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.

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Country Travel Advisory List:

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

- Afghanistan
- Burundi
- Central African Republic
- Gaza Strip
- Libya
- 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.

New Executive Order Protecting The Nation From Foreign Terrorist Entry Into The United States

On March 6, the President issued a revised order outlining protections related to the entry of personnel from various countries. The link to the order can be found here: https://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2017/03/06/executive-order-protecting-nation-foreign-terrorist-entry-united-states

However, a district court in Hawaii has issued a block of this new order and the order is pending subject to it working through the legal system. System Risk Management advised all personnel who may be effected by the new order, monitor the legal challenges closely for relevant and current information.
• **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 an Sila (which border Sudan), the southern regions of Logone Oriental, Mandoul, Moyen-Chari and Salamat, the norther 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 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**: South of the Litani River in the Ej Jnoub and Nabatieh governorates, Palestinian refugee camps, within 15km of the shared border with Syria in the Bekaa and North governorates, and to the city of Tripoli

• **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.

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

- **Uganda:** The Karamoja sub-region in the north east and to within 30km of Uganda’s shared borders with the DRC and South Sudan, excluding major towns and villages.

- **Ukraine:** The Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and the Crimean Peninsula.
24 April 2017

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- **UKRAINE** - OSCE observer killed in mine blast in the Luhansk oblast
Middle East and North Africa

IRAQ - Large group of kidnapped foreign nationals released
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NIGERIA - (Update) Further protests possible during high-profile trial in Abuja
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SOMALIA - Bomb attack targets AMISOM convoy in Afgooye
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SOUTH SUDAN - Security increase in Juba ahead of judges' strike

Americas

ARGENTINA (Country risk rating: High); 24 April; Union-led strike and protests expected in Santa Cruz

Members of the Argentine Workers' Central Union (CTA) have called for a province-wide strike in Santa Cruz, Argentina, on 24 April. The agitation has been organised to protest alleged police brutality during a 22 April protest over unpaid wages, in the provincial capital, Rio Gallegos. Although none have been confirmed as yet, protests by striking workers are anticipated in Rio Gallegos; Avenida Kirchner and the Government House are likely protest areas. The majority of union-led demonstrations in the country proceed peacefully; however, as highlighted by gatherings on 22 April, which were reportedly forcibly dispersed by police, the possibility of confrontations between protesters and police cannot be discounted. Disruptions to public services, public transport and business operations are also possible due to the strike.

Advice: Persons in Santa Cruz on 24 April are advised to monitor local media for updates on the strike and announcements of any related demonstrations. All protest gatherings should be avoided as a standard precaution. Clients are further advised to ensure that itineraries remain flexible to accommodate any potential disruptions resulting from the strike conditions.

BOLIVIA (Country risk rating: Medium); 24 April; Vendors set to march from El Alto to La Paz

Groups of vendors have called for a protest march from El Alto to Bolivia's capital, La Paz, on 24 April. The protest has been organised to demand the government withdraw draft legislation to regulate the sale of used clothing. Participants are expected to gather in La Ceja in El Alto at 08:00 local time and march to the La Paz city centre. It is unclear how many people will participate in the protest; nonetheless, localised disruptions remain possible along the protest route. The protest is expected to conclude peacefully; however, the possibility of isolated skirmishes cannot be discounted.

Advice: Clients in the affected areas on 24 April are advised to avoid all street protests as a standard precaution. Allowances should be made for possible travel disruptions.

MEXICO (Country risk rating: High); 21 and 22 April; Security forces kill suspected Gulf Cartel leader in Reynosa

Officials have announced the death of Juan Manuel Loza Salinas, a regional leader of the infamous Gulf Cartel, following an overnight gun battle with federal and state security forces in Reynosa, located in Mexico's Tamaulipas state, on 21/22 April. There were no civilian casualties reported in the wake of the skirmish; however, Salinas' supporters are said to have set dozens of vehicles and buildings on fire in a bid to prevent his capture during the confrontation. Further reports indicate
that a low-level member of Los Zetas, tentatively identified as Francisco Carreon Olvera, was also killed during a separate security operation in the state capital, Ciudad Victoria. Drug trafficking-related violence, involving various conflicts between organised criminal groups or drug trafficking organisations (DTOs) and security forces, as well as between rival DTOs, continues to contribute to an unstable security environment in parts of Mexico. Tamaulipas, in particular, has experienced persistent violence and continues to be one of the highest-risk states in the country, with Los Zeta and the Gulf Cartel serving as two of the most prominent organised crime groupings in the area. Although Salinas' death may be considered a notable victory for the government as it seeks to limit the operations of cartels in the country, this development is likely to disrupt the power dynamics within the Gulf Cartel organisation and between this group and other cartels. This disruption could manifest in a spike in cartel-related conflict and a deterioration of the security environment in the group's operating area over the short-term.

Advice: Heightened caution is advised across Mexico, including the state of Tamaulipas, due to the threats of crime and kidnapping, as well as the incidental risk of organised crime-related conflict. Persons operating in the state are advised to monitor the local security environment closely for potential spikes in cartel-related violence.

NICARAGUA (Country risk rating: Medium); 22 April; Further anti-canal protests possible

Further anti-canal protests are possible in Nicaragua after police prevented agricultural groups from holding a protest in Juigalpa on 22 April. The protest was initially called to demand that the government repeal Law 840, which allows for the construction of the Nicaragua Interocianic Canal; however, police set up checkpoints along routes leading to the city and detained an unknown number of activists. This follows a 27 March decision by Nicaragua's Supreme Court to reject an appeal by agricultural groups to block the project. Farmers in particular are opposed to the 'Grand Canal' project, which they believe will lead to their eviction. As the issue is ongoing and in light of the recent blocking of the protest in Juigalpa, further protests are anticipated, including in the capital, Managua. The possibility of low-level clashes between protesters and security forces at any upcoming protests cannot be discounted.

Advice: Clients in Nicaragua in the near-term are advised to monitor local media for details on any potential protests. All large street gatherings should be avoided.

PERU (Country risk rating: Medium); 21 April; Elevated dengue fever activity reported countrywide

Authorities have confirmed over 1,110 cases of dengue fever in the Piura region of Peru, according to local media reports on 21 April. As of 1 April, health officials have reported 3,785 confirmed cases of dengue fever countrywide since 19 March. Dengue fever activity has been reported throughout most of the country during 2017; however, the risk of infection during the aforementioned period was highest in the Ica and Piura regions. The aforementioned figures represent a more than 70 percent increase in cases compared to the number of cases reported during the same period in 2016, when officials identified roughly 2,210 cases. Dengue fever is a year-round risk in Peru, but the highest proportion of cases usually occurs during the first half of the year. In 2015, authorities reported approximately 39,450 cases and roughly 31,870 cases in 2016. Fears of a dengue fever outbreak have been elevated following widespread flooding in April. Symptoms of dengue fever usually present within 3 to 14 days of receiving a bite from an infected mosquito. These symptoms include high fever, severe headache, backache, joint pain, nausea and vomiting, eye pain and rash. Additional symptoms of dengue haemorrhagic fever, a more severe form of dengue fever, include marked damage to blood and lymph vessels, bleeding from the nose, gums, or under the skin, and sometimes internal bleeding. This form of dengue fever infection can be fatal.

Advice: Persons travelling to Peru are advised to take precautions against being bitten by mosquitoes, including using insect repellent containing DEET, picaridin, or another approved repellent, and wearing long-sleeved shirts and long pants, particularly at dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are generally most active. Individuals exhibiting the above-mentioned symptoms are advised to consult a medical practitioner immediately.

UNITED STATES (Country risk rating: Medium); 6 April; Indian national killed in Yakima city

An Indian national was killed during a robbery at a convenience store in Yakima city, located in the US state of Washington on 6 April. Two suspects allegedly entered the store, grabbed cash and shot the victim in the chest. The victim is said to have been behind the counter when he was shot. Authorities are utilising the store's security camera footage to aid them in their attempt to apprehend the culprits. There is a medium threat of crime in the US; the majority of incidents are petty in nature. Although less likely to affect visitors than petty crime, incidents of violent crime do impact foreign nationals, as illustrated by this recent incident. Violent crime is also considered to be pervasive in lower-income areas of all large urban
centres, including incidents of assault, armed carjacking, sexual assaults and gang-related shootings. As such, the possibility of further such crimes cannot be discounted.

**Advice:** Persons in the US, regardless of location, should remain aware of the prevailing risks of both petty and violent crime. Basic security precautions should be implemented at all times. These include being alert to suspicious behaviour, being prepared to let belongings go in the event of someone trying to steal them, and avoiding walking around alone or after dark. Caution is advised in all areas that are popular with tourists.

**UNITED STATES (Country risk rating: Medium); 21 April; Mandatory evacuations due to wildfires in Florida**

Thousands of people were evacuated due to separate wildfires in south west and central Florida, in the US, on 23 April. In south west Florida, 2,000 homes were placed under a mandatory evacuation order and another 5,000 under a voluntary evacuation order in the Naples area. Reports indicate that the fire in this area was 10 percent contained on 21 April. In Central Florida, at least 800 homes were evacuated in Indian Lake Estates, located in near Lakeland city in Polk county. The cause of the fires has not been determined; however, authorities are said to be treating the fires as 'suspicious'. Firefighters are continuing efforts to control the wildfires in both areas. It should be noted that wildfires are highly unpredictable, susceptible to rapid changes in intensity and direction, and may further impact residential areas. Associated disruptions to travel, including road closures, are possible if the fires continue to spread unabated. As such, further evacuations and disruptions to amenities, including electricity supply, cannot be discounted.

**Advice:** Persons in south west and central Florida are advised to monitor local media closely for updates and advisories. Travellers should confirm the status of all road routes prior to travel. This is particularly relevant for inter-state travel. Persons travelling near fire-affected areas should keep windows closed and ensure that the air conditioning system is adjusted to prevent smoke from entering the vehicle.

**VENEZUELA (Country risk rating: Medium); 24 April; (Update) Opposition protests and blockades over protester deaths planned countrywide**

The opposition Democratic Unity Roundtable (MUD) has called for further anti-government protests and blockades on major thoroughfares across Venezuela on 24 April. The protests are likely to be accompanied by a heavy security presence. The protests will be the latest to be held in response to the deaths of three people during related mass protests in various parts of the country on 19 April. Venezuela has experienced a spike in opposition protests following the controversial decision to withdraw powers from the MUD-led National Assembly to be conferred upon the judiciary; the decision was later revoked by the Tribunal of Justice (TSJ) on 1 April. The TSJ ruling has been described by opposition members as a 'coup'. An escalation in the opposition protest campaign remains possible across the country over the coming weeks, especially as the opposition continues to pressure the government into holding early elections before 2018. There is an elevated risk of violence at all politically motivated protests in Venezuela; at least eight people have died and hundreds have been arrested during the protests since 1 April. Some of the violence has been attributed to the heavy-handed tactics of security forces, and the presence of pro-government armed groups, called colectivos. The unrest coincided with increased levels of violent crime and looting, including in the capital, Caracas.

**Advice:** Clients are advised against all non-essential travel to Venezuela due to ongoing political instability and related insecurity. Persons in the country should consider travel with a trusted local contact or trained security driver, limit travel at night, and avoid all street protests and concentrations of security forces. Furthermore, clients should ensure that security and political developments in the country are closely monitored, and crisis management plans are regularly reviewed and updated in conjunction with a security provider.

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**Asia and Pacific**

**AFGHANISTAN (Country risk rating: Extreme); 21 April; Dozens killed in Taleban attack in Mazar-e-Sharif**

Over 100 Afghan soldiers were killed in an assault on a military base in Mazar-e-Sharif in Afghanistan’s northern Balkh province on 21 April. A mosque and dining facility was reportedly the target of the attack. The assailants reportedly approached the base in military trucks and wore military uniforms. A suicide bomber detonated his explosives at the gate, allowing the rest of the attackers to storm the facility and open fire on soldiers inside. The assault, which targeted the 209th
Corps of the Afghan National Army, continued for about five hours before the militants were killed. The Taleban subsequently claimed responsibility for the attack, stating that the attack was retribution for the killing of several senior Taliban leaders in northern Afghanistan. There is an extreme threat of terrorism throughout Afghanistan, stemming from a number of Islamist extremist organisations, of which the Taleban is the most prevalent. There are a number of foreign soldiers who operate from the base, some of whom serve in an advisory role to the Afghan National Army (ANA) as part of the NATO-led multinational mission. The Taleban has proven to have the capacity to conduct attacks throughout the country, targeting government and administrative interests and ANA as well as local and foreign civilian interests. Given this dynamic, further conflict, including attacks on major urban centres such as provincial capitals, as well as military assets should be expected in the short- to medium-term.

Advice: Due to a number of security concerns, all travel to Afghanistan is advised against. Maximum travel, personal and residential security protocols should be implemented at all times. All movement should be conducted during daylight hours only and in the presence of a security escort. Crisis management plans (evacuation and contingency) should be updated with a security provider.

INDIA (Country risk rating: High); 25 April; (Update) DMK calls for state-wide farmers' strike in Tamil Nadu

Opposition party Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) has called on farmers to observe a state-wide general strike (known locally as a bandh) in India's Tamil Nadu state on 25 April. The action has been supported by various opposition parties, including the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) and the Communist Party of India (CPI). Opposition party leaders have called for the agitation to highlight the alleged sufferings of farmers in the state. Although it is unclear how well supported the bandh will be, disruptions to business and travel should be expected for the remainder of the strike period. The possibility remains that associated protests and agitations may take place. Such protests are likely to rapidly degenerate into violent clashes between protesters and security forces.

Advice: Persons operating in Tamil Nadu on 25 April are advised to monitor local media closely for updates on the upcoming strike, and for related advisories from the authorities. All demonstrations, large street gatherings and concentrations of security forces should be avoided as a standard precaution. Clients are further advised to make allowances for localised travel and business disruptions in the vicinity of all demonstrations.

INDIA (Country risk rating: High); 22 April; Security forces placed on high alert in Uttar Pradesh

Security forces in India's northern Uttar Pradesh state were reportedly placed on high alert on 22 April, in response to a terrorism threat. Local intelligence agencies are said to have discovered a plot to carry out attacks at prominent religious sites and public places in the state. Elevated security measures have since been implemented in and around government facilities (particularly in Allahabad and Lucknow), transport hubs, and popular tourist areas (such as the Taj Mahal) across Uttar Pradesh. Additional security personnel have also been deployed to notable pilgrimage sites, including Ayodhya, Mathura, Varanasi, and Vrindavan. Further information regarding any possible timing or method of attack is unavailable at present; however, the assailants are reportedly expected to disguise themselves as Hindu saints. There is a high risk of terrorism in India, stemming predominantly from Islamist extremists. Warnings and associated security increases are regular occurrences in India. The warnings, even if issued out of an abundance of caution, serve to underline the continued threat to the country.

Advice: Persons operating in Uttar Pradesh should adhere to any directives or warnings issued by the authorities regarding the implementation of any security measures. Clients are advised to exercise heightened security awareness and to report all suspicious persons, packages and/or vehicles to the local authorities.

INDIA (Country risk rating: High); 25 April; Several unions call for state-wide transport strike in Assam

The All India Road Transport Workers' Federation (AIRTWF), Assom Petroleum Mazdoor Union (APMU), Sadou Asom Motor Shramik Jutiya Parishad (AAMSJP), and All Assam Motor Shramik Federation (AAMSF) have called for a 24-hour transport strike (known locally as a bandh) across India's north eastern Assam state, on 25 April. The action, which is set to commence at 05:00 local time, has reportedly been organised to denounce the Road Transport and Safety Bill and Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill and revisions made to the Motor Vehicles Act (1988). Significant disruptions to transport services are expected across the state, including in major urban centres such as Guwahati, should the action proceed as planned. It should be noted that associated demonstrations are expected to coincide with the strike; protesters may erect
informal roadblocks or block highways, major roads and railway tracks, further exacerbating disruptions to travel. Precedent
suggests that all protest action in India has the potential to turn violent; demonstrations intended to be peaceful regularly
erupt into violence between protesters and police, who will not hesitate to use robust crowd control tactics. Although foreign
nationals are generally not targeted in any violence that may occur, a significant incidental threat exists nonetheless.

Advice: Clients are advised against non-essential travel to Assam due to ongoing threats of separatist conflicts and
terrorism. Persons operating in the state on 25 April should monitor local media for updates on the strike action and related
demonstrations, as well as advisories from the authorities. All strike-related activities, protests and concentrations of
security forces should be avoided as a standard precaution. Clients are further advised to make allowances for travel
disruptions on the day.

INDIA (Country risk rating: High); 24 to 26 April; Sit-in protest in Jaipur

Multiple organisations launched a sit-in protest at the Rajasthan State Assembly building in Jaipur, the regional capital of
India’s Rajasthan state, on 24 April. The protest is expected to conclude on 26 April. The agitation has been organised to
demand justice for the killing of a dairy farmer in Behror in Alwar district on 1 April. Although no violence has yet been
reported, as with all protests in India, the possibility of confrontations between protesters and security forces cannot be
discounted.

Advice: Clients in Jaipur between 24 and 26 April are advised to avoid all protests and concentrations of security forces
as a precaution. Allowances should be made for potential disruptions.

PHILIPPINES (Country risk rating: Medium); 22 April; (Update) Militants killed following
security operation in Clarin

At least three suspected Abu Sayfayf militants were killed following a security operation in the Clarin municipal area, located
in the Philippines’ Bohol province, on 22 April. Reports indicate that the leader of the group was among those neutralised.
The militants were part of the 10-man armed group that infiltrated the neighbouring popular tourist area of Inabanga in a
foiled attack raid on 11 April; six of the militants were killed in armed clashes with security forces. Authorities state that two
or three additional rebels remain at large in the province. The presence of suspected Abu Sayfayf militants in Bohol province
is concerning. The group typically confines its activities to the southern Mindanao region but has conducted operations
outside this area in the past. The group, which is aligned with the Islamic State (IS), is known for its high-profile kidnapping
operations targeting foreign nationals. Indeed, the now-deceased leader of the group is said to have initiated the execution
of Canadian nationals on 21 September 2016 and German nationals in February. In light of the ongoing security operations
to capture the remaining suspects and counteract the militant threat in the region, a heightened security presence, including
additional checkpoints, patrols and possible travel restrictions, should be anticipated in Bohol province, particularly in the
province’s north and central western areas, over the near-term.

Advice: Persons operating in Bohol province are advised to limit travel in the Clarin area until the situation is resolved.
Clients in the Bohol and Cebu provinces should monitor local media closely for updates and consult regularly with in-
country hosts, including hotel security managers. Heightened awareness is advised while travelling in these regions,
particularly during the evening. Accommodation should be well secured with access control and 24-hour security at a
minimum.

PHILIPPINES (Country risk rating: Medium); 20 April; Japanese national shot dead in Manila

A Japanese national and business traveller was shot dead in the Philippines’ capital, Manila, late on 20 April. The victim,
identified as Nariki Mizuno, a 48-year-old resident of Aichi Prefecture, was shot while in his vehicle on Roxas Boulevard by
two assailants travelling on motorcycles. Mizuno had arrived in Manila earlier on the same day to inspect a factory in one
of the capital’s suburbs. The victim was part of a group of approximately 20 Japanese nationals who were travelling back
to their hotel in four vehicles when the incident took place. Investigations are ongoing; however, police suspect that Mizuno
was involved in a personal dispute with the assailants, as the attack seemed to be a targeted killing. There is a medium
risk of crime in Manila, with petty crime being the form of crime most likely to affect travellers. Violent crime incidents
affecting foreign nationals, while uncommon, do occur periodically, as this most recent incident indicates.

Advice: Clients in Manila are advised to maintain basic security precautions and to remain aware of their surroundings
at all times. Travellers should pay attention to signs of surveillance.
SRI LANKA (Country risk rating: Medium); 24 April; Countrywide fuel-sector strike underway

Workers of the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) Trade Union Collective initiated an indefinite strike in Sri Lanka from 00:01 on 24 April. The strike has been organised to protest a planned joint-venture agreement with India. Disruptions to fuel supply and eventual shortages should be anticipated. The governments of Sri Lanka and India are expected to sign an agreement to invest in and develop petroleum facilities at Trincomalee Port. The plan includes the construction of a refinery and other petrochemical plants, as well as changes to the operatorship of the port’s tank farm. The agreement stipulates that the CPC would only retain operating rights over a small percentage of the existing storage facilities. CPC workers from seven different unions oppose the proposed transfer of operational rights to Indian Oil Corporation subsidiary Lanka IOC, since the heavily indebted CPC would incur further financial losses. Related protests are possible. Should these occur, the possibility of low-level confrontations between protesters and police forces cannot be discounted.

Advice: Persons in Sri Lanka in the near-term are advised to anticipate fuel service disruptions and to monitor local media for developments and updates regarding the planned strike action and associated demonstrations.

VIETNAM (Country risk rating: Medium); 22 April; (Update) Hostage situation in Dong Tam ends

Protesting residents agreed to release the remaining 19 police officers and officials who had been held hostage in the village of Dang Tam, in Vietnam’s My Duc district, on 22 April. The successful release was reportedly negotiated by the mayor, Nguyen Duc Chung. According to the reported terms of the agreement, Chung held that local residents who had taken part in the hostage situation would not be prosecuted and that land grievances would be addressed within 45 days. Road blockades were lifted around the village and residents who had been arrested during the protest between 14 and 15 April were released. The hostage situation was reported after a dozen residents were arrested amid a protest related to a land dispute in the village between 14 and 15 April. The remaining residents took at least 38 police officers and officials hostage, demanding for the release of their compatriots and a resolution to the disputed land. This recent incident underscores the increasing tensions related to land disputes in the country since the land law was revised in 2013. The land law is said to have failed to provide provisions that would allow for multi-ownership of land to include the state, communities and individuals while facilitating compulsory land acquisitions. In light of this, the possibility of further land dispute-related protests cannot be discounted in the near-term. It should be noted that the hostage situation was a rare phenomenon and does not alter the baseline risk associated with civil unrest in the country, which is assessed as being low.

Advice: Persons in or near My Duc are advised to adhere to advisories issued by the local authorities. Clients should follow local media for updates on potential land dispute-related protests.

Europe and Russia

FRANCE (Country risk rating: Medium); 23 April and 7 May; Violent protests follow presidential election

Protesters opposed to leader of the National Front (FN) party, Marine Le Pen, clashed with police in France’s capital, Paris, shortly after the preliminary results of the first round of the presidential election on 23 April were announced. The results indicate a lead for Le Pen and Emmanuel Macron, representing En Marche (Association for the Renewal of Politics). Associated protest activity is expected to continue in the run up to the 7 May run-off election. The election period takes place amid the ongoing state of emergency. The terrorism threat in France is assessed to be high, and extraordinary security measures have been implemented in the country due to numerous terrorist-related incidents, including mass casualty terrorist attacks in Paris and Nice in November 2015, and July 2016, respectively. More recently, authorities arrested two men in connection with a terrorist plot in Marseilles on 18 April, in which the men were accused of planning an attack ahead of the country’s presidential election. In addition, one police officer was killed and two others wounded in a shooting incident claimed by the Islamic State (IS), at the Champs-Elysees in Paris on 20 April. These incidents have resulted in the elevated security posture, which is expected to remain in place for the duration of the election period. The threat of low-level and mass-casualty attacks amid the upcoming run-off election cannot be ruled out, even though the risk is somewhat mitigated by the counterterrorism capabilities of local security forces.
Advice: Although France has a high threat of terrorism, normal travel can continue. Clients are advised to exercise heightened situational awareness at all times, particularly in the vicinity of electoral and government facilities. All election-related gatherings should be avoided as a standard precaution.

HUNGARY (Country risk rating: Medium); 24 April; Planned demonstration outside Russian Embassy in Budapest

The activist group, 'Allitsuk meg Moszkvat', has called on its members and supporters to observe a mass demonstration outside the Russian Embassy in Hungary's capital, Budapest, on 24 April. Hundreds of participants are set to gather at the diplomatic mission, from 19:00 to 21:00 local time, to denounce what the group asserts is the increasing influence of Russia on Hungary. Although the demonstration is expected to conclude peacefully, there is a credible risk of skirmishes between participants and police due to the emotive nature (and location) of the protest gathering. Such unrest may pose an indiscriminate risk to bystanders. It should be noted that an earlier protest by the group was postponed due to inclement weather conditions; further ad hoc changes to the scheduled event date are possible.

Advice: Persons operating in Budapest on 24 April should monitor local media for updates on the upcoming agitation, as well as related advisories from the authorities. All protest gatherings and concentrations of security forces should be avoided as a standard precaution. Clients are further advised to make allowances for localised travel and business disruptions in the vicinity of the Russian Embassy on the day.

MALTA (Country risk rating: Low); 23 April; Anti-corruption demonstration held in Valletta

Malta's opposition Nationalist Party (PN) led a peaceful demonstration at Castille Square in the capital, Valletta, on 23 April. The protest was organised against recently emerged allegations of government corruption and to demand the resignation of the prime minister, Joseph Muscat. Given that the issue is ongoing, the opposition may call for further related protests in the near-term. Although violence is not expected, the possibility of low-level clashes at any upcoming protests cannot be discounted entirely.

Advice: Clients in Malta in the near-term are advised to monitor local media for updates on further potential protests. All large street gatherings should be avoided.

RUSSIA (Country risk rating: High); 21 April; Fatal shooting in Khabarovsk

At least three people were fatally shot by a single gunman in the city of Khabarovsk, located in Russia's south eastern Khabarovsk Krai region, on 21 April. The assailant is said to have opened fire outside a security checkpoint before he was neutralised. The attack was claimed by the Islamic State (IS); however, the authorities have reportedly identified the shooter as belonging to a neo-Nazi group and his connection to IS has not been confirmed. Investigations into the assailant's motive are ongoing. Should the attack be linked to an act of terrorism, this would highlight the medium threat of terrorism in the country, particularly those acts initiated by self-radicalised individuals inspired by extremist Islamist ideology. Russia has been threatened with reprisal attacks due to its military interventions in Syria. The risk is somewhat mitigated by the proficiency of Russia's security forces at identifying and eliminating threats before they escalate into violence. Nonetheless, further shooting and bomb attacks cannot be discounted in Russia's major urban centres in the near-term.

Advice: Persons operating in Russia are further advised to report any suspicious persons, packages and/or vehicles to the authorities.

SPAIN (Country risk rating: Low); 24 April; Rail sector strikes to take place in Barcelona and Madrid

Unionised workers on the Barcelona and Madrid Metro are set to observe unrelated partial strikes in Spain's capital, Madrid, and in the city of Barcelona, on 24 April. In the capital, employees are set to strike from 05:30 to 08:30 local time, affecting metro services throughout the city. The action has been launched to demand that metro rail conductors be placed in a similar job category as locomotive train operators. In Barcelona, workers are expected to observe two-hour work stoppages per shift. The action has been launched due to ongoing labour disputes. The representing union has stated strikes will be observed indefinitely every Monday until their demands have been met. Authorities have stated that at least 60 percent of services on high-volume routes in Madrid will operate on the day, and at least 40 percent of services in Barcelona during the two-hour stoppages. Accordingly, the impact of the strike is expected to be limited. Nonetheless, moderate to significant
congestion on metro stations and trains, as well as an increased demand for alternative forms of transport, should be expected. Both strikes may be suspended or extended on an ad hoc basis.

**Advice:** Persons in Madrid and Barcelona are advised to monitor local media for developments and announcements regarding the action, and to contact the applicable rail operators or their travel provider to confirm the status of services. For Madrid rail operators, please click [here](#). For Barcelona rail operators, please click [here](#).

**TURKEY (Country risk rating: High); 23 April; Referendum-related protests held in Istanbul**

Hundreds of people, including supporters of the opposition Republican People's Party (CHP), held a protest at Taksim Square in Istanbul, Turkey, on 23 April. The protest was the latest to be held to denounce the 16 April referendum, which President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) narrowly won. The victory is set to pave the way for constitutional amendments that are anticipated to extend Erdogan's powers. Opposition parties have denounced the result and called for its annulment due to voting irregularities. Further protests against the referendum are anticipated in the near-term. Such gatherings are likely to be well attended and may result in localised travel disruptions. Additionally, the government announced a further extension of the current state of emergency, which was due to expire on 19 April, for a further three months. This decision may further inflame anti-government sentiment and serve as a catalyst for further protests. The threat of violence at all political gatherings in Turkey is considered high.

**Advice:** Clients in Turkey are advised to avoid all protests and street gatherings as a standard precaution. Additionally, local developments should be monitored closely in conjunction with security providers.

**UKRAINE (Country risk rating: High); 23 April; OSCE observer killed in mine blast in the Luhansk oblast**

An Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) observer was killed after his vehicle struck a landmine while on patrol near the town of Pryshyb, located in the Luhansk oblast, in eastern Ukraine, on 23 April. The victim, an American paramedic, was part of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine (SMM). Two other foreign nationals, from Germany and the Czech Republic, were reportedly wounded in the blast. The incident underscores the risk of travel within areas not under the control of Ukrainian armed forces. Landmines, as well as other types of unexploded ordnance, are present in a number of areas in the Luhansk oblast. Ukrainian armed forces, along with private explosive ordnance disposal organisations, frequently carry out de-mining activities in areas under Ukrainian government control, and report unsafe as well as recently de-mined areas to SMM teams. The line of control between separatist and government forces is particularly dangerous as this terrain is littered with mines and booby traps. Pryshyb is located in separatist-held territory, just south of the line of control. In addition, the security situation in the eastern Luhansk oblast remains tenuous; although hostilities have reduced in scope, isolated flare-ups in violence are occasionally reported.

**Advice:** Clients are advised against all travel to Ukraine’s eastern Luhansk oblast, due to instability and frequent clashes involving armed forces and pro-Russia separatist militants. Persons currently in or intending to travel to the region despite this advisory should coordinate all movements in the presence of a security escort.

**Middle East and North Africa**

**IRAQ (Country risk rating: High); 21 April; Large group of kidnapped foreign nationals released**

The authorities in Iraq issued a statement on 21 April noting that 26 hostages, including 24 Qatari and two Saudi nationals, have been released following 16 months in captivity. The hostages were flown to Qatar on the same day. The group was abducted by suspected Shiite militiamen, possibly members of Kataib Hezbollah, during a falcon hunting expedition near the Saudi Arabia border in Muthanna governorate in December 2015. A large ransom of an unspecified amount was allegedly paid. Media reports in recent days have speculated that a Qatari aeroplane in the capital, Baghdad, had been dispatched to Iraq to deliver the ransom. The deal also included the release of Shiite community members trapped in besieged towns in Syria. The kidnapping of the group was one of the most high-profile abductions in southern Iraq in recent years. The kidnapping was well planned and executed and included dozens of gunmen, indicating the possible involvement of political actors in southern Iraq, a predominantly Shiite region. Shiite political groupings are generally opposed to the Sunni-dominated Qatar and its involvement in and support for Sunni rebels in Syria. Shiite militias in Iraq have also previously abducted Turkish nationals. In 2015, suspected Shiite militia from Furaq Al-Mawt abducted a large group of
Turkish construction workers in Baghdad. The abductions highlight the significant kidnap risk in Iraq, which can be motivated by a wide variety of factors, including regional developments and competition, local political disputes and financial gain.

Advice: Clients are advised against all travel to several central and northern Iraqi governorates, including Baghdad, and against all non-essential travel to several southern governorates, including Muthanna. Persons operating in Iraq should travel with a security escort and reside in secure accommodation. Visitors should maintain a low public profile.

ISRAEL (Country risk rating: High); 25 April; Histadrut calls for countrywide general strike

The Histadrut labour federation has called for a countrywide general strike in Israel on 25 April. The action has been organised to protest the early retirement and firing of hundreds of employees of the Israel Broadcasting Authority (IBA), which is set to be replaced by a new state-run media conglomerate known as Kan. The strike is expected to affect both private and public sectors, including transport and utility services. Associated demonstrations are also possible in a number of central locations, including in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, on the day. The strike is expected to be well observed and attendance at possible associated demonstrations is expected to be high. It should be noted that agitations of this nature may be extended, cancelled or suspended on an ad hoc basis (either by way of negotiation or court order). Localised travel disruptions are anticipated in the vicinity of strike-related protest gatherings, should such events take place.

Advice: Persons operating in Israel on 25 April should monitor local media for updates on the strike action and related advisories from the authorities. All strike-related activities, demonstrations and concentrations of security forces should be avoided as a standard precaution. Clients are further advised to make allowances for notable disruptions to business and travel services for the duration of the strike.

ISRAEL (Country risk rating: High); 23 April; Several wounded in stabbing incident in Tel Aviv

Four people were wounded in a knife attack in Tel Aviv, Israel, on 23 April. The incident occurred near the Leonardo Beach Hotel. The assailant, reportedly a Palestinian national, was arrested shortly after the incident occurred. Israel and the West Bank have been affected by dozens of similar knife and shooting attacks since early October 2016. Assailants are typically Palestinian and have been shot and killed, or wounded, shortly after the initial incident.

Advice: Persons in Israel, regardless of area of travel, are advised to report any suspicious people or activities to authorities immediately.

Sub-Saharan Africa

MADAGASCAR (Country risk rating: High); 20 April; (Update) Kidnapped French national released in Antananarivo

A French national of South Asian (Indo-Pakistani) origin, who was kidnapped on 11 April, was released in Madagascar's capital, Antananarivo, on 20 April. Further details regarding the circumstances of the victim’s release or his state of health were not immediately disclosed. Kidnapping poses a medium threat in the country. It should be noted that there has been a marked increase in incidents of kidnapping for the purposes of ransom and extortion in recent years. The increase has been attributed to the activities of suspected organised kidnapping syndicates operating in major urban areas across Madagascar. Furthermore, businesspeople of South Asian origin with long-term commercial interests and residency in the country, as well as their family members, have been increasingly specifically targeted in recent years. Indeed, the French-Indian collective of Madagascar (CFOIM) organisation has gone as far as to appeal to local authorities to address increased violence targeting members of their community in the country. Due to the fact that most kidnappings have targeted persons for financial gain, the possibility of other foreign nationals being targeted due to their perceived wealth cannot be discounted in the near-term.

Advice: Persons operating in Madagascar are advised to exercise a high degree of personal security awareness and to maintain a low public profile while travelling in the country, particularly in urban centres. This is particularly relevant for longer-term residents and visitors.
NIGER (Country risk rating: High); 20 April; Hepatitis E outbreak reported in Diffa region

Health authorities have identified a Hepatitis E outbreak in Niger's eastern Diffa region, where at least 86 cases of infection, including 25 deaths, were recorded between 9 January and 20 April. Although the majority of these cases were reported among refugees in the Diffa department, the disease is also said to be present in the departments of Maine-Soroua and N’guigmi. It should be noted that the Diffa region shares a border with Chad, which is currently experiencing an ongoing outbreak of Hepatitis E. Cases will likely continue to be reported in the coming weeks as disease surveillance is escalated.

Niger’s Ministry of Health reportedly notified the World Health Organisation (WHO) of Hepatitis E activity on 12 April; the WHO is supporting the Ministry of Health in the creation of an outbreak response plan. Hepatitis E is a viral liver infection that affects liver function, and is spread through food or water contaminated with faecal material from an infected person. Most infected individuals recover on their own, but some may require hospitalisation in cases of severe illness. There is no vaccination to prevent Hepatitis E or any specific treatment following infection. Strict food and water precautions are therefore essential.

Advice: Persons currently in or intending to travel to the Diffa region should take precautions against contracting Hepatitis E, including using only bottled water and avoiding food and beverages sold by street vendors. In addition, clients are advised to monitor local developments and to follow the directives of the authorities regarding public health advice and precautions. Clients are reminded that, due to the high threats posed by crime, kidnapping, conflict and terrorism, all travel to areas located within a 50km radius of Niger's shared border with Nigeria in Diffa is advised against.

NIGERIA (Country risk rating: High); 25 April; (Update) Further protests possible during high-profile trial in Abuja

Further demonstrations in support of Nnamdi Kanu, leader of the secessionist Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) group, and director of Radio Biafra, are possible during the resumption of his trial at the Federal High Court in Nigeria's capital, Abuja, on 25 April. Advocates of Kanu have been staging ongoing protests calling for his release since late 2015, the most recent of which took place in the city of Aba (Abia state) on 22 April. Given the emotive nature of Kanu's continued detention, unfavourable developments on 25 April may trigger unrest in the vicinity of the courthouse and elsewhere. Kanu was arrested on 14 October 2015 on charges that included criminal conspiracy and intimidation, related to broadcasts made by Radio Biafra. Although Abuja has recently served as a focal point for related unrest (due to the location of Kanu's court proceedings), associated protests have also taken place in the Anambra, Delta, Edo, Enugu, Imo and Rivers states. It should be noted that associated agitations have been marred by violent clashes between protesters and police in the past; security forces often resort to heavy-handed tactics to disperse these gatherings. The possibility of further such violence occurring at any future related demonstrations cannot be discounted.

Advice: Heightened caution is advised in Abuja due to various security concerns, including medium to high risks of terrorism, kidnapping, crime and civil unrest. Persons operating in the city on 25 April should monitor local media for updates on the trial and related developments, as well as advisories from the authorities. All protest gatherings and concentrations of security forces should be avoided as a standard precaution.

NIGERIA (Country risk rating: High); 21 April; Abducted Turkish nationals released

Two Turkish nationals, who were abducted by unknown assailants in Nigeria's southern Akwa Ibom state, were reportedly rescued by local security forces on 19 April. At least five suspects have been arrested in connection with the kidnapping, which took place in the city of Eket on 9 April. Although their captors are said to have initially demanded a ransom of approximately US$ 655,000, it is currently unclear whether any such payment was made to secure the victims’ release. There is a high risk of kidnapping in Nigeria, including Akwa Ibom state, and the country is one of the world’s pre-eminent kidnapping hotspots. The countrywide threat stems from a myriad of criminal and ideologically motivated entities (both political and Islamist extremist). Although the majority of kidnap victims in Nigeria are locals, as illustrated by this latest incident, the threat extends to foreign nationals as well. Regular kidnappings of foreign aid workers and construction, engineering, oil and gas personnel are reported. As such, the possibility of further abductions cannot be discounted.

Advice: Clients are advised against all travel to Akwa Ibom, due to elevated conflict, terrorism, kidnapping, civil unrest and crime risks. Persons operating in the state should exercise heightened situational awareness and pay attention to signs of surveillance; all suspicious persons and/or vehicles should be reported to the authorities immediately. Clients in the state are further advised to implement comprehensive travel, residential and personal security measures at all times, and to consider the use of a security escort, particularly if travelling outside major urban centres.
SOMALIA (Country risk rating: Extreme); 23 April; Al-Shabaab claim roadside bombing in Puntland

A vehicle belonging to security forces was struck by a roadside bomb in the semi-autonomous region of Puntland in northern Somalia on 23 April. The blast occurred in the Galgala hills areas, located 40km south west of the city of Bosaso, and left at least ten soldiers dead and several others wounded. Al-Shabaab claimed the attack. The attack comes a day after the Puntland authorities executed five suspected al-Shabaab militants on charges related to the killing of three government officials in 2016. The attack underlines the elevated countrywide terrorism risk in Somalia, including in the autonomous northern regions of Puntland and Somaliland. While the frequency of terrorist-related violence remains lower in these areas than in southern and central Somalia, high-profile attacks still occur. Al-Shabaab activity may increase in the north as the group faces losses in its southern and central strongholds.

Advice: Clients are advised against all non-essential travel to the autonomous regions of Puntland and Somaliland and against all travel to the rest of the country due to several security concerns. Persons operating in Puntland should adopt stringent personal security measures. Security escorts and secure accommodation are strongly recommended. Travel near security force installations and personnel should be limited, particularly outside major cities.

SOMALIA (Country risk rating: Extreme); 20 April; Bomb attack targets AMISOM convoy in Afgooye

Several soldiers were killed after a roadside bomb, targeting an African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) convoy, exploded in Afgooye, located in Somalia's Lower Shabelle region, on 20 April. The attack is said to have targeted soldiers en route to an African Union (AU) military base in Muuri village, located 13km south of Afgooye. Although there have been no immediate claims of responsibility, the bombing is likely to have been orchestrated by militants aligned with al-Shabaab. The group has been implicated in regular attacks targeting military, government and civilian interests in the Afgooye district and surrounds. Control of these areas continues to be contested between al-Shabaab on the one hand and the Somali Armed Forces (SAF) and AMISOM troops on the other. Al-Shabaab currently maintains a strong presence in parts of Lower Shabelle. Further attacks by the militant group should be anticipated in Somalia. An increased security presence should be anticipated in the vicinity of the affected area.

Advice: Due to various security concerns, all travel to Somalia, including the Lower Shabelle region, is advised against, except Puntland and Somaliland, against which non-essential travel is advised. Persons operating in the country despite this advisory should implement comprehensive travel, residential and personal security measures at all times, regardless of location.

SOMALIA (Country risk rating: Extreme); 21 April; KDF forces clash with militants in Lower Juba region

According to a statement by Kenya's Ministry of Defence, at least 52 suspected al-Shabaab militants were killed by members of the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF), following a counterterrorism operation in the Badhaadhe district of Somalia's Lower Juba region, on 21 April. The assault is said to have taken place at approximately 01:00 local time on the day and followed the earlier sighting of a significant militant concentration in the area. A number of weapons and ammunition caches were also reportedly retrieved during the operation, which involved both ground and air assaults on the apparent terrorist camp. It should be noted that al-Shabaab has yet to comment on the skirmishes and may well dispute the KDF's version of events, including fatality figures. There is an extreme risk of terrorism and conflict in Somalia. The primary security threat stems from the Islamist extremist group, al-Shabaab, which is currently engaged in an ongoing conflict with the Somali government and African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM) forces. The group frequently carries out attacks against government installations, security forces and civilian interests in Somalia, including in the Lower Juba region. As the group continues to maintain an elevated operational capability in the country, related security operations are likely to persist in the region in the medium-term. There is an elevated threat of reprisal attacks by militants still present in the recently affected area.

Advice: Clients are advised against all travel to most of Somalia, including Lower Juba, due the extreme threats posed by conflict, terrorism and kidnapping. Persons operating in the region despite this advisory should implement robust personal and residential security precautions at all times; these include coordinating all movements in the presence of a security escort and ensuring that all accommodation is sought within secure compounds.
SOUTH SUDAN (Country risk rating: Extreme); 14 and 15 April; Aid workers relocated due to conflict in Eastern Bieh state

According to reports on 20 April, at least 60 aid workers have been relocated in South Sudan's Eastern Bieh state (formerly part of Jonglei) following escalating conflict levels in the area in recent weeks. Waat (Nyriol county) and Walgak (Akobo county) are among the locations affected by the evacuations, which are said to have taken place on 14 and 15 April. This latest development underscores the extreme-risk operating environment in the country, where persistent conflict poses a notable threat to the safety of local civilians, humanitarian workers and their operations. Ongoing conflict and political instability has led to a marked increase in criminality and general insecurity in South Sudan, including in Eastern Bieh. It should be noted that fighting between rebel and government forces has been characterised by widespread civilian abuses, with the threat assessed as extending to aid workers travelling or operating in conflict-affected areas. Humanitarian workers are often viewed as both lucrative and vulnerable targets by criminal and rebel groups, with unconfirmed reports indicating that at least 79 aid personnel have been killed in the country since late December 2013. As the security situation in South Sudan is unlikely to improve in the near- to medium-term, aid organisations are likely to continue to order the relocation of their personnel in conflict-affected areas.

Advice: Clients are advised against all travel to South Sudan due to ongoing conflict and political instability. Persons operating in the country should ensure that crisis management plans are regularly reviewed and updated in conjunction with a security provider, and that robust travel, personal and residential security measures are implemented at all times. The security and political environment should be closely monitored.

SOUTH SUDAN (Country risk rating: Extreme); 24 April; Security increase in Juba ahead of judges' strike

A security increase has been reported in South Sudan's capital, Juba, ahead of an indefinite strike by judges and support staff, from 24 April. Both police forces and military troops have been deployed in the city. Additional security checkpoints have been erected. Judges have announced the strike over administrative issues and poor working conditions, and are calling for the resignation of the country's Chief Justice, Chan Rech Madut. It is unclear whether related demonstrations will take place; however, the deployment of forces indicates that unrest may be expected. Alternative accounts suggest that security is being increased due to worsening socio-economic conditions, aggravated by recent exchange rate changes. Persons in the city should anticipate an increased number of security patrols and additional security checkpoints. All demonstrations in South Sudan carry an elevated risk of violence due to heavy-handed responses by security forces.

Advice: Due to ongoing conflict and political instability, clients are advised against all travel to South Sudan. Persons currently in or intending to travel to the country should have a comprehensive contingency plan in place. All travel in the country should be conducted with a local security escort. All concentrations of security forces, as well as street gatherings or demonstrations, should be strictly avoided. Furthermore, persons in Juba should ensure that itineraries cater for potential road travel disruptions.