

GLOBAL HORIZONS

A communications platform from MIA's Protocol and International Affairs Division



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About Us

The core mission of MIA's Protocol and International Affairs Division is to *facilitate the movement of official guests, delegations, dignitaries, and VIPs through MIA and support the airport's international programs and initiatives.*

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Federative Republic of Brazil “The Land of the Holy Cross”

Brazil is one of the world’s most geographically diverse and culturally vibrant nations. It occupies half of South America’s landmass and is the 5th-largest country on Earth. It shares borders with ten countries.

Brazil’s history traces a long arc from thriving Indigenous civilizations to a modern democratic nation. Indigenous societies flourished for millennia before the Portuguese arrived in 1500, ushering in centuries of colonial rule shaped first by sugar production and later by a gold boom. In 1808, the Portuguese royal court moved to Rio de Janeiro, strengthening Brazil’s institutions and setting the stage for independence in 1822. The country shifted from empire to republic in 1889, endured a military dictatorship from 1964 to 1985, and ultimately restored democracy. Today, despite political challenges, Brazil stands as one of the world’s major economies with a stable democratic system.

The Amazon rainforest dominates the northwest region, covering more than 60 percent of Brazil. This vast ecosystem includes the Amazon River, the world’s second-longest river, along with major tributaries such as the Negro, Madeira, and Solimões. In the south, the Iguazu River forms part of Brazil’s border with Argentina and feeds Iguazu Falls, the largest waterfall system on Earth.

Brazil’s population reflects centuries of cultural blending. Most Brazilians identify as white with roots in Portuguese, Italian, Spanish, and German ancestry. A significant portion identify as pardo or moreno, describing mixed heritage from European, African, South Asian, and Indigenous backgrounds. Portuguese is the national language, though Brazilian Portuguese differs from European Portuguese in pronunciation.

Type of Government: Federal Presidential Republic

Head of State: President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva

Capital: Brasília

Population: 213.4 million (2025 estimate)

Independence Day, celebrated annually on September 7, marks the exact date in 1822 when Prince Regent Dom Pedro I declared Brazil free from Portuguese rule.

Currency: Brazilian Real (BRL)

Religion plays an important role in daily life. Most Brazilians are Roman Catholic, followed by a growing Protestant population. Smaller communities practice Islam, Buddhism, Afro-Brazilian, and Indigenous beliefs. Brazilians are known globally for their warm and welcoming nature. Carnival, the country’s most famous street festival, showcases Brazil’s love for music, dance, and artistic expression.

Fun Facts About Brazil

- Brazil is the only Portuguese-speaking country in the Americas, thanks to Portuguese colonization beginning in 1500. Brazil borders every South American country except Chile and Ecuador, for a total of 10 neighbors. It spans four time zones and covers nearly half of South America.
- Brazil leads the world in producing and exporting coffee, sugar, soybeans, and orange juice, and ranks among the top exporters of beef, iron ore, corn, and poultry.
- It has the largest Japanese community outside Japan, mostly in São Paulo, and the largest population of African descent outside Africa, shaping its music, food, and festivals.
- Samba grew from Afro-Brazilian traditions and became Brazil’s signature sound. Enslaved Africans in Brazil created capoeira, a dance-like martial art recognized by UNESCO.
- Brazil holds roughly 60% of the Amazon Rainforest, home to an estimated 10% of all known species on Earth. The Amazon River discharges more water than the next seven largest rivers combined, making it the world’s largest by volume.
- The nation is passionate about futebol (soccer). Brazil has won the FIFA World Cup a record five (5) times.

We thank the Consulate General of Brazil in Miami for its valued contribution to this article.



U. Desmond Alufohai

Division Director II

Protocol & International Affairs Division

September marks the beginning of the “**ember**” months (September, October, November, and December), a season that, across many cultures, signifies heightened activity, thoughtful reflection, and purposeful preparation. The Protocol & International Affairs Division embraces the renewed momentum these months bring and looks ahead to continued collaboration, meaningful engagement, and shared progress as we prepare for an extraordinary global milestone: the G20 Heads of State Summit in Miami, December 14–15, 2026.

This month, we are pleased to welcome **Ms. Jennifer Schuett**, the new Regional Director of the U.S. Department of State’s Office of Foreign Missions (OFM), Miami Regional Office. We also extend a warm welcome to **Mr. Thierry Peyroux**, the new Consul General of France in Miami. Their arrival further enriches our region’s dynamic diplomatic landscape, and we look forward to supporting their missions and strengthening cooperation with both offices.

We additionally congratulate **Mr. René Pika**, Consul General of Suriname, on his appointment as Deputy Dean of the Consular Corps of Miami. This well-deserved recognition reflects his professionalism, dedication, and longstanding service.

As always, we proudly salute all nations commemorating their Independence Day or National Day this month. These observances honor the heritage, resilience, and aspirations of countries around the world, and we join in recognizing their significance.

Diplomatic & Consular Relations

Suriname's Top Diplomat in Miami Assumes Role of Deputy Dean of the Consular Corps



The Consular Corps of Miami recently announced the appointment of **Mr. René Pika** as its new Deputy Dean, following the vacancy created by the departure of Consul General Oliver Mair of Jamaica to New York, NY. Mr. Pika is a seasoned diplomatic professional with extensive experience in international relations, consular affairs, and public administration. Known for his integrity, discretion, and strategic mindset, he brings a calm, solution-oriented approach to complex situations and excels in cultural diplomacy, negotiation, and conflict resolution.

Since 2022, Mr. Pika has served as Consul General of Suriname in Miami, Florida, where he oversees consular services, manages high-level diplomatic engagements, and protects and supports Surinamese citizens abroad. His leadership has strengthened operational efficiency, enhanced service delivery, and reinforced Suriname's diplomatic presence in the region.

Prior to his current role, he held policy advisory positions at the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and the Ministry of Sports and Youth Development, contributing to national policy development, strategic planning, and organizational improvement. Earlier in his career, he served as Senior Desk Officer for French Guiana at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and as Vice-Consul in Miami, where he advanced workflow modernization and staff training initiatives.

Mr. Pika's professional journey also includes roles in youth development, international cooperation, and private-sector coordination, reflecting his adaptability and commitment to public service. He is recognized for his collaborative leadership style, strong communication skills, and ability to guide teams toward shared goals. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Public Administration from Anton de Kom University of Suriname and has completed specialized training in negotiation, communication, international relations, and organizational development. Fluent in Dutch and English, with intermediate proficiency in Spanish, Mr. Pika brings a multilingual advantage to his diplomatic work. Born in Commewijne, Suriname, he maintains an active lifestyle and enjoys cycling, coaching youth soccer, playing basketball, and weightlifting.

Mr. Thierry Peyroux is the New Consul General of France in Miami, Florida



Mr. Thierry Peyroux is the new Consul General of France in Miami, Florida. A career diplomat since 2011, Mr. Peyroux has held various positions within the French diplomatic network and the United Nations. Most notably, he served at the French Embassy in Algeria before moving to New York to work on Sahel-related issues for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). He then worked at France's Permanent Mission to the United Nations, where he led negotiations on global health during the COVID-19 pandemic.

From 2022 to 2024, he served as Deputy Director for East Africa at the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, where he managed France's relations with countries in the region and helped handle several crises, particularly in Sudan and the Great Lakes region. He then took on ministerial staff roles, first as Deputy Chief of Staff to Thani Mohamed

Soilihi, Minister Delegate for Francophonie and International Partnerships, until his arrival in Miami, and then as Chief of Staff to Benjamin Haddad, Minister Delegate for Europe.

He is a graduate of Sciences Po Paris and also an alumnus of the École nationale d'administration (Robert Badinter Class, 2009–2011) and HEC Paris (École des hautes études commerciales de Paris). Mr. Peyroux is a father of two. He is passionate about contemporary literature and all forms of artistic expression.

OFM's New Regional Director



Ms. Jennifer Schuett is the new Regional Director, Office of Foreign Missions (OFM), U.S. Department of State, Miami Regional Office. Ms. Schuett is a foreign service officer with the U.S. Department of State and has diverse experience worldwide. In August 2026, she became Regional Director of the Office of Foreign Missions, Miami Regional Office.

Her previous tours include Israel, Afghanistan, Mexico, Myanmar, Colombia, and Washington, DC. She specializes in outreach and public communications, and most recently served as the Spokesperson for Venezuelan affairs. She earned her B.A. in International Relations from Miami University in Oxford, Ohio, and her M.A. in Latin American Studies from Georgetown University. She resides in Miami, Florida, with her husband, two small children, and a dog.

Aviation, Etiquette, Lifestyle and Culture

Pre-Flight Rituals: The Global Traditions Behind Tapping the Aircraft



Around the world, travelers embrace small rituals to ease flying anxiety and invite good fortune before takeoff. One increasingly visible practice is simply tapping the aircraft's fuselage while boarding. Some passengers describe it as "connecting" with the plane; others treat it playfully, as though greeting a familiar companion. A few even kiss their fingers and touch the airline logo for luck. Whether rooted in comfort or social media trends, these gestures offer reassurance in a moment when many feel vulnerable, especially given studies showing that up to 40% of Americans experience some level of fear of flying.

This instinct to seek protection is universal, and cultures express it in diverse ways. Travelers often rely on personal rituals such as wearing "lucky" clothing, carrying charms, listening to a meaningful song, or lifting their feet during takeoff. In China, some passengers have thrown coins toward an aircraft for good luck, an extremely dangerous act that airlines strongly discourage. Number-based superstitions also appear worldwide: Western carriers often remove row 13, while Italian airlines eliminate row 17 due to its unlucky connotation in Roman numerals.

Many traditions are spiritual. Christian travelers may make the sign of the cross or carry St. Christopher medals. Muslims recite the traditional *Dua for Travel*. Jewish passengers often say *Tefilat HaDerech*. Hindus invoke Ganesha for protection, and Japanese travelers carry *omamori* charms for safe journeys. Indigenous communities may bless travelers with chants and water.

Even flight crews participate. Some tap the aircraft as a friendly greeting, while pilots may quietly speak to the plane before departure. Across cultures and professions, these rituals, simple, personal, and often unseen, reflect a shared human desire for safety, comfort, and connection as we take to the skies.

September Diplomatic Travel: A Global Power Play



September consistently ranks among the most active months in international diplomacy, and this year's travel patterns underscore just how critical face-to-face engagement has become. With geopolitical tensions rising, economic uncertainty deepening, and security challenges multiplying, world leaders are on the move, reshaping alliances, testing partnerships, and negotiating influence across continents.

In Asia, major gatherings such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and BRICS have drawn leaders from across the Global South. These forums continue to evolve as strategic counterweights to Western institutions. India is using September's summits to strengthen ties with Central Asia and reinforce its leadership among developing nations, while China is leveraging the same platforms to expand its Eurasian footprint through infrastructure and technology diplomacy.

Across Europe, capitals are hosting urgent ministerial meetings on energy, migration, and defense. With winter approaching, energy security dominates the agenda, prompting intensified outreach to suppliers in the Middle East and North Africa. NATO consultations are also accelerating, with U.S. and European officials visiting frontline states to reaffirm commitments amid ongoing regional tensions.

In the Americas, September brings a blend of trade and climate diplomacy. Latin American leaders are traveling to Washington, Ottawa, and New York to advance economic cooperation and investment. The United States is focusing on supply chain resilience, especially in critical minerals and semiconductors, while Caribbean nations are pressing for stronger climate financing ahead of the COP summit.

At the center of it all is the United Nations General Assembly, where nearly every head of state converges in New York for a week of speeches, negotiations, and quiet deal-making. This year's agenda centers on economic recovery, climate action, and conflict resolution. As always, the most consequential breakthroughs often occur not on the main stage, but in the corridors and side rooms, where informal diplomacy thrives.

Briefs and Notes

Suicide Awareness Month: A Call to Understanding, Prevention, and Collective Action

Suicide Awareness Month offers an essential moment for communities, institutions, and individuals to confront one of the most urgent public health challenges of our time. Suicide affects every demographic, every region, and every socioeconomic group, yet it remains widely misunderstood, under-discussed, and stigmatized. Raising awareness is not merely symbolic; it is a proven strategy that saves lives.

The Reality in the United States

Suicide continues to be a leading cause of death in the U.S., with 48,824 deaths recorded in 2024. The impact extends far beyond these tragic losses: 14.3 million adults seriously considered suicide, 4.6 million planned it, and 2.2 million attempted suicides in 2024.

Key disparities highlight where attention is urgently needed

- Males die by suicide nearly four times more often than females.
- Non-Hispanic American Indian and Alaska Native individuals have the highest suicide rates among racial/ethnic groups in the U.S.
- Youth and young adults face rising risk, with suicide now the second leading cause of death among people aged 10–24.
- Firearms account for 54.6% of completed suicides, underscoring the role of lethal means safety in prevention efforts.
- These numbers reflect not only the scale of the crisis, but also the importance of early intervention, access to mental health care, and community support.



A Global Challenge

Worldwide, suicide claims hundreds of thousands of lives each year. Several trends illustrate the global dimensions of the issue:

- Males are 3.5 times more likely to die by suicide than females globally.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 10–24-year-olds worldwide.
- 78% of global suicide deaths occur among adults aged 25–64, with a global rate of 23.4 per 100,000 in this age group.
- Low- and middle-income countries experience suicide rates 1.5 times higher than high-income nations, reflecting disparities in access to care and social support systems.
- Regions such as Africa have seen a 20% increase in suicide rates since 2000.

These global patterns reinforce that suicide is not confined to any one culture or country; it is a universal human concern requiring coordinated international action.

What Works: Evidence-Based Prevention

Research consistently shows that suicide is preventable when communities invest in awareness, training, and accessible care:

- School-based prevention programs reduce suicide attempts by 30–50%.
- Mass media campaigns promote help-seeking and reduce suicide rates by 11% in targeted regions.
- Telehealth interventions reduce hospitalizations for suicidal ideation by 22%.
- Crisis hotlines receiving high call volumes show a 50% reduction in suicide attempts among callers.

These findings show that awareness is not passive; it is active prevention.

A Shared Responsibility

Suicide Awareness Month reminds us that every person has a role to play. Whether by checking in on loved ones, advocating for mental health resources, supporting community programs, or simply learning the warning signs, each action contributes to a culture where people feel seen, supported, and valued. If you or someone you know is struggling, confidential help is available 24/7. Reaching out is a sign of strength, and connection is often the first step toward healing.

How Countries Get Their Nicknames

Countries are often known by distinctive nicknames that reflect their history, geography, or cultural identity. Media, popular culture, and local expressions frequently shape these informal titles. Such nicknames offer valuable insights into a nation's character, serving as concise references that encapsulate rich stories, traditions, and national pride in just a few words.

Country	Nickname	Explanation	Source / Reference
Australia	<i>The Land Down Under</i>	Referring to its location in the Southern Hemisphere.	Australian Government, Tourism Australia
Brazil	<i>The Land of the Palms</i>	Due to its tropical vegetation and abundance of palm trees.	Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics (IBGE)
Canada	<i>The Great White North</i>	Highlights its northern location and snowy climate.	Canadian Encyclopedia
China	<i>The Red Dragon</i>	Symbolizes power and red, which is culturally significant in China.	BBC, Chinese Cultural Studies
Egypt	<i>The Gift of the Nile</i>	Refers to the Nile River's vital role in Egypt's civilization.	Herodotus, Ancient History Encyclopedia
France	<i>The Hexagon</i>	Due to the roughly hexagonal shape of the country.	French Government, France Diplomatie
Germany	<i>The Land of Poets and Thinkers</i>	Celebrates its rich intellectual and cultural history.	Goethe-Institut, Britannica
Greece	<i>The Cradle of Western Civilization</i>	Due to its foundational influence on Western philosophy, democracy, and the arts.	UNESCO, History.com
India	<i>The Land of Spices</i>	Known for its diverse and flavorful spice trade.	Indian Ministry of Commerce, National Geographic
Indonesia	<i>The Emerald of the Equator</i>	Refers to its lush tropical islands near the equator.	Indonesian Tourism Board
Ireland	<i>The Emerald Isle</i>	Refers to its lush green landscape.	Irish Tourism Board
Italy	<i>The Boot</i>	Named for its boot-like shape on the map.	National Geographic
Japan	<i>The Land of the Rising Sun</i>	Based on its eastern location and the Japanese name "Nihon" or "Nippon."	Japan National Tourism Organization
Kenya	<i>The Safari Capital of the World</i>	Known for its world-famous wildlife safaris.	Kenya Tourism Board
Mexico	<i>The Land of the Sun</i>	Refers to its warm climate and ancient sun-worshipping civilizations.	INAH (Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia)
New Zealand	<i>Aotearoa (Land of the Long White Cloud)</i>	Māori name describing the cloud formations seen by early Polynesian settlers.	Te Ara Encyclopedia of New Zealand
Nigeria	<i>The Giant of Africa</i>	Due to its large population and economic influence.	Nigerian Bureau of Statistics, BBC
Norway	<i>The Land of the Midnight Sun</i>	Referring to the natural phenomenon in the Arctic Circle.	Visit Norway, National Geographic
Russia	<i>The Motherland</i>	A term of endearment and patriotism used by Russians.	Russian History Museum
South Africa	<i>The Rainbow Nation</i>	Coined by Desmond Tutu to describe its multicultural diversity post-apartheid.	South African Government, Nelson Mandela Foundation
Switzerland	<i>The Land of Milk and Honey</i>	Referring to its prosperity and high quality of life.	Swiss Federal Statistical Office
Thailand	<i>The Land of Smiles</i>	Known for the friendliness and hospitality of its people.	Tourism Authority of Thailand
United Kingdom	<i>Albion</i>	An ancient name for Britain, often used poetically.	Oxford English Dictionary, Britannica
United States	<i>Uncle Sam / The Land of Opportunity</i>	"Land of Opportunity" reflects the American Dream.	Library of Congress, U.S. History.org
Venezuela	<i>The Land of Grace</i>	Named by Christopher Columbus for its beauty.	Venezuelan History Archives

Independence and National Days (September 2026)

September 1, 1991 – Uzbekistan: It gained independence from the Soviet Union.

September 2, 1945 – Vietnam: In early 1945, Japan ousted the French administration in Vietnam. Hours after Japan had formally surrendered to the Allies on September 2, 1945, Ho Chi Minh declared Vietnam's independence from France.

September 6, 1968 – Eswatini: Swaziland, as Eswatini was known until April 2018, achieved independence from the UK.

September 7, 1822 – Brazil: Prince Regent Dom Pedro declared Brazil's independence from Portugal on September 7, 1822.

September 8, 1991 – North Macedonia: A referendum endorsed independence from Yugoslavia in 1991.

September 9, 1991 – Tajikistan: Following the Soviet Union's breakup, Tajikistan gained independence.

September 15, 1821 – Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua: On September 15, 1821, envoys from Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua signed the Act of Independence of Central America, proclaiming their independence from Spain.

September 16, 1810 – Mexico: Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla, a Catholic priest and the father of Mexican independence, urged his fellow Mexicans to take up arms against the Spanish. His proclamation, known as the "Grito de Dolores," marked the start of the Mexican War of Independence. The war ended in 1821, and September 16 is celebrated annually as Mexico's Independence Day.

September 16, 1975 – Papua New Guinea: On this day, it was granted independence from the Australia-administered UN trusteeship.

September 18, 1810 – Chile: In 1810, a group of Santiago residents met in open council to name a governing board, taking the first steps toward independence from Spain. Although independence was not officially declared until February 12, 1818, and the last Spanish stronghold did not fall until 1826, September 18 is celebrated annually as Chile's Independence Day.

September 19, 1983 – St. Kitts and Nevis: In 1967, the island territory of Saint Christopher-Nevis-Anguilla became an associated state of the United Kingdom with full internal autonomy. After Anguilla seceded, the remaining islands achieved independence as Saint Kitts and Nevis on September 19, 1983.

September 21, 1964 – Malta: It was a British colony from 1814 until it gained independence in 1964. Since December 13, 1974, Malta has been a republic.

September 21, 1981 – Belize: British Honduras, a British colony since 1862, was renamed Belize on June 1, 1973. On September 21, 1981, Belize gained its independence from the United Kingdom.

September 21, 1991 – Armenia: On this day, approximately 95% of the population voted for independence from the Soviet Union.

September 22, 1908 – Bulgaria: Prince Ferdinand declared Bulgaria's independence from the Ottoman Empire.

September 22, 1960 – Mali: As the colony of French Soudan, Mali was part of the Federation of French West Africa. In 1959, Soudan and Senegal joined to form the Mali Federation, which became fully independent within the French Community on June 20, 1960, and collapsed two months later when Senegal seceded. On September 22, 1960, Soudan proclaimed itself the Republic of Mali and withdrew from the French Community.

September 23, 1932 – Saudi Arabia: King Abdulaziz proclaimed the unification of the country as a kingdom.

September 24, 1973 – Guinea-Bissau: Declared independence from Portugal.

September 27, 1991 – Turkmenistan: From 1924 until regaining its independence on October 27, 1991, Turkmenistan was a Soviet Republic. Since 2018, Independence Day has been officially celebrated on September 27.

September 30, 1966 – Botswana: In 1966, after 80 years as a British protectorate, Bechuanaland became the independent Republic of Botswana.