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-West, 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-West (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 Kasai Central province.
- **Egypt**: North Sinai governornate.
- **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, Ninewa, 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.
### Americas
- **COLOMBIA** - (Update) Strike action continues to impact Avianca flight operations
- **COLOMBIA** - Continued nationwide indigenous peoples' protests
- **DOMINICAN REPUBLIC** - Anti-corruption protests held in San Cristobal and Mao
- **UNITED STATES** - Mass-casualty shooting at Texas church
- **UNITED STATES** - West Nile virus activity in Los Angeles County, California
- **UNITED STATES / CANADA** - Severe weather in the Great Lakes region and southern Ontario

### Asia and Pacific
- **CHINA** - Elevated security measures in Beijing
- **CHINA** - Severe air pollution in parts of the north east
- **INDIA** - Very heavy rain produces widespread flooding in Chennai and Tamil Nadu
- **JAPAN** - Air Do cancels flights due to pilot shortage
- **KAZAKHSTAN / KYRGYZSTAN** - (Update) Ongoing delays at Kazakh-Kyrgyz border crossings
- **KYRGYZSTAN** - Days of History and Commemoration of Ancestors to be celebrated
- **MALAYSIA** - Adverse weather results in disruptions in Penang
- **PAKISTAN** - Severe air pollution disrupts national electric grid
- **SOLOMON ISLANDS** - Protests likely due to no-confidence motion in Honiara
- **SRI LANKA** - Potential nationwide fuel shortage
- **VIETNAM / CAMBODIA** - (Update) Weather-related casualties reported following Typhoon Damrey's landfall

### Europe and Russia
- **FRANCE / ITALY** - Inclement weather impacts southern France and north western Italy
- **GERMANY** - Activists to protest during Climate Change Conference in Bonn
- **ROMANIA** - Opposition activists protest judicial reforms nationwide
- **RUSSIA** - (Update) Tight security in central Moscow amid telephoned bomb threats
- **RUSSIA** - Federal aviation rules restrict free baggage allowance for passengers
- **RUSSIA** - Traffic disruptions due to military parade
- **SPAIN** - Further pro-independence protests planned in Catalonia
- **UKRAINE** - (Update) Anti-corruption rallies set to persist in Kiev
UNITED KINGDOM - RMT union-affiliated rail workers to strike in England

Middle East and North Africa
IRAQ - Casualties in twin suicide bomb attack in Kirkuk
IRAQ - Disruptions related to annual Arba'een pilgrimage
ISRAEL - Activists to protest outside the British Embassy in Tel Aviv
LEBANON - Political instability possible following Prime Minister's resignation
LIBYA - Three foreign nationals kidnapped in Ubari
MOROCCO - Drive-by shooting at La Creme cafe in Marrakesh
SAUDI ARABIA - Missile launched from Yemen intercepted in north east Riyadh
YEMEN - Bomb attacks reported in Aden

Sub-Saharan Africa
BURKINA FASO - Activists protest at Place de la Nation in Ouagadougou
MAURITANIA - Protests over blasphemy trial possible in Nouakchott
NIGERIA - Armed group in Niger Delta region ends ceasefire
SOMALIA - Potential threat against US nationals in Mogadishu
SOUTH AFRICA - Disruptive protest expected in downtown Pretoria
THE GAMBIA - Activists postpone protest in Serrekunda

Americas
COLOMBIA (Country risk rating: High); September 20 to November 6; (Update) Strike action continues to impact Avianca flight operations

Pilots employed by Colombian flag carrier Avianca (AV) remain on strike as of early November 6. The walkout has led to over 8,000 flight cancellations since it started on September 20. Both domestic and international flights have been affected, particularly flights to and from Avianca's main hub at Bogota's El Dorado International Airport (BOG). Avianca has fired at least nine striking pilots and started disciplinary proceedings against about 200 more since a grace period for employees to return to work without facing punitive action expired on October 16. The Ministry of Labour has asked Avianca not to fire more pilots, and it is continuing to mediate between the airline and the Colombian Association of Civil Aviators (ACDAC) to try to end the strike. According to Avianca, the airline has been able to operate over 80 percent of scheduled flights despite the work stoppage and a Cundinamarca Administrative Court order that prevented the company from hiring foreign pilots. To minimise inconveniences to passengers, the airline has started using larger planes to increase carrying capacity, hired about 40 new Colombian co-pilots, and taken steps to increase luggage handling efficiency to minimise time that aircraft spend on the ground. Bogota's Superior Court ruled the work stoppage illegal on October 6; ACDAC is appealing the decision. The inability to hire foreign pilots will likely cause Avianca to abstain from firing striking workers en masse for the time being. Several labour groups, including the Central Union of Workers (CUT), are supporting the pilots. Striking pilots could picket outside BOG and the Avianca Holdings S.A. headquarters. Demonstrations could lead to localised traffic disruptions and/or skirmishes between protesters and police.

Advice: Confirm Avianca flights before checking out of hotels or departing for the airport. Consider using other carriers for time-sensitive travel until the strike ends.

COLOMBIA (Country risk rating: High); October 30 to November 6; Continued nationwide indigenous peoples' protests

Activists from various social organisations in Colombia, including indigenous groups and farm workers' unions, continue to hold protests nationwide. The activists are demanding the government uphold the terms of various agreements it reached with members of rural communities. More than 100,000 people are estimated to be participating in the protests, which have
been ongoing since October 30. Some of the most disruptive demonstrations have taken place in Cauca and Norte de Santander departments. Demonstrators have erected roadblocks, stopping traffic on highways and major thoroughfares leading into Cali and Buenaventura, as well as sections of the Pan-American Highway leading into Ecuador. In some cases, the roadblocks have forced public intercity bus companies to cancel service along affected highways temporarily. Clashes between protesters and security forces are likely to continue. Clashes between demonstrators and security forces have reportedly injured more than 60 civilians and police officers. Protesters have also thrown rocks at journalists during demonstrations.

Advice: Avoid all protests as a precaution. Seek updated information on road conditions before beginning intercity or interdepartmental travel, especially if travelling to or passing through Cauca or Norte de Santander departments. Avoid driving through rural areas at night as a general precaution. Do not attempt to bypass any roadblocks; wait for police to clear them.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC (Country risk rating: Medium); November 5; Anti-corruption protests held in San Cristobal and Mao

Activists with the Green March (Marcha Verde) movement staged anti-corruption protests in San Cristobal and Mao (Santa Cruz de Mao) on November 5. The protests concluded without major incident. Activists have been holding anti-corruption protests in cities nationwide since January. Between 2001 and 2012, the Brazilian Odebrecht construction company was awarded a number of high-value contracts across Latin America. Court records indicate that the company paid at least USD 92 million in bribes to government officials in several countries during that period. Protesters demand that Dominican politicians who held office during that time be investigated for any possible involvement. The ongoing protest campaign is expected to persist across the country in the near-term, including in the capital, Santo Domingo. Although previous similar protests have been generally peaceful, violence cannot be ruled out, especially if police use force to disperse unruly demonstrators.

Advice: Avoid all protests as a standard precaution. Should protests occur, seek updated information about road and traffic conditions.

UNITED STATES (Country risk rating: Medium); November 5; Mass-casualty shooting at Texas church

At least 26 people were killed in a mass-casualty shooting incident at the First Baptist Church of Sutherland Springs, Texas, on November 5. Local police confirm that the suspect in the shooting was killed. It is unclear whether the gunman took his own life or was killed resisting arrest. Media reports indicate that the suspect has been identified; however, a possible motive for the attack is unknown has not been confirmed. A heightened police presence will continue in the affected area through November 6 at least.

Advice: Avoid the incident area until authorities have completed their investigation. Anticipate traffic congestion on US Route 87 in Sutherland Springs; seek alternative routes.

UNITED STATES (Country risk rating: Medium); November 3; West Nile virus activity in Los Angeles County, California

Health officials have reported elevated West Nile virus (WNV) activity in Los Angeles County, California. As of November 3, at least 216 cases have been reported since June. Of these cases, 177 were reported between September 9 and October 28, representing a more than 100 percent increase when compared to the 87 cases reported during the same period of 2016. Officials will likely identify additional cases through late November, highlighting the importance of mosquito bite prevention. California reported 442 cases of WNV during 2016, of which 151 were identified in Los Angeles County. WNV is transmitted to humans through the bite of an infected mosquito. Although most WNV infections are mild or asymptomatic, about one in five patients develops fever, rash, muscle and joint pains, and gastrointestinal symptoms. In rare cases, the virus can infect the central nervous system, potentially leading to meningitis, paralysis, coma, or death. Such complications can occur at any age, but are most common in individuals over the age of 50 or those with compromised immune systems. There is no immunisation against WNV, so appropriate precautions against mosquito bites are essential.

Advice: As weather permits, wear long-sleeved shirts, pants, and socks, or use insect protection containing DEET, picaridin, or another approved repellent. Remove standing water on premises to reduce the number of biting mosquitoes. Seek medical attention if symptoms develop within three weeks of being in affected areas.
UNITED STATES / CANADA; November 5; Severe weather in the Great Lakes region and southern Ontario

A strong frontal system brought severe weather to portions of the Great Lakes region of the US and Canada on November 5. The strongest storms developed during the afternoon and evening hours in Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, northwestern Pennsylvania, southern Michigan, and southern Ontario. Heavy hail, damaging winds, and heavy rainfall were reported. Gusts in excess of 97 kph (60 mph) prompted sporadic power outages across the affected area. The adverse weather also contributed to ground and air transport disruptions throughout the affected area during the afternoon and evening of November 5. Traffic and commercial trucking delays are possible on area highways. The storms also led to flight disruptions at regional airports.

Advice: Confirm flights. Seek updated information on road conditions before driving through areas where severe weather was reported. Plan accordingly for potential freight delivery delays if routeing shipments by truck through the affected area on November 6.

Asia and Pacific

CHINA (Country risk rating: Medium); November 8 to 10; Elevated security measures in Beijing

Security measures will be tightened ahead of the arrival of US President Donald Trump, who will be in Beijing during his first state visit to China from November 8 to 10. Details of Trump's itinerary have not been released, but the Chinese government routinely increases security around diplomatic missions, prominent hotels, and key government facilities during visits by major heads of state. Traffic and security-related disruptions can be expected around Tiananmen Square, the Diaoyutai Guesthouse, and the US Embassy. Noticeable security measures are also possible at transport centres, tourist sights, markets, and neighbourhoods. Increased security may cause minor transport disruptions throughout the capital. Tighter security checks are likely at Beijing Capital International Airport (PEK), as well as the capital's smaller Nanyuan Airport (NAY). Heavy security and additional screening checkpoints are also likely at railway and bus stations in Beijing through November 10. Periodic roadblocks are possible, especially on secondary streets in central Beijing, causing localised traffic disruptions in Dongcheng District. Police may establish checkpoints at subway stations near Tiananmen Square and the Great Hall of the People. Access to and from the Jianguomen, Dongdan, Qianmen, Wangfujing, Tiananmen East and Tiananmen West subway stations may be restricted without prior notification. Although major protests are highly unlikely, minor demonstrations cannot be ruled out. If protests occur, security personnel will move quickly to arrest anyone involved in civil disobedience; clashes are possible. Authorities will likely maintain increased vigilance for possible terror incidents, although there is no indication that any attack is imminent.

Advice: Allow additional time to reach destinations, especially in central Beijing's Dongcheng District, from November 8 to 10. Confirm any scheduled meetings at government offices. Carry proper identification at all times, and be prepared for possible bag searches at transport centres and other sensitive locations.

CHINA (Country risk rating: Medium); November 3 to 8; Severe air pollution in parts of the north east

Severe air pollution is forecast for parts of north China until at least November 8. The Ministry of Environmental Protection projects that heavy smog will impact both Beijing and Tianjin, as well as parts of Hebei, Shandong, Shanxi, and Henan provinces. On November 3, Beijing officials placed the capital on orange alert, the second-highest level, which places restrictions on the transport of construction waste and high-emission vehicles. However, authorities may raise the alert level if air pollution intensifies. All outdoor construction projects could also be suspended, and some factories will be forced to cease operations. Air pollution could result in reduced visibility, and flight disruptions are possible at Beijing Capital International (PEK) and Tianjin Binhai International (TSN) airports, as well as regional airports; disruptions are likely to be greatest during the overnight and early morning hours when relative humidity is high. Officials may close sections of roadways and require trains to travel at slower speeds in some areas until air quality improves.

Advice: Confirm flights before checking out of hotels or driving to the airport. Drive cautiously, and allow extra time to reach destinations due to possible low visibility and road congestion. Plan for possible delivery delays; confirm road conditions before routeing shipments through the affected areas. Individuals with pre-existing pulmonary problems should
carry adequate medication and consult with a physician before travel. Stay indoors in well-ventilated areas whenever possible, and seek medical attention if respiratory symptoms worsen. Eye irritation is possible; flush irritated eyes with copious amounts of water. Consider using a facemask if prolonged, outdoor activity is necessary; only purchase pollution facemasks from established retailers.

**INDIA (Country risk rating: High); November 1 to 6; Very heavy rain produces widespread flooding in Chennai and Tamil Nadu**

Very heavy north east monsoon rainfall produced disruptive flooding in Chennai and surrounding areas in Tamil Nadu State between November 1 and 4. Thousands of people are said be displaced and at least 12 weather-related fatalities have been reported in the affected area as of November 6. The rainfall on November 2 was Chennai's greatest one-day total since December 2015, when historic flooding occurred in the city. However, severe flooding similar to 2015 is not anticipated in the near-term, as major reservoirs near Chennai are currently well below maximum capacity. Intermittent spells of heavy rain and more flooding problems are likely in the metropolitan area. Days of precipitation have saturated the ground, and more rain will likely produce flash flooding in some areas. Areal flooding will also be a significant problem, particularly in depressed areas with poor drainage. Water levels will gradually decrease when rainfall moderates, but higher-than-normal tides will occur through November 6, which could affect drainage via outflows from the Adyar River, Cooum River, and other waterways. Waterlogging was reported through Chennai, including parts of Anna Nagar, Arumbakkam, Baby Nagar, Chitlapakkam, Madipakkam, T. Nagar, Thiruvanmiyur, Vadapalani, Velacheri, and areas close to Chennai Central station. Road networks, electricity supplies, and cellular services in the city were affected. Business disruptions were reported as a result of the as flooding affected public transport.

**Advice:** Stay away from tanks (reservoirs), rivers, streams, and other natural and manmade watercourses. Seek updated information on road conditions before driving or routeing shipments through areas where flooding has occurred. Plan accordingly for potential supply chain problems due to possible operational disruptions at manufacturing plants, rail and commercial trucking disruptions, and freight backlogs at the Port of Chennai, container yards, and intermodal terminals.

**JAPAN (Country risk rating: Low); November 3 to 30; Air Do cancels flights due to pilot shortage**

A pilot shortage on Sapporo-based carrier Air Do (HD) will cause flight disruptions through at least November 30. As of November 3, the airline cancelled 34 flights on its routes from Tokyo's Haneda Airport (HND) and Sendai Airport (SDJ) to Sapporo's New Chitose Airport (CTS). Air Do estimates the cancellations will affect 2,400 passengers. Air Do officials say that disruptions could spill over into December, as it has yet to secure new pilots.

**Advice:** Confirm flight status if scheduled on affected Air Do routes. Anticipate a moderate increase in demand for alternative carriers. Book reservations in advance, if possible.

**KAZAKHSTAN / KYRGYZSTAN; October 10 to November 10; (Update) Ongoing delays at Kazakh-Kyrgyz border crossings**

As of November 6, protracted pedestrian and vehicular traffic delays continue at the border crossings between Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, including Korday-Akjol, Kara-Su-Aktilek, and Chon-Kapka. Although negotiations on October 18 between the two sides have cleared legal hurdles to resolving the border delays, they have resumed; the cause of diplomatic and trade dispute remains unclear. On November 3, Kyrgyz activists staged a protest in front of Kazakh Embassy in Bishkek to demand the lifting of the enhanced border checks. Expect extensive travel and shipping delays to continue on both sides of the border through at least November 10. Rail traffic at the Chaldovar border crossing in Jambyl Province has not been affected. Kazakh authorities introduced enhanced border checks at all border crossings with Kyrgyzstan on October 10. The security measures, in place on the Kazakh side of the border, were allegedly linked to the Kyrgyz presidential election that took place on October 15. However, on November 4, nearly three weeks after the election, there were reportedly hundreds of trucks lined up at the Korday-Akjol and Kara-Su-Aktilek border crossings. The situation is serious enough that the Kyrgyz president authorised funds to pay for food for drivers waiting to cross the border. It is estimated that 80 percent of the trucks idled at the border are destined for Russia. Kazakhstan has claimed that it has increased border security to crack down on smuggling and counterfeit goods, but as is often the case 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 November 10. Allow additional time to cross the border, and confirm all shipments.
KYRGYZSTAN (Country risk rating: High); November 6 and 7; Days of History and Commemoration of Ancestors to be celebrated

Activities associated with a national holiday on November 6 and 7 will cause traffic disruptions in downtown Bishkek. 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. Anticipate heightened security around all events attended by government officials. Expect localised ground transport disruptions in central areas of major Kyrgyz cities on November 6 and 7. The Kyrgyz Parliament approved a resolution proposed by outgoing President Almazbek Atambayev that transforms the Soviet-era October Revolution Day holiday (November 7) into a two-day holiday called the Days of History and Commemoration of Ancestors. The holiday is associated with the mass uprising in 1916, when the Russian Tsar’s troops killed some 150,000 Kyrgyz for refusing to be drafted into the army and build fortifications during World War I.

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.

MALAYSIA (Country risk rating: Medium); November 4 to 6; Adverse weather results in disruptions in Penang

Flash flooding and landslides occurred across Penang following heavy rain on November 4 and 5. At least five people were killed and nearly 3,000 evacuated due to high winds and a torrential downpour. More than 110 areas throughout the state have been affected by floods. Hundreds of houses have been flooded, while many trees have toppled and roads submerged. A total of 16 landslide spots were reported along Jalan Tun Sardon. Some 1,200 personnel from various government agencies have been deployed to provide assistance following the floods. Travel disruptions continue to be reported as of November 6, as several roads remain inundated. Associated disruptions are expected to persist for the remainder of November 6, at least; commercial and power disruptions are also likely. Flight services at Penang International Airport (PEN) were temporarily diverted to neighbouring airports. Authorities have since reported normal flight scheduling at the facility.

Advice: Plan accordingly for transport disruptions, and allow extra driving time during and following periods of heavy rainfall. Seek updated information on road conditions before driving in affected areas. Heed all instructions from authorities, including evacuation orders.

PAKISTAN (Country risk rating: High); November 3 to 6; Severe air pollution disrupts national electric grid

Severe air pollution mixed with atmospheric moisture will likely continue to cause power disruptions in Pakistan through at least November 6. Utility officials reported that heavy smog concentrated around Punjab Province disrupted the national electricity transmission system. Authorities suspended operations at the Chashma Nuclear Power Complex until at least November 6 to perform needed repairs. The government also temporarily closed numerous oil-fired thermal plants in an attempt to improve air quality. Related commercial disruptions are possible for the duration of the power outages, although most major businesses have backup generators due to the country’s unreliable electrical power infrastructure. Lingering disruptions are likely even after power plants resume normal operations. Ongoing road transport delays as a result of poor visibility due to pollution continue to be reported in Pakistan, particularly Punjab province, were several smog-related accidents have been reported. Domestic and international flight delays and cancellations were also reported in Faisalabad and Multan.

Advice: Ensure the availability and functionality of backup electric generators. Drive cautiously in areas experiencing severe air pollution and allow extra time to reach destinations due to possible low visibility and road congestion. Confirm all flights. Plan for possible delivery delays; confirm road conditions before routeing shipments through affected areas. Individuals with pre-existing pulmonary problems should carry adequate medication and consult with a physician before travel. Stay indoors in well-ventilated areas whenever possible, and seek medical attention if respiratory symptoms worsen. Eye irritation is possible; flush irritated eyes with copious amounts of water. Consider using a facemask if prolonged, outdoor activity is necessary; only purchase pollution facemasks from established retailers.
SOLOMON ISLANDS (Country risk rating: Medium); November 6; Protests likely due to no-confidence motion in Honiara

Protests are possible in Honiara on November 6, after Prime Minister Manasseh Sogavare lost in a no-confidence motion in Parliament. No incidents of unrest have been reported thus far; however, possible protest sites include the Parliament House, the central market, and facilities used by Sogavare. Sogavare cited a proposed anti-corruption bill as the immediate cause of the political standoff. However, the country frequently experiences political turmoil and related civil unrest. Both supporters and opponents of Sogavare could stage street demonstrations; clashes between rival activist groups and/or security forces are possible. Authorities will likely increase security in Honiara to prevent violence. Businesses will probably close at the first sign of any unrest. Localised transport disruptions are likely near protest sites as police cordon off affected areas to contain demonstrators and arrest any persons engage in violent acts.

Advice: Avoid all demonstrations. Use caution near major government buildings, especially Parliament House, and facilities associated with the prime minister in the coming days as they are most likely to be targeted by protesters. Exit the area immediately if violence occurs near you; if unable to do so, take shelter in a publicly accessible non-governmental building. Allow additional time for travel in downtown Honiara.

SRI LANKA (Country risk rating: Medium); November 6 to 8; Potential nationwide fuel shortage

Sri Lanka faces a potential shortage of petroleum products through at least November 7. Panic buying and long queues were reported at filling stations throughout the country on November 3, after the state-owned Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) rejected an inbound shipment of petrol due to specification issues. Normal supplies will reportedly be available from November 7, but a CPC union representative has claimed that shortages may persist through November 8. Expect long queues at filling stations where fuel is available. Ground transport disruptions are likely if transit operators are unable to purchase sufficient fuel to continue providing scheduled services. Some retailers could engage in price gouging. Demonstrations over ongoing petrol shortages are possible. Protests will likely be sporadic and small, but localised clashes and associated disruptions cannot be ruled out. Spontaneous demonstrations are most likely at filling stations. Organised protests may target key CPC facilities if the shortage continues for a prolonged period.

Advice: If possible, stock up on fuel from stations that remain open; allow additional time to reach destinations due to congestion around these businesses. Ensure adequate fuel supplies before driving or routeing shipments long distances. Avoid all protests as a precaution.

VIETNAM / CAMBODIA; November 4 and 5; (Update) Weather-related casualties reported following Typhoon Damrey's landfall

Typhoon Damrey resulted in casualties and disruptions after making landfall in the southern and central areas of Vietnam early on November 4. The storm system affected Nha Trang, Cam Ranh, and surrounding area, with Nha Trang being the worst affected. Thousands of people were ordered to evacuate and at least 27 weather-related fatalities were reported. Significant disruptions to utility and transportation services were also reported; authorities have announced associated disruptions are expected to persist for the immediate term. Damrey weakened into a tropical storm as it reached Cambodia. Strong wind gusts are possible in eastern provinces as the system moves westward through the country on November 6. Further heavy rainfall is possible, and will likely lead to flash and areal flooding. Landslides could occur. Flooding and landslides could block roads, though ground disruptions are most likely in eastern provinces of the country. Flight disruptions are possible at airports in Phnom Penh (PNH) and Siem Reap (REP).

Advice: Follow all evacuation orders; be prepared to move away from coastal areas in the path of the storm. Once the storm begins affecting land operations, limit unnecessary driving in affected regions until it passes. Seek updated information on road conditions before driving or routeing shipments through mountainous areas or places where flooding regularly occurs. Confirm flight and rail reservations before checking out of hotels or driving to the airport. Stockpile bottled water, fuel vehicles, obtain emergency cash, and charge battery-powered devices in case prolonged electricity outages occur.

Europe and Russia
FRANCE / ITALY; November 4 and 5; Inclement weather impacts southern France and northwestern Italy

Severe thunderstorms and high winds overnight on November 4 and 5 caused power outages, localized flooding, and damage to buildings and property in southern France and northwestern Italy. Yellow and orange weather warnings for high winds remain in effect in southern France on November 6, while yellow and orange warnings for heavy rain, high winds and thunderstorms are in effect for much of central and northern Italy, including the island of Sardinia. Accordingly, further flooding, as well as weather-related travel and utility disruptions, remain possible through November 6. Further weather advisories may be issued at the discretion of local meteorological authorities.

Advice: Remain vigilant if travelling through areas under weather warnings. Avoid flooded areas; do not drive through standing water if road surfaces are obscured. Plan accordingly for possible transport disruptions, including ground transport, flights, ferry, commercial trucking, and rail freight services. Keep battery-powered devices fully charged in case electricity is lost.

GERMANY (Country risk rating: Low); November 4 to 17; Activists to protest during Climate Change Conference in Bonn

Environmental activists will hold a series of protests during the November 6 to 17 UN Climate Change Conference (COP23) held at the World Conference Centre Bonn (WCCB), in Bonn. The first of these was held by the Klimaschützen activist group, on November 4. The well-attended demonstration saw participants march from Münsterplatz to the WCCB. According to security forces, the event took place without major incident. Another protest march will be held along a similar route from 12:30 on November 11. Smaller gatherings are expected for the duration of the conference. Anticipate heightened security measures and possible road closures and diversions in the vicinity of WCCB. Localised clashes are possible, particularly if protesters attempt to breach police lines or vandalise private property.

Advice: Avoid all demonstrations to mitigate the potential for disruptions and as a routine security precaution. Allow additional time to reach locations if operating near affected areas.

ROMANIA (Country risk rating: Medium); November 5; Opposition activists protest judicial reforms nationwide

The 'Save Romania Union' (USR) and other civic groups staged protests in city centres nationwide on November 5 in reaction to controversial judicial reforms. Activists gathered in various cities, including at Victoria Palace in Bucharest as well as in Cluj-Napoca, Iasi, Sibiu and Brasov. The largest rally took place in Bucharest; thousands of people participated. No major incidents were reported at the nationwide protests. The demonstrations were part of an ongoing campaign to denounce corruption in the Social Democratic Party (PSD)-dominated government. The latest events were in reaction to PSD members proposing controversial amendments to the criminal justice system, which opponents argue will threaten the independence of the judiciary. Further demonstrations are possible.

Advice: Avoid all potential upcoming demonstrations to mitigate possible disruptions.

RUSSIA (Country risk rating: High); November 4; (Update) Tight security in central Moscow amid telephoned bomb threats

A series of telephoned bomb threats in Moscow on November 5 prompted mass evacuations from the Bolshoi Theatre, GUM shopping centre, and the Hotel Metropol in central Moscow, as well as from a number of shopping malls and movie theatres in other parts of the city. The bomb threats continued early on November 6, when two shopping centres in Novosibirsk, the Royal Park and Siberian Molle, were evacuated by authorities following bomb threats. The latest bomb threats and resultant security operations have not led to the discovery of any explosive devices, suggesting the incidents form part of a series of bomb hoaxes that have affected Russian cities in recent weeks. The hoax incidents are believed to have been pre-recorded telephone messages originating from outside Russia. It is unclear who is responsible or what their motive is. Nevertheless, heightened security and further evacuations are likely to cause short-notice disruptions over the coming days.

Advice: Prepare for short-notice transport and business disruptions in the coming days. Confirm air and rail travel with the service operator before departure. Avoid large crowds and concentrations of police. Allow extra time for travel near
event venues. Plan alternative routes to avoid closed streets. Report any suspicious activity or objects to authorities. Heed
the instructions of local law enforcement officials. Petty crimes such as pickpocketing increase during special events;
safeguard all valuables and personal belongings, and carry only items that are necessary.

RUSSIA (Country risk rating: High); November 5; Federal aviation rules restrict free baggage allowance for passengers

The Russian Ministry of Transport introduced changes to the Rules of Air Carriage of Passengers, Freight and Luggage. According to the new rules, which took effect on November 5, airlines may offer a choice of several ticketing options. From least to most expensive: a non-refundable ticket with free hand luggage of up to 5 kg (11 lbs); a non-refundable ticket with a separate luggage charge, which allows up to ten kg (22 lbs) per person; and a refundable ticket with luggage included (according to each airline’s specific allowances) in the price of the ticket. Passengers with tickets in any of the above categories, in addition to items classified as carry-on personal belongings (including handbags, briefcases, coats, baby food, baby carriages and flowers), may now take backpacks, medicine, and duty-free goods on board without charge. Crutches, canes, baby walkers, folding chairs, and carriages may be transported for free as checked baggage. Airlines, however, may weigh all carry-on items before boarding and have been given the option to voluntarily increase the free carry-on and baggage allowance as a method to compete in the marketplace. The new rules are aimed at reducing ticket prices and increasing the competitiveness of Russian airlines. However, only around ten percent of Russian passengers travel with a small (less than 5 kg) carry-on bag and initially, the move will likely have a negative effect on tourism, as travellers will have to pay additional fees.

Advice: To avoid confusion with the new regulations, contact your carrier or travel provider for specific details on carry-on and checked luggage allowances.

RUSSIA (Country risk rating: High); November 7; Traffic disruptions due to military parade

Traffic disruptions associated with a ceremonial military parade marking the 76th anniversary of the historic November 7, 1941, military march through Red Square, should be anticipated in downtown Moscow on November 7. Expect tight security. The re-enactment involves approximately 5,000 soldiers and officers; a similar number of spectators will likely watch the event. An exhibition of vintage military hardware in Red Square will follow the march. The event is expected to end at 1700. Expect road closures and traffic delays in areas near Tverskaya Street, the Kremlin, Red Square, and the Bolshoy Moskvoretskiy Bridge. Traffic delays could mean longer drive times between central Moscow and Sheremetyevo Airport (SVO). Licenced taxis may be difficult to find. Authorities may impose entry and exit restrictions at metro stations.

Advice: Allow additional time for travel. 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.

SPAIN (Country risk rating: Low); November 5 to 12; Further pro-independence protests planned in Catalina

Pro-independence bodies called for a week of protests around the region starting November 5, ahead of a large rally in central Barcelona at 12:00 on November 12; the details of these events have not yet been announced. The protests are being held to call for the release of pro-independence leaders who were arrested on November 2 for their part in the October 1 Catalonian independence referendum, as well as events leading up the Catalanion Parliament's unilateral declaration of independence. In addition, the pro-independence Intersindical-CSC union has called a 24-hour strike in the region from 00:01 to 23:59 on November 8. The action's impact is likely to be limited unless other labour unions support it. Nevertheless, protests and blockages of major thoroughfares can accompany such strikes. Demonstrations relating to the issue of Catalonian independence can draw thousands of participants and authorities will almost certainly deploy increased security around related events. Protests are also possible in the Basque region, where related demonstrations were held on November 4. Congestion is likely on roads and public transport in the vicinity of any demonstrations. Localised road closures around protest venues could prompt the rerouting of some public busses and trams. While such rallies are likely to remain peaceful, isolated violence is possible between rival activists, or between demonstrators and police.

Advice: Avoid all demonstrations as a standard precaution. If violence occurs, leave the area immediately. Seek updated information on traffic conditions from trusted local sources and contacts. Plan alternative routes circumventing demonstrations to avoid congestion. On strike days, check the status of transport services and overland routes before setting out, and allow significantly greater time for travel.
UKRAINE (Country risk rating: High); November 7; (Update) Anti-corruption rallies set to persist in Kiev

Mikheil Saakashvili’s Movement of New Forces party and activists supporting other opposition organisations plan to continue protests outside the Verkhovna Rada (Parliament building) in Kiev on November 7, when lawmakers return from their scheduled recess. Protesters continue to demand that legislators vote on the creation of an anti-corruption court and changes to election laws. However, they also threaten to expand their protests if their initial demands are not met and to call for early presidential and parliamentary elections. The Higher Administrative Court of Ukraine (HACU) scheduled a hearing on a lawsuit filed by Saakashvili and his party against Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko to recognise as unlawful and repeal a decree stripping Saakashvili of Ukrainian citizenship. The court is slated to hear the case on November 22, one day after Ukraine's Day of Dignity and Freedom holiday. Skirmishes between demonstrators and security personnel could occur, especially if police attempt to disperse rallies or are provoked. Expect localised transport disruptions in the government quarter in central Kiev for the duration of the protest campaign. On October 22, activists held a rally near the Verkhovna Rada in Kiev to discuss plans for the country after President Petro Poroshenko leaves or is removed from office. The current opposition demands, even if approved by the Parliament, would take a long time to be implemented.

Advice: Avoid all demonstrations. If possible, avoid Hrushevvs'koho Street and the Verkhovna Rada, as well as the Presidential Administration building. Allow additional time to reach destinations in central Kiev.

UNITED KINGDOM (Country risk rating: Low); November 8 and 9; RMT union-affiliated rail workers to strike in England

The National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) called on rail staff for five train operators in England to strike on November 8 and 9. Workers employed by Greater Anglia, Southern, and South Western Railway will strike for 48 hours on November 8 and 9, while workers employed by Merseyrail and Northern will strike for 24 hours on November 8. Greater Anglia will likely implement contingency plans to mitigate the worst disruptions, though moderate delays remain possible during the 48-hour strike from November 8 to 9. Merseyrail plans to operate a reduced train service on November 8. No services will operate on the Ellesmere Port line while a number of stations on other lines, which have not been announced, will be closed. In addition, the majority of services will run between 07:00 and 19:00, with a break in service during the middle of the day. Northern will operate approximately 50 percent of its usual services on November 8. The majority of these will run between 07:00 and 19:00. The majority of routes served by Southern will likely experience minor disruptions on November 8 and 9. Southern trains will not call at Guildford station, while some services have been cancelled on the West London and Marshlink lines. South West Railway will operate approximately 60 percent of its usual services on November 8 and 9, while 70 percent of its usual seating capacity will be available during peak hours on London services. RMT is currently engaged in talks with rail operators to resolve the dispute. As such, the upcoming strike may be averted with little notice.

Advice: Confirm rail schedules on November 8 and 9; consider using other means of transport, or telecommuting options. Plan accordingly for increased traffic congestion and reduced taxi availability in affected metropolitan areas. Confirm rental car and taxi reservations due to potentially increased demand.

Middle East and North Africa

IRAQ (Country risk rating: High); November 5; Casualties in twin suicide bomb attack in Kirkuk

Two suicide bombings occurred in close succession in central Kirkuk, Iraq, the afternoon of November 5; at least six people were killed and more than 20 others wounded. The first blast was a suicide car bomb set off near a former police station on Atlas Street; the second was a suicide bomber who detonated his explosive belt nearby about 15 minutes later. The death toll will likely increase. Security forces cordoned off the affected areas. No groups have immediately claimed responsibility, but the Islamic State (IS) militant group was likely responsible. The police station was once the headquarters of Saraya Al-Salam, a Shi'a paramilitary force led by Muqtada al-Sadr, an influential Shi'a cleric.
Advice: Stay away from areas where bombings have occurred until security personnel completely secure them and it becomes clear no further attacks are imminent. Limit exposure to security installations, religious sites, crowded areas, and other frequent bombing targets.

IRAQ (Country risk rating: High); November 6 to 10; Disruptions related to annual Arba'een pilgrimage

An estimated 20 million people will converge on the Shi'a holy city of Karbala in southern Iraq during the annual Arba'een pilgrimage, which culminates on November 10. The threat of terrorism by Sunni extremists will be elevated in areas where large numbers of Shi'a congregate, especially in Baghdad and on routes to the holy cities of Karbala and Najaf for at least a week before and after the event. Thousands of security personnel will deploy to Karbala and on roads leading to the city to help thwart attacks on pilgrims. Security may also be increased in other prominent Shi'a areas. Shi'a militias will help police and soldiers maintain security in these areas. Vehicles are likely to be banned in Karbala during the pilgrimage, and authorities will use a dedicated fleet of buses to move people from gathering points on the outskirts of the city to the Imam Hussain and Al-Abbas shrines. Curfews and other restrictions are possible if security conditions warrant. Crowding and flight delays are possible at Najaf International Airport (NJF). Millions of Iranians will travel to Iraq for the pilgrimage; overcrowding, crowding, immigration processing disruptions, and stampedes have occurred at border crossings between Iran and Iraq's southern provinces in the past. Arba'een marks the end of the 40-day mourning period for Imam Hussain ibn Ali, whose martyrdom at the Battle of Karbala led to the schism between Shi'a and Sunni Muslims. Terror attacks on Shi'a pilgrims have been relatively common in the past, and security continues to be a major concern.

Advice: Stay away from large crowds and sites where pilgrims gather unless observing Arba'een; respect local customs. Allow considerable extra time to reach destinations in Shi'a-populated areas due to increased security and heavy congestion. Confirm hotel reservations, transport bookings, and business appointments.

ISRAEL (Country risk rating: High); November 7; Activists to protest outside the British Embassy in Tel Aviv

Activists plan to demonstrate outside the British Embassy in Tel Aviv on November 7 to mark the centenary of the Balfour Declaration. The start time of the gathering has not been made public. The rally will probably remain small, but may attract hundreds of participants. Authorities will almost certainly deploy additional police near the embassy. While violence is not anticipated, security personnel could use force to disperse any demonstrators who do not follow instructions. Counter-demonstrations are possible, and the possibility of clashes between rival demonstrators cannot be ruled out. Expect increased security and localised traffic disruptions. The 1917 Balfour Declaration expressed the British government's support for the creation of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. Thousands of Palestinians protested in the West Bank on November 2 to denounce the 100-year-old declaration. Additional demonstrations are possible in the West Bank in the coming days.

Advice: Avoid the protest area on November 7. Allow additional time for travel near the British Embassy. Remain courteous and cooperative if approached and questioned by security personnel.

LEBANON (Country risk rating: High); November 4; Political instability possible following Prime Minister's resignation

On November 4, Prime Minister Saad Hariri, leader of the Al-Mustaqbal (Future) Movement, made a surprise announcement of his resignation while in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Hariri claims to have survived an assassination plot in Beirut several days earlier and feared another plot similar to the one that killed his father, then-Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, in 2005. On November 5, Bahrain's foreign ministry urged Bahraini citizens currently residing in Lebanon to leave immediately and to exercise caution; it also recommended that Bahrainis refrain from travelling to Lebanon. So far, no other country has announced similar recommendations, although it is likely that Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates will do so in the coming days. Hariri's move precipitates a new political crisis in Lebanon, although so far there have been no indications of any imminent security threats. Media are reporting that Western intelligence agencies may have warned Hariri of a nascent assassination plot, but so far, no Western country has updated their travel warnings to echo the Bahraini warning. The lack of any Western reaction could signal that Bahrain's warning is just another rhetorical step in the proxy war Iran and its ally Hezbollah are waging against Saudi Arabia and its Persian Gulf allies. Realistically, the greatest threat to Lebanon or visitors to Lebanon is probably from the Islamic State (IS) militant group. The threat of militancy in Beirut remains high, as several bombings attributed to Sunni militants have occurred in the capital since 2014. Most of the bombings have targeted the southern area of the capital, which is a Hezbollah stronghold.
Advice: Take precautions to reduce your risk of becoming a victim of terrorism. Vary routes and times of travel; do not discuss your plans with anyone but close associates. Do not linger in areas that could be targeted for an attack, such as government buildings, diplomatic missions, shopping areas, places of worship, tourist areas, and transportation hubs. Register and maintain contact with your diplomatic mission.

LIBYA (Country risk rating: Extreme); November 3; Three foreign nationals kidnapped in Ubari

Local security sources reported that three foreign engineers were kidnapped in Ubari by unidentified armed assailants on November 3. The victims, two Turkish nationals and one German national, were reportedly abducted while on route to the Ubari gas power plant after departing Ubari Airport (QUB). The threat of kidnapping in Libya is extreme. The majority of kidnappings are the result of political and territorial disputes among local militias. Militias will sometimes attempt to assert their unofficial policing authority by arresting perceived opponents. Foreigners may become incidental victims of abduction as part of these inter-militia power struggles. With the recent re-emergence of attacks by the Islamic State (IS) in Libya, militant kidnappings are also a threat. IS is attempting to re-organise in Libya after being pushed out of its former stronghold of Sirte in late 2016. The militant group has gained a foothold in Libya by exploiting the security vacuum that emerged after the 2011 civil war.

MOROCCO (Country risk rating: Medium); November 2; Drive-by shooting at La Creme cafe in Marrakesh

Two men on a motorcycle shot patrons at La Creme cafe in Marrakesh at around 19:45 on November 2, killing a local medical student and injuring at least two other persons. The targeted shooting appears to have stemmed from a personal dispute. Authorities are continuing their investigation into the incident and have not determined the motive for the attack. Shootings are rare in Morocco; the little violence that does occur usually involves knives. While there is a terrorist threat from returning Islamic State (IS) fighters and sympathisers who could target tourists, the November 2 attack does not appear to be related to terrorism. While some accounts say the intended target was the owner of the cafe, who was involved in drug smuggling in the Netherlands, the victim was the son of the president of Beni Mellal's Court of Appeals, indicating he may have been targeted due to his father's work.

SAUDI ARABIA (Country risk rating: High); November 4; Missile launched from Yemen intercepted in north east Riyadh

Late on November 4, Houthi rebels in Yemen reportedly fired a long-range ballistic missile in the general direction of Riyadh. Saudi forces said they intercepted a missile over north eastern Riyadh. Not long after the missile was intercepted, the official Houthi-controlled Saba News Agency claimed it had launched a ballistic missile toward Riyadh. The missile was intercepted over open desert and caused no damage or injuries, although the explosion was widely reported over social media as taking place near King Khalid International Airport's (RUH) VIP section. There were no reported delays to flight operations. Houthi ballistic missile and other cross-border fire is largely concentrated on the immediate border area within Saudi territory, especially Asir, Jizan, and Najran provinces. However, in late 2016 Houthi forces acknowledged possessing Burkan-1 and Burkan-2 missiles, which purportedly have a range of up to 800 km, enabling Houthi rebels to target areas as far away as Jeddah. It is unclear how many projectiles with this extended range the Houthis possess, but further attacks are likely. This latest attack came just under a month after the US finalised a USD 110 billion arms deal with Saudi Arabia that includes funds for a Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile defence system, designed to counter short-, medium- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles.

YEMEN (Country risk rating: Extreme); November 5; Bomb attacks reported in Aden

A large suicide car bomb struck the main security headquarters in Aden's Khormaksar district on November 5 and resulted in subsequent clashes between armed militants and security forces. At least 15 people were killed. A second assault in the city on the same day, gunmen stormed a crime unit and set files and archives on fire as a suicide bomber detonated an explosive belt at the building's entry. A local affiliate of the Islamic State (IS) later claimed the attacks. Insecurity in Aden has worsened since July 2015, when the Saudi-led coalition, in support of Yemeni President Abed Rabo Mansour al-Hadi, ousted the Shi'a Al-Houthi rebels from the city. Since then, security forces have struggled to establish order, allowing both IS and AQAP to exploit Aden's security vacuum to carry out numerous shootings and bombings. In one of the worst incidents, an IS suicide bomber targeted a military base in December 2016, killing 52 soldiers and wounding 60 others.
BURKINA FASO (Country risk rating: High); November 4; Activists protest at Place de la Nation in Ouagadougou

A coalition of civil society organisations held a march from Ouagadougou's Place de la Nation (Place de la Revolution) to the National Assembly on November 4. The action was launched to demand the prosecution of members of former president Blaise Compaore’s government. Reports indicate that thousands of people participated in the protest action. The event was led by the Burkinabe Movement for Human and People's Rights (MBDHP), which played a key role in the uprising that ousted Compaore in 2014. MBDHP called for nationwide protests to condemn the alleged impunity of Compaore regime officials in urban centres such as Banfora, Bobo Dioulasso, Koudougou, and Ouahigouya.

Advice: Avoid all protests due to the potential for violence, even if they appear to be peaceful. Register and maintain contact with your diplomatic mission.

MAURITANIA (Country risk rating: High); November 7; Protests over blasphemy trial possible in Nouakchott

Activist and religious groups may stage protests near the Nouakchott Court of Appeals starting November 7 when blogger Sheikh Ould Mohamed Ould Mkhaitir is expected to face retrial. Authorities previously sentenced the blogger to death on charges of apostasy in 2014, for the publication of an article deemed blasphemous toward Islam's prophet, Mohammed. The sentence, initially upheld by the Court of Appeals, was later overturned by the Supreme Court and remitted on January 31 due to procedural irregularities in the initial trial. Numerous religious groups staged protests demanding Mkhaitir’s execution throughout the previous proceedings, and similar gatherings are possible for the duration of the upcoming new trial. Authorities will likely increase security around the Court of Appeals during the trial as a precautionary measure. Security personnel may set up roadblocks and security cordons near the court, which will result in traffic disruptions. In the event of protests, clashes are possible, particularly if local authorities attempt to forcibly disperse the gatherings.

Advice: Avoid the vicinity of the Court of Appeals starting from November 7 for the duration of the trial. Stay away from any protests or large concentrations of security personnel. If a crowd starts forming in your area, immediately depart or seek shelter indoors due to the potential for violence. Allow extra time to reach destinations if travelling near the Court of Appeals.

NIGERIA (Country risk rating: High); November 3; Armed group in Niger Delta region ends ceasefire

The Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) armed group cancelled a ceasefire with the government on November 3 and threatened to conduct attacks targeting the oil sector in the south east Niger Delta region. NDA threatened to begin a 'brutal and bloody campaign' and pledged to cut all pipelines transporting crude oil in the Niger Delta. NDA will likely use explosives to damage and destroy pipelines, as well as ambush security personnel on land and from rivers. The armed group could also kidnap oil workers, including foreign nationals, and hold them for a protracted period as leverage in any negotiations with the government. NDA's previous activities directly affected business operations in Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Delta, and Rivers states; further activity could encourage related action by other armed groups, such as the Niger Delta Greenland Justice Mandate, which has attacked pipelines in the past. Authorities will almost certainly bolster security near oil facilities and government buildings. Enhanced security measures may include roadblocks, random vehicle searches and identity checks, and temporary road closures. The declaration of resumed hostilities marks a significant escalation in the NDA’s conflict with the government, although officials have blamed the group for intermittent violence in the Niger Delta even during the ceasefire.

Advice: Travel in a convoy with an armed escort, and carry satellite phones for emergency use. Complete all movements well in advance of nightfall. Do not discuss plans and routes publicly. Individuals operating in the Niger Delta in the long-term should vary routes and travel times. Review contingency plans, including short-notice evacuation procedures, and maintain direct and regular contact with organisational security resources and diplomatic missions. Keep vehicle doors locked at all times. Carry proper identification; be polite and non-confrontational if stopped at a security checkpoint.

SOMALIA (Country risk rating: Extreme); November 4; Potential threat against US nationals in Mogadishu

The US Department of State (DOS) ordered all nonessential US personnel to depart Mogadishu on November 4. The DOS cited specific threat information related to Mogadishu International Airport (MGQ), but did not expand on the threat's nature.
or a possible time frame. The threat of terrorism is extreme in Mogadishu. Known and specific terrorism threats exist, and Mogadishu must currently be considered a potential target of the Al-Shabaab and Islamic State in Somalia (ISS) groups. Expect greatly increased security at MGQ and at other potential targets in Mogadishu, including but not limited to diplomatic missions, government offices, military and police installations, transportation hubs, and hotels and other venues where foreigners tend to congregate.

Advice: Exercise extreme caution. Those who choose to remain in Somalia should update security plans, take additional steps to increase personal security, and maintain a high level of vigilance.

SOUTH AFRICA (Country risk rating: High); November 8; Disruptive protest expected in downtown Pretoria

Members of the National Taxi Alliance (NTA) plan to march to the Department of Transport and block nearby roads in downtown Pretoria (Tshwane) on November 8. The action aims to draw attention to various issues the taxi industry claims have hampered its development. NTA officials assert that Minister of Transport Joe Maswanganyi lacks the expertise to manage the economic challenges facing the sector. Although the exact route has not been announced, demonstrators could march along Struben Street (N4), Paul Kruger Street (R101), Bosman Street (M 18), and Pretorius Street (R104) in central Pretoria. The march is expected to be well attended and will likely cause significant traffic disruptions in the Arcadia area. Expect heightened security; police could forcibly disperse unruly gatherings, particularly if demonstrators block roads. Police will likely use tear gas to disperse uncooperative protesters.

Advice: Avoid all demonstrations. Seek updated information on security and traffic conditions before commuting through areas where protests activity is likely to occur. Allow extra travel time to reach destinations. Confirm business appointments.

THE GAMBIA (Country risk rating: High); November 5; Activists postpone protest in Serrekunda

Activists from the Occupy Westfield postponed a protest which was slated to take place at Westfield Junction in Serrekunda on November 5, due to the authorities denying the group's request for a permit to demonstrate. Police turned down the permit request to gather at the venue, citing security concerns and potential traffic disruptions in light of another event in the same area on the same day. Nonetheless, police forces were deployed to strategic locations around Serrekunda and Kanifing on the day as a precaution. Occupy Westfield had planned to protest actions by the National Water and Electricity Company (NAWEC), particularly persistent power cuts and water shortages. Media reports suggest that activists remain determined to stage protests; however, information on the new protest date has not been disclosed. Should the protests take place, the possibility of clashes between police and protesters remains elevated in case activists proceed with their gathering. Localised traffic and transport disruptions, are also likely if the demonstration takes place.

Advice: Avoid all future protests due to the potential for violence, even if they appear to be peaceful. Register and maintain contact with your diplomatic mission.