

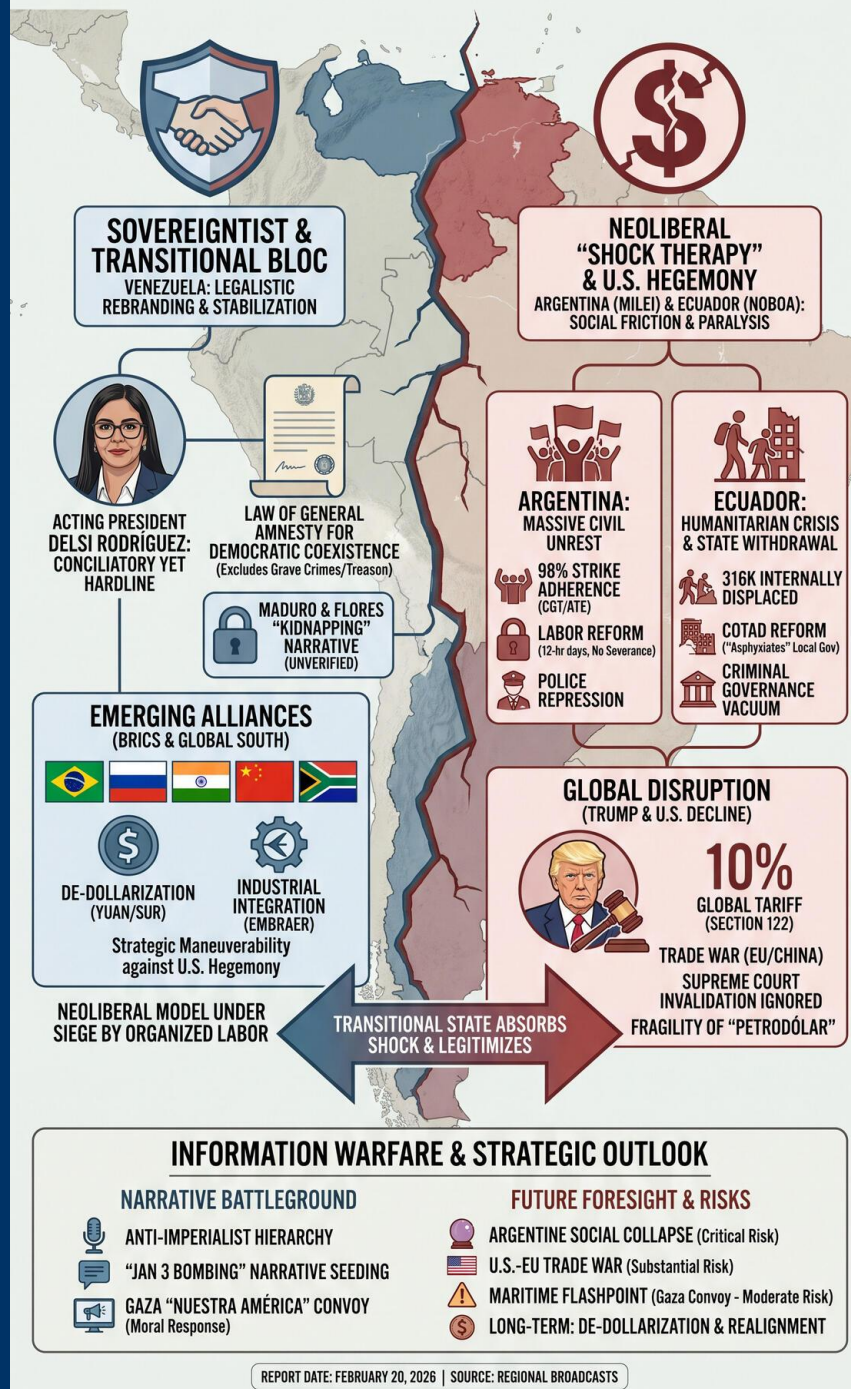
TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

TELESUR

FEBRUARY 20, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

TRANSITIONAL GOVERNANCE IN VENEZUELA AND REGIONAL RESISTANCE TO NEOLIBERAL REFORM



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DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

The global news landscape on February 20, 2026, is dominated by the stabilization efforts of a transitional government in Venezuela following the reported "kidnapping" of President Nicolás Maduro by U.S. forces on January 3. Acting President **Delsi Rodríguez** (also referred to as Delhi or Delsis in various reports) has leveraged the National Assembly to pass a **Law of General Amnesty for Democratic Coexistence**. This 16-article law, passed by an unusual [unanimous consensus](#) between Chavista and opposition legislators, is framed as a foundational step toward "national reconciliation" while explicitly excluding those involved in "crimes against humanity" or recent acts of "violent extremism" linked to the January 3 events. The administration is using this legal instrument to consolidate a post-Maduro domestic order while demanding the release of the "kidnapped" leader and his wife, Silia Flores.

Simultaneously, the Southern Cone is experiencing a period of extreme social friction as the governments of **Javier Milei** (Argentina) and **Daniel Noboa** (Ecuador) face massive civil unrest. Argentina is paralyzed by its fourth general strike, with a [98% reported adherence](#) in the public sector, directed against Milei's labor reforms. Noboa is facing similar backlash in Ecuador over reforms to the **Organic Territorial Code (COTAD)**, which critics claim will "asphyxiate" local governments and worsen a humanitarian crisis marked by 316,000 internally displaced persons. These developments suggest a widening ideological rift in Latin America, where the "neoliberal" model is under siege by organized labor and social movements, while the Venezuelan "Bolivarian" remnants attempt a legalistic rebranding to survive external shocks.

On the global stage, **Donald Trump** continues to act as a primary disruptor. Despite a U.S. Supreme Court ruling declaring his previous tariffs [illegal and unilateral](#), Trump has responded by invoking "Section 122" to impose a new **10% global tariff**, precipitating a potential trade war with the European Union and China. His administration's "Peace Council" in Washington, attended by Milei, is being dismissed by international analysts as a cover for continued "expansionism" and interventionism, particularly as regional powers like Brazil, Russia, and India (BRICS) seek to deepen ties and bypass the U.S. dollar in favor of "de-dollarization."

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Venezuelan Legislative Stabilization and Amnesty

- The National Assembly passed 16 articles of the **Law of General Amnesty**, covering political crimes committed between [January 1, 1999, and January 30, 2026](#).
- The law excludes crimes of homicide, drug trafficking, corruption, and **grave violations of human rights**, as well as those who [invoked foreign invasion](#).
- Acting President Delsi Rodríguez describes the law as a "door to reencounter," while the military (FANB) has issued a [formal communique](#) backing the measure as an "act of love" for the nation.

Argentine Social and Labor Paralysis

- A nationwide strike coordinated by the **CGT** and **ATE** has caused [total transport shutdowns](#) and 98% inactivity in state offices.
- Protesters in Moreno and other districts have [blocked access](#) to the capital, facing police repression and water cannons near the "jailed" Congress.
- The reform under debate includes controversial measures like 12-hour workdays and the [elimination of traditional severance pay](#) in favor of a fund financed by companies.

Ecuadorian Humanitarian Crisis and Legislative Conflict

- Internal displacement has reached an "alarming" [316,000 individuals](#) due to "criminal governance" in provinces like Guayas and Esmeraldas.

- Legislators moved a session to **Samborondón** to avoid protests in Quito while passing a law requiring local governments to spend [70% of budgets on infrastructure](#), threatening social programs.

Trump's Trade Defiance and Global Tariff Offensive

- The U.S. Supreme Court invalidated global tariffs, prompting over 800 companies to [demand refunds](#) for "illegal" collections.
- Trump responded by announcing a **10% global tariff** for 150 days, citing trade imbalances, while simultaneously considering [limited military strikes on Iran](#) if nuclear negotiations fail.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Diplomacy & Statecraft

- Mexico's President **Claudia Sheinbaum** and other regional leaders are utilizing the **113th anniversary of the Mexican Army** to [ratify sovereignty](#) against "foreign imposition" and U.S. interference.
- Brazil is hosting Russian delegations to discuss industrial and aeronautical integration via **Embraer**, signaling a [pivot away from Washington](#).

Civil Unrest & Social Order

- In El Salvador, the "Regime of Exception" is criticized for [488 reported deaths](#) in custody over nearly four years of implementation.
- Spain is experiencing its **fifth day of medical strikes** in Madrid and Barcelona as healthcare professionals demand [salary equalization](#) with European peers.

Energy & Critical Minerals

- Cuba is implementing **Resolution 41** to grant [8-year tax exemptions](#) for investments in renewable energy, attempting to mitigate its severe fuel crisis.
- Strategic interest in Venezuelan **lithium and gas** is framed as the [underlying cause](#) for U.S. intervention and the kidnapping of the executive pair.

Macroeconomics & Trade

- Cacao prices have [crashed to 3,150 Euro per ton](#) after a period of high volatility, threatening producers in Ivory Coast and Ghana.
- China reports a **20.2% increase** in [green credits](#), totaling 44.8 trillion Yuan, as it seeks to decouple development from environmental degradation.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Weaponization of Legality: Amnesty vs. Reform

A contrasting trend in legal statecraft is emerging. In Venezuela, the "Amnesty" is being used as a defensive shield to absorb the shock of a decapitated executive and stabilize a **transitional state** under Delcy Rodríguez. By involving the opposition, the government seeks to legitimize itself before the international community while [isolating "radicals"](#) who supported the January 3 attack. Conversely, in Argentina and Ecuador, governments are using **legislative "shock therapy"**—labor and budget reforms—as offensive tools to dismantle post-1970s social contracts. These reforms are being pushed via [extra-regulatory maneuvers](#), such as bypassing internal rules and moving sessions

to remote locations, indicating a decay in parliamentary norms.

The Fragility of the "Petrodólar" and U.S. Hegemony

There is a consistent narrative across multiple broadcasts that the U.S. is "exhausting its moral and political capital." The [illegal collection of tariffs](#) and the "kidnapping" of a sovereign leader are presented as desperate acts of a failing hegemon. The movement toward **de-dollarization**—led by Venezuela's refusal to accept dollar logic and the BRICS nations' search for [autonomous developmental models](#)—is framed not just as economic policy but as a "liberation" movement. The "petrodólar" is explicitly described as a "perverse logic" that allows the U.S. to export its inflation to the global south.

Governance vs. Criminality: The Ecuadorian Model of Failure

Ecuador serves as a cautionary tale of "institutional inoperancy." The news suggests that as the state retreats from its "legitimate monopoly on violence," criminal structures have implemented a [shadow governance](#), using displacement as a "logistical cleaning" tool for land expropriation. This "punitive focus without social arms" is described as a [failure of governability](#) that could be replicated in other regional states if neoliberal budget cuts to local security and social programs continue.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

Venezuela: The Transition Govt's Survival Strategy

- The state is in a state of high alert, 49 days after the "kidnapping" of its head of state. Acting President Delcy Rodríguez is relying on **emotional and nationalistic rhetoric**—mentioning "tears in her stomach" and "acts of greatness"—to maintain [elite and military cohesion](#).
- Institutional decay is being countered by the **Law of Amnesty**, which functions as a "pact of non-repetition" to prevent the collapse of the parliamentary system.

Argentina: Total Labor Resistance

- The Milei government is facing an **erosion of mandate** just months into its tenure, with 98% strike adherence signaling a massive loss of public support for its "modernization" project. The use of [repression as a primary governance tool](#) suggests the administration lacks the "political arguments" necessary to sustain its reforms democratically.

Ecuador: State Withdrawal and Social Collapse

- The government's decision to cut current spending to 30% for local entities while facing [record homicide rates](#) (45 per 100k) has created a vacuum. This is driving a **trust deficit** where 90% of crimes go unsentenced, pushing the population toward "reactive flight."

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

The world is framed as an **arena of fracturing hegemonic systems**. The "North" (USA, France, EU) is consistently portrayed as hypocritical—imprisoning "Yellow Vests" or "Basque Rappers" while [lecturing others on human rights](#). The "South" (BRICS, Latin American Sovereignists) is presented as the new zone of economic and moral opportunity.

Strategic Maneuverability

- **Russia & China:** Actively projecting power into South America (Brazil) and maintaining a "consolidated alliance" to preserve [multilateralism](#) against Trump's unilateralism.
- **Japan:** Framing itself as a ["U.S. protectorate"](#) by increasing defense spending to 2% of GDP, specifically targeting China and North Korea.
- **Cuba:** Projecting **medical diplomacy** as a counter-offensive to the U.S. blockade, despite facing internal "asphyxia" caused by fuel shortages that have [delayed thousands of surgeries](#).

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

Sentiment is volatile, reacting primarily to **U.S. trade policy and energy constraints**. The Supreme Court ruling against Trump's tariffs caused a [short-term rally](#) in the S&P 500 and Dow Jones (0.4%–0.6%), which is likely to be reversed by the announcement of a new 10% global tariff.

Key Economic Vectors

- **Tariffs:** Trump invokes **Section 122** for a [10% global tariff](#) for 150 days; Section 301 investigation into "unfair practices" targeting China remains active.
- **Commodities:** Cacao prices [plummet to 3,150 Euro/ton](#); Venezuela expects \$500 million in oil-related payments, described as a "right, not a favor."
- **Labor Market:** Argentina's industrial sector is contracting; **Fate** (tire manufacturer) [dismissed 80 people](#) today as imports flood the market.
- **Sustainable Finance:** China reports 30.2% annual growth in [green credits](#).
- **National Debt:** Ecuador's public debt has [reached 57% of GDP](#).

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The Venezuelan executive remains in a state of unprecedented flux, while European royalty and American judicial figures face internal scrutiny.

- **Delsi Rodríguez (Acting President, Venezuela):** Consolidated power via the [promulgation of the Amnesty Law](#), framing herself as a "conciliatory" leader while maintaining a hardline stance against the U.S.
- **Andrew Mount Batten Wisor (British Royal Family):** Under investigation for [presunta misconduct in public functions](#), aggravating the "institutional crisis of the crown."
- **Nils Olsen (President of the National Assembly, Ecuador):** Leading a controversial move of legislative sessions to [Guayas/Samborondón](#) to evade civil unrest in Quito.

- **Godoy (President of the Supreme Court, Ecuador):** Sanctioned for alleged ties as a ["narco lawyer"](#), highlighting high-level institutional corruption.
- **Claudia Sheinbaum (President, Mexico):** Emerged as the [leading regional critic](#) of U.S. interventionism and a defender of indigenous leaders like Peru's Pedro Castillo.

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

The network maintains a **strictly anti-imperialist hierarchy**. The "Lead Stories" are the Venezuelan Amnesty Law and the Argentine General Strike, framed as "Historical Justice" vs. "Neoliberal Oppression." The "kidnapping" of Nicolás Maduro is treated as a **settled fact**, with frequent emotional tributes to his "martyrdom." The "Peace Council" hosted by Donald Trump is a "Buried Story," mentioned primarily to contrast Milei's "subservience" with the reality of Argentine domestic collapse. The **Conspicuous Omission** is any objective detail on the "3rd of January attack" in Caracas or the current whereabouts of Maduro; the network relies on "rumors of U.S. captivity" without providing evidence, serving as a psychological operation to maintain domestic support for the Rodríguez transition.

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The day's framing presents a binary world: the "Sovereignists" (BRICS, Sheinbaum, Rodríguez) vs. the "Subordinates" (Milei, Noboa, Zelensky) and the "Aggressors" (Trump, Netanyahu).

COUNTRIES

- **Venezuela:** Portrayed as a **stable, principled** nation enduring an "unprecedented bombing" and kidnapping, now leading a "historic reconciliation" via the Assembly.
- **Argentina:** Framed as **chaotic** and "auctioning its rights" under a "totalitarian government" that is "tutored by the IMF."
- **United States:** Portrayed as **corrupt and weak**, unable to maintain its own laws (Supreme Court vs. Trump) and resorting to "primitive imperialism."
- **Ukraine:** Depicted as an **inept** "dictatorship without elections" led by a "Zionist/Nazi" (Zelensky) who is "destroying his country for personal gain."

LEADERS

- **Donald Trump:** Framed as a **bully** who is "ashamed of his own judges" and ignores international law to "asphyxiate" global economies.
- **Javier Milei:** Portrayed as a **weak "puppet"** who "enjoys record-breaking travels" to Washington while his country "burns" in a general strike.
- **Benjamin Netanyahu:** Consistently labeled a **genocidist** whose aircraft should be "forced to land" for arrest by the ICC.

NON-STATE & CORPORATE ACTORS

- **CGT/ATE (Argentina Unions):** Framed as the **principled** vanguard of the people, representing a "mass adhesion" against reform.

- **CIA:** Portrayed as a **shadowy instigator** of the North Stream sabotage, reportedly "allowing" the attack despite having the power to stop it.

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

The media landscape is saturated with **narrative seeding** regarding the January 3 "Caracas Bombing." The acting government is aggressively pushing the idea that the "radical opposition" invited a foreign nuclear power to attack the capital. This serves to **justify the exclusion** of certain figures from the [Amnesty Law](#). There is a clear "delta" between the reported ground truth—a "unanimous" assembly—and the actual "polite debates" where opposition members like **Alvis Florido** attempted to challenge the definition of "violent acts" but were [silenced for the sake of "calm."](#) [The framing of the Gaza conflict is also used as an information weapon, with "Nuestra América" convoys presented as the only moral response](#) to a "U.S.-backed genocide," further isolating the U.S. diplomatically in the eyes of the TeleSUR audience.

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- The **Venezuela Amnesty Law** will likely be used to purge the civil service of "radical" elements by categorizing their past dissent as "treasonous cooperation with the Jan 3 bombing," while rewarding cooperative opposition members with inclusion in the transitional cabinet.

- The **10% global tariff** from Trump will lead to retaliatory measures from the EU, potentially driving Argentina and Brazil closer to the BRICS "Common Currency" project to avoid dollar-denominated trade risks.
- The **Ecuadorian humanitarian crisis** will deteriorate as Noboa's budget cuts take effect, likely leading to a "National Strike" similar to Argentina's, further destabilizing the Andean region.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

- **Short Term (1-4 Weeks):** Massive protests in Quito against the **COTAD reform**; potential for military crackdown in Buenos Aires if the CGT strike extends to 36 hours. Possible "limited strike" by U.S. on Iranian assets.
- **Medium Term (1-6 Months):** The first "convoy" to Gaza in **March** will become a major maritime flashpoint if intercepted by Israel; Venezuela will formalize its transition with an "Amnesty Revision Commission."
- **Long Term (1-5 Years):** Japan's re-militarization will force a **structural realignment** of China-India-Russia naval assets in the Pacific; U.S. dollar hegemony will continue to erode as Latin American nations formalize trade in Yuan or "Sur."

RISK ASSESSMENT

The current geopolitical climate is at a "pre-conflict" boil, with domestic instability in the South and illegal trade warfare in the North.

- **Argentine Social Collapse:** Triggered by the CGT's proposed **36-hour active mobilization** following the labor reform passage. Likelihood: **High**. Impact: **Critical** (Regional economic disruption). Mitigations: Withdrawal of the "12-hour workday" clause and IMF debt renegotiation.
- **U.S.-EU Trade War:** Triggered by the [imposition of the 10% global tariff](#) under Section 122. Likelihood: **High**. Impact: **Substantial** (Global supply chain inflation). Mitigations: Judicial intervention by international trade bodies or U.S. Congressional repeal of Section 122 powers.
- **Maritime Flashpoint (Gaza Convoy):** Triggered by the arrival of the "**Nuestra América**" **flotilla** in Gaza waters on March 21. Likelihood: **Moderate**. Impact: **High** (Direct military engagement/diplomatic crisis). Mitigations: UN-supervised delivery of humanitarian aid bypassing military blockades.
- **Ecuadorian "Balkanization":** Triggered by the expansion of **criminal governance** into Quito and the collapse of the 70% infrastructure budget mandate. Likelihood: **Moderate**. Impact: **Substantial** (Regional migration crisis). Mitigations: Restoration of local autonomy funds and anti-corruption purges in the judiciary.

- **Venezuelan Internal Purge:** Triggered by the **Amnesty Commission's** "minutiae review" of political cases. Likelihood: **High**. Impact: **Moderate** (Elimination of political plurality). Mitigations: International monitoring of the Amnesty application by neutral third parties (e.g., Mexico/Brazil).

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- The condition and location of **Nicolás Maduro** and **Silia Flores** remain entirely unverified; no official statement from the U.S. State Department is provided to confirm the "kidnapping" narrative.
- The casualty and damage reports from the **"January 3 Bombing of Caracas"** lack forensic or independent confirmation; the figure of "100 dead" is used repeatedly without source data.
- The transcripts do not explain why **radical opposition members** were allowed to remain in the National Assembly if they are accused of treason/invoking invasion.
- There is no discussion of the **fiscal impact** of the Venezuelan Amnesty (e.g., reparations to victims vs. state survival).

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

- **The "Managed Exile" Hypothesis:** The kidnapping of Maduro was not an abduction but a **negotiated departure** facilitated by the U.S. and Rodríguez to allow for a "managed transition" that saves the regime while removing a toxic leader. The Amnesty Law is the payoff for the opposition's compliance.

- **The "False Flag" Bombing:** The January 3 attack was a **staged event** using localized munitions to create a "Martyrdom Narrative" for Maduro and consolidate power under Delsi Rodríguez without a real U.S. invasion taking place.
- **Black Swan Event:** A **military coup in Argentina** by junior officers who refuse to repress the CGT general strike, leading to the sudden collapse of the Milei government and a pivot back to peronismo under a military-civilian junta.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- **Security:** Strengthen border controls near **Ecuador and Venezuela** to manage potential surges in displaced populations fleeing either criminal governance or political purges.
- **Economic:** Accelerate the transition to **non-dollar trade mechanisms** (e.g., Swap lines with China) to mitigate the impact of Trump's upcoming global tariffs.
- **Diplomatic:** Utilize the **ICC debates** to push for a formal definition of "Economic Genocide" as it pertains to long-term blockade/sanctions regimes.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Supply Chain:** Diversify sourcing for **cacao and agriculture** away from West Africa as price drops signal potential supply-side instability or production abandonment.

- **Regulatory Compliance:** Companies with U.S. exposure must prepare for **repayment audits** following the Supreme Court tariff ruling while navigating the legal "grey zone" of Trump's new Section 122 tariffs.
- **Energy Sector:** Explore **Renewable Investment** opportunities in Cuba following **Resolution 41**, focusing on "Autoconsumo" models to hedge against state grid failures.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

The day focused on **restorative justice** in Venezuela and **punitive austerity** in the Southern Cone. Legislative maneuvers across the board were characterized by "emergency" justifications and a desire to consolidate power in a chaotic regional environment.

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **Law of General Amnesty for Democratic Coexistence (Venezuela):** A [16-article law](#) aimed at forgiving political crimes since 1999 to stabilize the transitional government; excludes grave human rights abuses and treason.
- **Labor Reform Law (Argentina):** A project seeking to [flexibilize contracting](#), allow 12-hour shifts, and replace traditional severance with a private fund; triggered a national strike.
- **Organic Reformatory Law to the COTAD (Ecuador):** Mandatory [70% infrastructure spending](#) for local governments, potentially defunding social and educational programs.
- **Resolution 41/2026 (Cuba):** Updates [tax benefits](#) for renewable energy imports and local production to combat fuel "asphyxia."

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Delsi Rodríguez Press Conference:** Formal [signing of the Amnesty Law](#) at Miraflores; framed as an "act of greatness" for the youth of Venezuela.
- **Embratur Rio Tourism Report:** Announced a [17% increase](#) in carnival visitors (300,000 foreigners), signaling Brazil's economic resilience.
- **UNAM International Law Forum:** Celia Flores debated [ICC jurisdiction](#) in the case of non-signatory states like Israel and the U.S.

KEY STORIES

- **Venezuela Enacts General Amnesty Law:** Acting President Delsi Rodríguez signed the [Law for Democratic Coexistence](#) after a unanimous vote in the Assembly. The law pardons political prisoners from 1999 to Jan 2026 but excludes those involved in the "Jan 3 attack."
- **Argentina Paralyzed by Fourth General Strike:** Unions including **CGT and ATE** shut down the country, reporting [98% public sector participation](#). Protests against Milei's labor reform faced heavy police repression in Buenos Aires.
- **Trump Defies Courts with New 10% Global Tariff:** After the Supreme Court invalidated previous tariffs, Trump invoked [Section 122](#) for a new global 10% levy, citing trade "imbalances" and "desire to protect the home market."
- **Ecuador Protests Move to Guayas:** Amidst a displacement crisis of [316,000 people](#), President Noboa's government moved the National Assembly session to **Samboorondón** to pass the **COTAD budget reform** away from Quito's protesters.

- **Cuba Energy Crisis and Tax Reform:** Cuba's Ministry of Health reported **delayed pediatric surgeries** due to the U.S. blockade. In response, the state implemented [8-year tax breaks](#) for renewable energy investors.
- **El Salvador Prison Deaths Exposed:** The NGO **Socorro Jurídico** documented [488 deaths](#) under Bukele's regime of exception, alleging widespread torture and medical neglect.
- **Sheinbaum Defends Regional Sovereignty:** Mexico's President utilized a military anniversary to [condemn U.S. interference](#) and demand justice for Peru's ousted Pedro Castillo.
- **ICC Expansion and Netanyahu Arrest Calls:** Global legal experts discussed the [ICC's evolving role](#) in prosecuting non-statute members like Netanyahu for "crimes against humanity" in Gaza.
- **Russian-Brazilian Industrial Integration:** Russian delegations visited Brazil to discuss [strategic cooperation](#) in industrial and aeronautic sectors via **Embraer**.
- **Cacao Market Crash:** Global prices dropped [below 3,150 Euro/ton](#) due to high inventories and low buyer interest, impacting African producers.
- **China's Green Credit Surge:** The People's Bank of China reported a [20.2% annual growth](#) in green credits, now totaling 44.8 trillion Yuan.

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Today's Media Trends is a public interest experiment in applying deep thematic trend analysis to television news coverage from around the world to explore how responsibly

applied advanced AI can help journalists and scholars better understand the overarching trends, themes and patterns of our global world.

No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

Each morning, in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's coverage from each television news channel to tease out the overarching themes and trends of its news coverage into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original broadcast, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the dominate themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

By helping journalists and scholars see the broader trends and patterns of global news coverage, this analysis helps them identify relevant stories and coverage they might not otherwise have encountered and uncover connections, emphases and narrative shifts that enable more comprehensive reporting and deeper, evidence-based research.

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