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-Kivi, Sud-Kivi, and Tanganyika provinces, as well as the north eastern Ituri, Haut-Uele and Bas-Uele provinces and the southern Kasia Central province.
- **Egypt**: North Sinai governorate.
- **Eritrea**: Within 20km of Eritrea's borders with Djibouti, Ethiopia, and Sudan.
- **Ethiopia**: Within 20km of Ethiopia's border with Eritrea in the Tigray and Afar regions, within 20km of the South Sudan border in the Gambela and Benishangul-Gumuz regions, and the Somali region (excluding the two northern zones of Fafan, formerly Jijiga, and Sitti, formerly Shinile).
- **Iran**: Sistan va Baluchestan province
- **Iraq:** Baghdad, Anbar, Salah ad-Din, Kirkuk, Diyala, 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.

- **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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**February 05, 2018**

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Africa

BENIN (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Hong Kong-owned Oil Tanker Marine Express Disappears in the Gulf of Guinea

Authorities announced Feb. 3 that the Hong Kong-owned, Panamanian-flagged oil tanker, Marine Express, has been missing offshore from the port of Cotonou, Benin, since Feb. 1. The whereabouts of the 22 Indian crewmembers are also unknown. The vessel was carrying about 13,000 tonnes of oil.

Analysis: The reason for the ship's disappearance is unclear; however, authorities will likely focus on hijacking, as pirates have previously seized ships in the Gulf of Guinea, including off of Cotonou. The threat of piracy is high across the Gulf of Guinea, especially in waters closer to Nigeria. The MT Barrett tanker, which belongs to a UK-based operator, was released with 22 crewmembers Jan. 16, after disappearing Jan. 10. The vessel was seized by pirates approximately 140 km (87 miles) south of Cotonou in the Gulf of Guinea. Commercial ships, oil rigs, and their crews are typically targeted by pirates; however, leisure boats are also occasionally attacked. The threat of being harmed or killed is much higher for local sailors; abductions of foreign nationals are typically financially motivated, though pirates also target ships to capture their cargo.


The threat of protests has eased in Kinshasa after a Roman Catholic priest feared kidnapped by government security personnel was released late Feb. 3. The priest was seized outside of his parish in the N'Sele Commune early Feb. 3 by individuals in civilian clothes after a mass, and several faith-based groups immediately called for his release, prompting fears of potential unrest.

Analysis: Authorities said that the priest was briefly detained for questioning about a land dispute in connection with the plot on which his parish is built. Initial reports had suggested that the priest was abducted by security personnel due to his involvement in the Jan. 21 anti-government protests in Kinshasa carried out by the Laic Committee for Coordination (CLC) - a Catholic Church organisation. Tensions remain high between the government and the Roman Catholic Church of DRC. The church has been vocal in calling on President Joseph Kabila to publicly state that he will not stand in the scheduled Dec. 23 presidential election.

KENYA (Country Risk Rating: High) - Political Demonstrations Possible Nationwide after Violent Protest in
Nairobi

The arrest of opposition politicians is likely to prompt additional spontaneous protests by National Super Alliance (NASA) activists in the coming days. Police fired warning shots in Nairobi's Kibera area to disperse several hundred people protesting the detention of opposition parliamentarian Miguna Miguna Feb. 2. Demonstrators blocked roads - including the Southern Bypass - with burning debris and pelted stones at passing vehicles. In an unrelated incident, NASA supporters attacked an officer who stopped their vehicle in Naivasha the same day.

Analysis: Opposition protests in Nairobi are most likely to occur in NASA strongholds, especially the Kawangware, Kibera, Mathare, and Ruaraka neighbourhoods. Demonstrations in the capital's central business district (CBD) cannot be discounted. Elsewhere, NASA demonstrations are most likely to occur in the southwest, including Homa Bay, Kisii, Kisumu, Migori, Mombasa, and Slaya, but are possible nationwide. Authorities will likely deploy additional security personnel near NASA strongholds in major cities, including Nairobi, Kisumu, and Mombasa. Police will likely fire tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse any unauthorised protests and could use live ammunition if significant violence takes place. Protesters could throw stones and Molotov cocktails at officers. Skirmishes and targeted violence between rival political activists are possible. Protesters could block roads with burning debris and indiscriminately target vehicles passing near demonstrations. Traffic and commercial disruptions are likely near any protest activity. Authorities could shut down communication networks if significant violence takes place, as social media is often used to coordinate protests.

Tensions are high across Kenya after police forcibly ended NASA leader Raila Odinga's mock inauguration in central Nairobi Jan. 30, and clashes at protests could rapidly escalate into political violence. Officers fired tear gas to disperse thousands of NASA supporters in the capital's CBD. Odinga lost a 2017 presidential election after boycotting an October re-run vote, and claims electoral officials influenced an original August poll in President Uhuru Kenyatta's favour. Following the NASA inauguration, the government declared the recently formed opposition National Resistance Movement (NRM) to be a criminal organisation and is detaining its political supporters. Miguna described himself as the NRM's "general." Police dispersed crowds blocking roads with burning debris in Kisumu and its Kondele outskirts following the arrest of NASA parliamentarian TJ Kajwang Jan. 31. Although the Supreme Court repealed a ban that the government enforced on media outlets for covering the so-called inauguration, journalists are avoiding reporting on protests and related violence due to concerns of potential retaliation. This self-imposed censorship will likely limit the availability of information on NASA demonstrations and related unrest. Opposition politicians protested the withdrawal of their police security details Feb. 1, leaving them exposed to violent reprisals by Kenyatta supporters.

MADAGASCAR (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Armed Assailants Kidnap French National in Toamasina

At least five heavily armed assailants abducted a French national of Indian heritage outside his residence in Toamasina's Salazamay neighbourhood at approximately 1815 Feb. 2. The suspects escaped despite police setting roadblocks along the RN2 and RN5. The victim's whereabouts remain unknown, and officials have not released any information on the kidnappers' demands.

Analysis: The abduction was the second high-profile kidnapping since the start of the year. On Jan. 17, another foreigner of South Asian descent was kidnapped in Antananarivo's Ambohitsoa district. The kidnappers issued a ransom demand of EUR 2 million (USD 2.4 million); the hostage remains in captivity. The threat of kidnapping is moderate nationwide, but the number of abductions in Madagascar targeting individuals of South Asian heritage is high and increasing. According to civil society organisations, almost 100 individuals of South Asian descent have been abducted nationwide since 2010. Gangs involved in these kidnappings are believed to be well-armed and sophisticated, often able to abduct high-profile businessmen - including those with bodyguards. Police efforts to curb abduction rates have so far been largely unsuccessful.

MALI (Country Risk Rating: High) - Islamist Militants Issue Proof-of-life Video One Year After Colombian's Abduction

On Jan. 29, the Jamaat Nasr al-Islam wa al-Moumin (Group for the Victory of Islam and the Faithful, JNIM) alliance released a proof-of-life video of a Colombian nun, Gloria Cecilia Narvaez Argoti. The footage depicts Argoti wearing some of her Catholic attire, who appeals to Pope Francis, her family, and her religious order to secure her release. The
undated clip was shot at night in an undisclosed location, though the general surroundings suggest it was filmed in a desert area. Argoti's face appears weather-beaten, indicating she has not remained in continuous confinement. An off-screen narrator demands an undisclosed ransom for her release through negotiations with independent charitable organisations.

**iJET Analysis:** Argoti's continued detainment is illustrative of the high threat of kidnapping in Mali, which is further heightened in the country's central and northern regions. The victim had been working as a missionary in Mali for at least six years prior to her abduction in Karangasso, Sikasso Region, Feb. 7, 2017. Argoti's religious affiliation was likely a key targeting factor in her kidnapping, as well as minimal physical security enabled her abduction. However, financial incentives were likely the primary motivation; foreign nationals, particularly westerners, represent high-value targets due to the likelihood of high ransom payments. Criminal and rebel groups are suspected of engaging in kidnapping and then selling hostages on to other armed groups, such as JNIM. The intermediaries described in the video is likely a reference to the Gift of Givers organisation, which reportedly secured the July 2017 release of South African Stephen McGowan after over six years in captivity. JNIM likely holds five other foreign hostages kidnapped in Burkina Faso and Mali since 2015. Although most abductees are released after several years following prisoner exchanges or ransom payments, militants have been known to kill foreign captives for ideological reasons.

**MALI (Country Risk Rating: High) - Military Bans Motorbikes and Pick-up Trucks in Parts of Mopti, Segou, and Tombouctou Regions**

Mali's defence ministry indefinitely banned motorbikes and pick-up trucks from operating in several areas of the Mopti, Segou, and Tombouctou regions as of Feb. 2, in response to attacks by Islamist militants in central Mali. The government plans to implement the vehicle restrictions in Bandiagara, Bakass, Djenne, Douentza, Koro, Mopti, Tenekou, and Youwarou districts (Cercle) of Mopti Region; Niono, Tomiian, and Macina districts of Segou Region; and Niafunke district of Tombouctou Region. Humanitarian organisations and associated convoys will require authorisation from the district military commander for ground movements to be provided escort.

**Analysis:** The overwhelming majority of the local populace rely upon motorcycles for travel; the personal transportation of local employees in affected areas will likely be significantly impaited. Pick-up trucks are used for freight transportation in remote areas; disruptions to deliveries are possible. The military has threatened to treat all unidentifiable vehicles that violate the ban as potential hostiles and could use heavy weaponry to engage targets.

The government likely issued the bans as a response to the Jan. 27 assault on a military camp near Soumpi, in Niafunke district, but a persistent militant threat of attack and kidnapping remains very high in northern and central Mali. Attacks by members of groups affiliated with the Jamaat Nasr al-Islam wa al-Moumin (Group for the Victory of Islam and the Faithful, JNIM) militant alliance occur daily and are increasingly frequent in central Mali. JNIM claimed the Soumpi raid Jan. 29 and issued photographs depicting captured heavy weaponry, ammunition, and military vehicles. JNIM also claimed a Jan. 28 suicide bombing in Menaka that killed four soldiers; such attacks occur less frequently compared to ambushes and static improvised explosive device (IED) attacks.

Authorities may be concerned that militants could travel undetected in the trucks to conduct additional assaults, or for a vehicle-borne IED. Militants use motorbikes to traverse difficult terrain and remote locations, and for rapid raids on isolated security personnel and government officials.

**NIGERIA (Country Risk Rating: High) - Kidnappers Release Abducted Oil Workers in Delta State**

Reports emerged Feb. 2 that kidnappers had released five local oil workers kidnapped in the Ajoki area, at the border between southeastern Delta and Edo states in the Niger Delta, late Jan. 17. The exact timing and conditions of the abductees' liberation remain unclear. Unconfirmed reports indicate that the victims' Nigerian employer paid an NGN-50 million (USD-139,000) ransom to secure their release. The kidnappers initially demanded payment of NGN-200 million (USD 556,000).

**Analysis:** Although the threat of kidnapping is high in many areas of Nigeria, it is further heightened in the
southeastern Niger Delta region. The profile of the victims and the location of the attack supports unconfirmed reporting that local militants conducted the kidnapping. The oil workers were travelling by boat near Koko village to an oil site at the time of their abduction, which occurred the same day the Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) released a statement threatening to resume its attacks on oil industry sites. While most kidnappings are financially motivated to obtain ransom payments, militant groups have occasionally made political demands for the release of victims. The majority of kidnapping victims are eventually released after a ransom is paid, but criminal gangs and militants have occasionally killed hostages.

NIGERIA (Country Risk Rating: High) - Strike Action Grounds Bristow, Caverton Helicopters Operations in Lagos and Port Harcourt

A union-led, indefinite strike action forced Bristow Helicopters (UH) and Caverton Helicopters, both of which primarily service Nigeria's offshore oil and gas industry, to suspend operations at Murtala Muhammed Airport (MMA), Lagos, and Port Harcourt Air Force Base (PHG), Rivers State, Feb. 1. Striking workers affiliated with the National Association of Aircraft Pilots and Engineers (NAAPE) and the United Labour Congress (ULC) blocked access to the two operators' offices at MMA from early Feb. 1 to call for higher wages and increased employment opportunities for locals. Participating workers vowed to continue their protests until their demands are met.

Union leaders have also secured the support of the Nigeria Union of Petroleum and Natural Gas Workers (NUPENG), which is reported to have suspended the sale of aviation fuel to Bristow and Caverton as of Feb. 2. It is unclear whether Bristow or Caverton helicopter operations are being disrupted at other airports in the oil-rich Niger Delta region, such as in Delta (Warri and Escravos) and Akwa Ibom (Ibeno) states.

Analysis: Most strikes affecting the oil and gas industry and associated support and logistics services are relatively short-lived. Labour relations between unions and Bristow Helicopters, and to a lesser extent Caverton Helicopters, have been fractious, resulting in sporadic strikes over the past five years. In November 2016, the NAAPE severely disrupted Bristow operations nationwide after the firm allegedly laid off several local pilots and engineers.

A protracted work stoppage could affect offshore oil and gas operations, though companies are likely to use alternative providers to mitigate potential disruptions to personnel and equipment transport to and from their offshore facilities. An increase in demand for alternative providers may occur. Disruptions to production are unlikely.

NIGERIA (Country Risk Rating: High) - Union Calls off Planned Port Strike

On Feb. 4, the Maritime Workers Union of Nigeria (MWUN) called off a strike that was scheduled at ports nationwide beginning Feb. 5. The union decided to cancel the action after the federal government called for a stakeholders' meeting to find a durable solution to address poor road conditions.

Analysis: Lingering cargo delivery issues are possible despite the suspension of the strike. The union could call for a new labour action if its concerns are not addressed during the planned meeting. The MWUN was demanding that authorities clear vehicles parked along the Oshodi-Apapa Dual Carriageway in Lagos and conduct significant repair work. The union also demanded maintenance work on port roads in Calabar, Port Harcourt, and Warri. The union blamed poor surface conditions for fatal road accidents involving MWUN members.

SOUTH AFRICA (Country Risk Rating: High) - Listeriosis Outbreak Continues Primarily in Gauteng and Western Cape Provinces

According to a Jan. 29 report, officials have identified an additional 53 cases of listeriosis during January, bringing the total to approximately 820 cases in South Africa since the outbreak began in late 2016. Gauteng Province accounts for approximately 60 percent of all cases, followed by Western Cape (13 percent) and KwaZulu-Natal (7 percent). Investigators have been unable to identify specific food items or consumption patterns among infected individuals as definitive sources of the outbreak, highlighting the importance of using food and water precautions.
Analysis: The UN reports that this outbreak, which began in December 2016, is the largest known listeriosis outbreak in history. Listeriosis is a serious bacterial infection caused by eating food contaminated by *Listeria monocytogenes*, which can survive sub-freezing temperatures. People at higher risk for infection include pregnant women, older adults, and people with weakened immune systems. Symptoms of listeriosis include fever, muscle aches, cramping, and diarrhoea. Listeria precautions include avoiding unpasteurized milk and dairy products, rinsing all raw produce thoroughly before eating, thoroughly cooking raw meat and poultry, and washing hands before and after handling raw meat products.

SOUTH AFRICA (Country Risk Rating: High) - Officials Extend Suspension of All CemAir Flights over Maintenance Issues

The South Africa Civil Aviation Authority (SACAA) extended a suspension order for CemAir (5Z) operations Feb. 4. The agency suspended CemAir flights Feb. 2, after an audit revealed that unqualified personnel had cleared 12 of its aircraft as airworthy. The SACAA withdrew the affected aircrafts' Certificates of Airworthiness. CemAir flights are expected to remain grounded indefinitely.

Analysis: The SACAA indicated that the grounding of CemAir flights was a precautionary measure. The airline is cooperating with the agency to bring its aircraft in line with safety regulations. Based out of Johannesburg's OR Tambo International Airport (JNB), CemAir offers scheduled flights to airports in Bloemfontein (BFN), George (GRJ), Cape Town (CPT), Hoedspruit (HDS), Margate (MGH), Plettenberg Bay (PBZ), Port Elizabeth (PLZ), and Sishen (SIS).

TOGO (Country Risk Rating: High) - Political Violence Remains Possible Nationwide ahead of National Talks

Political violence remains possible in Togo following the Feb. 2 announcement that regional mediators will begin national talks on Feb. 15 to address the ongoing dispute between President Faure Gnassingbe's government and the opposition. Both the government and opposition have pledged to participate in the talks, which will be led by Ghana and Guinea.

Analysis: Although the mediation team has called for the suspension of all political demonstrations through the talks, some dissatisfied parties could continue to stage demonstrations in Lome and other regions of the country. Any such demonstrations would likely be small in scope compared to those carried out by a coalition of political groups since August that attracted thousands of people. Still, clashes and localised transport disruptions remain likely near protest sites, as police will likely disperse any unauthorised anti-government demonstrations. An unresolved dispute between Gnassingbe and the opposition over constitutional reforms has generated sustained unrest in Togo since August. The opposition has pledged to boycott a referendum on proposed constitutional amendments endorsed by the legislature in September; a date for the poll has not been set. Opposition groups claim initiatives presented by the government were insufficient, denouncing a clause failing to make presidential term limits retroactive so that Gnassingbe will not be allowed to run again after leading the country since 2015. The opposition wants the country to return to the 1992 constitution, which limits the president to two terms in office. The opposition is also demanding a review of existing electoral frameworks, institutional reforms, the ability for diaspora to vote, and the release of all political prisoners. Tensions could re-escalate if talks reach a deadlock.

ZIMBABWE (Country Risk Rating: High) - Suspected Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front Supporters Clash with Opposition Members in Harare

Youths suspected to be affiliated with the ruling Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF) allegedly attacked members of the opposition National People's Party (NPP) in Harare, Feb. 1. According to reports, the attack, in which the purported ZANU-PF youth members pelted NPP delegates with stones, took place during an NPP campaign rally in the Glen Norah suburb of Harare; former Vice President Joice Mujuru was among eight delegates injured during the incident.

iJET Analysis: The attack was almost certainly politically motivated and is indicative of the elevated threat of violence during politically motivated gatherings in the country. Demonstrations in the state generally coincide
with major political developments and have been known to result in violent altercations between opposition party members and groups affiliated with ZANU-PF. Zimbabwe has seen drastic political developments in the past couple of months after longstanding former President Robert Mugabe resigned, following military intervention Nov. 21, 2017. Former Vice President Emmerson Mnangagwa succeeded him in the presidency after Mugabe's resignation and has retained the country's original electoral calendar to hold general elections in September 2018. Mnangagwa, whose transition into governance has so far been largely peaceful, has promised fair and violence-free elections; however, the threat of further altercations between rival political party supporters is expected to increase in the months leading up to the polls.

Asia

CAMBODIA (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Council of Ministers Ratify Contentious Revisions to Constitution and Penal Code

Cambodia’s Council of Ministers ratified several amendments to the country's Constitution and Penal Code Feb. 2. The revisions include restrictions to the freedom of expression and punishments for insulting King Norodom Sihamoni. Those charged for insulting the king could be imprisoned for up to five years and fined up to USD 2,500. Other amendments concern the right to vote and contest as a candidate in elections, and the formation of political parties. The amendments were drafted under the supervision of the ruling Cambodia People's Party (CPP) vice president.

Analysis: The passage of the amendments is likely, given the ruling party's majority in the National Assembly; constitutional amendments require two-thirds approval to pass, while the proposed lese majeste law requires a simple majority. Rights activists have expressed concerns that a broad interpretation of the lese majeste law could mean that the courts may use it to go after those critical of Prime Minister Hun Sen, as a similar law was used to persecute political dissidents in neighbouring Thailand. The amendments are expected to be passed before the upcoming general elections in July.

INDIA (Country Risk Rating: High) - CPI-Maoist Rebels to Stage Shutdown Strike in Parts of Telangana and Chhattisgarh

The outlawed Communist Party of India-Maoist (CPI-Maoist) has called for a 24-hour bandh (shutdown strike) in Telangana State and the Dandakaranya region in southern Chhattisgarh State Feb. 5 to protest government policies perceived to harm the poor. Disruptions will probably be limited to Maoist strongholds within the two states, including the following areas:

- Chhattisgarh: Bastar, Bijapur, Kanker, and Rajnandgaon districts
- Telangana: Khammam District

Analysis: The strike will likely prompt significant business and transportation disruptions in Maoist-affected areas. The rebels have already torched several vehicles and exchanged fire with security personnel in the run-up to the strike. Rebels could intensify attacks during the strike, with security personnel, rural government offices, and infrastructure the most likely targets. CPI-Maoist rebels have also been known to sabotage rail infrastructure during previous strikes, sometimes resulting in train derailments. CPI-Maoists are not known to have significant operational capabilities in urban areas, and the event should have few security implications for people operating exclusively in major cities, including Hyderabad.

INDIA (Country Risk Rating: High) - Officials Plan Regular Closures of Mumbai Airport's Main Runway for Repairs

Authorities are closing the main runway at Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji International Airport (BOM) 1000-1700 daily until Feb. 17 to allow for the urgent upgrade of navigational equipment. The runway will remain open on Wednesdays. The
facility’s secondary runway will be available during this period, but it can handle far fewer flights.

**Analysis:** Airlines operating at BOM have been notified of the runway closure in advance, and have rescheduled their flights accordingly. Regardless, flight delays and cancellations are possible, though major disruptions are unlikely.

**INDIA (Country Risk Rating: High) - Opposition Parties and Student Groups to Stage Protests across Tamil Nadu State**

Students and opposition parties are organising demonstrations across Tamil Nadu State Feb. 5 to demand exemption for residents from the National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test (NEET). Gatherings will likely take place in major cities and towns, including Chennai, Coimbatore, Tiruchirapalli, and Thanjavur.

**Analysis:** Specific rally sites have not been announced, but protesters may rally outside government buildings or in popular parks and squares. Demonstrators may block roads, highways, and rail lines, causing ground transport disruptions. While major unrest is not anticipated, localised clashes are possible, especially if police use force to disperse any gatherings. Tamil Nadu is seeking exemption from NEET - a single national-level examination for admission to medical and dental schools - maintaining that it would negatively affect students from the state. In late August, the Supreme Court ordered the Tamil Nadu government to use NEET as a basis for admission to medical schools, striking down a state ordinance that exempted students from having to take the test this year. Students and several opposition parties have staged periodic demonstrations since a medical school aspirant allegedly committed suicide Sept. 1 following the order.

**INDIA (Country Risk Rating: High) - Opposition Parties Organising Shutdown Strike and Protests in Andhra Pradesh State**

Six leftist political parties and multiple activist and student groups have called for a shutdown strike (bandh) in Andhra Pradesh Feb. 8 to protest a lack of funding provided for the state in the federal government budget. The groups claim that the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party prioritised funding to states holding elections in 2018 to lure voters and has not provided previously promised financing.

**Analysis:** Due to the high level of support, participation in the strike will probably be high. A number of small businesses and markets may close, though large, multinational firms will probably continue operations. Transport workers may also join the action, producing ground travel disruptions. Supporters may stage demonstrations across the state to demand more funding. While major unrest is not anticipated, localised clashes cannot be ruled out, especially if police attempt to forcibly disperse gatherings. The Andhra Pradesh Indian National Congress party has separately called for protests over the budget Feb. 5-15. These events will take place at mandal (administrative division) headquarters and will probably be much smaller than any gatherings Feb. 8. Localised disruptions remain possible but will likely be minimal.

**INDIA (Country Risk Rating: High) - Rally in Bengaluru during Visit by Indian Prime Minister**

A visit and rally by Prime Minister Narendra Modi prompted a large demonstration at Freedom Park in Bengaluru. Thousands of people reportedly joined the action. Although localised disruptions were reported, the event concluded without major incident.

Modi's visit culminated a 75-day political march by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) - dubbed the Nava Karnataka Nirmana Parivarthan Yatra (NKNPY) - across Karnataka State. The BJP launched the NKNPY in Bengaluru Nov. 2 to mobilise supporters ahead of the Karnataka legislative assembly election slated to take place in April or May. Modi addressed a massive rally at Palace Ground in Bengaluru Feb. 4, which attracted thousands of BJP supporters.

**INDONESIA (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Foreign Journalist Told to Leave Papua Province Following "Insensitive Tweet"**
Authorities ordered an Australian national working for the BBC and her two co-reporters to leave Papua Province, Indonesia, Feb. 2 following a tweet made by the foreign journalist; the team was in the province to cover a health and malnutrition crisis. The foreigner had posted several tweets that were critical of the provision of aid in the province; officials claimed her tweets were offensive to the government and the Indonesian people. She was detained for several hours for questioning by the military and police and has been banned from reporting in Papua.

**Analysis:** Media reporting in Papua - one of Indonesia's most impoverished regions - is restricted. Papua is the only place in Indonesia where foreign journalists require special permission to visit. President Joko Widodo made opening Papua to foreign visitors, especially journalists, one of the priorities during his presidential campaign in 2014. However, the government has been inconsistent in implementing this policy. The province has experienced a low-level separatist conflict for several decades between the Papua Freedom Movement (OPM) and the government. Locals in the underdeveloped but resource-rich region have demanded greater autonomy and better treatment from the central government.

**INDONESIA (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Officials Issue Flood Warning for Jakarta**

The National Disaster Mitigation Agency (BNBP) has issued a flood warning for Jakarta Feb. 5, after water levels at the Katulampa sluice gate rose significantly following days of heavy rainfall in Bogor. Authorities have advised those near the Ciliwung riverbank to prepare for potential floods and possible evacuations. Flooding is expected to affect Cawang, Ciliwung, Bealekambang, Bidara Cina, Bukit Duri, Kalibata, Kampung Melayu, Kebon Baru, Rawajati, Srengseng Sawah, Pejaten Timur, and Pengadegan in the southern and eastern parts of Jakarta in the late afternoon.

**Analysis:** Flooding will likely cause localised transport, business, and utility disruptions. Delays and detours may occur on the Commuter Line train and TransJakarta bus routes. Significant flight disruptions are unlikely at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport (CGK) in Tangerang, west of central Jakarta.

**JAPAN (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Independent Candidate Wins Mayoral Election in Nago, Okinawa**

Independent candidate Taketoyo Toguchi won the Nago mayoral election Feb. 5. Toguchi defeated two-term mayor and anti-US base relocation candidate Susumu Inamine. The challenger received 54 percent of the votes in the election, which saw an almost 77-percent turnout for the poll. Nago is the host city for a planned relocation of US Marine Corps Air Station Futenma.

**Analysis:** The election result is likely to be used by the ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which supported Toguchi's campaign, to argue residents are more concerned about the economy than the base relocation issue. Toguchi made the base a non-issue, instead focusing on measures to boost the local economy in the city. The mayor-elect claimed he would monitor the outcome of an ongoing legal challenge Okinawa Governor Takeshi Onaga initiated against central government over the base relocation, rather than stake a position on the relocation plan. Toguchi's success is likely to influence the LDP candidate in the Okinawa governor's election set for late 2018; however, a similar plan will not necessarily have success, as the relocation of Marine Corps Air Station Futenma remains unpopular across Okinawa. Demonstrations over the issue occur periodically, most frequently near the relocation site at Camp Schwab, and political activity to ensure the base relocation remains a key election issue is likely in the coming months.

**MALAYSIA (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Authorities to Maintain Increased Security in Waters off Eastern Sabah State**

Authorities are maintaining heightened security measures in the Eastern Sabah Security Zone (ESSZone), composed of Beluran, Sandakan, Kinabatangan, Lahad Datu, Semporna, Kunak, and Tawau districts, in eastern Sabah State. On Feb. 2, officials extended an 1800-0600 curfew for coastal areas and a maritime zone 3 nautical miles (5 km/3.5 miles) offshore to the international border with the Philippines through Feb. 18. Authorities are likely to extend the curfew - which expires every two weeks - indefinitely. No vessel traffic is allowed during the curfew hours, though mariners can apply for a special permit exempting them. Officials advised those in the affected areas to remain indoors during the curfew.
Analysis: Heightened security will likely remain in effect in coastal areas of the ESS Zone, especially near tourist resorts and fish farms located on offshore islands, where multiple kidnappings and gunfights with Philippine militants have occurred. Police are stationed on islands dotting the coast to facilitate more rapid response to territorial intrusions. However, while travellers and residents may notice the heightened security, only those planning to participate in overnight fishing or diving trips are likely to be directly affected. Authorities implemented heightened security measures following an increase in vessel hijackings and crewmember kidnappings in the waters between Sabah and the southern Philippines. Officials have enforced the curfew since July 2014 and extended the restrictions regularly amid ongoing security concerns. Senior Malaysian officials have blamed a variety of groups for the attacks, including Nur Misuari's faction of the Philippine militant group Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), criminal organisations, Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) extremists, and "Sulu Sultanate" militants. Officials reported that there were no kidnapping cases in 2017 in Malaysian-controlled territory, mainly due to the increased security measures. However, the threat posed by Philippine militants remains high; at least two reported incidents of maritime hijacking and kidnappings in Philippine-controlled areas of the Sulu Sea in 2017 occurred near islands close to eastern Sabah. It is likely that the restrictions will remain in effect indefinitely due to the continuing threat of cross-border incursions by criminal and militant groups.

MALDIVES (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Political Tensions Escalate after Government Refuses to Obey Supreme Court Order

Political tensions have sharply escalated in the Maldives following the refusal of President Abdulla Yameen's government to comply with a Supreme Court ruling on Feb. 1. The Supreme Court ordered the immediate release and retrial of exiled former president Mohamed Nasheed and eight other opposition leaders. The court also reinstated 12 ousted lawmakers who had defected to the opposition; the order gives the Maldives United Opposition (MUO) - a broad coalition of opposition parties led by Nasheed's Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) - a clear majority in the 85-member parliament, which has the power to impeach Yameen. Following the ruling, the government has shut down parliament indefinitely and ordered the armed security forces to resist any move by the Supreme Court to arrest or impeach Yameen.

Analysis: The recent political developments have sparked demonstrations by MUO and pro-government supporters in Male. Further rallies and marches by both camps are likely in the coming days and possibly weeks. While the largest gatherings are likely to take place in the capital, sizeable rallies may also occur in Addu City and other urban areas. In Male, opposition supporters could gather outside the MDP offices, the Supreme Court, Shaheed Hussain Adam Building (main police headquarters), People's Majlis (parliament), Republic Square, Artificial Beach, and Yameen's residence. Pro-government supporters have rallied outside the Supreme Court building, though further rallies could also occur outside other government buildings, the president's residence, and the ruling Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) party offices. Clashes between opposing political groups are likely, though police will try to prevent the rival camps from rallying in proximity to one another.

Authorities have deployed riot police outside government offices in Male, including parliament, as well as other common opposition protest sites. Expect unannounced road closures, traffic diversions, and roadblocks near likely rally sites in the capital. Police may initiate mass arrests of opposition supporters ahead of or during any demonstrations or employ tear gas to disperse demonstrators. Security disturbances - including minor arson attacks and vandalism and clashes with police - cannot be ruled out during any protests. Localised business disruptions are also possible in Male if clashes erupt. Due to fears of collateral damage or injuries, businesses often close at the first sign of unrest.

The political tensions have prompted the US and UK governments to issue advisories for the Maldives, warning of the potential for unrest in Male. Other foreign governments may issue similar warnings if ongoing tensions persist. However, the unrest is unlikely to affect operations at Male's Ibrahim Nasir International Airport (MLE) or any of the tourist resorts.

The Supreme Court ruled that the trials against Nasheed and other opposition figures violated the constitution and international law. The ruling gave credence to opposition allegations that Nasheed's trial was politically-motivated. Nasheed, the first democratically-elected leader in the Maldives, was convicted in 2015 on terrorism charges and was sentenced to 13 years in prison. The MDP claims that the trial was intended to prevent
Nasheed from running in the 2018 presidential election.

The Supreme Court ruling is a huge gain for the Maldivian opposition, which has been vying to oust Yameen in recent years. Following the Feb. 1 ruling, Nasheed has indicated that he will return from exile from Britain to contest the upcoming election. However, Yameen's defiance of the court order to maintain his grip on power has raised the prospects of another round of protracted political turmoil and unrest in the Maldives.

**MYANMAR (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Police Arrest Suspect Behind Petrol Bomb Attack on State Counsellor's Villa**

Police announced that they had arrested a suspect behind the petrol bomb attack on State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi's villa in Yangon, Myanmar, early Feb. 2. Officials claimed that the mentally ill man confessed to throwing a petrol bomb into Suu Kyi's residential compound Feb. 1. The suspect allegedly told police that he was motivated to carry out the attack because he had been "cursed by magic." Authorities said they will proceed to take legal action against him.

**Analysis:** Violence and unrest directed against Myanmar's democracy icon is rare. Prior to the suspect's arrest, there were speculations that the incident could have been fuelled by growing grievances against Suu Kyi's administration. She has faced criticisms for the slow pace of economic and democratic reforms, particularly pertaining to freedom of expression and human rights. Reconciliation with Myanmar's powerful military apparatus has also only made tentative progress - a fact that continues to hamper Suu Kyi's ability to push forward with bolder reforms. Moreover, Suu Kyi has been criticised, primarily abroad, for her handling of an ongoing crisis involving the country's Rohingya ethnic minority group in northwestern Rakhine State.

**PAKISTAN (Country Risk Rating: High) - TTP Suicide Bomber Kills 11 Soldiers in Swat Valley**

The Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) militant group claimed responsibility for a suicide bomb attack at an army base in the Swat Valley region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province Feb. 3. The bombing occurred during evening hours near a sporting arena while the soldiers were playing volleyball, killing 11 of them and injuring 13 more.

**Analysis:** The TTP and its allies continue to stage periodic bombings and other violence in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province - which borders both Afghanistan and Pakistan's restive semiautonomous tribal areas. However, Swat Valley and neighbouring districts have seen fewer attacks since a major military offensive in 2009 drove out most of the TTP militants from the region. Following the Feb. 3 bombing, the TTP warned of further suicide attacks on government and security personnel and installations in Pakistan, and urged civilians to avoid these areas. The TTP, also known as the Pakistani Taliban, is the deadliest among all indigenous militant outfits and has been responsible for the majority of attacks in Pakistan over the past decade.

**SOUTH KOREA (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Elevated Varicella Activity Reported in Gwangju, Seoul, and Jeju Island**

Health officials in South Korea have reported 280 cases of varicella (chickenpox) in Gwangju, Dec. 31-Jan. 27, representing the most recent data available as of Feb. 2. This is more than two times higher than the average number of cases reported during the same period between 2013 and 2017.

During the same period, officials have reported more than 875 cases in Seoul, a nearly 75-percent increase in cases compared to an average of 502 cases reported during the same period between 2013 and 2017.

In addition, 214 cases have been reported during the same period on Jeju Island, which is a 96-percent increase compared to an average of 109 cases reported during the same period between 2013 and 2017.

**Analysis:** Varicella is considered an endemic risk worldwide. South Korea reported 54,060 cases nationwide during 2016 and approximately 80,070 cases in 2017.

Varicella is a vaccine-preventable acute infectious disease caused by the varicella-zoster virus (VZV). The VZV is
transmitted from person to person through coughing or sneezing, or contact with virus particles from blisters. Chickenpox is the result of a primary varicella infection. Recovery from chickenpox usually results in lifetime immunity against a second occurrence. The first sign of chickenpox in children is usually a rash; adults usually experience fever and malaise before getting a rash. Since the VZV remains latent in nerves, it can become reactivated and cause a recurrent infection known as herpes zoster, or shingles. Visit a doctor to ensure vaccination against varicella 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 varicella infection, call ahead before visiting a doctor to prevent the spread of the disease at clinics or hospitals.

SOUTH KOREA (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Heavy Snowfall, Strong Winds on Jeju Island Disrupt Flights

The Korea Meteorological Administration warns of strong winds and heavy snowfall of up to 8 cm (3.1 inches) on Jeju Island. The agency forecasts winter weather conditions to persist until at least Feb. 6.

**Analysis:** More than 100 flights were either disrupted or cancelled at Jeju International Airport (CJU) Feb. 4 due to inclement weather condition on Jeju Island. Authorities have warned motorists to exercise caution, particularly in mountainous areas. Lingering transport disruptions are likely after snowfall ends, as passenger backlogs are cleared.

SRI LANKA (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Water Board Employees Launch Indefinite Nationwide Strike

Unionised employees of the National Water Supply and Drainage Board (NWSDB) launched a strike across Sri Lanka the morning of Feb. 5 after wage negotiations with authorities ended inconclusively. Participating workers, including engineers, may abstain from maintenance work and other activities during the action; minor municipal water supply interruptions are likely. Union leaders have vowed to continue the action until the government agrees to meet their demands.

**Analysis:** Striking employees could stage demonstrations, particularly outside NWSDB offices; the largest gatherings will probably take place in Colombo. These actions will likely pass peacefully and may only cause localised traffic disruptions, though minor clashes between protesters and police cannot be ruled out.

TAIWAN (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Groups Protest Pension Reform in Chaozhou

Anti-pension reform groups held a demonstration in Chaozhou, Pingtung County, Feb. 3 during a speech by President Tsai Ying-wen. Police prevented protesters from gathering at the venue, where Tsai called for support for ongoing pension reform. The protest took place a day before leaders from the 800 Heroes veterans group condemned a leaked version of the pension reform plan. The plan called for a limit on payments to veterans.

**Analysis:** The incidents highlight opposition to many proposed pension reform plans. Tsai and her government have argued that pension reforms are necessary to ensure the government has funding to invest in infrastructure. However, government civil servants, municipal workers, military personnel, and teachers have all opposed previous attempts to change the pension scheme. Thousands of people have demonstrated against the proposals in the past, typically in Taipei. While the government has reached an understanding with some groups, opposition continues, especially from veterans who argue the pensions are promised retirement benefits and should not change. While main opponents have not announced large-scale events, additional protests are possible once the government formally introduces the reform bill and debate takes place in the Legislative Yuan.

TAIWAN (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Magnitude-6.1 Earthquake Strikes off East Coast

A magnitude-6.1 earthquake struck in the Pacific Ocean about 17 km (10 miles) north-northeast of Hualien and 102 km (63 miles) south-southeast of Taipei at 2156 Feb. 4. The quake reportedly produced light to moderate shaking across the island. There have been no reports of damage or casualties. No tsunami warning was issued.
Analysis: Officials may temporarily halt public transportation, or close airports or rails stations in some areas for inspections of infrastructure. These facilities will likely reopen quickly if no damage is detected. Aftershocks are possible, and may lead to temporary transport disruptions.

THAILAND (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Heavy Rainfall Forecast for Southern Provinces

Meteorologists forecast that the Northeast Monsoon in the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea will bring heavy rainfall and high waves to parts of southern Thailand through Feb. 8. The Thailand Meteorological Department has issued a heavy rainfall warning for the provinces of Chumphon, Krabi, Prachuap Khiri Khan, Ranong, Songkhla, Surat Thani, Phangnga, and Phuket. Officials have also advised all ships in the Gulf of Thailand and the Andaman Sea to proceed with caution as waves may reach as high as 3 metres (9.8 feet).

Analysis: Heavy rainfall may cause landslides and flash flooding, which could block roads and damage or destroy bridges, resulting in ground transport disruptions. Flooding could also disrupt passenger and freight rail services. Flight delays could occur at regional airports including those in Phuket (HKT), Ranong (UNN), and Krabi (KBV) due to reduced visibility during downpours; however, significant flight disruptions are unlikely. Commercial interruptions are possible. Power outages may also occur in more rural areas.

Strong wind and high waves hit Songkhla's Singhanakhon district Feb. 4, forcing residents in coastal areas to evacuate. Several houses near the sea were also damaged. Authorities have advised those in coastal areas to beware of inshore surges.

Caribbean

TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO (Country Risk Rating: High) - Police Report Record Number of Murders in January

Police reported 63 murders across Trinidad and Tobago in January, representing a record high for a one-month period. Authorities said that some of the killings were domestic or gang-related, but others were linked to violent crimes gone wrong, such as armed robberies and burglaries.

Analysis: Trinidad and Tobago has long struggled with a high crime threat, but local politicians claim that the latest crime spree is affecting business and day-to-day life for residents. Officials claim that residents in some high crime areas are engaging in self-imposed curfews due to the elevated threat of violence overnight, while some businesses are closing early. Authorities have partially attributed the growing murder rate to the increased number of guns available in the country. Trinidad and Tobago reported 495 homicides in 2017, up slightly from 463 in 2016 and 420 in 2015.

Central/South America

BOLIVIA (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Public Transportation Drivers to Stage 24-hour Strike in La Paz

Unionised drivers in La Paz have called for a 24-hour strike Feb. 7 to protest the government's purchase of 72 buses for the PumaKatari network, which the drivers fear will threaten their income.

Analysis: Public bus and van service will likely be minimal during the strike, resulting in increased demand for other forms of transportation, especially taxis. Protests throughout La Paz are possible; demonstrations could occur in front of municipal government offices or in central plazas. Striking workers may also set up roadblocks, potentially on National Route 3, which connects La Paz to El Alto and El Alto International Airport (LPB).
COSTA RICA (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Officials Lift Suspension Order for Nature Air Operations

The Directorate of Civil Aviation of Costa Rica (DGAC) lifted a suspension order for Nature Air (5C) operations effective Feb. 4. The airline is expected to resume normal operations by Feb. 5. The agency indicated that the airline had resolved personnel shortages and implemented required adjustments to ensure it was in compliance with DGAC safety regulations.

**Analysis:** The DGAC ordered Nature Air to suspend operations on Jan. 11, two weeks after one of the airline’s Cessna 208B Grand Caravans aircraft crashed 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).

PARAGUAY (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Farmers to Stage Protest outside National Congress Building in Asuncion

Members of the National Intersectorial Coordination (NCI) are planning a rally outside of the National Congress building in Asuncion Feb. 5. Organisers claim that up to 1,500 supporters from across Paraguay will join in the event to protest the alleged failure of the government to comply with the National Emergency Law on Farming and provide agreed-upon funding in the past six months. The farmers have threatened to escalate their action in Asuncion in the coming weeks unless their demands are met.

**Analysis:** Localised transport disruptions in central Asuncion near the Congress. Lingering disruptions are possible even after the protest ends, as farmers leave the area and transit normalises. Plan for heightened security, particularly near Congress.

Europe

CZECH REPUBLIC (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Taxi Drivers to Launch Indefinite Protest in Prague

The Czech Taxi Drivers Association is planning to launch an indefinite protest in Prague Feb. 8 in response to perceived unfair competition and unsafe practices by app-based ride-hailing services. The drivers intend to gather in the Strahov area at 1000 Feb. 8, but have not specified specific actions behind the initial rallying point. Past protests over the issues have seen drivers stage a go-slow along the main route to Prague’s Vaclav Havel Airport (PRG); similar actions are possible during the upcoming demonstration. Go-slow and roadblocks may also be staged on other highly travelled routes in the city.

**Analysis:** Expect ground transport disruptions near protest sites, which may not be widely announced in advance. While the protest will probably remain peaceful, low-level clashes between protesters and police cannot be ruled out.

FRANCE (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Flooding Continues to Disrupt Ground Transport in Northeastern Regions

High water levels in the Seine and Marne rivers are prompting public transport disruptions and some road closures in at least 11 departments in northeastern France. Water levels are gradually receding, though authorities maintain orange flood warnings in Seine-Maritime, Eure, Yvelines, Val-d’Oise, Paris, Seine-et-Marne, Marne, and Aube as of Feb. 5. Some portions of roads and rail tracks remain submerged under water throughout the affected departments.
**Analysis:** The Paris metropolitan area is the most affected by the floods. Traffic remains suspended on the RER C rail line in Paris as personnel pump water out of flooded stations and tunnels. RER C trains will not serve the Saint-Michel Notre-Dame, Orsay Museum, Invalides, Champ de Mars, President Kennedy Avenue, and Boulainvilliers stations through at least Feb. 10. Traffic also remains suspended between Javel and Gare d'Austerlitz, and between Avenue Henri Martin and Gare d'Austerlitz stations until further notice. Trains are slated to resume at Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines Feb. 5. Other rail stations will possibly reopen over the coming days, though trains will likely run less frequently than usual.

FRANCE (Country Risk Rating: **Medium**) and SWITZERLAND (Country Risk Rating: **Low**) - Flight Delays Possible at Airports in Marseille and Zurich

Flight delays are possible at airports in Marseille (MRS) and Zurich (ZRH) early Feb. 5.

- Marseille Provence (MRS/LFML) - Low delays*
- Zurich (ZRH/LSZH) - Moderate delays*

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

**Delay Index**

- Very High (greater than 45 min)
- High (30-45 min)
- Moderate (15-30 min)
- Low (less than 15 min)

GREECE (Country Risk Rating: **Medium**) - Activists Set to Rally in Thessaloniki

Activists are planning to rally at White Tower in Thessaloniki at 1400 Feb. 5. Minor skirmishes happened at a similar rally in Syntagma Square in Athens at 1400 Feb. 4. The rallies are related to the ongoing Macedonia naming dispute between Macedonia and Greece, as both the Republic of Macedonia and the Greek Macedonian region lay claim to the name. The gatherings are likely to be well attended; previous rallies over the same issue have seen substantial support.

**Analysis:** Local authorities are likely to implement increased security measures, including road traffic restrictions along thoroughfares near the rally sites. Large crowds and security measures could prompt additional localised transport disruptions. While the events will probably conclude without major incident, skirmishes between protesters and security personnel cannot be ruled out.

IRELAND (Country Risk Rating: **Low**) - Elevated Seasonal Influenza Activity Continues since January

Health officials in Ireland have identified more than 2,500 confirmed cases of seasonal influenza since the start of the 2017-2018 influenza season in October through Jan. 28, representing the most recent data available on Feb. 2. This is more than double the amount of confirmed cases reported during the same period of the 2016-2017 season, when approximately 1,420 cases were identified. Disease activity during the 2017-2018 season has occurred nationwide; however, eastern and southern counties are most affected.

**Analysis:** Most seasonal influenza transmission in the Northern Hemisphere occurs October to May, with cases typically peaking between December and February. Ireland reported a total of roughly 3,300 confirmed influenza cases during the 2016-2017 influenza season. Unlike the 2016-2017 season, the 2017-2018 season in Ireland is
notable for the elevated number of confirmed influenza B viruses rather than influenza A, which is more typically more common. Seasonal influenza is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus. Typical symptoms are nondescript, including fever (though not in all cases), cough, congestion, aches, and fatigue. The disease occurs in all age groups but is particularly severe in the elderly or persons with high-risk medical conditions. Influenza vaccinations are recommended yearly since the influenza virus undergoes frequent changes. Visit a doctor to discuss obtaining this year’s vaccine against seasonal influenza. Practise typical health precautions: wash hands frequently with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser, avoid close contact with people who appear sick, and routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

ITALY (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Authorities Detain Gunman Suspected in Shooting of Six Foreigners in Macerata

Authorities have detained a gunman suspected in the drive-by shootings of six foreigners - described as migrant workers by local media - in the town of Macerata midday Feb. 3. The suspect first opened fire around 1100 and targeted at least three different groups in the Via Spalato and Via dei Velini areas, injuring five men and a woman, before being detained by police around 1300. Security personnel had set up roadblocks and advised the public to avoid open public spaces during the two-hour period, but have issued the all-clear.

Macerata is about 185 km (115 miles) northeast of Rome.

Analysis: The shootings were clearly targeted in nature, and do not indicate any change in the overall violent crime threat in Italy, which is perceived to be low. Authorities believe that the shootings were racially motivated and may have been prompted by the arrest of a Nigerian migrant in the suspected murder of an 18-year-old girl found dead Jan. 31. Several social media posts have called for revenge attacks following the murder, while politicians have used the incident to campaign for tougher restrictions on migrants ahead of the March general elections.

TURKEY (Country Risk Rating: High) - Authorities Declare Explosion in the Cukurambar Area of Ankara a Terrorist Attack

Turkish authorities have announced that a recent explosion at a tax office in Ankara's Cukurambar neighbourhood was a terrorist attack. Police initially attributed the blast, which occurred at approximately 2000 Feb. 1, to a gas line rupture; however, CCTV footage later reportedly revealed an individual placing a bag believed to contain an explosive device near the entrance to the building shortly before the incident occurred. Police killed the alleged perpetrator during a Feb. 2 attempt to apprehend him. The investigation revealed that the suspect was born in the southern Mardin province and allegedly trained with the Civil Protection Units (YPG) in an area of Syria controlled by the Kurdish Democratic Union Party (PYD). Police also detained eight other individuals in Osmaniye, Adana, Sirnak and Mardin provinces, who reputedly have links to the suspect.

Analysis: The explosion at the Ankara tax office occurred after business hours, causing damage to the building but no casualties. While it is impossible to independently confirm or refute the findings reported by Turkish authorities, the vast majority of terror attacks by Kurdish militants in Turkey during recent years have targeted security forces or government interests while attempting to minimise casualties of civilian noncombatants. Turkey regards the YPG/PYD as the Syrian branch of the Kurdistan Workers’ Party (PKK) terrorist group.

Middle East/North Africa

IRAN (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Authorities to Impose Travel Restrictions and Close Schools in Tehran Due to Severe Air Pollution

Authorities will impose travel restrictions on vehicles entering downtown Tehran Feb. 5 due to high levels of air pollution affecting the city and the surrounding province. Officials will restrict driving to vehicles based on their licence plates.
Expect overcrowding on alternative forms of transportation, such as the metro, and limited availability of taxis. Delays are possible at Tehran Imam Khomeini International Airport (IKA).

**Analysis:** Authorities have also ordered schools to remain closed Feb. 5 and have advised children, the elderly, pregnant women, and people with existing heart or respiratory problems to stay at home as poor air quality poses the greatest risk to these individuals. The restrictions and mitigating measures could be extended or expanded if conditions do not improve. Tehran is one of the world's most polluted cities - with air pollution at unhealthy levels for at least 100 days each year - and authorities regularly impose vehicular restrictions to improve air quality. The poor air quality is due to a combination of geography and vehicular congestion - Tehran is in a mountainous basin that traps polluted air over the city. Additionally, there are a high number of cars on the roads, particularly older models that produce higher levels of exhaust than newer ones.

**IRAN (Country Risk Rating: Medium)** - Women Protest Morality Laws Nationwide

A large number of women took to the streets of several cities Feb. 2 to protest the country's modesty laws and dress code. Authorities have reportedly arrested 29 women during the protests.

**Analysis:** The nationwide protests follow a demonstration by women in Tehran, Jan. 28, in response to the same issue. Many women across the country believe that religion and how they dress and conduct themselves in public is a private matter, and that the government, particularly the morality police, should not force them into wearing hijabs. Although the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and the clergy attribute the recent protests to foreign powers, a growing number of Iranians are frustrated over a wide range of issues facing the country, including unemployment, corruption, and oppressive policies and laws. Iranians across the country demand social, political, and economic reforms. Concerned about the gravity of popular discontent and the possibility of further social unrest, President Hassan Rouhani urged leaders Jan. 31 across Iran's political establishment to respond to the demands of the people and join him in his efforts to institute reforms and further job opportunities and civil liberties for the youth, who constitute a majority of the population.

**LEBANON (Country Risk Rating: High)** - Activists to Protest the Syrian War in Awkar Area of Beirut

The US Embassy announced that activists have called for a demonstration near Awkar Square starting 1200 Feb. 5. While the embassy will remain open, it has cancelled all appointments for US Citizens Services, possibly due to the proximity of the protest site. The protest is meant to denounce the ongoing Syrian war, in particular the situation in the Afrin area of that country, where heavy fighting has deteriorated security conditions and created a humanitarian crisis.

**Analysis:** Roads adjacent to the square will close at 1100; expect significant localised transport disruptions. Though unlikely, clashes are possible between protesters and security personnel, especially if officers attempt to disperse the crowds.

**LEBANON (Country Risk Rating: High)** - Kidnapped Local Freed in Jib Janine

On Feb. 2, Internal Security Forces (ISF) announced that a Lebanese national, who was previously abducted in the town of Jib Janine, had been freed. ISF freed the man Jan. 31; authorities said the abduction stemmed from a personal dispute. Jib Janine is located in the Beqa'a Valley, 15 km (9 miles) from the Lebanon-Syria border.

**Analysis:** The incident underscores the high kidnapping threat in the Beqa'a Valley, where security is tenuous due to drug and weapons trafficking, armed robberies, and militancy. Criminal elements and militants, such as the Islamic State (IS) and Jabhat Fateh Al-Sham (Al-Qaeda's affiliate in Syria), have been accused of abductions, which are a common occurrence in the Beqa'a Valley. In general, spillover violence from the conflict in neighbouring Syria often occurs in the area, as it is adjacent to the Syrian border.

**OMAN (Country Risk Rating: Low)** - Ministry of Oil and Gas Raises Fuel Prices
The Ministry of Oil and Gas (MOG) announced Jan. 31 that it would raise fuel prices for the month of February.

**JET Analyst:** Following major anti-government protests in 2011, the government expanded subsidy and welfare programmes to appease protesters, who were demanding economic and political reforms. However, given that the economy is heavily dependent on oil, and because oil prices have sharply fallen in the last several years, it is hard for the government to pay for the welfare and subsidy programmes. The MOG put in place a similar measure in December 2017 to offset government expenditures. Oman's unemployment rate stands at 16 percent. College graduates protested outside the Ministry of Manpower in Muscat for several days in January, demanding employment opportunities. Rising fuel prices, coupled with unemployment rates, could lead to a new wave of protests in the country.

**TUNISIA (Country Risk Rating: High) - Security Forces Arrest Armed Libyan Suspect Attempting to Cross Border Illegally**

On Feb. 2, security forces in Ras Jedir arrested a Libyan national attempting to illegally cross into Tunisia. The suspect was reportedly in possession of an automatic weapon, which authorities confiscated during the security operation. Ras Jedir is located approximately 430 km (267 miles) southeast of Tunis.

**Analysis:** The incident highlights continued security threats along Tunisia's border with Libya. The Libyan border area has been the site of several security incidents in recent years. In early 2016, roughly 50 militants aligned with the Islamic State (IS) in Libya crossed into Tunisia and attacked an army barracks in Ben Guerdane. More recently, on Jan. 5, authorities were forced to close the Ras Jedir border crossing temporarily due to clashes between disparate armed groups on the Libyan side of the border. Tunisia remains under a nationwide state of emergency that was first implemented following a series of high-profile attacks in 2015. Evidence suggests that several of the militants who carried out the attacks in 2015 received training and support from militant groups in Libya.

**North America**

**CANADA (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Influenza Activity Surges during January**

Health officials in Canada have identified more than 28,725 confirmed influenza cases since the start of the 2017-2018 influenza season in late August through Jan. 27, with at least 13,160 cases reported Dec. 31-Jan. 27, representing the most recent available data as of Feb. 2. This number represents a more than 60-percent increase in cases compared to the number of cases reported during the same August-January period of the 2016-2017 influenza season. Disease activity during the 2017-2018 season has occurred nationwide; however, Alberta and Quebec are the most affected provinces.

**Analysis:** Most seasonal influenza transmission in the Northern Hemisphere occurs October to May, with cases typically peaking between December and February. Canada reported a total of roughly 39,370 confirmed influenza cases during the 2016-2017 influenza season. According to the US CDC, the current seasonal influenza vaccination leaves some gaps in protection against H3N2, highlighting the importance of diligent handwashing and respiratory hygiene. According to Canadian officials, influenza A (H3N2) has accounted for approximately 40 percent of influenza A cases since August through Jan. 27.

Seasonal influenza is a highly contagious disease caused by a virus. Typical symptoms are nondescript, including fever (though not in all cases), cough, congestion, aches, and fatigue. The disease occurs in all age groups but is particularly severe in the elderly or persons with high-risk medical conditions. Influenza vaccinations are recommended yearly since the influenza virus undergoes frequent changes. Visit a doctor to discuss obtaining this year's vaccine against seasonal influenza. Practise typical health precautions: wash hands frequently with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitiser, avoid close contact with people who
appear sick, and routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

MEXICO (Country Risk Rating: High) - Gunmen Kill Six at Cockfight Club in Chihuahua

Gunmen opened fire on the Santa Maria cockfight club situated on the outskirts of southern Chihuahua City, capital of Chihuahua State, late Feb. 3, killing at least six people and injuring 14 others. Authorities said that the club was an illegal arena.

Analysis: Chihuahua continues to struggle with high levels of violence tied to drug trafficking organisations (DTOs) and local criminal groups. The Feb. 3 attack took place just a month after 31 people were killed in a series of incidents overnight Jan. 4-5, demonstrating the threat of violence. Authorities have attributed much of the violence to turf wars between the Juarez Cartel and the Sinaloa Cartel. However, it is unclear if the Feb. 3 shooting was the work of a DTO or tied to the illegal nature of the club.

UNITED STATES (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Trains Collide in Lexington County, S.C.

Authorities confirmed that Amtrak Train 91 travelling from New York to Miami collided with a CSX freight train near Charleston Highway in Lexington County, South Carolina, at approximately 0235 Feb. 4. The lead engine and several passenger cars derailed. Two people were killed, and at least 116 others were injured.

Analysis: Authorities have closed off a section of Pine Ridge Drive to facilitate ongoing police and emergency response operations. Officials have urged motorists to avoid the area. Expect localised traffic disruptions. Train disruptions may occur.

South Pacific/Oceania

MARTHALL ISLANDS (Country Risk Rating: Low) and FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA (Country Risk Rating: Low) - High Tides Forecast to Cause Flooding on Northern Shores

Unusually high tides and storm conditions are forecast to impact the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Marshall Islands through Feb. 6. Waves more than 2.4-3 metres (8-10 feet) are projected to occur on north-facing shores of Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Kosrae in the FSM, and Majuro in the Marshall Islands; officials have issued high surf advisories for these areas. Although wave heights are likely to subside in Chuuk beginning Feb. 5, high tides are expected to affect Pohnpei and Kosrae in FSM and the Marshall Islands through Feb. 6.

Analysis: High tides will likely lead to coastal flooding and associated transport disruptions along the northern shores of affected islands. Flooding and debris could block roads in coastal areas. Inundations are possible near airports in Pohnpei (PNI) and Kosrae (KSA), particularly during the evening hours. Flooding may prompt localised business closures and evacuations. Localised utility outages are also possible.

NEW ZEALAND (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Measles Exposure Reported at Hospital in Christchurch

Health officials warn that an individual infected with measles visited Christchurch Hospital's Emergency Department in Christchurch Jan. 28 after 1300.

Analysis: Measles is a very contagious viral disease. The virus spreads through airborne droplets created when an infected person coughs or sneezes. The virus can survive up to two hours in an airspace or on a surface where an infected person has coughed or sneezed. Symptoms of measles can develop up to 21 days after exposure and typically begin with a fever, runny nose, sore throat, red eyes, and/or cough, followed by a rash that spreads all over the body. Infected individuals are most contagious five days before and four days after the
measles rash erupts. Recovery generally occurs within 10-14 days, but serious complications, including pneumonia, may occur. Complications are most likely in children younger than five years old, adults older than 20 years, and people whose immune systems are weakened by other acute or chronic health conditions.

VANUATU (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Alert Level Raised for Mount Gharat Volcano on Gaua Island

The Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-hazards Department has raised the alert for the Mount Gharat volcano on Gaua Island, Torba Province, to Level 2. The department’s volcanic alert levels range from zero to five. The department raised the alert level Jan. 31 following increases in seismic activity and gas releases. Authorities have warned against travel within the Gaua volcanic zone due to the potential for an eruption and continuing gas discharges.

Analysis: Ground transport disruptions are possible; authorities could also block routes leading to Mount Gharat’s crater. Though no eruptions or ash plumes have occurred, an eruption at the volcano could prompt some regional flight disruptions, especially Gaua Airport (ZGU).