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No Changes This Week:

Please be aware System Risk Management has asked all members to prohibit travel to extreme risk countries and regions. Please reference memorandum from the Chancellor regarding procedures relating to international travel to be followed by all System members found at this link:


Should you have any questions, please contact me directly. Thank you.

Henry Judah, AIC CPCU CLU ChFC | Associate Director
System Risk Management
hjudah@tamus.edu

1262 TAMU | College Station, TX 77840-7896
Tel. 979.458.6234 | Cell 979.820.2006 | Fax 979.458.6247 | www.tamus.edu

Country Travel Advisory List:

Any travel to the below listed countries requires an International Travel Questionnaire submission to System Risk Management for review.

- Afghanistan
- Central African Republic
- Cuba
- Gaza Strip
- Libya
- North Korea
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Syria
- Yemen

Any travel to the specified regions within a country noted below requires an International Travel Questionnaire submission to System Risk Management for review.

Information on Travel Restrictions From Listed Countries: Sudan, Syria, Iran, Libya, Somalia and Yemen.

- **Armenia**: Within 2km of the line of contact in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region
- **Azerbaijan**: Within 2km of the line of contact in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region
- **Cameroon**: Far North (Extreme-Nord) region and within 50km of Cameroon’s shared border with Nigeria in the country’s North (Nord) and Adamawa (Adamaoua) regions.
- **Chad**: Ennedi-Est, Ennedi-Quest, Wadi Fira, Quaddai and Sila (which border Sudan), the southern regions of Logone Oriental, Mandoul, Moyen-Chari and Salamat, the northern regions of Tibesti, Borkou and Ennedi-Qest (which border Libya) and the western Kanem and Lac regions.
- **Democratic Republic of Congo**: The eastern Nord-Kivu, Sud-Kivu, and Tanganyika provinces, as well as the north eastern Ituri, Haut-Uele and Bas-Uele provinces and the southern Kasia Central province.
- **Egypt**: North Sinai governorate.
- **Eritrea**: Within 20km of Eritrea’s borders with Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Sudan.
- **Ethiopia**: Within 20km of Ethiopia’s border with Eritrea in the Tigray and Afar regions, within 20km of the South Sudan border in the Gambela and Benishangul-Gumuz regions, and the Somali region (excluding the two northern zones of Fafan, formerly Jijiga, and Sitti, formerly Shinile).
- **Iran**: Sistan va Baluchestan province
- **Iraq**: Baghdad, Anbar, Salah ad-Din, Kirkuk, Diyala, Nineva, Karbala and Babil governorates and the northern Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG)-held and disputed territory west of the Green Line.
- **Israel**: Within 2km of the shared Gaza Strip-Israel border in southern Israel and all travel to the Gaza Strip due to the threats of conflict and secondary threats of kidnapping and terrorism.
- **Japan**: Within a 20km radius of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Okuma.
- **Kenya**: Within 50km of the Somali border in the Mandera, Wajir, Garissa and Lamu counties.
- **Lebanon**: An area within 15km of the shared border with Syria in the Bekaa and North governorates and Palestinian refugee camps across the country.
- **Mali**: Gao, Kidal, Mopti and Timbuktu regions
- **Mexico**: Due to the high risks of kidnapping, violent crime and an escalating drug cartel-related conflict, red24 currently advises against non-essential travel to the countryside outside of major cities and primary resort areas as well as the states of Tamaulipas, Michoacan, Coahuila, Sinaloa, Nayarit and Guererro.
• **Niger**: Within a 50km radius of Niger’s shared border with Nigeria in the administrative regions of Diffa and Zinder and to within a 100km radius of Niger’s shared borders with Chad, Algeria, Libya and Mali.

• **Nigeria**: Adamawa, Borno, Yobe and Gombe in the northeast. Rural and remote areas within Kaduna, Bauchi, Plateau, Benue, Zamfara, Enuge and Taraba states in the “Middle Belt” and the Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta and Rivers states in the south.

• **Pakistan**: Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces

• **Philippines**: The southern Mindanao region and the Sulu Archipelago.

• **Russia**: Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria (including the Mount Elbrus region).

• **Saudi Arabia**: Within 10km of the shared border with Yemen

• **Somalia**: Most of Somalia except Puntland and Somaliland.

• **Sudan**: Dafur region, South Kordufan state, Blue Nile state and the disputed Abyei region.

• **Tunisia**: The Djebel Chambi National Park (Kasserine governorate) and South of but not including the towns of El Borma and Dhehiba (Tataouine governorate)

• **Turkey**: Within 10km of the shared border with Syria in the Turkish provinces of Hatay, Kilis, Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, Mardin and Sirnak.

• **Uganda**: Areas within 30km of Uganda’s shared borders with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan, excluding major towns.

• **Ukraine**: The Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and the Crimean Peninsula.
### News summary

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- **ARGENTINA** - Nationwide airline strike anticipated

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- **INDONESIA** - Labour groups plan to stage a demonstration at Jakarta City Hall
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- **IRAQ** - (Update) Security forces free three Lebanese nationals in Baghdad
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- **MOROCCO** - Protests occur despite ban in Al Hoceima Province
- **PALESTINE** - Suspected assassination attempt results in disruptions in Gaza's Nuseirat Camp
- **SAUDI ARABIA** - Rocket attack in Najran wounds at least one person
**Sub-Saharan Africa**

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO** - Clashes reported in Beni

**KENYA** - Violence prompts indefinite vote delays in four counties

**SOMALIA** - Al-Shabaab claims attack at Nasa Hablod Hotel in Mogadishu

**SOUTH AFRICA** - Metered-taxi protest results in disruptions near Johannesburg's OR Tambo International Airport

**SOUTH AFRICA** - Opposition-led demonstration expected in Pretoria (Tshwane)

**SOUTH AFRICA** - Travel disruptions expected as protest convoy heads to Cape Town

**ZIMBABWE** - Ruling party rally planned in Bulawayo

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**Americas**

**ARGENTINA** (Country risk rating: High); October 31; Nationwide airline strike anticipated

Unionised employees of Aerolíneas Argentinas (AR) and Austral Líneas Aereas (AU) plan to strike on October 31 after negotiations between union representatives and the carrier's management failed to resolve a dispute over increased wages. Workers belonging to five aviation sector unions will be participating in the labour action. Unless averted, the work stoppage will likely have a severe impact on the airlines' domestic and international flight operations throughout October 31. Disruptions could linger into the morning of November 1 if the carriers have to service passenger backlogs and reposition aircraft and flight crews to resume normal services. A similar labour action by the same unions on October 13 reportedly grounded over 100 flights and impacted more than 10,000 passengers at Buenos Aires' Aeroparque Jorge Newbery (AEP) and Ministro Pistarini International (EZE) airports alone.

**Advice:** If booked to travel on Aerolíneas Argentinas or Austral Líneas Aereas on October 31 and November 1, confirm flights before checking out of hotels or driving to the airport. Reserve flights with an alternative carrier for time-sensitive travel. Allow extra time for check-in and security screening.

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**Asia and Pacific**

**BANGLADESH** (Country risk rating: High); October 30; Protests called for following attack on BNP leader's motorcade

The Jatiyatabadi Jubo Dal, Jatiyatabadi Swechchasebak Dal, and Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal called for nationwide demonstrations on October 30 to protest an attack on the motorcade of Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leader Khairul Zia. The three groups are affiliated with BNP, the country's main opposition party. Demonstrations will possibly occur in major cities and district headquarters during the course of the day, with the largest gatherings likely in Dhaka. Specific rally sites have not been announced, but possible locations include BNP offices and local government buildings. Opposition protests often devolve into skirmishes with security personnel; though no reports of violence have occurred thus far, minor arson attacks and vandalism are possible. Because of the high risk of collateral damage, businesses often close at the first sign of unrest. Any perceived police crackdown on BNP activists could prompt the party to call for more protests or a hartal (shutdown strike), which could lead to significant business and transport disruptions. Assaults attacked Zia's motorcade on Dhaka-Chittagong Highway in the Feni area on the afternoon of October 28, while she was en route from Dhaka to Rohingya refugee camps in Cox's Bazar District. Zia's car and the first few vehicles in the convoy were apparently not affected, but several other cars, especially those carrying journalists, were vandalised. There were no injuries reported in
the attack. BNP claims that members of the ruling Awami League (AL) party planned and carried out the attack, a charge denied by AL, which says it was stage-managed by the opposition party.

**Advice:** Avoid all protests due to the risk of violence. As demonstration sites may not be announced in advance, check with local contacts for updates on venues and associated disruptions. Use caution near BNP offices, government buildings, university campuses, and other popular rally sites. If a demonstration forms nearby, immediately depart the area or seek shelter in a secure location. Confirm business appointments near any demonstration.

**INDONESIA (Country risk rating: High); October 29; Alert level for Mount Agung lowered as seismic activity decreases**

Indonesia's National Disaster Mitigation Agency (BNBP) lowered Mount Agung's status in Bali's Karangasem Regency from the highest alert (level IIII) to standby (level III) on October 29 following a decrease in seismic activity at the volcano. However, authorities warn that an eruption remains possible at the volcano, which is still emitting smoke. Officials have decreased the exclusion zone from 9-12 km (5.6-7.5 mile) to 6-7.5 km (3.7-4.7 mile) around Mount Agung's summit. Six villages remain within the exclusion zone, while other evacuees have been allowed to return. Authorities may set up roadblocks leading to the new exclusion zone to prevent the public from entering the area. Ground transport disruptions are likely near the exclusion zone. Officials raised the volcano's alert status to its highest warning level on September 22 following a significant increase in seismic activity. More than 150,000 residents were evacuated.

**Advice:** Confirm all transport arrangements if operating in the area. Do not check out of accommodations until you have confirmed onward travel. Plan for disruptions if a major eruption occurs. Heed local authorities' instructions.

**INDONESIA (Country risk rating: High); October 31; Labour groups plan to stage a demonstration at Jakarta City Hall**

Labour groups plan to stage a demonstration at Jakarta City Hall in Central Jakarta on October 31 to demand new Governor Anies Baswedan fulfil his campaign promise of increasing the provincial minimum wage by USD 50. The workers are also demanding that the city's administration disregard Government Regulation (PP) No. 78/2015, which ties wage increases to economic growth and inflation rates. Thousands of workers from the Federation of Indonesian Metal Workers Union (FSPMI), Jakarta Workers' Movement (GBJ), and Jakarta Workers' Coalition (KBJ) are expected to participate in the rally. Authorities will likely increase security near the protest site by setting up roadblocks and security cordons, prompting localised traffic disruptions. Police may also divert traffic and temporarily close roads around City Hall. Minor skirmishes are possible if protesters try to break through security cordons, or security personnel forcibly disperse the crowds.

**Advice:** Avoid the demonstration as a precaution. Allow additional time for travel in the affected area, or consider taking alternative routes, if possible.

**JAPAN (Country risk rating: Low); October 29 and 30; Weather-related disruptions along southern coasts of Kyushu, Shikoku, and Honshu**

Typhoon Saola weakened to a tropical storm and made landfall on Japan's Honshu Island late on October 29. The system will bring strong winds, torrential rains, and dangerous storm surges to the southern coasts of Kyushu, Shikoku, and Honshu through October 30. Significant transport and business disruptions are possible as Saola makes a close approach to Kyushu and Shikoku. Heavy rains could result in flooding, and resultant landslides. Flooding and landslides could damage roads and train tracks, prompting ground transport disruptions, including to Japan's Shinkansen ('Bullet Train') rail service. Flight cancellations and delays are also possible. Power outages and telecommunication disruptions cannot be discounted.

**Advice:** Review business contingency plans. Charge battery-powered devices and stockpile bottled water and nonperishable food in case of protracted power outages. Limit unnecessary driving in affected regions until the storm passes. Seek updated information on road conditions before driving in mountainous areas, which are prone to mudslides. Use caution around streams, rivers, and other flood-prone areas. Plan accordingly for potential urban flooding and transportation disruptions. Confirm all flights and train reservations.

**KAZAKHSTAN / KYRGYZSTAN; October 31, 2017 to May 1, 2018; Karkara border crossing scheduled to close**
Officials plan to suspend all pedestrian and vehicular traffic at the Kazakhstan-Kyrgyz border crossing at Kegen-Tup/Kensu in the Karkara Valley at 18:00 on October 31. The closure, which occurs seasonally due to winter weather, is slated to last until at least May 1, 2018; it will likely result in additional congestion at other Kazakh/Kyrgyz border crossings, including Korday-Akjol and Kara-Su-Aktilek. The seasonal closure of the Kegen-Tup/Kensu border crossing is not related to the recently introduced enhanced border checks by Kazakh authorities at all border crossings with Kyrgyzstan on October 10. Kazakhstan claims that it increased border security to crack down on smuggling; however, this official explanation likely belies underlying political motivations for the new measures.

Advice: Plan for additional supply chain disruptions after October 31. Allow additional time to cross the border, and confirm all shipments.

KAZAKHSTAN / UZBEKISTAN; October 28; Delays at Konysbayeva-Yalama border crossing

On October 28, protracted vehicular traffic delays were reported at the Konysbayeva-Yalama border crossing between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Extensive travel and shipping delays are expected to continue on both sides of the border through at least October 31. The Tajen-Karakalpakia and Kaplanbek-Navoi highway border crossings are likely to be congested as well. Delays at other border points into Kazakhstan could become lengthier than usual, as drivers seek alternative routes to avoid the most congested crossings. Kazakh authorities introduced enhanced border checks at all border crossings with Kyrgyzstan, Russia, and Uzbekistan on October 10. Kazakhstan claims that it has increased border security to crack down on smuggling, but in cases with delays such as this, the official explanation usually does not match the underlying reason, which is likely political.

Advice: Plan for supply chain disruptions at least through October 31. Allow additional time to cross the border, and confirm all shipments.

PAKISTAN (Country risk rating: High); October 27; Afghan politician kidnapped in Peshawar

Afghan officials have confirmed the kidnapping of the deputy governor of Kunar Province in the north western Pakistani city of Peshawar. Authorities said that Qazi Mohammad Nabi Ahmadi was walking in the Dubgari area of Peshawar on October 27 when he was abducted by assailants who arrived in a car. Ahmadi was reportedly seeking medical treatment in Peshawar in a private capacity. Pakistani security personnel have launched a search operation for the Afghan politician. No one has claimed responsibility for the kidnapping. However, many believe that Ahmadi's abduction could be linked to political rivalry or carried out by militants. Ahmadi is a leader of former Afghan warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hizb-e-Islami (HiG) party, whose decision to sign a peace deal with the Afghan President Ashraf Ghani in September 2016 has apparently created an internal rift within the organisation. Several key HiG leaders have since gone missing or have been killed, including one in Peshawar in May this year. Alternatively, the kidnapping could be tied to an ongoing security operation against Islamic State (IS) militants in north eastern Kunar Province. The province is home to hideouts of IS and Pakistani Taliban factions aligned with IS. Prominent Afghan government officials have been kidnapped in Pakistan in the past. In February 2016, assailants abducted the former governor of Afghanistan's Kunar and Herat provinces in Islamabad; he was rescued by Pakistani security personnel two weeks later in Mardan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

PAKISTAN (Country risk rating: High); October 27; Railway bomb attack results in fatalities in Mach, Balochistan

A bomb exploded near a Quetta-Lahore Ahkbar Bugti Express passenger train at the Mach railway station on October 27, resulting in four deaths and at least six injuries. The explosives were reportedly planted on the railway tracks. Authorities temporarily suspended rail services operating out of Quetta, while officials investigated the attack. Rail infrastructure sabotage is relatively common in Balochistan. Most of the attacks are attributed to Baloch separatist rebels operating in the province.

Advice: Confirm all rail travel to and from Quetta. Consider arranging an alternative method of travel due to security concerns. Maintain a very low profile in Quetta and surrounding areas. Maintain contact with your diplomatic mission.

PAKISTAN (Country risk rating: High); October 27; Vehicle bombing kills local political leader in Shahrag
A vehicle bombing killed local Awami National Party (ANP) leader Abdur Razaq and a family member in Shahrag, Balochistan Province, on the morning of October 27. Investigators believe that the incident was a targeted attack, and the explosives were planted in Razaq's vehicle. The explosive device detonated shortly after the pair entered the vehicle, en route to an ANP rally in Pishin. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.

Advice: Allow additional time to reach destinations in the Shahrag area due to increased security and potential roadblocks amid the investigation.

THAILAND (Country risk rating: Medium); October 10 to October 29; (Update) Flooding in northern and central provinces

Persistent flooding continues to affect at least 19 provinces in the north, north east, and central regions of Thailand following a period of heavy rainfall beginning October 10. Areal and flash floods affected districts in the provinces of Angthong, Ayutthaya, Chai Nat, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai, Kalasin, Khon Kaen, Lop Buri, Maha Sarakham, Nakhon Sawan, Nong Bua Lamphu, Pathum Thani, Phichit, Roi Et, Sing Buri, Sukhothai, Suphan Buri, Tak, Ubon Ratchathani, and Uthai Thani. The Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation said that flooding killed 19 people to date, and affected more than 125,000 households. The Chao Phraya River burst its banks in Ayutthaya, flooding several districts in the province. Authorities diverted the flood surge from the northern region into canals on both sides of the Chao Phraya River to prevent further flooding in central Thailand, including Bangkok. Additional rain and flooding will likely result in localised road closures and traffic disruptions, particularly in low-lying areas and along waterways. Flooding could disrupt passenger and freight services. Utility disruptions and telecommunications outages may also occur, especially in more remote communities. Commercial and transport disruptions are likely to continue in the coming days. Poor weather could affect flight operations at regional airports.

Advice: Seek updated information on road conditions before driving or routeing shipments through affected areas. Plan for possible delivery delays. Allow additional travel time. Avoid low-lying areas, areas adjacent to waterways, and other zones at elevated risk for flooding and landslides. Keep battery-powered devices charged in the event of prolonged power outages.

Europe and Russia

CZECH REPUBLIC / GERMANY / POLAND; October 29 and 30; Storm Herwart impacting several countries

Storm Herwart impacted parts of the Czech Republic, Germany, and Poland on October 29 as it transited Central Europe. Fallen trees and flooding blocked some roads and rail lines, as well as damaged power lines, resulting in transport disruptions and leaving thousands of customers without power. At least six deaths, two each in the Czech Republic, Poland, and Germany, have been attributed to the storm. Herwart first struck Germany's North Sea coast early on October 29, bringing heavy rains and strong winds. Portions of central Hamburg experienced severe flooding as the Elbe River overflowed its banks. Orange warnings (Level 2 - significant weather) were issued for wind in most of the eastern half of Germany, with red warnings (Level 3 - severe weather) issued in the southern districts of Bavaria. Authorities in Poland issued orange warnings for wind in nine provinces in the southern and central regions of the country, as well as the Pomeranian (Pomorskie) Province on the Baltic Sea coast. The entire Czech Republic was under red warnings for strong winds on October 30. Rail traffic disruptions occurred in northern Germany in the aftermath of the storm. National rail company Deutsche Bahn temporarily suspended services along its Bremen-Hannover, Dortmund-Hamburg, Hamburg-Berlin, Berlin-Leipzig, Berlin-Dresden, Hannover-Dortmund, and Berlin-Frankfurt am Main routes. Deutsche Bahn officials estimate service along these lines should be restored during the course of October 30, but this remains unconfirmed.

Advice: Confirm all flight and ground transport reservations. Seek updated information on weather and road conditions before travelling through areas under wind, rain, or flood warnings. If in an area affected by electricity outages, limit usage of battery-powered devices and stockpile water, in case outages become prolonged.

IRELAND (Country risk rating: Low); November 1, 7, 14, 23 and December 8; Irish Rail workers call for nationwide strikes

Irish Rail staff plan to stage nationwide 24-hour strikes on November 1, 7, 14, 23, and December 8 over pay disputes. Irish Rail has warned that trains are not expected to operate across Inter-City (IC), DART, and commuter routes on the strike
Workers may stage pickets at rail stations during the work stoppage, but these are unlikely to become unruly or intensify disruptions. Should the strikes proceed, overcrowding and delays are highly likely on alternative services, including buses and taxis. Increased traffic congestion is also possible on primary motorways and in downtown areas of major cities, as reduced rail services could force passengers to resort to using private vehicles. The strike action would coincide with the FIFA World Cup playoff between Ireland and Denmark at Lansdowne Road Stadium in Dublin on November 14; severe traffic congestion is expected on this day as thousands of people are expected to attend the event.

**Advice:** Arrange alternative travel in advance of the strike, as services may overbook quickly. Plan accordingly for traffic congestion and high demand for private car services.

**RUSSIA (Country risk rating: High); November 4 to 6; Heightened security expected in Moscow during National Unity Day events**

Activities associated with the National Unity Day holiday from November 4 to 6 are expected to cause traffic disruptions in downtown Moscow. Authorities will significantly boost security throughout the city, and will likely close streets near important holiday event venues. Most businesses and all government offices, including foreign diplomatic missions, will close. Most public transport, including commuter trains, will operate on a Sunday schedule from November 4 to 6.

**Advice:** Avoid large crowds and concentrations of police. Allow extra time for travel near event venues. Plan alternative routes to avoid closed streets. Petty crime such as pickpocketing increases during special events; safeguard all valuables and personal belongings, and carry only items that are necessary.

**RUSSIA / UKRAINE; October 28 to 31; Storm warning issued for Kerch Strait region**

Authorities issued a severe weather warning for the Kerch Strait region for October 28 to 31. Rough seas, heavy precipitation, and winds as high as 90 kph (56 mph) are forecast for the area, likely resulting in maritime and ground transport disruptions in the region. Strong winds could also prompt authorities to restrict the movement of high-profile vehicles, especially on bridges. Wind-blown debris may cause traffic disruptions along local thoroughfares. Poor weather conditions could ground regional helicopter operations. Telecommunication and utility services disruptions should be expected.

**Advice:** Seek updated information on transport conditions from trusted contacts. Confirm ferry reservations and freight shipments. Do not attempt to navigate roadways blocked by debris. Charge battery-operated devices when possible, and update power outage contingency plans.

**SPAIN (Country risk rating: Low); October 29; (Update) Large-scale protests over Catalonian autonomy likely to continue**

The Spanish Senate voted to implement Article 155 of the Constitution and revoke Catalonian autonomy on October 27. It also removed Catalonian President Carles Puigdemont and disbanded his Cabinet. Article 155 enables the federal government to assume control of Catalonia's finances, security forces, and public media. The vote came shortly after the Catalonian Parliament voted to declare independence from Spain, a move that is unlikely to have any legal weight. Nevertheless, both developments are likely to increase the size and intensity of pro- and anti-independence protests in Catalonia in the short term. Demonstrations over the independence issue have the potential to attract very high participation. An estimated 300,000 pro-Spain activists demonstrated in central Barcelona on October 29, and pro-independence and pro-Spain activists are likely to call further protests and industrial action in Catalonian urban centres in the coming days; such action could prompt public transport disruptions. Related demonstrations have so far been peaceful. Nevertheless, protests have the potential to turn unruly and could see isolated clashes between activists and security forces, particularly if protesters attempt to breach security cordons, or if police try to disperse any demonstrations.

**Advice:** Exercise commonsense security precautions if visiting Catalonia Region. Avoid all demonstrations to minimise associated disruptions and the incidental threat from potential clashes. Exercise heightened caution if planning to visit areas near likely demonstration venues in Barcelona, as protests can occur at short notice; minimise time spent near the Catalonian Parliament building. Seek updated information on traffic conditions from trusted local sources and contacts.
BAHRAIN (Country risk rating: High); October 27; Bombing results in at least one fatality in Jid Hafs

The Bahraini Interior Ministry announced that a bombing of a police bus on Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Highway in Jid Hafs killed one police officer and wounded eight others on October 27. No group has claimed responsibility for the bombing, but officials blamed the incident on terrorists, without specifically naming an organisation. Jid Hafs is 6 km (3.7 miles) west of central Manama. Police will likely carry out security sweeps in the area and may completely seal off Jid Hafs to find the perpetrators. Radicalised members of the Shi'a opposition movement often target security personnel in Bahrain with crude bombs. Unrest among Shi'a groups began during the February 2011 uprising and has escalated in recent months amid a continuing government crackdown on opposition groups. Bombings have killed more than 15 police officers and wounded dozens of others since 2011. On October 2, a bombing in the Shi'a village of Daih wounded five police officers.

Advice: Avoid the area until police have determined that no further devices are present and have declared the location secure. Plan alternative routes to avoid Sheikh Khalifa bin Salman Highway west of central Manama. Expect road closures and checkpoints when approaching Jid Hafs.

EGYPT (Country risk rating: High); October 27; Authorities likely to continue counterterrorism operations in the Western Desert region

Authorities are likely to continue ongoing efforts to counter militant threats in the Western Desert region. The majority of recent counterterrorism operations have taken place in isolated areas; however, during the raids police have frequently shut down portions of major highways or deployed additional security personnel in populated areas to contain conflicts or prevent suspects from fleeing. Prior operations have led to large-scale violence between militants and security forces, and additional clashes are likely during any future operations. Expect heavy security and periodic road closures in areas where raids and other counterterrorism operations occur. Authorities have conducted major counterterrorism raids in the Western Desert region since an October 20 security operation in Giza, during which 16 police officers were killed in a shootout with suspected militants; authorities launched a multi-governorate search effort to track suspected militants who fled the area. During the early hours of October 27, police conducted a raid near the 47 km (29 mile) point of Assuit-Kharga Road, killing 13 militants; a portion of the highway was shut down during the operation. The Interior Ministry did not disclose which militant group the suspects targeted in the raids were associated with; however, the assailants’ capabilities appear to be more closely aligned with those of Egypt's Islamic State (IS) affiliates, rather than smaller militant groups such as the Hasam Movement or Liwaa al-Thawra. IS affiliates have previously carried out attacks in the Western Desert, including a shooting in El Farafra Oasis that killed 21 border guards in 2014.

Advice: Avoid unnecessary travel along isolated roads in the Western Desert. Carry identification and move in multi-vehicle convoys if using such roads is unavoidable; allow additional time to reach destinations. Seek updated information on road and security conditions from trusted local contacts.

IRAQ (Country risk rating: High); October 29; Security forces free three Lebanese nationals in Baghdad

Early on October 29, Iraqi security forces in Baghdad freed three Lebanese businessmen, who were previously abducted outside Baghdad International Airport (BGW). Iraqi officials did not provide details on the security operation, but described the captors as an ‘armed gang’. Security forces killed one gang member in the raid and arrested several others. Officials also did not indicate exactly where in Baghdad the operation took place. The three men were reportedly abducted on October 22 upon leaving BGW and taken to an undisclosed location. The kidnapping threat remains high across Iraq, particularly outside Baghdad's International Zone. Locals are much more frequently taken than foreigners; however, this is not due to a lack of threat, but rather to the extreme security measures usually employed by foreign nationals travelling in the country.

Advice: Exercise a high degree of vigilance due to the threat of kidnapping across Iraq, including in Baghdad. Vary routes and times if driving is required on a regular basis. Do not discuss travel plans around strangers.

IRAQ (Country risk rating: High); October 29; Protesters storm Parliament building in Arbil, Kurdistan

Late on October 29, demonstrators brandishing clubs reportedly stormed the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Parliament building in Arbil, following President Masoud Barzani's announcement that he would step down from his position.
There were unconfirmed reports of gunfire, but it was unclear whether the protesters or security forces were the ones doing the shooting; there were no reports of casualties. Expect heavy security around the KRG Parliament building in central Arbil in the coming days. In a meeting of Parliament earlier on October 29, President Barzani announced that he would step down on November 1 when his term of office is slated to end and that he would not seek an extension to his term. According to initial reports, Barzani’s presidential powers would be divided between the government, Parliament, and judiciary until elections are held. His announcement followed the independence referendum vote that led to a major crisis between Arbil and Baghdad. Even though the overwhelming majority of Kurds voted for independence from the Baghdad central government, security forces aligned with Baghdad seized the KRG-held city of Kirkuk as well as other locations previously under Kurdish control.

Advice: Avoid the vicinity of the Parliament building until authorities have secured the area and given the all-clear.

MOROCCO (Country risk rating: Medium); October 27 and 28; Protests occur despite ban in Al Hoceima Province

Authorities in the northern Al Hoceima Province banned protests on October 27 and 28, after the National Committee to Support the Hirak (Popular Movements) called for nationwide protests on October 28. The demonstrations were in support of regional development and detained local activists. Protests took place despite the ban, including in Al Hoceima. The security forces forcibly dispersed some of the minor gatherings that occurred. The protest movement began as a series of rallies against the death of Mohsen Fikri, who was killed while trying to retrieve his illegal fish catch after it was confiscated by the government. However, a year later, the movement has taken on a life of its own and encompasses a general drive for justice as well as anger over the ongoing detention of activists, some of whom are on a hunger strike. The lack of development in the Rif Region continues to motivate protests, even after the king fired four current ministers and blacklisted several ex-ministers for not implementing a local development initiative, 'The Lighthouse of the Mediterranean', fast enough. The project was announced in October 2015 but has not been completed. The Rif cause has also been taken up by Moroccans concerned more broadly with equality in development initiatives.

PALESTINE (Country risk rating: High); October 27; Suspected assassination attempt results in disruptions in Gaza’s Nuseirat Camp

A small bomb exploded near the vehicle of Hamas Deputy Security Head, Tawfiq Abu Nayim, outside the Abu Al-Hassan Mosque in Gaza’s Nuseirat Camp on October 27, wounding Nayim and several others. Officials suspect the attack was an assassination attempt. Nayim had worked on Hamas security operations against Salafist militants and other groups competing for power in the Gaza Strip, making him a likely target for an assassination. In the wake of the recent unity deal between Hamas and Fatah, local spoilers and Israeli forces who are opposed to the deal could target Hamas personnel to try and derail the agreement. However, in this case, Hamas’ official announcement of the attack did not blame Israel. In addition, the poorly planned and unsuccessful nature of the attack suggests that local assailants staged the bombing.

Advice: Allow additional time for ground travel if operating near Nuseirat Camp until the investigation is completed. Obey the instructions of security forces.

SAUDI ARABIA (Country risk rating: High); October 27; Rocket attack in Najran wounds at least one person

A rocket struck a residential neighbourhood in Najran early on October 27, wounding at least one person and causing significant material damage. Saudi civil defence officials stated that the rocket was launched by Shi'a Al-Houthi rebels in Yemeni territory. Najran is 16 km (10 miles) from the Saudi Arabia-Yemen border. Cross-border mortar and rocket attacks are common in south western Saudi Arabia's Najran, Asir, and Jizan border provinces. Saudi defence forces have countermeasures in place to intercept long-range ballistic missiles fired by Al-Houthi rebels, but those countermeasures are largely ineffective against short-range mortars and rockets. As the rebels continue attacks along the border, they will likely employ more short-range mortar and rocket systems against targets in southern Najran, Asir, and Jizan provinces to exploit gaps in Saudi defences.

Advice: Ensure that a thorough communication plan exists for rapid accountability for all personnel operating in Najran, Asir, and Jizan provinces.
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (Country risk rating: High); October 26 and 27; Clashes reported in Beni

Commercial activities were paralysed in the city of Beni, North Kivu Province, on October 27, after government troops clashed with rebels in the city's north eastern Boikene-Manyongos area, eastern Rwenzori Commune, on October 26. Heavy weapons fire was heard as suspected members of the Ugandan militia group Allied Democratic Forces-National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF-NALU) raided Boikene, prompting many residents to remain in their homes or seek shelter in the city centre. Reports indicate that at least 20 people were killed. While authorities indicated that the situation was under control, additional clashes cannot be ruled out. Further violence could prompt transport and commercial disruptions. Officials could implement a curfew if the security threat persists. The threat of attack by armed groups on the government and security forces around Beni has increased significantly since January. Government troops and UN forces repelled a rebel attack on Beni on June 22. Rebel and militia groups continue to pose significant security threats in parts of the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), especially in Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu provinces.

Advice: If additional violence occurs while operating in Beni, remain in a secure location until the situation stabilises. Confirm security conditions and route viability with trusted local sources before conducting ground movement. If operating in North Kivu Province, travel in a convoy protected by an armed escort; carry extra fuel and satellite phones for emergency use, and maintain contact with your diplomatic mission.

KENYA (Country risk rating: High); October 27; Violence prompts indefinite vote delays in four counties

Tensions will likely remain high in Kenya after the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) on October 27 indefinitely postponed polls that were scheduled to take place in Homa Bay, Kisumu, Migori, and Siaya counties on October 28. Authorities cited security as the reason for the second delay; opposition supporters in the affected counties erected roadblocks preventing the distribution of ballot boxes. It remains unclear when the Commission will set up a new date for the election. High tensions will persist in the coming days, particularly in the opposition strongholds of south western Kenya, including Kisumu and Kisii counties, as issues related to the polls remain unresolved. In Nairobi, the Baba Dogo, Huruma, Kawangware, Kibera, Mathare, and Ruaraka neighbourhoods are the most likely to experience protests in defiance of a government ban. Police forces will probably continue to use live ammunition against protesters. The results of the October 26 presidential rerun election are expected to be released during the course of October 30; however, the new poll postponement in the four counties could also delay the release of nationwide partial and final results, potentially throwing the country into an open-ended election crisis. Social media platforms are often used to coordinate protests, and communication networks could be taken offline in some areas to try to stop protesters from organising demonstrations.

Advice: Avoid all areas near polling stations, political party offices, large gatherings, and areas with a heavy security presence, especially in Homa Bay, Kisumu, Migori, or Siaya counties. Be aware that the political situation is volatile and could quickly change during this election period. Review emergency contingency plans; maintain contact with your diplomatic mission.

SOMALIA (Country risk rating: Extreme); October 28 and 29; Al-Shabaab claims attack at Nasa Hablod Hotel in Mogadishu

At least 25 people were killed and another 30 wounded during an attack and subsequent 10-hour siege at the Nasa Hablod Hotel in Mogadishu's Waberi District overnight on October 28/29. Two car bombs detonated and at least five armed militants stormed the hotel. The first blast, which occurred by the hotel's gate at 16:55, was caused by a truck bomb, while a minibus was used for the second explosion. More than 30 people, including a government minister and a prominent cleric, were eventually rescued. Several assailants were reportedly arrested after the siege while others were shot dead. The militant group Al-Shabaab claimed responsibility for the attack. Expect increased security in the area while authorities investigate the incident. The October 28/29 attack is the largest in the city since the October 14 truck bombing, which killed more than 358 people and left another 56 missing. This latest assault took place in an area of Waberi reputed to be among the capital's most secure. Because it is frequented by lawmakers and army forces, the Nasa Hablod Hotel is considered a high-value target for Al-Shabaab. The group regularly conducts car bombings against security personnel, government buildings, upscale hotels, and restaurants in Mogadishu, underscoring the town's persistent vulnerability to such attacks.

Advice: If operating in Mogadishu, exercise maximum caution, maintain a low profile, and limit exposure to potential terror targets, such as government buildings, security installations, markets, transport centres, major intersections, and other crowded sites. Maintain contact with your diplomatic mission.
SOUTH AFRICA (Country risk rating: High); October 27; Metered-taxi protest results in disruptions near Johannesburg's OR Tambo International Airport

A protest by metered-taxi drivers caused disruptions on several roads near OR Tambo International Airport (JNB) in Johannesburg on October 27. Officers arrested at least 30 taxi and heavy-goods vehicle drivers involved in the demonstration. Fire crews extinguished at least one app-based ride-hailing service vehicle that had been torched by metered-taxi drivers on Electron Road in Isando. The arsonists also attacked the vehicle's passengers, but no casualties have been confirmed. Protesters also reportedly vandalised a car company's office. Although no future taxi and heavy-goods vehicle driver protests have been announced, the longstanding tensions that motivated the demonstration remain and could spur additional protests in the coming weeks. Metered-taxi operators organised the blockade to draw attention to their grievances with app-based ride-hailing services. The drivers complain that ride-hailing services are not regulated and are undercutting their business. App-based transport providers have called on authorities to intervene and resolve the dispute, but there have been no substantive changes to the situation. Tensions between taxi drivers and ride-hailing service operators exist nationwide, but associated violence occurs more frequently in Gauteng Province. Cyclical episodes of violence targeting both taxis and vehicles offering app-based transportation services occur at least monthly in Gauteng Province. Passengers are threatened both directly by violent assaults and the collateral impact of clashes between drivers.

Advice: Avoid all protests. Seek updated information on route and destination security, as well as traffic conditions, from trusted local contacts before conducting ground movements in Johannesburg. Exercise a high level of caution and discretion when using ride-hailing services in areas where metered-taxi drivers wait for customers. If violence breaks out near you, exit the area immediately, or seek shelter until order is restored.

SOUTH AFRICA (Country risk rating: High); November 2; Opposition-led demonstration expected in Pretoria (Tshwane)

The opposition Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party has called for a protest march in Pretoria (Tshwane) on November 2. Participants are set to gather at Church Square at 11:00; they then intend to march to the Union Buildings before proceeding toward the Israeli Embassy. The protest route has yet to be announced; however, the demonstration is likely to proceed through parts of the city's Arcadia, Hatfield, and Lynnwood suburbs. It is currently unclear how well the event will be attended, but localised traffic and commercial disruptions are possible near any protest activity. Expect heightened security near the march; police could forcibly disperse any unruly gatherings. The demonstration has reportedly been organised in support of the establishment of an independent Palestinian state. The march is set to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, which officially declared British support for the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

Advice: Avoid all demonstrations. Seek updated information on security and traffic conditions before travelling through locations where protest activity is likely to occur. Confirm business appointments ahead of travel. Allow additional time due to ground movements.

SOUTH AFRICA (Country risk rating: High); October 30; Travel disruptions expected as protest convoy heads to Cape Town

A convoy, led by the Genoeg is Genoeg (Enough is Enough) activist group, is underway from Kanonkop in Stellenbosch to the Cape Town Stadium in Cape Town on October 30 to protest the high rate of farm murders in South Africa. The procession of some 2,000 people travelling in about 500 vehicles, which has been accompanied by police officers and Stellenbosch traffic officials, is expected to arrive at the stadium at around 12:00. A prayer service is scheduled to end at the stadium at 13:00. The group has agreed to avoid the N1 highway, which is routinely congested during peak traffic hours. The convoy route, which has been approved by the City of Cape Town, includes Kraaifontein, Scottsdene, Northpine, Brackenfell, Bellville, Parow, Goodwood, Kensington, and Maitland areas. Travel disruptions should be expected.

Advice: Avoid the demonstration at Cape Town Stadium as a precaution. Allow additional time for ground movement along the planned route; seek alternative routes due to possible traffic disruptions.

ZIMBABWE (Country risk rating: High); November 4; Ruling party rally planned in Bulawayo

The Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) youth league plans to host the Ninth Presidential Youth Interface Rally at the White City Stadium in Bulawayo on November 4. The start and end times of the event have not been
publicised. It is also unclear how many people will attend the event; however, precedent suggests that a minimum few thousand attendees are likely. Police are likely to deploy at the White City Stadium and surrounding areas on the day of the event to safeguard high-profile attendees, including President Robert Mugabe. Authorities could implement additional security measures, including the closure of nearby roads or the establishment of checkpoints, leading to localised transport disruptions, including along Hyde Park Road and B B Burombo Road. Police could disperse any anti-Mugabe protests that may materialise near the rally site or at any location within Bulawayo. If demonstrations occur, clashes are possible between officers and protesters. The event is aimed at boosting support for President Mugabe ahead of the 2018 general election.

ZANU-PF members have held similar rallies in other parts of the country and will continue to do so in the coming months. The event in Bulawayo is particularly significant as the city is considered an opposition stronghold; security personnel will remain on high alert to prevent any anti-government protests from taking place.

Advice: Avoid the White City Stadium and all protests or large public gatherings in Bulawayo on November 4. Allow additional time for travel if operating near protest venues or affected areas. Seek updated information from trusted local sources on road conditions before travelling in the city. Leave the area immediately if violence erupts near you, and seek shelter in a nongovernmental building, such as a hotel.

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