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FEATURED Q&A

How Will the Global Oil Crisis Affect the Energy Transition?



The war in Iran has caused upheaval in global fuel markets, leading some policy leaders around the globe to call for renewed support for electrification and decarbonization initiatives. // File Photo: abriendomundo via Adobe Stock.

Q Chile's government will expand tax incentives for taxi drivers to switch to electric vehicles in response to the global oil shock caused by the conflict involving Iran, Israel and the United States, Chilean Finance Minister Jorge Quiroz told CNN Chile on March 23. Amid what the International Energy Agency has described as "the largest supply disruption in the history of the global oil market," Brent crude oil traded above or near \$100 per barrel throughout March. To what extent does the ongoing global oil and gas crisis represent an opportunity for electrification and decarbonization efforts in Latin America? In what ways might the oil crisis stymie renewable energy investment? Which countries in the region are best positioned to rapidly transition away from oil and gas in the power, transportation and heating sectors?

A Ricardo Raineri, former Chilean energy minister and former president of the International Association for Energy Economics: "Latin America embodies a striking contradiction: It has the world's highest oil share in primary energy supply (approximately 49 percent), and oil meets 91 percent of transport needs. Yet fossil fuels overall account for 80 percent of its primary energy mix, even though around 67 percent of electricity already comes from renewables, and the region holds 38 percent of global lithium reserves and one-third of copper reserves. The region is simultaneously highly exposed to an oil shock in end-use terms and among the best endowed to transition away from it. The Hormuz crisis, which the IEA has called the largest supply disruption in oil market history, sends the right price signal for acceler-

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TOP NEWS**OIL & GAS**

Venezuelan Oil Exports Top One Million Barrels

Venezuela exported more than one million barrels per day of oil products in March, marking a 50 percent jump from February, according to shipping data viewed by Reuters.

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OIL & GAS

Russia Sending Second Oil Tanker to Cuba: Minister

Russia's energy minister said that a second cargo of crude oil is being prepared for shipment following the docking last week of a Russian tanker at northern Cuba's main import terminal.

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OIL & GAS

Ecopetrol Board Removes Ricardo Roa as CEO

The board of Colombia's state oil company, Ecopetrol, on Monday removed Chief Executive Officer Ricardo Roa. Colombia's attorney general charged him with influence peddling in March.

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Roa // File Photo: MiyojinYahiko via Wikimedia Commons [CC BY-SA 4.0](#).

OIL & GAS NEWS

Mexico to Study Unconventional Gas Reserves: Sheinbaum

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum on Wednesday announced a study to tap unconventional natural gas reserves in a bid to boost energy security, the Associated Press reported. Though Sheinbaum avoided direct usage of the terms “hydraulic fracturing” or “fracking,” she said Mexico’s government would begin a two-month technical study to find the most “sustainable” method of extracting hydrocarbons from hard-rock deposits, the AP reported. Concerns regarding water usage, pollution and seismic risk have made fracking a controversial topic in Mexico in recent years. Sheinbaum’s predecessor, former President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, unsuccessfully sought to ban fracking at a constitutional level in 2024; Sheinbaum has yet to revive the legislative push despite enjoying supermajority support in both chambers of Congress. She said Wednesday that she had changed her mind regarding the tradeoffs of fracking due to soaring global energy prices caused by the war in Iran, the Financial Times reported. “If we don’t do anything, we will be importing more and more,” Sheinbaum said, the Financial Times reported. “Just look at how lots of countries in the world are suffering because of what happened in Iran,” she added. Mexico relies on the United States for approximately 74 percent of its domestic supply of natural gas, according to data from energy consultancy Ember. No other country in the world imports more gas from the United States. Mexico’s production of natural gas has declined in recent years, leading industry groups to call on the government to incentivize the development of new deposits, particularly shale fields in the northeast of the country that share geology with Texas’ Eagle Ford and Permian basins, the AP reported. On Wednesday, a group of nongovernmental organizations, Mexico’s Alliance Against Fracking, said in a statement that were Sheinbaum to authorize large-scale fracking projects—state-

run Pemex is nearly certain to hold at least a minority stake in any such venture—it would reflect “a betrayal of the people who elected her,” the Financial Times reported. [Editor’s note: See related [Q&A](#) in the Feb. 27 issue of the Energy Advisor.]

Ecopetrol Removes Ricardo Roa as CEO Following Charges

The board of Colombian state oil company Ecopetrol on Monday removed Chief Executive Officer Ricardo Roa, a move that came after Colombia’s top prosecutor charged him with influence peddling, Bloomberg News reported. Roa will take an extended vacation and an unpaid leave of absence that lasts until late June, Ecopetrol said in a statement. By then, Colombia will have elected a new president who would then likely appoint new leadership for the company, Bloomberg News reported. Roa will be replaced by the company’s chief operating officer, Juan Carlos Hurtado, Ecopetrol said. Colombia’s attorney general in March charged Roa with influence peddling in connection with his purchase of a luxury apartment in Bogotá from an oil executive, Bloomberg News reported. Roa is also accused of violating campaign spending limits when he served as head of President Gustavo Petro’s campaign in 2022. Colombia’s National Electoral Council fined Roa in November, alleging that he had exceeded spending limits by more than 5 billion pesos (\$1.4 million), Bloomberg News reported. Roa, who has headed Ecopetrol since April 2023, has denied wrongdoing in both cases.

Two U.S. Lawmakers Blast Oil Restrictions After Visiting Cuba

Two Democratic U.S. lawmakers are calling for a resolution to Cuba’s deepening humanitarian crisis following an official five-day visit to the island, the Associated Press reported Monday. Representatives Pramila Jayapal of Washing-

NEWS BRIEFS

Chile Approves New Wind and Solar Projects With Total Capacity of 822 MW

Chile’s Committee of Ministers, the country’s top federal environmental review body, has approved three proposed renewable energy projects totaling 822 megawatts in continuous electrical capacity, news site PV Magazine reported on Monday. The projects include a 226-megawatt-capacity wind and solar plant being developed by a subsidiary of Repsol in northern Chile, as well as two proposed wind farms in the central Biobío and Ñuble regions with 258 and 338 megawatts of power capacity, respectively.

Brazil’s Natural Gas Prices Set for Spike of 20 Percent

Natural gas prices in Brazil could jump by as much as 20 percent after state-run Petrobras releases its next quarterly price update in early May, Marcelo Mendonça, the director of Brazil’s top domestic gas industry group, told Reuters on Tuesday. Barring significant reversals in market trends, gas prices could rise by as much as 35 percent by August relative to the beginning of this year, Mendonça said. Approximately 10 percent of Brazil’s electricity comes from natural gas, and the fuel is used widely for heating.

Petrobras Delivers LPG Shipments at Market Price

Brazil’s state-run Petrobras last week delivered liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) at global market rates despite federal guidance for the firm to protect consumers from price hikes caused by the war in Iran, two sources close to the matter told Reuters on April 2. President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva told a local radio station on April 2 that the firm had conducted an LPG offtake auction at market rates without the knowledge or approval of management. LPG is commonly used for household cooking in Brazil.

ton and Jonathan Jackson of Illinois met with Cuban President Miguel Díaz-Canel, Foreign Minister Bruno Rodríguez and members of Cuba's legislature. "This is cruel collective punishment—effectively an economic bombing of the infrastructure of the country—that has produced permanent damage. It must stop immediately," Jayapal and Jackson said in a joint statement, referring to U.S. restrictions that have blocked nearly all of Cuba's oil imports. Díaz-Canel said on social media site X that upon meeting the representatives he "denounced the criminal damage caused by the #blockade, particularly the consequences of the energy embargo imposed by the current U.S. administration and its threats of even more aggressive actions." Both governments have acknowledged that high-level talks are ongoing, though no details have been disclosed. Jayapal cited recent gestures by Cuba—including opening the country's economy to some investments by Cubans living outside the country, its pardoning of more than 2,000 prisoners and its cooperation with the FBI in a shooting investigation—as signs the moment is ripe for genuine negotiations. Jayapal and Jackson pledged to prepare a report and advance measures in the U.S. House of Representatives to lift sanctions against Cuba, the AP reported. [Editor's note: See related [Q&A](#) in the Jan. 30 issue of the Energy Advisor.]

Russia Sends Second Oil Tanker to Cuba Amid Fuel Crisis

Russia will send a second crude oil tanker to Cuba to alleviate acute fuel shortages amid a U.S.-imposed energy blockade of the Caribbean island, Russia's energy minister, Sergei Tsivilyov, said on April 2, The New York Times reported. Earlier last week, the administration of U.S. President Donald Trump allowed a Russian oil tanker carrying more than 700,000 barrels of crude oil to dock in northern Cuba—it was Cuba's first large-scale shipment of fuel since Jan. 9, the Associated Press reported. White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters on March 30 that the first Rus-

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ating electrification. But the infrastructure to respond in transport requires sustained capital and takes a decade or more. Oil displacement in transport won't accelerate materially on the back of a single shock, however severe. Chile's rapidly decarbonizing power sector, the real inflection dating from the past decade, is a genuine buffer: the shock has a reduced transmission into electricity prices. The recent government announcement of EV incentives for taxis and shared taxis is structurally coherent, targeting high-utilization urban vehicles where charging infrastructure can be deployed. But freight trucks, where the diesel shock hit hardest, face a multi-decade replacement horizon. The Hormuz crisis also stymies

“Oil displacement in transport won't accelerate materially on the back of a single shock...”

— Ricardo Raineri

transition in three ways. It diverts political and fiscal attention toward emergency stabilization; it accelerates upstream fossil investment in producer countries like Argentina and Brazil; and it disrupts petrochemical supply chains on which solar panels, power cables and wind turbine components all depend. The countries best positioned to transition are those with already-clean power sectors—Chile, Costa Rica, Brazil and Paraguay—because they can absorb EV growth without simultaneously decarbonizing the grid. Regional EV sales grew 52 percent in 2025, with the total fleet up 851 percent since 2022—real momentum, though still from a low base and projected to lag behind Europe and China. The deeper irony is that stabilization mechanisms like Chile's MEPCO become fiscally untenable precisely when the price signal for transition is strongest, consuming the fiscal space needed to

finance it. That policy trap remains unsolved across the region.”

A Raphael Moraes Paciello, partner at Pinheiro Neto Advogados: “The ongoing global oil and gas crisis presents both challenges and opportunities for Latin America's energy transition, and Brazil offers a compelling case study in this regard. Brazil's initial response to the surge in oil prices triggered by the conflict involving Iran was to grant subsidies on diesel fuel and to impose an export tax on oil and diesel, seeking to shield domestic consumers and industries from the immediate impact of soaring energy costs. While these measures aim to provide short-term relief, they also highlight the country's continued vulnerability to fossil fuel price volatility—a weakness that stands in contrast to the remarkable diversity of its energy matrix. Brazil is, in fact, one of the countries in the region best positioned to accelerate the transition away from oil and gas. Its power sector is already predominantly renewable, with hydroelectric generation accounting for around 60 percent of electricity supply, complemented by growing wind and solar capacity. In the transportation sector, Brazil has decades of experience with ethanol as a biofuel, and its flex-fuel vehicle fleet provides a built-in infrastructure for reducing gasoline dependence. These structural advantages mean that the current oil shock, rather than stymieing investment, could serve as a catalyst for deepening electrification and decarbonization efforts. That said, the crisis may divert fiscal resources toward emergency subsidies and price controls, potentially crowding out public investment in renewable energy infrastructure. I believe the key challenge for Brazil—and probably for the region more broadly—will be to resist the temptation of short-term palliatives and instead channel the momentum created by the crisis into long-term policies that lock in the gains of a cleaner energy matrix.”

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sian tanker, the Anatoly Kolodkin, was allowed to dock “for humanitarian reasons” and that the Trump administration would continue to assess oil shipments to Cuba on a “case-by-case basis,” The New York Times reported. The White House declined to comment on the matter on April 2, the newspaper reported. In January, Trump threatened steep tariffs against countries that send oil products to Cuba, effectively cutting off the island’s supply of badly needed fuel imports from countries including Mexico and Venezuela. Last month, as global fuel prices spiked in response to the war in Iran, the U.S. Treasury said that Cuba could not benefit from sanctions waivers that were issued for Russian and Iranian oil products, Al Jazeera English reported. Fuel shortages in Cuba in recent months have increasingly caused island-wide power outages and forced cuts to public services like education, health care and transit. “Cuba is finished,” Trump told reporters on March 29, the AP reported. “Whether or not they get a boat of oil, it’s not going to matter,” he added. “We will not leave Cubans alone in trouble,” Tsivilyov said on April 2, the AP reported, citing Russian state media. Tsivilyov added that the second cargo of crude oil is currently being loaded at a Russian port; the vessel will take at least two weeks to arrive in Cuba, the wire service reported. Each tanker ship has a capacity equivalent to roughly nine days of Cuba’s imported fuel demand.

Venezuelan Exports of Oil and Fuel Top One Million Barrels

Venezuela’s exports of crude oil and refined fuels averaged 1.1 million barrels per day in March, Reuters reported on April 1, citing shipping data. The figure marks an increase of approximately 50 percent from February, representing an uptick in activity in the wake of the U.S. government relaxing sanctions on Venezuela’s oil sector. Oil supermajor Chevron exported 267,000 barrels of crude oil per day from Venezuela to its refineries along the U.S. Gulf Coast in March, a 28 percent increase from the month prior, Reuters reported. Indian refiners also stepped up their purchases of

ADVISOR Q&A

What Are the Effects of the Iran War on Latin American Agribusiness?

Q **The ongoing conflict in the Middle East between Iran and Israel and the United States has roiled global energy markets, causing global fertilizer prices to surge by more than 25 percent since the beginning of March. Brazil, Latin America’s top producer of agricultural products, imported more than \$15 billion in fertilizer in 2025. Which countries in Latin America and segments of the region’s agribusiness sector are most exposed to rising input and logistics costs? To what extent do higher fertilizer and energy prices threaten production, crop choices and export competitiveness in key agricultural economies such as Brazil and Argentina? How might the current shock lead to longer-term shifts in Latin America’s role in global food markets?**

A **Mariangela Hungria, agronomist, soil microbiologist and researcher at Embrapa Soja:** “Conflicts such as the one in the Middle East are devastating, especially because of the lives lost. Regarding the effects on Brazilian agriculture, they will have a major impact, both on the cost and supply of inputs, as well as on food exports. However, difficulties also bring opportunities. For those who, like me, work with biological inputs as a substitute for chemical ones, the transportation constraints during Covid-19 and the disruption in fertilizer supply caused by the war between Russia and Ukraine represented a major opportunity for the sector. Faced with shortages of chemical inputs, farmers decided to test biologicals and were able to confirm what research had long

demonstrated—that biologicals are effective and can support high yields. As a result, from 2020 onward, there was an explosion in the use of bioinputs. Once farmers see results, adoption tends to increase steadily. We are now facing another conflict, which will once again significantly constrain the supply and increase the cost of fertilizers and chemical molecules for pest and

“This also represents a new opportunity...”

— Mariangela Hungria

disease control. Nevertheless, this also represents a new opportunity for the expansion of biologicals, which are produced in Brazil and based on its rich biodiversity. I hope that this second warning regarding the heavy external dependence on chemical inputs for agriculture, alongside the strong opportunity for developing biologicals in Brazil, becomes clear to all sectors. This should lead to the necessary incentives to consolidate the biologicals market in the country. With this, not only will production costs be significantly reduced, but we will also move toward a more sustainable agriculture, with lower environmental impact.”

EDITOR’S NOTE: More commentary on this topic appears in the Q&A of Monday’s issue of the daily Latin America Advisor.

Venezuelan crude oil last month amid the effective closure of the Strait of Hormuz, through which more than 20 percent of the world’s oil

supply—and most of India’s—typically transits. [Editor’s note: See related Q&A in the March 20 issue of the Energy Advisor.]

NEWS BRIEFS

Haitian Electoral Council Delays Voter Registration

Haiti's electoral council said Wednesday that it had postponed a voter registration period that had been scheduled to open on April 1, Reuters reported. The Caribbean nation's provisional government had set a date of Aug. 30 to hold the country's first general election since 2016, but that could now be delayed even further, the electoral council's president, Jacques Desrosiers, told Reuters on Wednesday. Some 12 percent of Haitians—1.4 million people—remain internally displaced as gangs continue to exert quasi-state control over nearly all of Port-au-Prince, Reuters reported.

Brazil's Lula Backs Ban on Online Betting Platforms

Brazilian President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva on Wednesday expressed support for a ban on online betting platforms, the Associated Press reported. "If it is up to me, we close them," Lula told website ICL Notificas. "I am deeply worried about the indebtedness of the Brazilian people. If these platforms cause harm, why don't we close them? We are discussing this very seriously," he added. Any move to ban such platforms would require legislative approval, Lula said. Online gambling generates about \$4 billion annually in revenue in Brazil.

Paraguay's Peña Picks New Finance Minister

Paraguayan President Santiago Peña on Wednesday appointed Óscar Lovera as the country's new economy and finance minister, Reuters reported. Lovera, who was serving as vice minister of financial administration, replaces Carlos Fernández Valdovinos, who resigned last week at Peña's request. Peña said in a post on social media site X that the switch is intended to improve state efficiency. "I want an agile state that guarantees the conditions for the country to continue developing," he said.

POLITICAL NEWS

Venezuela's Interim President Vows Increase in Wages

Acting Venezuelan President Delcy Rodríguez on Wednesday vowed in a nationally televised address to implement wage increases, the Associated Press reported. Rodríguez said wage hikes would take effect on May 1, but she gave few details about the plan. "This increase, as we have indicated, will be a responsible increase," Rodríguez said, the AP reported. "Likewise in the near future, as Venezuela enjoys more resources that allow for the sustainability of salary improvements and workers' income, we will continue moving forward on this path," she added. Venezuela's monthly minimum wage of 130 bolivars (\$0.27) has not been raised since 2022. The figure is well below the \$3 per day level that the United Nations classifies as the extreme poverty rate. However, many workers in the public sector earn money through bonuses and other payments that can take their monthly incomes up to about \$150 per month, Reuters reported. "Our immediate, medium-term and long-term goal is to steadily and gradually restore workers' incomes through productive growth in both the hydrocarbons and mining sectors, which generate immediate revenue once production recovery takes place," Rodríguez said Wednesday in her televised announcement, Reuters reported.

ECONOMIC NEWS

Argentina Approves Reform of Glacier Protection Law

Argentina's Congress early Thursday morning approved a reform of its glacier protection law that is designed to open new areas to mining activities, the Financial Times reported. In a victory for President Javier Milei, who has pushed for the changes, the lower house

passed the reform on a vote of 137-111, with three abstentions. The Senate previously approved the legislation in February, and Milei is expected to sign it into law. The measure would give provincial authorities greater ability to determine which glaciers should be protected. The reform replaces a national framework that set environmental standards related to glaciers, the Financial Times reported. Milei has long called mining a main part of Argentina's economic recovery. After lawmakers passed the reform, he said the changes would allow mining in areas that had previously been incorrectly classified as glaciers, the Financial Times reported. The reform is expected to lead to \$165 billion in exports by 2035 and create thousands of jobs, Economy Minister Luis Caputo said in a post on social media site X. Environmentalists have opposed the reform, saying it would jeopardize water resources, Reuters reported. [Editor's note: See related [Q&A](#) on the debate surrounding Argentina's glacier law in the Nov. 26 issue of the daily Latin America Advisor.]

Digital Payments Rapidly Expanding in Region: Report

Digital payments are rapidly expanding in Latin America and the Caribbean through artificial intelligence, cloud technology and new market players, according to a report released on Thursday by Mastercard and consulting group Payments and Commerce Market Intelligence. However, in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean, 77 percent of small businesses do not currently accept digital payments, and 23 percent do not accept payment cards, meaning that nearly 11 million businesses can benefit from greater acceptance of digital payments, according to the report. "As commerce becomes more digital, connected, and data-driven, the acceptance infrastructure built today will shape how fully merchants can participate in the economy of the next decade," Mastercard said in a statement accompanying the report. [Editor's note: See related [Q&A](#) in the Feb. 25 issue of the biweekly Financial Services Advisor.]

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A Isabel Beltran, vice president for Latin America and the Caribbean and Global Energy Alliance: “Diversifying the energy mix is one of the main reasons for advancing the energy transition. It has long been part of the discussion because it helps shield economies from geopolitical shocks like the one we are witnessing today. This is especially relevant for countries that rely heavily on imported fossil fuels for transport, manufacturing, electricity and services. In that context, the current spike in global oil prices creates a clear opportunity to accelerate electrification and decarbonization. However, high fossil fuel prices do not automatically accelerate the transition. Countries can move quickly and in the right direction only if the right foundations are already in place: enabling regulations, clear transition frameworks, grid readiness, financing mechanisms and targeted incentives. Without these, governments may respond with short-term fossil fuel subsidies rather than structural reform. We are seeing the difference this makes in practice. In Brazil, modest catalytic funding from the Global Energy Alliance helped support a World Bank program that is now unlocking more than \$100 million to expand electricity access; we’ve also been able to take this approach deploying solar mesh-grids in Haiti and helping unlock Barbados’ first major battery energy storage project. In addition to financing, bringing the right partners to the table and providing technical support can help reduce risk. The current crisis can both encourage and hinder renewable energy investment. It may spur investment by highlighting the risks of fossil fuel dependence, but it can also slow progress if costs rise, supply chains are disrupted or access to key components is constrained. Some countries are better positioned than others, depending on the strength of their incentives and infrastructure. Those that have invested in these foundations will be best placed to translate this moment into lasting progress at scale.”

A Ramón Fiestas, senior advisor at the Global Wind Energy Council in Brussels: “Disruptions to the normal flow of oil and gas trade can now be seen as a recurring threat to energy security and economic stability in this century. This latest episode, triggered by the war in the Persian Gulf, extends its damages beyond the recent crisis caused by the invasion of Ukraine, leading to a surge in prices that affects virtually the entire global economy. In Latin America, its impact varies greatly and is directly linked to the extent to which these economies rely on fossil fuels. Countries such as Chile, Brazil and Uruguay can capitalize on the advantage they hold over other economies due to their having made progress in decarbonization, to the extent that, for example, wind power generation in Uruguay enables it to meet its own electricity demand and cover part of Argentina’s needs, as well. The current gas and oil blackout in the Persian Gulf undoubtedly provides an incentive to accelerate the energy transition underway in Chile, in this case on the energy demand side, which is still 64 percent dependent on these fuels. Brazil’s exposure to gas imports exceeds \$3.5 billion, hence the global reconfiguration of gas markets and their extreme volatility caused by this crisis represent a historic opportunity for the country to switch to electrification, as well as relaunch its onshore wind industry and implement its portfolio of offshore wind projects, which count on more than enough potential to meet the country’s power needs. For Mexico, the current crisis serves as a serious warning of its high vulnerability and exposure to fossil fuel consumption. This could accelerate Mexico’s transition to renewable energy, facilitating a safer and more streamlined implementation for investors of the existing renewable energy project pipeline.”

The Advisor welcomes comments on its Q&A section. Readers can write editor Gene Kuleta.

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