion/2024-12-07/la-ue-y-mercosur-una-tercera-via.html>>, accessed 10 December 2024.

Mexico's geostrategy – Porfirio Díaz said “poor Mexico, so far from God, so close to the US” [and so] “poor Ukraine, so far from God, so close to Russia”.¹¹⁴

In the context of the Russo-Ukrainian war, the interplay of Latin American and Caribbean non-alignment and the different relations between individual Latin American and Caribbean countries and Russia and the US has resulted in the emergence of three distinct camps.¹¹⁵ Latin America is divided between countries openly supporting Ukraine (Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Paraguay and Uruguay); countries openly supporting Russia (Bolivia, Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela); and those in the middle (most notably Brazil, Colombia and Mexico). Mexico City is reportedly the home base of Russian propaganda in the region.¹¹⁶ The middle category of countries, which has been a source of great concern among Ukrainians, seems to pursue policies of ‘fence-sitting’ or ‘hedging’ in ‘response to the rise of a new, multipolar world’.¹¹⁷ Yet, some, such as the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek, have denounced ‘the dark side of neutrality’, as neutrality might end up enabling Russian imperialism.¹¹⁸ Indeed, all Russia needs to achieve its goals is for other countries to be neutral.¹¹⁹ It is also worth noting that according to one interviewee from Latin America, whereas there is alignment between political and diplomatic elites in countries such as Chile, in ‘Brazil and Mexico there is more disparity, as diplomatic elites are more receptive [to the Ukrainian message] than political elites’.¹²⁰

Nevertheless, while the notion of non-alignment does not inherently carry negative implications, in practice it can have deleterious consequences. The fact that the doctrine of ‘Active Non-Alignment’ (ANA)¹²¹ is promoted by some voices in their region might suggest why Latin American and Caribbean countries are sometimes able to condemn Russia's aggression, while at the same time not enforcing sanctions against it.¹²² One Ukrainian interviewee underscored the idea that ‘we need to work with Latin

114. Author interview 11 with an expert in Latin America, online, 17 December 2024.

115. Kateryna Vakarchuk, « Російсько-українська війна у сприйнятті Латинської Америки » [‘Latin America's Perception of the Russian-Ukrainian War’], Борисфен Інтел, 18 August 2022, <<https://bintel.org.ua/en/analytics/politics/rosijsko-ukrayinska-vijna-u-spriinyatti-latinskoyi-ameriki/>>, accessed 21 August 2024; Juan Gabriel Vásquez, « Опирайся, Україно » [‘Resist, Ukraine’], in Kuleba, *Війна і нові горизонти. Лідери думок про сьогодення та майбутнє України і світу* [War and New Horizons. Opinion Leaders on the Present and Future of Ukraine and the World], pp. 28–29.

116. Author interview 18 with a Ukrainian diplomat, online, 8 January 2025; Ivan U Klyszcz, ‘Russia's Changing Latin America Strategy’, PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo (No. 875, 2024), pp. 1–6.

117. Matias Spektor, ‘In Defense of the Fence Sitters’, *Foreign Affairs*, 18 April 2023, <<https://www.foreignaffairs.com/world/global-south-defense-fence-sitters>>, accessed 26 November 2024.

118. Slavoj Žižek, ‘The Dark Side of Neutrality’, Project Syndicate, 17 February 2023, <<https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/neutrality-functions-as-support-for-russian-aggression-by-slavoj-zizek-2023-02>>, accessed 4 December 2024.

119. Runde, ‘Ukraine's Narrative War’.

120. Author interview 23 with an international security scholar, online, 16 January 2025.

121. Carlos Ominami, ‘Un no alineamiento activo’ [‘An Active Non-Alignment’], *La Tercera*, 9 August 2019, <<https://www.latercera.com/opinion/noticia/no-alineamiento-activo/774839/>>, accessed 16 December 2024.

122. J Luis Rodriguez, ‘International Order and Latin American Reticent Support for Ukraine’, *Bulletin of Latin American Research* (Vol. 43, No. 4, 2024), p. 293.

America so it does not collaborate with Russia, and to obtain votes and international support in order to globalise the war'.¹²³ Moreover, those who believe in ANA should note that ambiguity and fence-sitting are not just theoretical tools at the disposal of states; they could also result in the death of innocent civilians. As one Ukrainian interviewee pointedly remarked: 'If Latin American countries keep trading with Russia, they need to be reminded that the latter is killing people, each dollar it makes is turned into a bomb and they stain their hands with the blood of Ukrainians'.¹²⁴ 'Neutrality does not mean indifference',¹²⁵ as Zelenskyy reminded a Mexican audience during an online address in 2023.¹²⁶

Hence, ANA should not necessarily mean neutrality or indifference: it should admit criticism of normative transgressions. When adopted, ANA also should not freeze countries forever in an equidistant position between great powers; instead, it should lead them to espouse a principled 'variable geometry'¹²⁷ and to participate in collective action through international organisations.¹²⁸ These are, at least, the theoretical arguments advanced by those who defend the concept of ANA. Whether countries follow this doctrine in practice is a different issue. Regrettably, the potential future benefits which countries may derive from following the doctrine of ANA can come at the cost of irreparable harm to other states and populations in the present. Thus, ANA is not a doctrine that should be embraced uncritically, or out of blind respect for a historical tradition of non-alignment.

Potentially Productive Narratives

Values

'Rules are the voice of reason applied to international relations, the best defense we have against the law of the strongest'.¹²⁹ These powerful words were delivered at the 2025 UN General Assembly – a few minutes before Zelenskyy spoke – by King Felipe VI of Spain. His ancestors once ruled Latin America and he is today a constitutional

123. Author interview 9 with a think-tank scholar, online, 16 December 2024.

124. Author interview 11 with an expert in Latin America, online, 17 December 2024.

125. Rafael F Castro Alegría and Viviana García Pinzón, 'Peripheral Autonomy in a Multipolar Order: Latin American Reactions to the War in Ukraine', *Bulletin of Latin American Research* (Vol. 43, No. 4, 2024), p. 316.

126. Office of the President of Ukraine, 'When Our Voices are Heard in Unison, We Will Prevail, and Peace, Justice and the Rule of Law Will be Restored – Address by President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to Students and Professors of Universities in Mexico'.

127. Carlos Fortin, Jorge Heine and Carlos Ominami (eds), *Latin American Foreign Policies in the New World Order. The Active Non-Alignment Option* (London: Anthem Press, 2023), p. 449.

128. Chris Alden, 'The Global South and Russia's Invasion of Ukraine', *LSE Public Policy Review* (Vol. 3, No. 16, 2023).

129. Casa de Su Majestad el Rey, 'Intervención de Su Majestad el Rey en la apertura del 80º periodo de sesiones de la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas' ['Statement by His Majesty the King at the Opening of the 80th Session of the United Nations General Assembly'], 24 September 2025, <https://www.casareal.es/EN/Actividades/Paginas/actividades_disursos_detalle.aspx?data=6737>, accessed 21 November 2025.

monarch bound by the law of the land. Ukraine is a highly legalistic society, as are certain countries in Latin America. Accordingly, Ukraine has explicitly included in the LACCS 'Vision' the need to uphold international law in the face of Russia's violation of its core principles.¹³⁰ Considering the premium that Latin American and Caribbean countries place on the rules-based international order and the values it embodies (classic liberal ideals such as democracy, the rule of law and individual rights¹³¹), 'values' would be a highly productive narrative for Ukraine to pursue.¹³² As Chile's President Gabriel Boric remarked at the Ukraine Peace Summit in Switzerland in 2024: 'We choose humanity and the civilizatory [sic] advances that we, together as United Nations, have achieved. Today [it] is Ukraine and Palestine; tomorrow it could be any one of us'.¹³³ Echoing this message from a fellow 'small' country, the Nobel laureate and former president of Liberia, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, similarly highlighted the importance of international law for all countries, especially small ones, by saying, 'It is unacceptable for small nations to be subjugated by more powerful ones simply because one of them is militarily superior'.¹³⁴ Or, as the EU high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, Kaja Kallas, put it recently: 'Rules are the nuclear weapons of smaller states'.¹³⁵ In short, values can both be intrinsically valuable beliefs and a means for achieving the security goals of small states.

Beyond states conducting official foreign policy, Latin American civil society has rallied behind Ukraine in its defence of the rules-based order and the humanitarian values underpinning it. According to many experts interviewed for this paper, such values are one of the things Ukraine and Latin America and the Caribbean have in common. This civil society mobilisation is seen through initiatives such as Aguanta Ucrania¹³⁶ (Hang on Ukraine), which feature prominent public figures supporting the cause and lobbying at the UN level.¹³⁷ Social support has also been demonstrated by the hundreds of foreign fighters from Latin America who have volunteered to join Ukraine's war

130. MFA, 'Communication Strategy: Ukraine–Latin America and the Caribbean, 2024–2026', p. 8.

131. Fareed Zakaria, *Age of Revolutions. Progress and Backlash from 1600 to the Present* (New York, NY: W W Norton and Company, 2024), pp. 272–82.

132. Kurnyshova, 'Ukraine and the Global South', p. 282; Riabchuk, 'Ukraine's (Im)Possible Engagement'.

133. Francisco Lobo, 'Chile and the Global South at the Summit on Peace in Ukraine: A Case of Multi-Dimensional Diplomacy', Independent Analytical Center for Geopolitical Studies, 19 July 2024, <<https://bintel.org.ua/en/analytics/chili-ta-krayini-globalnogo-pivdnya-na-samiti-miru-dlya-ukrayini/>>, accessed 19 February 2025.

134. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, 'Війна в Україні' ['The War in Ukraine'], in Kuleba, *Війна і нові горизонти* [War and New Horizons], p. 71.

135. EU Debates, 'Kaja Kallas' Powerful Message: A New Era for EU-Latin America Relations!', YouTube, 17 February 2025, at 4:30, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPVGUrMOrt8>>, accessed 19 February 2025.

136. Aguanta Ucrania, 'Home', <<https://aguantaucrania.com/>>, accessed 19 February 2025.

137. On 23 September 2024, during the UN International Law week, Aguanta Ucrania posted on X that they sent a formal letter to the Secretary-General of the UN, with the support of more than 20 former foreign ministers from Latin America and more than 30 Latin American and Ukrainian human rights experts. See Aguanta Ucrania, '¡Aguanta Ucrania! envió esta carta al Secretario General de las Naciones Unidas, con el apoyo de más de 20 ex Cancilleres de América Latina y más de 30 expertos en derechos humanos latinoamericanos y ucranianos', X post, 23 September 2024, <<https://x.com/aguantaucrania/status/1838202266177737182?s=12&t=At3UR9BKEBojG0ag6JMDkQ&mx=2>>, accessed 19 February 2025.

effort; Spanish has even become one of the operational languages on the ground, alongside Ukrainian and English.¹³⁸ Although some of these fighters are admittedly driven by financial remuneration,¹³⁹ others are reportedly motivated by the defence of values commonly held with Ukraine, which has earned them the label of 'legionnaires of the free world'.¹⁴⁰

Ukraine's diplomatic momentum at the UN early in the war, marked by a broad condemnation of Russia's invasion, has gradually diminished. Some UN member states have chosen to abstain or vote against resolutions perceived as aligned with Western priorities. This erosion of support stems from several factors: growing fatigue with a protracted conflict; the economic and political costs of alignment; and perceptions of inconsistency or double standards in the application of international norms, particularly in relation to crises such as Gaza.¹⁴¹ For Kyiv, this shift has represented a significant diplomatic shock, underscoring the limitations of moral or legal appeals alone. It has also prompted a re-evaluation of strategy, suggesting a need for more diversified, interest-based engagement that recognises the geopolitical balancing many states in the Global South seek.

In sum, the values of the rules-based international order that Ukraine is fighting for today are the same standards that Latin America and the Caribbean hold dear and have always considered part of their identity and foreign policy. After all, the rules are the best defence smaller states have when they find themselves caught in the middle of great power competition.

Authoritarianism and Human Rights

Another narrative that highly resonates with Latin American audiences is the issue of human rights violations committed by authoritarian regimes within the context of transitional justice.¹⁴² Indeed, during an online address to the Chilean Congress in 2023, Zelenskyy remarked that what his country is fighting is indeed a '21st century

138. *France 24*, 'Ukraine: Latin Americans on the Front Lines', YouTube, 26 November 2024, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Muzlj61QpOQ>>, accessed 19 February 2025; International Legionnaires, 'FAQ 05: What languages do I need to speak to be able to join? As of right now, we only accept people who understand and speak English, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian or Ukrainian', <<https://www.ildu.com.ua/>>, accessed 17 November 2025.

139. Illia Novikov and Manuel Rueda, 'Ukraine Needs More Troops Fighting Russia. Hardened Professionals from Colombia are Helping', *AP News*, 9 February 2024, <<https://apnews.com/article/ukraine-colombian-foreign-fighters-professional-soldiers-07b5cb7949bd10234e7456f9c1c20b08>>, accessed 5 August 2025.

140. International Legion for the Defence of Ukraine, 'Border Guard from Colombia Defends Ukraine', <<https://ildu.mil.gov.ua/news/border-guard-colombia-defends-ukraine>>, accessed 5 August 2025.

141. *CBS News*, 'U.N. Rejects U.S. Resolution that Urged End to Ukraine War Without Mentioning Russian Aggression', 24 February 2025, <<https://www.cbsnews.com/news/un-resolution-us-ukraine-russia-war/>>, accessed 31 October 2025.

142. Tetyana Ilyuk and Pavlo Horbatiuk, 'Positioning of Ukraine in Latin America', *Bulletin of Lviv University* (Vol. 52, 2024), pp. 352–61.

fascism, ... a dictatorship'.¹⁴³ The kidnapping of thousands of Ukrainian children by Russian authorities – a war crime, arguably constitutive of genocide¹⁴⁴ – is particularly poignant and echoes some of the darkest passages in Latin America's dictatorial past, especially in Argentina¹⁴⁵ (although this has occurred on a far greater scale in Ukraine, when close to 35,000 children have been abducted at the time of writing).¹⁴⁶ In turn, Ukrainian authorities have expressly appealed to Latin American countries to assist them with their shared narratives in the effort to bring Ukrainian children back home.¹⁴⁷

Furthermore, certain Latin American countries have joined the collective referral to the International Criminal Court for Russia's alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity. These countries notably include Colombia, Costa Rica and Chile.¹⁴⁸ Similarly, Costa Rica and Guatemala¹⁴⁹ have joined the Core Group on the Establishment of a Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression Against Ukraine.¹⁵⁰

Considering the first two narratives of respect for 'values' and fighting for human rights against authoritarianism, it is worth underlining that these enforcement efforts are ultimately built on respect for human dignity, a universal value which underpins the entire rules-based international order. Ukraine and Latin American and Caribbean countries have centred their respective 'revolutions of dignity' in the past decade on

-
143. Republic of Chile Senate, 'Sesión conjunta: reafirman solidaridad con pueblo de Ucrania y vocación de paz de Chile' [Joint Session: Reaffirming Solidarity with the People of Ukraine and Chile's Commitment to Peace], 4 April 2023, <<https://www.senado.cl/comunicaciones/noticias/sesion-conjunta-reafirman-solidaridad-con-pueblo-de-ucrania-y-vocacion-de>>, accessed 6 January 2025.
 144. Francisco Lobo, 'The Forcible Transfer of Ukrainian Children as Cultural Genocide: Challenges and Alternatives for Prosecution and Punishment', Center for Civil Liberties, 21 March 2024, <<https://ccl.org.ua/en/positions/the-forcible-transfer-of-ukrainian-children-as-cultural-genocide-challenges-and-alternatives-for-prosecution-and-punishment/>>, accessed 19 February 2025.
 145. Ivan Fechko, *Ucrania-Argentina: Nuevas Oportunidades de Asociación Global* [Ukraine-Argentina: New Opportunities for Global Partnership] (Kyiv: Ukrainian Prism, 2024), p. 28.
 146. Ruchi Kumar, '“Basically Impossible to Get Them Back”: Russia's Mass Abduction of Ukrainian Children is a War Crime, Say Experts', *The Guardian*, 27 June 2025.
 147. Office of the President of Ukraine, 'Ukraine Relies on Latin American Countries' Assistance in Bringing Home Children Deported by Russia: Dariia Zarivna and Daria Herasymchuk Met with Latin American Parliamentarians', 30 November 2024, <<https://www.president.gov.ua/en/news/ukrayina-rozrahovuye-na-dopomogu-krayin-latinskoyi-ameriki-v-94741>>, accessed 19 February 2025.
 148. International Criminal Court, 'Situation in Ukraine', ICC-01/22, <<https://www.icc-cpi.int/situations/ukraine>>, accessed 19 February 2025.
 149. Ukrinform, 'Costa Rica Joins Coalition for Special Tribunal to Prosecute Russia', 14 April 2023, <<https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-polytics/3696107-costa-rica-joins-coalition-for-special-tribunal-to-prosecute-russia.html>>, accessed 19 February 2025; *Kyiv Independent*, 'Minister: Guatemala to Join Core Group on Special Tribunal for Russian Crime of Aggression', 25 February 2023, <<https://kyivindependent.com/minister-guatemala-to-join-core-group-on-special-tribunal-for-russian-crime-of-aggression/>>, accessed 19 February 2025.
 150. MFA, 'The Core Group on the Establishment of the Special Tribunal Defined the Legal Framework for the Establishment of the Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression Against Ukraine', 5 February 2025, <<https://mfa.gov.ua/en/news/core-group-establishment-special-tribunal-defined-legal-framework-establishment-special-tribunal-crime-aggression-against-ukraine>>, accessed 19 February 2025.

human dignity.¹⁵¹ All share an ambition to fight for human rights, against authoritarianism.

Security

Security is a pressing matter today in the Western Hemisphere, and consequently features in the LACCS.¹⁵² Security is a major concern in Ukraine's 2020 National Security Strategy¹⁵³ and its 2021 Foreign Policy Strategy¹⁵⁴ – where international cooperation is emphasised in the fight against 'terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, international crime, drug trafficking, human trafficking, extremism, illegal migration, cyber threats, and climate change'.¹⁵⁵ Within the general realm of security, interviewees for this paper also highlighted food security as another area of common interest between Ukraine and Latin America.

One Ukrainian interviewee, however, underlined that the main difference between the security challenges in both regions is that 'for Ukraine, security comes from the outside; in Latin America and the Caribbean security is a domestic concern but it is not a threat from the outside, since there are no invasions'.¹⁵⁶ Conversely, for another Ukrainian interviewee, one of the most important overlapping areas of interest in Ukrainian and Latin American security is nuclear non-proliferation,¹⁵⁷ and in particular the 1967 Treaty of Tlatelolco, according to which a nuclear-free zone is established in the entirety of Latin America and the Caribbean region.¹⁵⁸ Ukraine likewise voluntarily gave up its entire nuclear arsenal pursuant to the 1994 Budapest Memorandum,¹⁵⁹ becoming one of the few states in the world to take that step in the name of nuclear disarmament (alongside Belarus, South Africa and Kazakhstan) – a

151. Serhii Plokyh, *The Russo-Ukrainian War* (London: Allen Lane, 2023), p. 95; Francisco Lobo, 'Chile and a Global Revolution for Dignity', Open Global Rights, 13 December 2019, <<https://www.openglobalrights.org/chile-and-a-global-revolution-for-dignity/>>, accessed 19 February 2025.

152. MFA, 'Communication Strategy: Ukraine–Latin America and the Caribbean, 2024–2026', pp. 5, 9.

153. Верховная Рада, «Про рішення Ради національної безпеки і оборони України від 14 вересня 2020 року «Про Стратегію національної безпеки України»» ['Decree of the President of Ukraine on the Decision of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine of September 14, 2020 "On the National Security Strategy of Ukraine"'], para. 33.

154. Office of the President of Ukraine, «Протокол про приєднання України до Договору про заснування Енергетичного Співтовариства» ['Protocol on the Accession of Ukraine to the Treaty Establishing the Energy Community'], No. 448/2021, 24 September 2010, para. 11.

155. Office of the President of Ukraine, «Про рішення Ради національної безпеки і оборони України від 14 вересня 2020 року «Про Стратегію національної безпеки України»» ['Decree of the President of Ukraine on the Decision of the National Security and Defense Council of Ukraine of September 14, 2020 "On the National Security Strategy of Ukraine"'], para. 33.

156. Author interview 9 with a think-tank scholar, online, 16 December 2024.

157. Author interview 22 with a Ukrainian diplomat, online, 15 January 2025.

158. UN Platform for Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zones, 'Treaty of Tlatelolco', <<https://www.un.org/nwzfz/content/treaty-tlatelolco>>, accessed 20 February 2025.

159. Plokyh, *The Russo-Ukrainian War*, pp. 70–74; UN, 'Memorandum on Security Assurances in Connection with Ukraine's Accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons', 5 December 1994, <<https://treaties.un.org/Pages/showDetails.aspx?objid=0800000280401fbb>>, accessed 17 November 2025.

feat that can certainly resonate with the countries situated in the Tlatelolco nuclear-free zone.

Ukraine's tested know-how in matters of cybersecurity and e-governance, bolstered by important partnerships in these areas with countries such as Estonia,¹⁶⁰ can also benefit Latin America and the Caribbean, as the region aims to develop capabilities for resilience in these areas as claimed by experts.¹⁶¹ The battle-tested knowledge now available in Ukraine in drone technology, as applied to the fight against drug trafficking and illegal migration, can also benefit the region.

Ukraine and Latin America therefore currently share many concerns related to the main regional and international security challenges. Both could benefit from more engagement in these fields, which should be highlighted in communication strategy aimed at uniting them.

160. Matthew Crandall, 'Understanding Estonia's Cyber Support for Ukraine: Building Resilience, Not Status', *Applied Cybersecurity & Internet Governance* (Vol. 3, No. 1, 2024), pp. 78–90.

161. RUSI, 'Bridging Digital Borders: Cybersecurity Capacity Building in Latin America', Conference, 18 September 2023, <<https://my.rusi.org/events/cybersecurity-capacity-building-in-latin-america.html>>, accessed 20 February 2025.

Conclusions

To support its kinetic war against Ukraine, Russia has used information operations to target key audiences in important regions, including Latin America and the Caribbean. As a result, Ukraine must urgently develop its own information operations with a communication strategy tailored to the region in order to counteract Moscow's efforts.

As this paper has shown, to develop its diplomatic approach to Latin America and the Caribbean, Ukraine has thus far used the template of the 2023 ACS, which was its first comprehensive diplomatic communication strategy that went beyond Europe. With its new 2024 LACCS, Ukraine aims to engage public and private audiences in the region to counteract Russian influence and garner support for a free and independent Ukraine as a reliable partner.

It is too early to tell how effective this new communication strategy has been, as many interviewees for this paper indicated. Nevertheless, according to one Ukrainian interviewee, coverage of Ukraine in Latin American news articles and social media presence increased by 450% between 2023 and 2024, an increase which the interviewee attributed to the LACCS.¹⁶² Yet, at the same time, political support for Ukraine from countries across Latin America and the Caribbean has fluctuated since the beginning of Russia's full-scale invasion. The overwhelming support that Ukraine received in 2022 has become more disorganised in 2025.

The 2022 UN General Assembly resolution condemning Russia's attack was supported by almost every country in the Americas – except for Bolivia, Cuba, Nicaragua and Venezuela.¹⁶³ In 2025, a similar resolution was supported only by the Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Canada, Chile, Guatemala, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay. Argentina, Brazil, Colombia and Costa Rica unexpectedly

162. Author interview 11 with an expert in Latin America, online, 17 December 2024.

163. UN General Assembly, 'Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly on 2 March 2022', A/RES/ES-11/1, 2 March 2022, <<https://docs.un.org/en/A/RES/ES-11/1>>, accessed 17 November 2025.

abstained, and the US even voted against it.¹⁶⁴ This shift in support reflects the growing political fragmentation of the region with regard to the war.¹⁶⁵

In order for Ukraine to strengthen its engagement in Latin America and the Caribbean, and to learn the lessons from its initial outreach, this paper offers recommendations for Kyiv's diplomatic strategy in the region, tailored for the short, medium and long term.

Recommendations

Short Term: Maintain Communication Efforts for the LACCS

- The effectiveness of the LACCS can be increased through metacommunication,¹⁶⁶ or communicating about communication. Indeed, half of the non-Ukrainians interviewed for this paper were unfamiliar with Ukraine's new Latin America strategy. Ukraine should communicate more purposefully to Latin American and Caribbean audiences about its strategy. For this, *UATV Español* could be an effective medium.¹⁶⁷

Medium Term (2026–27): Values, Human Rights and Security

- Ukraine should focus its political and communication efforts on developing productive narratives.
- Ukraine should persevere in its multi-vector diplomacy efforts in the region, including at the interparliamentary level,¹⁶⁸ at the Organization of American States (where Ukraine has been a Permanent Observer since 2006), with universities and think tanks, and with the Ukrainian diaspora (over 1 million people mostly concentrated in Brazil and Argentina but also present in other countries).
- Ukraine should open more honorary consulates alongside the planned new embassies and thus promote contact-diplomacy. The opening of honorary consulates can pave the way for future diplomatic missions and is essential for present international engagement, as evidenced, for example, by the honorary consulate of Ukraine in Panama.

164. UN General Assembly, 'Letter Dated 28 February 2014 from the Permanent Representative of Ukraine to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council', A/ES-11/L.10, Eleventh Emergency Special Session, 28 February 2014, <<https://docs.un.org/en/A/ES-11/L.10>>, accessed 17 November 2025.

165. Fraga, 'Las Naciones Unidas y el rol de América Latina en el conflicto ruso-ucraniano' ['The United Nations and the Role of Latin America in the Russian-Ukrainian Conflict'].

166. Robert Craig, 'Metacommunication', in Klaus Bruhn Jensen et al. (eds), *The International Encyclopedia of Communication Theory and Philosophy* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley, 2016), pp. 1–8.

167. *UATV Español*, <<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIWkxQ62jgu-J7H-qrpMJXA>>, accessed 21 February 2025.

168. Press Service of the Ukrainian Parliament, 'Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine Ruslan Stefanchuk Called on the Parliaments of Latin American and Caribbean Countries to Cooperate for the Sake of Peace and Reconstruction of Ukraine', 30 November 2024, <<https://www.rada.gov.ua/news/Top-novyna/256190.html>>, accessed 21 February 2025.

Long Term: Stay Engaged with Latin America and the Caribbean

- Ukraine should continue to develop strong diplomatic, political, economic, military and cultural relations with the region beyond the war and regardless of the outcome of peace negotiations. This should include the celebration of the long-awaited first Ukraine–Latin America summit before the end of the decade. As one interviewee remarked: ‘relationships between countries are just like relationships between people. They take time’.¹⁶⁹

169. Author interview 12 with a practitioner familiar with Ukraine, online, 17 December 2024.

About the Authors

Francisco Lobo is a PhD student in War Studies at King's College London, where he is also a Tutor at the Centre for Military Ethics. He has an LLM in International Legal Studies from New York University, and an LLM in International Law and an LLB from the University of Chile. He has worked as a legal practitioner in the private and public sectors, and as a lecturer and academic. He has more recently worked as a consultant on military ethics for an international project to support the Armed Forces of Ukraine. His research focuses on international law, human rights, the laws and ethics of war, legal theory and moral philosophy.

Carlos Solar is a Senior Research Fellow in Latin American Security in RUSI's International Security research group. He is the author of *Cybersecurity Governance in Latin America* (SUNY Press), *Governing the Military* (Manchester University Press), *Government and Governance of Security* (Routledge), and he co-edited *Violence, Crime and Justice in Latin America* (Routledge). His publications have appeared in several academic journals, including the *Journal of Strategic Studies*, the *RUSI Journal*, *Global Crime*, *British Politics*, *International Politics*, *Current Sociology*, *Contemporary Politics*, the *Bulletin of Sociological Methodology*, and the *Journal of Cyber Policy*, among others. He has a PhD in Politics from the University of York.

194 years of independent thinking on defence and security

The Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) is the world's oldest and the UK's leading defence and security think tank. Its mission is to inform, influence and enhance public debate on a safer and more stable world. RUSI is a research-led institute, producing independent, practical and innovative analysis to address today's complex challenges.

Since its foundation in 1831, RUSI has relied on its members to support its activities. Together with revenue from research, publications and conferences, RUSI has sustained its political independence for 194 years.

