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
- Central African Republic
- Cuba
- Gaza Strip
- Libya
- North Korea
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Syria
- Yemen
Any travel to the specified regions within a country noted below requires an International Travel Questionnaire submission to System Risk Management for review.

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


- **Armenia**: Within 2km of the line of contact in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region

- **Azerbaijan**: Within 2km of the line of contact in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region

- **Cameroon**: Far North (Extreme-Nord) region and within 50km of Cameroon's shared border with Nigeria in the country's North (Nord) and Adamawa (Adamaoua) regions.

- **Chad**: Ennedi-Est, Ennedi-Quest, Wadi Fira, Quaddai and Sila (which border Sudan), the southern regions of Logone Oriental, Mandoul, Moyen-Chari and Salamat, the northern regions of Tibesti, Borkou and Ennedi-Qest (which border Libya) and the western Kanem and Lac regions.

- **Democratic Republic of Congo**: The eastern Nord-Kivu, Sud-Kivu, and Tanganyika provinces, as well as the north eastern Ituri, Haut-Uele and Bas-Uele provinces and the southern Kasia Central province.

- **Egypt**: North Sinai 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, Enugu 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.

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Africa

CONGO (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Authorities Arrest Army Officer for Alleged Coup Attempt

On Jan. 11, authorities arrested army officer Norbert Dabira in Brazzaville for his alleged involvement in a coup plot against President Denis Sassou Nguesso in 2017. Dabira has been held at the intelligence services headquarters, where he is being questioned, since his arrest.

Analysis: Dabira, considered part of Nguesso's inner circle, was previously arrested in December 2017, and released shortly thereafter. Since his Jan. 11 arrest, pro-government newspapers have described Dabira as the initiator of the alleged coup, accusing him of contacting the chief of the National Guard to plot the President's toppling. Intelligence services apparently learned of the alleged plot through intercepted phone communications between the two men. Over the past two years, several of Nguesso's opponents have been charged with compromising state security and kept in detention without trial. General Jean-Michel Mokoko and Andre Okombi Salissa, both of whom ran against Sassou Nguesso in the 2016 presidential election, are among those detained. The government has promised that a formal trial against the accused would start in the first trimester of 2018. N'Guesso has held power since 1979, with a five-year interim hiatus, and was elected to a third term as president through a constitutional referendum widely viewed by both international and domestic observers as fraudulent.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (Country Risk Rating: High) - Police Fire Live Ammunition to Disperse Crowds at Cathedral in Kinshasa, Killing Two

Police fired live ammunition to disperse crowds gathered for mass at Notre Dame du Congo Cathedral in Kinshasa midday Jan. 12. The Catholic church held the service to honour those killed by police gunfire during a recent anti-government demonstration.

Analysis: Authorities may have perceived the event as an unauthorised protest. Police will likely increase their presence near the cathedral and could conduct multiple arrests if clashes with churchgoers occur. Officers may also use tear gas to disperse crowds, who could respond by pelting stones at security personnel. Officers could establish roadblocks and conduct vehicle searches, which will likely disrupt traffic - notably along November 24 Avenue and Sergeant Moke Road.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (Country Risk Rating: High) - Rebels Kidnap at least 10 People near Beni City

A group armed men kidnapped 10 local nationals near the city of Beni, North Kivu Province, on Jan. 11. While the identities of the kidnappers is as yet unconfirmed, authorities have accused elements of the Ugandan rebel group, Allied Democratic Forces-National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF-NALU), of being behind the abduction. The kidnappers blocked passenger vehicles travelling from the northern Beni territory district of Kasindi to Beni City for hours before taking the victims to an undisclosed location.
Security forces have launched a rescue operation to free the hostages. Armed clashes are possible if government troops locate the kidnappers.

**Analysis:** Kidnappings by members of various armed groups have become more frequent in North Kivu since early 2015. Most victims have been local nationals, although foreign aid workers have also been targeted. Several armed groups - including the ADF-NALU, Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), the Alliance of Patriots for a Free and Sovereign Congo (APCLS), the Raia Mutomboki, and other Mai-Mai militia groups - operate throughout most of North Kivu, especially in areas bordering Rwanda and Uganda. Clashes between insurgents and government troops occur regularly in the Beni, Masisi, Nyiragongo, Rutshuru, and Walikale territories. Fighting has often resulted in significant collateral damage to civilian interests and large-scale internal displacement, which has produced widespread, longstanding humanitarian problems throughout the region. The governor of North Kivu said on Jan. 11 that additional troops have been deployed to fight these armed groups.

**ETHIOPIA (Country Risk Rating: High)** - US Embassy in Addis Ababa Restricts Personnel from Travelling to Danakil Depression Area, Afar Region

The US Embassy in Addis Ababa announced Jan. 11 that its personnel are now restricted from travelling to the Danakil Depression in the northeastern Afar Region due to unspecified security concerns. Further details were not provided.

**Analysis:** Although the reasons behind the travel restriction remain unclear, the measure may be related to the death of a German tourist near the Erta Ale volcano, within the Danakil area, on Dec. 3, 2017. An Eritrean-based armed group is suspected of having killed the German national, but his death could also have been accidental. A witness reported that the victim was attempting to catch up with his group of tourists when security guards mistook him for an assailant and opened fire. Ethiopia's border regions, specifically those shared with Eritrea, remain characterised by insecurity. Multiple rebel groups are known to operate in the northern Afar region, where several attacks on security forces and foreign nationals have occurred in recent years. In January 2012, five tourists were killed, several others wounded, and four kidnapped in an attack which took place approximately 25 km (15 miles) from the Eritrean border. The Afar Revolutionary Democratic Front (ARDUF) claimed responsibility for the attack. Following this incident, diplomatic tensions escalated as Ethiopia accused Eritrea of supporting, harbouring, and training those responsible. ARDUF was also responsible for the kidnapping of five Europeans in January 2007.

**GAMBIA (Country Risk Rating: High)** - Authorities Ban Public Political Events and Rallies Nationwide amid Political Violence

Gambian authorities have issued a ban on all public political events and rallies until further notice effective Jan. 11. The measure follows violent incidents that took place between supporters of rival political groups outside Banjul Jan. 8-11. The clashes erupted primarily in Busumbala and Mankamang Kunda. The ban includes the suspension of political campaigns for local elections slated to be held in April, until such time as authorities complete their investigation into the recent violence.

**Analysis:** Additional political violence remains possible, however, as activists could defy the ban. Authorities will almost certainly take the precaution of deploying heightened security in areas most likely to be affected, including near popular demonstration venues. While none of the violence has occurred within Banjul itself, clashes have the potential to spread to the Gambian capital. Clashes first broke out Jan. 8 between supporters of the ruling United Democratic Party (UDP) and the rival Alliance for Patriotic Reorientation and Construction (APRC) near Mankamang Kunda, the home village of Gambian President Adama Barrow. Subsequently, over Jan. 11-12, UDP and APRC supporters engaged in further violence and vandalism in Busumbala, about 30 km (18 miles) south of Banjul. Police fired into the air to disperse the rioters who threw stones and other projectiles at officers. The demonstrators burned tyres and debris on roads creating transport disruptions, including on Birkama-Serrekkunda Highway. At least four people were injured and several others arrested in the series of incidents.

**GUINEA-BISSAU (Country Risk Rating: High)** - Prime Minister Offers to Resign ahead of April Legislative Election

**Analysis:**
On Jan. 13, Prime Minister Umaro Sissoco Embalo revealed that he had submitted his resignation to President Jose Mario Vaz. The President has not yet accepted Embalo's offer.

**Analysis:** Guinea-Bissau's government has not functioned effectively since August 2015, when Vaz fired former prime minister Domingos Simoes Pereira. The ruling African Party for the Independence of Guinea and Cape Verde (PAIGC) subsequently rejected Vaz’s choice of Embalo as prime minister. An October 2016 accord brokered by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) called for the nomination of a new prime minister, agreed to by all, but has not been implemented. The country's Constitution states that it is the majority party's prerogative to choose the Prime Minister. However, Vaz hopes to bypass the PAIGC by relying on another political force, the Party for Social Renovation (PRS), as well as on dissenting voices within the ruling party. On Dec. 16, 2017, ECOWAS leaders expressed renewed frustration over the ongoing political crisis in Guinea-Bissau, asking various stakeholders to resolve the crisis within two months. Legislative polls are scheduled for April 2018.

KENYA (Country Risk Rating: **High**) - Al-Shabaab Attack on Bus Convoy along Lamu-Malindi Road Leaves Two Dead

At around 1100 Jan. 13, armed militants attacked a convoy of buses on the road between the towns of Lamu and Malindi, killing a police officer and a civilian, and injuring at least five more officers. The attackers were not dissuaded by the presence of a police escort with the convoy, opening fire on the officers and firing rockets at police vehicles, setting them on fire. The incident's exact location remains unclear. A government official blamed the attack on Al-Shabaab.

**Analysis:** Though less frequent on the coast, Al-Shabaab attacks are a regular occurrence in Kenya’s border counties with Somalia: Garissa, Wajir, Mandera and Lamu. Earlier in January, the militants destroyed a communication mast in Wajir, and carried out a raid Jan. 2 on the town of El Wak, in Mandera County, which killed five police officers. Due to repeated attacks on the B9 road between El Wak and Kotulo, police forces no longer escort civilian buses, the majority of which now favour the use of road A2 between Marsabit and Moyale. Al-Shabaab has vowed to punish Kenya for its military intervention in Somalia, now in its seventh year.

MAURITIUS (Country Risk Rating: **Low**) and REUNION (Country Risk Rating: **Low**) - Tropical Cyclone Berguitta Tracking Southwestward; Landfall Projected in Mauritius Jan. 17

Tropical Cyclone Berguitta is tracking southwestward through the Indian Ocean toward Mauritius and Reunion. As of 2200 Jan. 14, Berguitta had maximum wind speeds of at least 101 kph (63 mph); the storm is projected to continue intensifying, with wind speeds likely to peak at 176 kph (109 mph) late Jan. 16. Current projections now indicate that landfall is likely at Roches Noires, Mauritius, about 24 km (15 miles) northeast of Port Louis, late evening Jan. 17. The storm is predicted to maintain peak wind speeds as it makes landfall, potentially causing significant damage to the island. Although Berguitta is no longer forecast to make landfall in Reunion, its centre of circulation is projected to pass just 13 km (8 miles) southeast of the town of Saint-Philippe in early afternoon Jan. 18, likely bringing strong winds and heavy rains to the entire island.

**Analysis:** Expect severe weather conditions in Reunion and Mauritius; assuming current projections are maintained, Mauritius will probably be the hardest hit. Heavy rainfall has the potential to cause areal flooding and mudslides in the islands’ higher elevations, as well as power, telecommunications, and road transport disruptions. Flight operations at Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport (MRU), Saint-Denis Roland Garros Airport (RUN), and Pierrefonds (ZSE) could be affected. Inclement conditions could prompt officials to curtail port operations at Mauritius’ Port Louis and Reunion’s Pointe des Galets.

MOZAMBIQUE (Country Risk Rating: **High**) - Head of Police Association Injured during Kidnapping in Maputo

Heavily armed criminals kidnapped the head of the Mozambican Police Association while he walked along Lusaka Accords Avenue in the Urbanizacao area of Maputo at approximately 1700 Jan. 9. The incident almost certainly occurred within 2.5 km (1.5 miles) of the main entrance to Maputo International Airport (MPM). The abductors demanded money they claimed the victim had withdrawn from an ATM and a ransom of MZN 16 million (USD 273,000). The assailants beat the local official until he divulged PIN numbers for bank cards, and abandoned him in the Costa del Sol neighbourhood around 2300 the same day. The official required medical treatment for severe injuries.
**Analysis:** Criminal gangs pose a high threat of kidnapping in Maputo - higher than the moderate national threat - and target both local and foreign nationals. Expatriates and local nationals with overseas ancestry - notably Portuguese, and East and South Asian - face a higher threat of kidnap due to their perceived wealth. The Jan. 9 abduction suggests the perpetrators trailed and specifically targeted the victim in advance of the kidnapping. Abductors often use violence to force victims' compliance and frequently target their victims when they are entering or exiting vehicles. Corrupt police officers are also alleged to have collaborated with abductors and hindered anti-kidnapping efforts by authorities.

**NIGERIA (Country Risk Rating: High)** - Extended Curfew Hours to Remain in Place in Maiduguri until at least Jan. 20

The Borno State government has extended a 2000-0600 curfew in Maiduguri until at least Jan. 20. Authorities are instructing residents to remain indoors during the curfew. Security measures, such as checkpoints and roadblocks, are likely to be used to enforce the curfew. Security personnel may resort to lethal force against pedestrians and motorists violating the curfew.

**Analysis:** It is the second time that the curfew is extended; authorities had initially planned to relax the curfew on Jan. 6 to its usual 2200-0600. The extensions are likely a response to the persistent threat of attack by Islamist militants associated with the Boko Haram group, which continue to target the city at least monthly. Due to layers of roadblocks and checkpoints in the Borno State capital, and heightened security awareness, militant attacks have primarily occurred in Maiduguri's peripheral areas and internally displaced persons camps. The military repelled an assault by vehicle-borne militant on the Molai outskirts of the city Dec. 25. In addition, Boko Haram elements have frequently launched firearm- and bomb-based attacks on mosques, markets, security checkpoints, and government buildings across Borno State. The group has also frequently relied on suicide bombers.

**ZAMBIA (Country Risk Rating: Medium)** - Soldiers Deployed to Secure Kanyama Area of Lusaka after Riots

The Zambian army deployed troops to restore order in Lusaka following riots in the Kanyama area of the city Jan. 12. Earlier in the day, police fired tear gas to disperse crowds that blocked Los Angeles Road after looting nearby shops and destroying property. The unrest began as a protest over authorities having closed the Kanyama market as part of movement and assembly restrictions intended to mitigate a cholera outbreak in Lusaka.

**Analysis:** Additional protests against the restrictions are possible. Security personnel could use batons, rubber bullets, and tear gas to disperse unauthorised gatherings. Police and military personnel could also set up roadblocks and reroute traffic around sensitive areas where multiple incidents have occurred. Transport disruptions are possible in certain parts of the Lusaka District.

Expect continued commercial disruptions and heightened security in Lusaka while restrictions remain in place. An 1800-0600 curfew imposed on Kanyama will likely be extended indefinitely, as the number of cholera cases continues to rise. A citywide ban on public gatherings and street vending will also be maintained indefinitely. The capital's main passport office and all schools are closed, and church services were cancelled throughout the city on Jan. 7.

Although no nationwide measures have been announced, local authorities in districts beyond the capital have taken steps to prevent the spread of the disease. The Chisokone Market - the largest market in the northern city of Kitwe - has been closed, and similar precautions are possible in other main population centres. Namibia banned the importation of perishable food, fish, fruits, unprocessed food and water from Zambia until the cholera outbreak ends Jan. 8, but the countries' border remains open.
Asia

BANGLADESH (Country Risk Rating: **High**) - Periodic Fog-related Transport Disruptions to Persist in Bangladesh through at least Jan. 31

The Bangladesh Meteorological Department (BMD) predicts that a current cold spell that is producing dense fog in Dhaka and other parts of Bangladesh is likely to persist until the end of January. Periods of heavy fog could affect air and ground transport. On Jan. 14, heavy fog prompted authorities to suspend operations at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (DAC) for at least six hours, while delays and flight diversions were also reported at Shah Amanat International Airport (CGP) in Chittagong.

**Analysis:** Heavy fog poses a significant safety hazard for ground movements, and officials could close sections of roads and intercity highways due to low visibility. Intense traffic congestion may occur in Dhaka, Chittagong, and other major urban centres, particularly during morning rush hours. Reduced visibility during winter routinely affects inland waterway transport, as well as passenger and freight train movements, which in turn could lead to increased demand for and congestion on alternative public transit services. Heavy fog could also affect commercial trucking and port operations; while severe supply chain disruptions are unlikely, some time-sensitive deliveries and orders may be delayed.

Bangladesh suffers from significant gas shortages during winter months due to increased demand, which typically affects gas-based industrial units, households, and CNG (compressed natural gas) filling stations. Gas shortages have previously generated protests. Some of these protests could turn violent; in the past, demonstrators have engaged in arson and vandalism, blocked roads and highways, and clashed with police.

INDIA (Country Risk Rating: **High**) - Student Group Planning Highway Shutdown and Strike in Manipur State Jan. 16-17

The Thadou Students' Association (TSA) is planning a 36-hour highway shutdown and strike in Manipur State Jan. 16-17 to protest the failure of the government to resolve several murder and rape cases in the past year. TSA members have pledged to disrupt traffic on the four main highways, including NH-102 (Imphal-Moreh Road), AH-1 (Imphal-Dimapur Road), NH-37 (Imphal-Jiribam Road), and NH-2 (Imphal-Churachandpur Road). Students will likely erect roadblocks at multiple locations along each route.

**Analysis:** Though participation may vary by location, the action will likely cause significant business and transport disruptions, especially in parts of the state outside Imphal. Demonstrators have previously attacked and vandalised vehicles attempting to defy protest actions; similar incidents are possible during the shutdown. Arson, vandalism, and clashes with police cannot be ruled out, especially if security personnel use force to disperse demonstrators and/or remove roadblocks. The students have threatened to organise additional actions in the future unless their demands are met.

INDIA (Country Risk Rating: **High**) - Traders’ Groups to Stage Protest March and Rally in Delhi Jan. 15

As many as 250 traders' associations plan to participate in an Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led demonstration in Delhi the afternoon Jan. 15. The groups allege that officials of three Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-controlled Delhi municipal corporations have been harassing traders by sealing shops and establishments without prior notices. Participants intend to assemble at the AAP headquarters at Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg at 1200, before marching to Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) Civic Centre, where they intend to stage a rally. Up to several thousand traders and AAP members could participate in the protest.

**Analysis:** Expect increased security, possible road closures, and localised traffic disruptions during the event. Public mass transit disruptions are also likely in the vicinity of the protest, especially when participants arrive and depart. Although major security disturbances are unlikely, clashes between protesters and police, as well as between AAP and BJP supporters, cannot be ruled out.
INDIA (Country Risk Rating: **High**) - Unionised Government Workers Planning Nationwide Strike

Unionised employees for various government programmes are planning a nationwide strike Jan. 17 to protest the government's alleged anti-labour policies and to pressure officials to meet multiple demands. Striking workers are slated to hold demonstrations at district headquarters across the country, as well as offices of Union Ministers.

**Analysis:** Tens of thousands of workers employed with various government schemes will participate in the strike, and the action will almost certainly cause disruptions to affected government services. Authorities will likely increase security around protest sites, particularly in major cities. Most events will probably remain peaceful, but sporadic violence and vandalism cannot be ruled out. Protesters may also block roads, resulting in ground transport disruptions.

INDONESIA (Country Risk Rating: **Medium**) - Balcony Collapses at Indonesia Stock Exchange in South Jakarta

A balcony in Tower Two of the Indonesia Stock Exchange building in South Jakarta collapsed midday Jan. 15. Reports indicate an unspecified number of people are trapped under the debris, and at least 72 injuries have been reported.

**Analysis:** Expect localised traffic disruptions as security and emergency personnel carry out rescue operations at the building.

PAKISTAN (Country Risk Rating: **High**) - Opposition PAT-led Alliance Calls for Nationwide Protests

The All Parties Conference (APC), an opposition coalition of 40 political and religious groups led by the Pakistan Awami Tehreek (PAT) party, has called for nationwide protests from Jan. 17. The coalition is demanding the resignation of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)-led government over its perceived role in violent unrest in Lahore in 2014. The clashes took place between police and protesters in the city's Model Town neighbourhood, leaving at least 14 PAT supporters dead.

**Analysis:** APC has not released exact details about the protest campaign. However, if demonstrations materialise, they will most likely take place outside of local government or PML-N offices, local press clubs, on major thoroughfares, or at public squares and parks. Thousands of people could participate in protests in major cities. Given past precedent, protests are most likely to take place in Punjab Province, particularly the provincial capital Lahore.

Expect increased security, possible road closures, and traffic delays near large demonstrations. Localised violence cannot be ruled out during any action. Clashes with police are possible if protesters attempt to storm government offices or block major transit routes.

PHILIPPINES (Country Risk Rating: **Medium**) - Activists to Stage Protest in Quezon City in Metro Manila; Additional Protests Possible through Jan. 17

The Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) - an alliance of left-wing activists - plans to stage a demonstration in front of the House of Representatives in Quezon City in Metro Manila at 1330 Jan. 15. The action is intended to protest the government's plans to amend the Constitution, which include allowing term extensions for officials; Bayan leaders claim the proposed changes are making way for the imposition of constitutional authoritarianism.

**Analysis:** Additional protests are possible at least through Jan. 17, when a Senate committee is slated to hold a hearing on the Charter amendment bills. Authorities will likely increase security around all rally sites as a precaution. Expect localised traffic disruptions in the vicinity of demonstrations. Minor skirmishes between demonstrators and security forces may occur.

PHILIPPINES (Country Risk Rating: **Medium**) - Authorities Issue Level 3 Alert for Mayon Volcano in Albay Jan. 14
The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) raised the alert level for Mayon Volcano in Albay Province to 3 at 2000 Jan. 14 due to increased activity. Authorities said that three phreatic (steam-driven) eruptions had occurred since the afternoon of Jan. 13 and officials suspect that a lava flow is growing on the southern slope of the volcano, though thick clouds are obscuring visibility. Alert Level 3 means that there is relatively high unrest at the volcano and magma is close to the crater, making an eruption possible in the coming weeks; the PHIVOLCS scale runs from 0-5.

Officials have declared a danger zone within a 7-km (4-mile) radius of the volcano. All residential areas within the danger zone were subject to a mandatory evacuation order Jan. 14, including Camalig, Guinobatan, and Malilipot; over 5,000 people were affected and further evacuation orders may be issued over the near term.

**Analysis:** The volcano is located on southeastern Luzon less than 15 km (9 miles) northwest of Legazpi City. An eruption may lead to disruptions in Legazpi City, depending on whether wind carries volcanic ash towards or away from the metropolitan area. Based on seasonal wind patterns, PHIVOLCS predicts that ashfall is most likely to move southward, but any shift east could direct ash towards the city. Disruptions are possible at Legazpi Airport (LGP), which may be forced to cancel flights until the cloud moves away. Civil aviation authorities are urging pilots to avoid the volcano's summit due to the ash.

**PHILIPPINES (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Flooding Likely to Persist in Camarines Sur Province**

Ongoing commercial and transportation disruptions are likely in Camarines Sur Province, southern Luzon, as heavy rainfall is forecast to continue in the region through at least Jan. 15. Flooding and landslides have disrupted transport and business operations in Naga City and nearby towns. Areal flooding has been particularly severe in areas along the Bicol and Naga rivers. Authorities suspended schools and other nonessential government services in Naga City, Jan. 12 due to weather-related disruptions.

Landslides have blocked several roads, including the Lagonoy-Presentacion Road in Lagonoy town.

**Analysis:** Additional flooding and landslides are possible throughout the region, and power and telecommunications outages may also occur, especially in remote communities.

**Caribbean**

**SAINT LUCIA (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Foreign Nationals Targeted in Armed Robbery in Rodney Bay**

Assailants attacked a US couple and their young son in an armed robbery in Rodney Bay, Gros Islet, around 2230 Jan. 11. The victims said that they were walking to their residence after departing Massy Stores supermarket when a vehicle carrying the attackers passed them before pulling to the side of the road ahead of them. Four assailants then threatened the couple with guns and knives before stealing their valuables and fleeing the scene. No injuries were reported from the incident.

**Analysis:** Police in Saint Lucia reported a 10-percent increase in crime from January through September 2017, the most recent statistics released. This followed a decrease in crime from 2013-2016. Though the increase is concerning, the overall risk to foreign nationals is perceived to be low. However, the robbery of the US nationals demonstrates the need for individuals to employ commonsense security precautions at all times to reduce the likelihood of being targeted.

**Central/South America**

**ARGENTINA (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Municipal Water Disruptions Ease in Southern Cordoba**
Municipal water services are being restored in southern Cordoba the afternoon of Jan. 14. Service provider Aguas Cordobesas said operations resumed at the Los Molinos plant around 1230 and service should be normal by the evening. The municipal water outage, which began during the morning hours due to a high turbidity level at the plant, affected about 30 percent of Cordoba - primarily southern neighbourhoods.

CHILE (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Papal Visit Scheduled Jan. 15-18

Pope Francis will participate in public events and meet with political, religious, and community leaders during visit to Chile Jan. 15-18. The visit will prompt street closures and the heavy deployment of security forces, and will almost certainly disrupt transportation and business operations.

Papal Itinerary

Jan. 15
- 2010: Arrival at Santiago Benitez International Airport (SCL) and welcoming ceremony

Jan. 16
- 0820: Meeting with officials and civil society organisations at La Moneda Palace.
- 0900: Meeting with President Michelle Bachelet at La Moneda Palace
- 1030: Mass at O'Higgins Park
- 1600: Visit to women's prison
- 1715: Meeting with religious authorities at Santiago Cathedral
- 1815: Meeting with bishops at Santiago Cathedral
- 1915: Visit to the shrine of St. Alberto Hurtado

Jan. 17
- 0800: Departure from SCL
- 1030: Mass at Temuco Maquehue Airport (PZS)
- 1245: Lunch with indigenous residents at the Casa Madre de la Santa Cruz
- 1530: Departure from PZS
- 1700: Arrival at Temuco (SCL)
- 1730: Meeting with youth at the Shrine of Maipu
- 1900: Visit to the Pontifical Catholic University of Chile

Jan. 18
- 0805: Departure from SCL
- 1035: Arrival at Iquique International Airport (IQQ)
- 1130: Mass at Lobito Beach
- 1400: Lunch at the Shrine of Our Lady of Lourdes
- 1645: Departure ceremony at IQQ
1705: Departure from IQQ

**Analysis:** Expect major transport disruptions in and around Santiago, Temuco, and Iquique. Street closures and vehicle restrictions are likely around venues hosting papal events. Some restrictions may not be announced in advance for security reasons. Highways and roads leading into the cities where the pontiff will make public appearances will likely experience heavy traffic flows, which could lead to long backups. Main roads to and from SCL, PZS, and IQQ will be periodically closed for motorcade movements. Airspace over the airports will be restricted while the pope is travelling, causing flight delays and possible cancellations.

**COLOMBIA (Country Risk Rating: High)** - State Oil Company Shuts Down Transandino Pipeline following Rebel Bombing

State-run oil company Ecopetrol halted operations on the Transandino pipeline Jan. 14 following a rebel attack. Suspected National Liberation Army (ELN) rebels detonated a bomb on the pipeline late Jan. 13 along the pipeline in Mallama municipality, Narino Department. The blast penetrated the pipeline, resulting in a crude oil spill into the Guiza River.

**Analysis:** The ELN has stepped up attacks following the expiration of a ceasefire agreement with the government Jan. 9. In addition to the pipeline bombing, suspected ELN rebels also kidnapped a local oil worker in Saravena, Arauca Department, Jan. 13, and staged four minor bombings against oil infrastructure in Arauca, Boyaca, and Casanare departments Jan. 9-12. The ELN has also been blamed for the killing of two police officers and a soldier since Jan. 9. Though talks aimed at restarting formal peace talks with the ELN are ongoing, progress has been slow, especially after Bogota withdrew its negotiators Jan. 10. In the meantime, continued bombings, kidnappings, and shootings are likely, especially against military and police targets and oil infrastructure.

**COSTA RICA (Country Risk Rating: Medium)** - Officials Order Suspension of All Nature Air Operations

The Directorate of Civil Aviation of Costa Rica ordered Nature Air (5C) to suspend operations effective Jan. 12. Officials cited a lack of senior workers and management to ensure safe operations as the primary factor behind the suspension. Authorities confirmed that the pilot training director was killed in a recent crash, the operations manager has resigned, and the aerial security director is on a leave of absence. The airline will be allowed to resume operations if it can prove that it can operate safely.

**Analysis:** The suspension of operations comes just two weeks after the crash of a Cessna 208B Grand Caravans aircraft operated by Nature Air in Nandayure canton Dec. 31; the cause of that incident remains under investigation. The crash killed the pilot training director and another pilot, along with 10 US citizens. The crash followed another incident Sept. 5 in which a Nature Air flight crash landed into the Torres River shortly after departing Tobias Bolanos Airport (SYQ), killing two people and injuring the four others onboard. Although Nature Air's fleet consists of only six aircraft, the carrier is one of Costa Rica's largest domestic airlines, serving 15 destinations. The company also offers charter services, and is headquartered at San Jose's Juan Santamaria International Airport (SJO).

**GUATEMALA (Country Risk Rating: High)** - CODECA Planning Nationwide Anti-government Protests

The Committee for Farmer Development (CODECA) plans to hold a protest in Guatemala City Jan. 15 against the government of President Jimmy Morales. A related protest led by the group Jan. 14 proceeded without incident until the participants attempted to access streets surrounding the legislature, at which point security forces used pepper spray to disperse the crowd. Although no arrests were reported, at least eight people were treated for injuries. The Jan. 14 protest was timed to coincide with Morales' annual address to Congress. Thousands of people may join the Jan. 15 action.

In addition to the protest in Guatemala City, CODECA has urged supporters to stage rallies in departmental capitals Jan. 15. These gatherings will likely be smaller, but may still attract hundreds of participants. Rallies may also occur in smaller cities and towns throughout Guatemala.
Analysis: Authorities will undoubtedly boost security as a precaution. Though CODECA is urging peaceful protests, localised clashes cannot be ruled out, especially if protesters defy police orders or law enforcement try to forcibly disperse crowds. Localised traffic disruptions are probable near all rally sites, though CODECA has pledged not to set up roadblocks, which it has regularly done during previous actions.

PERU (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Damage Assessments Continue after Magnitude-7.3 Earthquake Strikes Offshore

Authorities are continuing damage assessments in southwestern Peru after a magnitude-7.3 earthquake struck offshore northern Arequipa Region at 0418 Jan. 14. The quake occurred at a shallow depth of 12 km (7.5 miles), with the epicentre situated about 25 km (16 miles) southeast of Lomas and 346 km (215 miles) northwest of the city of Arequipa. Strong tremors occurred in towns near the epicentre, including Lomas and Bella Union, while moderate to light shaking occurred elsewhere in southern and western Peru. Light shaking was felt as far north as Lima, which is more than 400 km (250 miles) from the epicentre.

As of early afternoon Jan. 14, authorities had confirmed two deaths and 65 injuries in Arequipa, Ica, and Ayacucho regions. Some homes were destroyed in towns near the epicentre, though initial reports suggest that damage is not severe. Landslides are blocking traffic along several local roads, including the Atico-Caraveli and Atico-Cerro Arena roads. Electrical outages are also occurring in parts of the affected area, including Jaqui, Acari, Bella Union, Yauca, Chala, and Atiquipa.

The Pacific Tsunami Warning Centre (PTWC) issued a tsunami warning for coastal areas within 300 km (187 km) of the epicentre at 0458; that warning was subsequently cancelled at 0536 with no hazardous tsunami wave having been observed.

Analysis: Strong aftershocks are possible in the region in the coming days and could lead to further damage and disruptions.

Europe

AUSTRIA (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Opposition Activists Stage Protest in Central Vienna

Left-wing activists and anti-fascist groups staged a rally and march in central Vienna Jan. 13. The events were peaceful and attended by approximately 20,000 people. The demonstrations were to protest Austria's governing, far-right Freedom Party (FPO).

Analysis: Demonstrations against the leading coalition government of the FPO and the People's Party (OVP) have become more frequent since Dec. 15, when authorities announced the new alliance. Opposition activists have criticised the new government's announced budget cuts to pension, health, and social programmes. Opposition supporters have also challenged the government's controversial immigration and asylum policies.

FRANCE (Country Risk Rating: Medium), NETHERLANDS (Country Risk Rating: Low) and UNITED KINGDOM (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Flight Delays Possible at Airports in Amsterdam, London, and Paris

Flight delays due to inclement weather and ongoing repair works are possible at airports in Amsterdam (AMS), London (LHR), and Paris (ORY) the morning Jan. 15.

- Amsterdam (AMS/EHAM) - Low delays*
- London Heathrow (LHR/EGLL) - Low delays*
Paris Orly (ORY/LFPO) - High delays*

* The rating reflects average anticipated delays; many individual flights may be on time or - alternatively - delayed for longer periods.

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FRANCE (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Ongoing Measles Outbreak Reported in Bordeaux Metropolitan Area since November

Health officials have reported at least 77 cases of measles in the Bordeaux metropolitan area since November 2017 through Jan. 11. According to officials, the outbreak began at the University of Bordeaux and has spread to the metropolitan area.

Analysis: Measles is a recurring threat in France. According to international officials, an average vaccination rate of 92-95 percent is needed to prevent wider community transmission. The national vaccination rate in France was roughly 79 percent in 2016. France reported 364 cases during 2015, 79 cases in 2016, and at least 440 cases during 2017.

Measles spreads through airborne droplets created when an infected individual coughs, sneezes, or speaks. Infected individuals can also expose people around them by contaminating surfaces with secretions from the nose, mouth, and throat. Symptoms of measles typically appear seven to 21 days after exposure, but patients become contagious up to five days before symptoms appear. Such symptoms generally include fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes, and a red rash that begins on the face and spreads downward. Serious complications - including pneumonia - can occur, especially in children younger than five years old, adults older than 20 years old, and people whose immune systems are weakened by other acute or chronic health conditions. Visit a doctor to ensure vaccination against measles or immunity through previous infection. Emphasise basic health precautions, especially frequent hand washing with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if soap and water are unavailable. If you suspect measles infection, call ahead before visiting a doctor to prevent the spread of the disease at clinics or hospitals.

GREECE (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Public Transit Workers in Athens to Stage 24-hour Strike

Public transport workers in Athens announced that they would join nationwide, 24-hour strikes and protests Jan. 15 called for by several major labour unions. The planned actions are the second phase of nationwide walkouts and demonstrations staged Jan. 12 by several labour unions representing seamen, ferry workers, medical workers, and municipal government staff. The strikes and protests are in reaction to a recent government proposal limiting the ability of unions to strike.

Strikes

- Athens public transport workers plan to strike, likely bringing metro, bus, trolleybus, and tram services to a standstill. Expect traffic congestion in the Athens metropolitan area and around large transport hubs, such as Athens International Airport (ATH).
- Widespread Athens-Piraeus Electric Railways (ISAP) service disruptions are expected 0001-2359. Regional rail operations are likely to remain unaffected.
Air traffic controllers at airports nationwide will strike from 1200-1500. All flights scheduled to arrive and depart during that time frame will either be cancelled or postponed. The most significant flight delays will likely occur at ATH.

Municipal government workers in Athens and Thessaloniki are scheduled to strike. Local government administration offices and local schools will likely be short-staffed or closed.

**Demonstrations**

- Athens: The Civil Servants Confederation (ADEDY) has planned demonstrations in Athens at Klaifthmonos Square at 1230, and Syntagma Square at 1800.
- Thessaloniki: The All-Workers Militant Front (PAME), one of Greece's largest labour unions, has called for a demonstration at the Venizelos Statue at 1200 and 1830.

**Analysis:** Additional demonstrations near government buildings in Athens, such as the Parliament, and around government facilities in other city centres are possible through Jan. 15. Security-related disruptions and heavy traffic are likely around protest locations. Low-level clashes have occurred during previous general strikes, and similar unrest is possible Jan. 15. Security personnel have used tear gas and water cannon to disperse demonstrations. Security disturbances are more likely if anarchists join rallies. Far-left demonstrators have thrown petrol bombs, vandalised property, and clashed with riot police during previous anti-austerity protests. The Greek federal government recently introduced a bill that requires support from at least 50 percent of an individual labour or trade organisation's membership to declare a strike. Union members contend that the bill is an attempt to undermine the right to labour action.

**PORTUGAL (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Fire at Residential Building in Tondela Kills at least Eight People**

A fire at a residential complex in Vila Nova da Rainha, Tondela, late Jan. 13 killed at least eight people. Authorities said that dozens of people were also injured; some reports said that 36 people are wounded, though others placed the number as high as 60. Emergency operations are ongoing.

Investigators said that a heating system exploded in the building around 2150 Jan. 13, sparking the blaze. The incident occurred as an event was taking place in the building, with flames reportedly blocking several exits, contributing to the high casualty toll.

Vila Nova da Rainha is in the Dao-Lafoes sub-region in Centro Region, approximately 90 km (55 miles) southeast of Porto.

**TURKEY (Country Risk Rating: High) - Confederation of Public Employees’ Union Holds Pro-democracy Rally in Istanbul**

The Confederation of Public Employees' Union (KESK) and several other organisations held a pro-democracy rally at Freedom Square in Istanbul's Bakirkoy district starting at 1500 Jan. 14. The protest, which remained peaceful and attracted thousands of participants, was intended to denounce the current state of emergency laws and other related issues that are perceived to stymie democracy.

**Analysis:** On Oct. 16, Turkey's National Security Council suggested that the current nationwide state of emergency be extended for an additional 90 days. The announcement constituted the fifth extension of the state of emergency since the approval of 18 highly controversial constitutional amendments that transition the country from a parliamentary system headed by a prime minister to an executive presidential system of government. The changes, which go into effect following the next presidential election in 2019, were approved by a narrow margin in a nationwide referendum held April 16, 2017. The plebiscite was followed by large protests in cities across
Turkey amid opposition claims of fraud committed by the administration of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. While the initial backlash to the referendum's outcome has largely abated, political, labour, and civil society groups will likely continue to stage sporadic demonstrations against the ongoing state of emergency and the government's crackdown on dissent. The Erdogan administration will probably continue extending the state of emergency until the 2019 polls, under the assumption that the president will be re-elected and the measure will no longer be necessary after his new, broad powers officially take effect. Critics have accused Erdogan of using the post-coup period to silence his dissenters. The administration launched a nationwide purge immediately following the attempted coup, ostensibly to round up conspirators who were part of the so-called "Fethullah Terror Organisation" (FETO), allegedly run by cleric Fethullah Gulen, currently living in exile in the US. The purge has affected tens of thousands of people, many of whom have been detained by police.

Middle East/North Africa

BAHRAIN (Country Risk Rating: High) - Former Al-Wefaq Official Taken into Custody

On Jan. 11, authorities took former Al-Wefaq lawmaker Sheikh Hamza al-Diri into custody after a Bahraini court upheld his one-year prison sentence. In August 2016, Sheikh al-Diri was arrested for participating in peaceful sit-in in Diraz in support of Bahraini spiritual leader, Sheikh Issa Qassim. A court later sentenced Sheikh al-Diri to one year in prison in October 2017, but he was free on bail during appeals. It is unclear if he was still allowed to appeal.

Analysis: The latest court ruling is part of the government's crackdown on Al-Wefaq and opposition groups. In February 2017, the Court of Cassation - the country's top appeals court - upheld a ruling calling for the dissolution of Al-Wefaq, the country's largest and most influential opposition organisation. In July 2016, an administrative court found the group guilty of fostering an "atmosphere for the incubation of terrorism, extremism, and violence," and ordered it to be dissolved and its assets seized by the government. Collectively, these moves against the opposition have increased sectarian tensions between the predominantly Shi'a opposition and the Sunni-led government. Protests have been a near-daily occurrence since the Shi'a uprising began in February 2011 but usually increase in severity following the arrest of activists and their subsequent imprisonments.

EGYPT (Country Risk Rating: High) - Former Military Chief Announces Candidacy for 2018 Elections

On Jan. 11, a spokesperson for the Arabism Egypt Party announced the intention of party leader Sami Anan to submit his candidacy for the 2018 presidential elections to be held March 26-28, with a run-off scheduled for April 24-26. Anan was formerly the Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces until his tenure ceased with the election of former President Mohamed Morsi in 2012.

Analysis: Anan, like Ahmed Shafiq, who withdrew his candidacy, likely does not represent enough of an ideological shift from President Abdel Fatah Al Sisi to draw votes away from the incumbent president. All three men are former military elite with strong ties to the current administration. It is possible that, like Shafiq, Anan may face obstacles in completing the steps to formalise his candidacy. Anan must have the support of at least 20 parliamentarians to run in the election, and the majority of Parliament traditionally are adamant supporters of the current president.

Shafiq announced Jan. 7 that he was no longer considering a presidential bid. Officially, Shafiq stated that his absence from Egypt for more than five years would make him unfit to lead the country; however, there were several allegations that Shafiq was harassed by the state after declaring his intention to run. On Dec. 13, reports emerged that security forces arrested three of Shafiq's supporters. The arrests followed allegations by Shafiq that he was prevented from departing the United Arab Emirates after announcing his candidacy. Two others who announced their intention to run faced similar issues. Khalid Ali - a prominent lawyer who led a case against the state for its controversial transfer of the Islands of Tiran and Sanafir to Saudi Arabia - has been charged with making an obscene hand gesture outside a Cairo court. If convicted, Ali could be sentenced to up to two years in prison and barred from running for president. Similarly, military officer Ahmed Konsowa was arrested and sentenced to six
years in prison over charges of violating military regulations prohibiting political activity when serving in the armed forces. President Abdel Fatah Al-Sisi has not yet publicly confirmed whether he will run for a second term.

IRAQ (Country Risk Rating: **High**) - At least 25 People Dead following Twin Explosions near Al-Tayaran Square in Baghdad

At least 25 people were killed, and more than 60 others injured, after twin blasts struck near Al-Tayaran Square in central Baghdad the morning Jan. 15. The number of casualties is expected to rise in the coming hours. Reports indicate the blasts were caused by two suicide bombers. Expect increased security and localised traffic disruptions in the vicinity of Al-Tayaran Square until the situation stabilises.

**Analysis:** No group has claimed responsibility for the attack; however, suicide bomb attacks on civilian targets in Baghdad are frequently carried out by militants affiliated to the Islamic State (IS) group.

IS has experienced major territorial losses since 2015. Some estimates state that 98 percent of the territory the group controlled in Syria and Iraq in 2014 has been recaptured. The frequency of terrorist attacks in Baghdad has seen a decrease in recent months as the group has diverted resources to defences. Despite territorial setbacks, there are fears the group may alter tactics, including reverting to guerrilla insurgency tactics against security forces and escalating suicide bomb attacks in urban areas. Periodic car bombings, suicide attacks, and assassinations are likely to continue. Government buildings, critical infrastructure sites, security posts, and predominantly Shi'a areas in Baghdad and central and western Iraq will remain potential targets for terrorism.

LEBANON (Country Risk Rating: **High**) - Targeted Vehicle Bombing Injures Hamas Official in Sidon

A targeted vehicle bombing injured a Hamas official in Sidon Jan. 14. Authorities said that the explosive device was hidden beneath the seat in the vehicle of Mohammed Hamdan, and detonated as he opened the door, causing serious injuries to his legs. The incident took place in the Bustan Al-Kabir residential neighbourhood in northern Sidon. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

**Analysis:** Heightened security is likely in northern Sidon as authorities investigate the incident and search for the perpetrators.

LIBYA (Country Risk Rating: **Extreme**) - Gunmen Attack Defence Minister's Residence in Janzur District

Gunmen attacked the residence of the Libyan Minister of Defence Al-Mahdi Al-Baraghati in Janzur district, Jan. 12. Janzur district is approximately 16 km (10 miles) west of central Tripoli. The gunmen reportedly fired at the compound walls and launched a rocket-propelled grenade before fleeing the scene. There were no reports of injuries from the attack, and no militia or militant group has claimed responsibility for the incident.

**Analysis:** The security situation remains fragile throughout Libya because the country lacks a united, cohesive national force. Rival militia groups often clash over power and control of government institutions in Tripoli and other parts of the country. Gen. Al-Baraghati is a key member of the Government of National Accord, which is backed by the UN. That gunmen could attack his residence is indicative of the continued instability and insecurity in the country.

TUNISIA (Country Risk Rating: **High**) - Clashes Reported During Anti-austerity Protest in Tunis

Protesters clashed with police in Ettadamen, Tunis, Jan. 14, during an anti-austerity protest that opposition political parties and trade unions organised. The protests were timed to coincide with the Jan. 14 anniversary of former president Zine El Abidine Ben Ali's resignation during the 2010-2011 revolution. Protesters initially gathered on Habib Bourguiba Avenue amid a heavy police presence.
Analysis: Further related demonstrations should be expected over the immediate term, while violent unrest remains possible overnight. Gatherings can be expected at popular protest venues, including Habib Bourguiba Avenue and Kasbah Square. The demonstrations have taken place amid heightened tensions nationwide. Expect increased security and localised traffic disruptions in the vicinity of all related demonstrations.

Several governors throughout the country have witnessed violent demonstrations in response to the implementation of the 2018 Finance Law, which introduced new taxes that raised the cost of a number of basic goods. Opposition groups say that the austerity measures have created a significant burden for lower-income populations. The current protest movements have tapped into the symbolism of the 2010-2011 revolution, which was in part rooted in Tunisia’s economic conditions under Ben Ali, to rally support against the austerity measures.

TUNISIA (Country Risk Rating: High) - Taxi Drivers Threaten to Launch Indefinite Strike in Grand Tunis Jan. 15

Unionised taxi drivers are planning to launch an indefinite strike in Grand Tunis starting Jan. 15. Expect reduced taxi availability in the Tunis, Ariana, Ben Arous, and Manouba governorates, including at Tunis-Carthage International Airport (TUN). The metropolitan area could face higher-than-normal traffic volume during the strike as commuters are forced to rely on private vehicles. Overcrowding is possible on alternative modes of transport, including metro, tram, and bus services.

Analysis: During previous strikes, taxi drivers have staged protests and erected roadblocks, including on the Tunis-Bizerte (N8) highway at the section leading to TUN, causing significant congestion. Similar actions are possible during the upcoming walkout.

The Tunisian Taxi Union is organising the strike to protest the perceived failure of the government to follow through with agreements made in October to end a two-day strike. The union is protesting heavy fines and demanding an increase in government-regulated transport tariffs. Tunisian legislation allows for fines ranging between TND 60-1000 (USD 26-443) for small infractions, including refusing to travel to a specific point, driving beyond authorised limits, and inability to produce required documentation.

YEMEN (Country Risk Rating: Extreme) - Saudi Airstrike Kills 14 People in Kitaf

The Saudi-led coalition reportedly conducted airstrikes in the city of Kitaf, Jan. 11. The air raid struck a market and a residence, killing at least 14 people.

Analysis: Saudi Arabia initiated a military campaign against the Houthi rebels in March 2015 after the group seized control of Sana’a and much of northern Yemen. The Saudi-led coalition regularly conducts airstrikes against Al-Houthi positions in the country. While civilians are not a deliberate target of these strikes, they have borne the brunt of the war. In retaliation, the Al-Houthi rebels shell and launch ballistic missiles toward Saudi provinces, particularly neighbouring provinces of Najran, Aseer, and Jazan. The ongoing conflict in Yemen has resulted in thousands of casualties, displacement of millions of people, and a humanitarian crisis.

North America

MEXICO (Country Risk Rating: High) - Assailants Kill Journalist in Nuevo Laredo

An assailant fatally stabbed a journalist in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas State, Jan. 13. Authorities said the attacker targeted the victim as he was travelling in a vehicle along Benito Juarez Street with a family member around 1500; his family member was not harmed in the attack.

iJET Analysis: Mexico is considered one of the most dangerous countries for journalists, with at least 10 media workers killed in 2017. Authorities are still investigating whether the Jan. 13 slaying was related to the victim’s
profession; although family members said the victim had not received any threats, the incident took place just two days after the journalist condemned growing political violence in Mexico. Many journalists have halted or reduced coverage in Tamaulipas due to intimidation by organised crime groups. However, violence against journalists has also been linked to corrupt politicians and business leaders who disagree with their coverage.

Russia/CIS

RUSSIA (Country Risk Rating: Medium) and UKRAINE (Country Risk Rating: High) - Winter Storm to Disrupt Transport in Crimea and on Black Sea

A winter storm resulting from an Arctic low will affect Crimea, the Kerch Straits, and portions of the Sea of Azov and Black Sea starting Jan. 13. The Crimean Directorate of the Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations has issued a winter storm warning for the affected region through Jan. 15. Meteorologists are predicting that the system will bring moderate snowfall and high winds of 61-79 kph (38-49 mph) with gusts of 90 kph (56 mph), producing blizzard-like conditions in some areas.

Analysis: Icing on roadways will produce hazardous driving conditions, likely prompting ground transport delays in Crimea. Dangerous conditions in parts of the Sea of Azov and the Black Sea could disrupt operations at ports in Kerch, Novorossiysk, and Tuapse. Authorities have suspended ferry operations in the Kerch Straits until the system moves out of the area. Flight delays are possible at Simferopol International Airport (SIP).

UKRAINE (Country Risk Rating: High) - Officials Report Ongoing Measles Activity in Kyiv since Jan. 1

Ukrainian health officials report an outbreak of measles in Kyiv on Jan. 11, where at least 66 cases were identified since Jan. 1. Officials cite the low vaccination coverage as the primary reason for ongoing activity and are intensifying vaccination campaigns in the capital to help curb the spread of disease.

Analysis: Ukraine reported at least 3,382 measles cases nationwide during 2017, and 102 cases during 2016. The US CDC also maintains a "Watch-Level 1" travel health notice due to elevated measles activity in Ukraine, where the nationwide vaccination rate against the disease remains very low. Measles is a very contagious viral disease that is spread through airborne droplets created when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Symptoms of measles typically appear seven to 21 days after exposure, but patients become contagious up to five days before symptoms appear. Such symptoms generally include fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes, and a red rash that begins on the face and spreads downward. Serious complications, including pneumonia, can occur, especially in children younger than five years old, adults older than 20 years old, and people whose immune systems are weakened by other acute or chronic health conditions. All travellers should ensure they are protected by up-to-date measles vaccinations.

South Pacific/Oceania

AUSTRALIA (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Closure of Newcastle Airport in New South Wales Extended until 2030 Jan. 15 due to Brushfires

Authorities have extended the closure of Newcastle Airport (NTL) in New South Wales until at least 2030 Jan. 15 due to intensifying brushfires nearby. Airport officials said that they would reassess the situation at that time. NTL was originally scheduled to reopen at 1500. All flights, with the exception of several services scheduled for the late evening, have been cancelled.

Analysis: Flight service disruptions are expected to persist even after the airport reopens; NTL was closed for
multi-hour periods on the afternoons and evenings of Jan. 13 and 14. Airlines intend to fly additional aircraft into NTL once normal operations resume to ease the backlog.

AUSTRALIA (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Tropical Cyclone Joyce Tracking Overland through Pilbara Region, WA

The remnants of Tropical Cyclone Joyce are set to bring heavy rainfall to Perth and surrounding coastal areas in southeastern Australia Jan. 15. Tropical Storm Joyce initially made landfall near Pardoo, in northeastern Australia, late Jan. 12. The system weakened as it transited southwest through Western Australia. The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) has issued heavy rain warnings for the Perth metropolitan area, Midwest-Gascoyne, and Goldfields-Midlands

Analysis: Transport disruptions are possible in the affected region Jan. 15. Significant damage from major winds or storm surges is unlikely. Strong winds may pose a hazard to high-profile vehicles.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA (Country Risk Rating: High) - More Evacuations Ordered as Volcanic Eruption Intensifies in Kadovar

Authorities have ordered further evacuations due to intensifying eruptions at Mount Kadovar on Papua New Guinea (PNG)’s Kadovar Island. As of Jan. 14, officials had ordered more than 3,000 people to depart Blup Blup (Biem) Island, including residents of Kadovar who had previously been relocated to that island. Officials have also placed residents of nearby Bam Island on standby to evacuate. All evacuees are now being relocated to the mainland.

Although the volcano, which was previously thought to be dormant, began shooting ash into the air Jan. 5, the eruptions intensified a week later as Mount Kadovar exploded Jan. 12, releasing lava and rocks. As of Jan. 14, authorities said that between 50 and 60 percent of Kadovar Island has been covered by lava. Officials are concerned that the activity could cause other volcanos on Blup Blup and Bam to become active, though the probability for this is perceived to be low. There are also fears that rapid lava flow into the water, or landslides triggered by the lava, could prompt localised tsunamis, threatening the nearby islands

Analysis: Ash clouds are reaching as high as 600 metres (1,969 feet) above sea level. Airlines have rescheduled some nighttime flights to Wewak Airport (WWK), though service has not been fully suspended. Flights could also potentially be affected at airports serving other nearby regional destinations, depending on the duration of the eruption, ash consistency, and prevailing winds.

SOLOMON ISLANDS (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Magnitude-5.9 Earthquake Strikes Offshore Southeast of San Cristobal

A magnitude-5.9 earthquake struck offshore in the Solomon Sea southeast of San Cristobal Island around 2224 Jan. 13. The epicentre was located approximately 389 km (241 miles) east-southeast of Honiara. The quake occurred at a depth of about 23 km (14 miles). There have been no immediate reports of damage or casualties; officials have not issued a tsunami warning.

Analysis: Moderate aftershocks may continue in the coming days. Brief infrastructure disruptions could occur after all tremors as authorities assess for possible damage.