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No Changes This Week:

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

<http://www.tamus.edu/assets/files/safety/pdf/InternationalTraveltoHighRiskCountries.pdf>

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
- 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.

<https://www.dhs.gov/news/2017/06/29/frequently-asked-questions-protecting-nation-foreign-terrorist-entry-united-states>

- **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 Kasai 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 Guerro.

- **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, Enuege 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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Americas

CARIBBEAN; September 18 and 19; Tropical Storm Maria to impact the region

Tropical Storm Maria continues to track westward in the Atlantic Ocean as of September 18. In coming days, the system is expected to slowly begin moving west north westward. TS Maria is expected to make landfall on the Leeward Islands in the coming hours as a category-1 storm. The storm is expected to then pass between Guadelupe and Dominica on September 18 and 19. Several islands that were devastated by Hurricane Irma's September 6 to 9 passage through the Caribbean are in the path of Tropical Storm Maria. High winds, rain, and flooding brought by TS Maria could frustrate infrastructure repair efforts on islands that were heavily damaged by Irma. Heavy rainfall over a short period could cause flash flooding. Mudslides could occur, especially in areas of mountainous terrain. Strong winds have the potential to knock out power and cause significant property damage. The system will likely generate rough seas and minor storm surge along eastern-facing shorelines. Transport disruptions are possible.

Advice: Activate contingency plans if operating in areas in the path of the storm. Be prepared to move quickly to safety if serious flooding occurs. Stay away from rivers, streams, and steeply sloped terrain due to the high potential for flash flooding and mudslides. Do not attempt to drive on flooded roads. Seek updated local information on road conditions before driving long distances or routing shipments through affected areas. Charge battery-powered devices, and stockpile bottled water and non-perishable food in case prolonged electricity outages occur. Do not check out of hotels before confirming onward travel.

COLOMBIA (Country risk rating: **High); September 20; Avianca Airlines pilots threaten to strike**

Avianca Airlines (AV) pilots represented by the Colombian Association of Civil Aviators (ACDAC) have threatened to initiate a strike lasting up to 60 days. The pilots have not announced a definitive start date for the strike, which they maintain will affect only domestic routes, but they say it will begin sometime between September 20 and September 27. The group is pressuring Avianca to institute a wage increase, but negotiations have been unsuccessful so far. The airline says it has presented over 20 benefit-improvement proposals to the union without results; the ACDAC reportedly unilaterally ended talks after 20 days of negotiation. Over 700 union employees would participate in the labour action, which could result in mass flight cancellations. Avianca has been unable to reach an agreement with ACDAC since 2013. About half of all Avianca services will be affected if the strike occurs; the work stoppage is currently not slated to affect Avianca operations at hubs in Peru or El Salvador. Avianca is Colombia's flag carrier and its Colombian hub is at El Dorado International Airport (BOG). The airline has not announced any contingency plans to mitigate disruptions. Striking pilots could picket outside BOG and the Avianca Holdings S.A. headquarters on Avenida El Dorado at during the strike. Avianca has rejected the walkout, calling it illegal. The airline has threatened to take disciplinary action against participating pilots, but has not publicly elaborated on how it would sanction employees.

Advice: Confirm Avianca flights before checking out of hotels or departing for the airport, starting on September 20. Consider using other carriers for time-sensitive travel until the strike ends or is cancelled.

GUATEMALA (Country risk rating: **High); September 14, 15 and 20; Nationwide anti-corruption protests**

Anti-corruption protests will likely continue in cities across Guatemala over the near-term. The demonstrations first began late on September 14, when activists rallied at the Plaza de la Constitucion, located in Guatemala City's Zona 1, knocking over security barricades and scuffling with police. The protests subsequently spread across Zona 1 - focusing particularly near the Congress building - and continued into September 15, prompting President Jimmy Morales to cancel scheduled Independence Day celebrations. Several civil society groups have also called for a nationwide strike on September 20. The demonstrations are a reaction to an effort by Congress to drastically reduce the punishment for crimes related to campaign finance violations. President Morales' administration is in the midst of a major corruption and campaign finance scandal, and the proposed reforms are widely seen as an attempt to benefit the president and his supporters in the legislature. A court issued an emergency order barring the Congress from promulgating the law late September on 14.

Advice: Avoid all demonstrations as a precaution. Do not attempt to drive through areas where protesters are blocking roads. Allow additional time to reach destinations in major cities. If violence breaks out near you, leave the area immediately. If you are unable to do so, seek shelter in a publicly accessible non-government building until it is safe to depart.

UNITED STATES (Country risk rating: **Medium); September 15 to 17; Protests over controversial verdict in St. Louis, Missouri**

Protests over a ruling to acquit Jason Stockley, a former St. Louis, Missouri, police officer, have affected St. Louis since the ruling was made on September 15. The controversial trial was held to determine whether Stockley murdered Anthony Lamar Smith, an African American suspect, in 2011. Local police prepared for unrest and erected barricades around the city's courthouses and the police headquarters in anticipation of possible clashes. Missouri Governor Eric Greitens activated the National Guard to provide support if needed. Nonetheless, several of the protests have been marred by acts of violence and vandalism, and police have forcibly dispersed some of the gatherings, including in the downtown area. Further protests are likely to result in localised disruptions, including in the downtown area, the airport, and possibly other sites, including future Cardinals baseball games at Busch Stadium. Expect heightened security throughout the city as police closely monitor protests that materialise in the coming days.

Advice: Monitor local media for updates on events and associated disruptions. Consider avoiding rallies due to potential street closures, traffic congestion, and possible security disturbances. Heed all instructions by law enforcement. Should violent protests erupt nearby, immediately depart the area or seek shelter inside a secure, non-governmental building. Check public transit schedules for possible service changes if large demonstrations materialise.

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Asia and Pacific

AFGHANISTAN (Country risk rating: **Extreme); September 17; Casualties reported following market bombing in Khost**

A bombing in the city of Khost in eastern Khost Province on the afternoon of September 17 killed at least four civilians and wounded 14 others. The blast occurred in the underground section of Hamam market in Sargardan Square. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

Advice: Clients in Khost are advised to implement maximum travel, personal and residential security protocols at all times.

BANGLADESH (Country risk rating: **High); September 26 to October 1; Increased security expected for Hindu and Muslim holidays**

Security forces will be on high alert throughout Bangladesh for the Hindu Durga Puja festival, which will run from October 26 to 30, as well as the Muslim Ashura observance on September 30 and October 1. Durga Puja is the biggest religious festival of the minority Hindu group in Bangladesh. The holiday is celebrated nationwide with traditional pujas, fairs, large gatherings marked with *pandals*, and installations of the Hindu Goddess Durga's idols. Festivities conclude with the immersion of Durga idols in nearby bodies of water, sometimes accompanied by massive processions. Ashura is a national

holiday in Bangladesh, which falls on the 10th day of the Muslim month of Muharram. The day holds special significance for Shi'a Muslims, many of whom will participate in processions to and from *imambargahs* (places of worship) to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hussein. Elevated security is likely around all Hindu and Shi'a religious venues, as well as affiliated congregation/festival sites. Security will also be extremely tight during religious processions by both Shi'a and Hindu groups. Authorities have not disclosed any specific threats to the upcoming holiday, but Islamist militants have been responsible for a series of targeted attacks on religious minorities in the country over the past couple of years. As a precautionary measure, security personnel will likely set up checkpoints on major roadways and increase security at malls, markets, and other potential soft targets. Major traffic congestion is possible in urban centres during religious processions on September 30 and October 1.

Advice: Stay away from religious processions. Limit exposure to Hindu and Shi'a places of worship, festival/congregation venues, crowded markets, and other sites identified as popular militant targets. Prepare for travel delays and disruptions; allow additional time to reach destinations, especially in Dhaka and other urban centres on September 30 and October 1.

INDIA (Country risk rating: **High); September 18; Ongoing strike in Jammu region**

Multiple groups are observing a general strike in the Jammu region of Jammu and Kashmir State on September 18 to protest the perceived failure of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) - a member of the state's ruling coalition - to address various issues. Those calling for the strike include the Jammu Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Jammu and Kashmir National Panthers Party. It is unclear how well the strike is being supported; however, business and transport disruptions are possible. Although no protests have been reported as yet, demonstrations are possible for the remainder of September 18; the largest gathering(s) will probably occur in the city of Jammu. Protesters may also block roads during the action. Clashes with police are possible.

Advice: Confirm business appointments and transport reservations during the strike. Avoid all protests as a precaution. Allow additional time to reach destinations. Seek updated information on security and road conditions before driving in the Jammu region.

INDIA (Country risk rating: **High); September 20; Rally over high fuel prices expected in Delhi**

The opposition Indian National Congress (INC) is set to rally at the Jantar Mantar in central Delhi on September 20. The purpose of the demonstration is to demand the government lower fuel prices. The INC is blaming fuel price hikes nationally on the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), and in Delhi on the city administration led by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP). The demonstration could draw a large crowd. INC leaders intend the September 20 rally in Delhi to be the launching point for nationwide protest campaign. Authorities will almost certainly bolster security near the Jantar Mantar as a precaution. Major travel delays are possible in central Delhi, if the event draws a large turnout; police may cordon off adjacent roads and detour traffic. Increased congestion is also possible in nearby bus and train stations, as rally participants arrive and depart. The September 20 gathering will probably remain peaceful, but minor skirmishes between protesters and security forces cannot be ruled out. Clashes are also possible between INC activists and supporters of rival political parties. The INC is using the issue of rising fuel costs as a means of mustering popular support. Fuel is heavily taxed in India, and the INC claims current taxes are significantly higher than was the case when they were the national ruling party - a tenure which ended in 2014. Despite generally lower international oil prices in recent years, Indian consumers continue to pay high prices. A new value-added tax (VAT) system also contributes to rising fuel costs. Given widespread popular anger over the issue, the September 20 protests in Delhi have the potential to be large and disruptive.

Advice: Avoid all demonstrations as a precaution. Consider alternative travel routes to circumvent the area of the protest. Allow additional driving time to reach destinations in central Delhi on September 20. Exit the area immediately if clashes break out near your location.

JAPAN (Country risk rating: **Low); September 17 and 18; Tropical Storm Talim brings heavy rain to south western areas**

Tropical Storm Talim (20W) weakened from a typhoon on the morning of September 17 after making landfall near Kagoshima on Kyushu Island. Models indicate Talim could make a second landfall in either northern Honshu or southern Hokkaido on September 18. The storm is likely to bring destructive winds and heavy rainfall to western and northern Japan, especially Kyushu, Shikoku, and western Honshu islands through September 18; flooding and/or landslides are probable. Authorities issued an evacuation order or advisory to some parts of Miyazaki, Kumamoto, Kagoshima, Fukuoka, Oita and Kochi prefectures. Powerful winds could cause property damage and down trees and power lines; power outages are likely in Kyushu and are possible in other areas of western Japan, including Hiroshima and Okayama. The weather system also

resulted in significant rail, flight and road travel disruptions in the affected areas. Though Talim is projected to weaken rapidly as it tracks north eastward across land, the storm could still cause flight disruptions at airports in the affected areas.

Advice: Review contingency plans, especially if in Kyushu. Be prepared to move away from coastal areas in the path of the storm; follow all evacuation orders. Once the storm begins affecting land operations, limit unnecessary driving in affected regions until it passes. Seek updated information on road conditions before driving. Use caution around streams, rivers, and other flood-prone areas. Plan accordingly for potential urban flooding and transportation disruptions. Confirm all flights and train reservations. Do not check out of accommodations until verifying onward travel. Charge battery-powered devices and stockpile bottled water and non-perishable food in case power is lost.

NEW ZEALAND (Country risk rating: **Low); September 16 to 18; Fuel shortage prompts flight disruptions in Auckland**

A jet fuel shortage caused several domestic and international flight cancellations at Auckland Airport (AKL) since September 16, with disruptions expected to continue indefinitely. Air New Zealand (NZ) said it has cancelled some services to consolidate passenger loads, and is diverting Asian and North American long-haul flights to refuel at Pacific and Australian airports. Qantas (QF) and Jetstar (JQ) have indicated that they were working to minimise impact on customers and urged people to check their flight status online. Lingering flight disruptions are possible as the backlog is cleared once the situation is resolved. Fuel companies are rationing oil due to a leaking Auckland supply pipeline being closed for repairs at New Zealand's only refinery at Marsden Point, Whangarei. Refining NZ, which owns the pipeline, said it could take 10 to 15 days to repair.

Advice: Contact airlines for updated flight information at AKL.

PAKISTAN (Country risk rating: **High); September 21 to October 19; Increased security countrywide for Muharram due to terrorism threat**

Security forces will go on high alert, and soldiers and paramilitaries will deploy en masse, to help police maintain order in cities and towns throughout Pakistan during the Muslim month of Muharram (September 21 to October 19). Muharram starts when religious authorities sight the crescent moon, so a slight variation in the start and end dates is possible. The days preceding Youm-e-Ashura, which falls on the 10th day of the month, are particularly sensitive; violence against Shi'a Muslim communities, rallies, and events has been a historical problem during this period. Bombings, assassinations of political and religious figures, sectarian clashes between Sunni and Shi'a Muslims, and riots could occur. While violence is possible in many areas, major cities such as Karachi, Hyderabad, Lahore, Peshawar, Quetta, Islamabad, and Rawalpindi are potential flashpoints. Security problems are also possible in other cities and towns in Punjab, the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Gilgit-Baltistan, and Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Province, particularly Abbottabad, Haripur, and Mansehra in the former Hazara Division.

Advice: Maintain a very low profile, and stay away from Shi'a processions. Limit exposure to places of worship, government and political party offices, security and intelligence installations, and large concentrations of police, soldiers, and paramilitaries throughout the country. Shi'a processions typically follow fixed, approved routes; avoid them if possible. If travel is necessary during the first ten days of Muharram, avoid unnecessary movements in the days leading up to Ashura.

PAKISTAN (Country risk rating: **High); September 17; Roadside bombing reported in Bajaur Agency**

A roadside bomb detonated in the Bajaur Agency of Pakistan's restive north western Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) on September 17, killing a local government official and six police officers. The incident took place in the town of Mamoon, about 25 km (15 miles) from Khar, the main town of Bajaur. No one has yet claimed responsibility for the blast, but in the past Taleban militants have carried out several suicide bombings and other attacks in the district.

Advice: Maximum travel, personal and residential security protocols should be implemented at all times.

PHILIPPINES (Country risk rating: **Medium); September 21; Rallies to mark anniversary of martial law anticipated nationwide**

Philippine authorities are planning a one-day suspension of schools and nonessential government services in Manila on September 21 in response to potential large-scale protests. Multiple groups plan to stage rallies in the Philippines on

September 21 to mark the 45th anniversary of the declaration of martial law by late dictator Ferdinand Marcos. Many activists will also protest President Rodrigo Duterte's martial law declaration in Mindanao and rising extrajudicial killings under his administration. Opposition groups were further angered by President Duterte's statement on September 15 implying he may institute martial law nationwide in response to communist rebel activity. The largest protest is likely to occur in Metro Manila, where demonstrators plan to gather at the Rizal Park (also known as Luneta Park) from 1400. Thousands of people are expected to join the rally. Sizeable demonstrations will probably take place in other major cities, including Cebu and Davao; activists will probably gather at public parks and squares and could stage marches. Authorities will likely increase security around rally sites, particularly near larger demonstrations. Localised traffic disruptions are likely if large marches are organised. Significant unrest is possible as skirmishes between security personnel and protesters cannot be ruled out.

Advice: Avoid all demonstrations as a precaution. Allow additional driving time in Metro Manila and in other major cities where demonstrations could occur. Exercise caution near popular protest sites; seek updated information on traffic disruptions and protest sites.

SRI LANKA (Country risk rating: **Medium); September 13 to 18; (Update) Unionised CEB workers' strike to continue indefinitely across the country**

As of September 18, unionised employees of state-owned utility provider Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) are continuing their strike action indefinitely after negotiations with government over wage hike revisions and other issues fell through late September 14. The strike, which began on September 13, has been prompting electricity outages in several areas of the country, including Colombo and Southern Province. Minor transport and commercial disruptions are probable for the duration of the strike. Small shops and businesses that are unable to afford generators will likely be forced to shut down during power outages. Transport disruptions could occur if outages affect street lights and traffic signals. CEB is the largest electricity utility provider in Sri Lanka. Workers participating in the strike may stage demonstrations, possibly outside CEB or government offices. These actions will likely produce localised traffic disruptions. Localised violence cannot be ruled out if security forces crack down on protesting employees to end the strike. The government has threatened to suspend striking workers from their jobs, and clashes could also occur if protesters prevent employees from returning to work.

Advice: Avoid all demonstrations; stay away from likely protest sites such as CEB and government offices due to the potential for unrest. Inspect generators, if available, to ensure that they function properly and are fully fuelled. Allow additional time for travel, especially during peak electricity usage hours.

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Europe and Russia

EUROPE; September 15 to October 31; Flight cancellations as Ryanair reduces services

Low-cost carrier Ryanair (FR) has announced that it will cancel around two percent of its daily scheduled flights (40-50 per day) in Europe until the end of October. The measure, which came into effect on September 15, aims to help improve the company's on-time performance, which recently fell below 80 percent. The problem is directly tied to crew shortages associated with the implementation of a new holiday leave calendar. Flights have been cancelled on many different routes, although services to and from airports serving London (STN), Dublin (DUB), Milan-Bergamo (BGY), Charleroi (CRL), Barcelona (BCN) and Madrid (MAD) have been particularly affected. More than 80 flights were cancelled each day on September 16 and 17, but the airline has stated that fewer flights would be affected going forward. Flights are being cancelled on short notice; Ryanair customers should receive email notices 24-48 hours ahead of departure if their flights are affected. Per the EU's Flight Compensation Regulation 261/2004, EU carriers that cancel flights on short notice must re-book passengers on other airlines or pay full fare refunds within seven days; the consumer protection law also allows passengers to claim additional compensation for cancelled flights.

Advice: Confirm flights before checking out of hotels or travelling to the airport. Consider using alternative carriers or rail services for time-sensitive travel.

FRANCE (Country risk rating: **Medium); September 7; Malaria cases reported in Allier Department, Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes Region**

On September 7, health officials in France reported two locally acquired cases of malaria in Allier Department, Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes Region. The infected individuals both attended a wedding from August 11 to 16 in Moulins and developed

symptoms on August 26. The risk of malaria in Allier Department remains minimal. Furthermore, there is no current data indicating active malaria transmission, though authorities continue to survey local mosquito populations. According to health officials, an imported case of malaria from Burkina Faso - a malaria-endemic country - stayed in Moulins and surrounding areas between late July and early August. Officials are assessing if there is a link between the imported case and the locally acquired cases. While imported cases of malaria are very common in France, it appears that the last known locally acquired cases occurred in 2014. Malaria is a potentially serious parasitic disease spread through the bite of infected mosquitoes, causing fever and potentially fatal influenza-like illness. Symptoms of malaria most commonly include fever, chills, headaches and body aches, nausea and vomiting, and general malaise. These symptoms usually develop 10-28 days after being bitten by an infected mosquito. The disease is often associated with anaemia and jaundice (yellowing of the skin and eyes, associated with liver damage), but severe disease can lead to seizures, mental disorientation, kidney failure, acute respiratory disease, coma, and death.

Advice: As weather permits, wear long-sleeved shirts, pants, and socks, or use insect protection containing DEET, picaridin, or another approved repellent. Remove standing water to reduce potential breeding areas for mosquitoes. Seek immediate medical attention if you develop symptoms of malaria within two months after returning from Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes Region.

FRANCE (Country risk rating: **Medium); September 17; US citizens hospitalised after acid attack in Marseille**

Four US tourists were hospitalised after an acid attack at Gare de Marseille Saint-Charles in Marseille at 1100 on September 17. Two of the college-age women suffered facial burns when the suspect sprayed them with hydrochloric acid; the others were treated for shock, but they were released after several hours. Police arrested a middle-aged woman described as mentally unstable in connection with the attack, and they have dismissed terrorism as a potential motive. Gare de Marseille Saint-Charles is the city's main rail station, and services are normal. The young women had been travelling from Marseille to Paris. Investigators do not believe the victims were targeted due to their nationality. The suspect was previously known to police for her involvement in a number of theft cases, and she did not attempt to flee the scene of the crime. The woman apparently justified the assault by stating that she had previously been the victim of an acid attack. The train station attack occurred less than a month after motorist with psychological problems killed one person when he deliberately rammed his vehicle into two bus shelters in the Croix-Rouge and Valentine quarters of Marseille. That incident had initially sparked fears of a possible terror attack.

SPAIN (Country risk rating: **Low); September 19; Labour union organising protest in central Barcelona**

Activists affiliated with the General Confederation of Labour (CGT) union have announced plans to hold a demonstration in front of the courthouse in Barcelona, Spain, on September 19. Participants will gather to protest the trial of a union member arrested for leading a strike and rally in the city several years ago. Participants will gather in front of the Lluçmajor Metro station and around the Plaza Republica at 0845 and head toward the courthouse building in central Barcelona at 0930. Participation will likely be in the low hundreds. It is unclear how long the rally will last, though localised transport disruptions and heightened security are likely until the early afternoon. CGT activists in Barcelona host frequent protests in urban centres over labour rights. The September 19 event will denounce local police for arresting this union member, who supporters claim was defending workers' rights. Clashes between police personnel and protesters are possible. Security forces will likely disperse any unrest by force, including the use teargas and water cannon. While foreign nationals are unlikely to be targeted, bystanders could be victims of collateral injury. As a precaution, security forces may cordon off the area surrounding the rally.

Advice: Avoid the protest sites throughout the morning of September 19. Allow additional time to reach destinations in central Barcelona due to possible transport.

UNITED KINGDOM (Country risk rating: **Low); September 17; Terror threat level change following London tube bombing**

The UK Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre lowered the nationwide threat level for international terrorism from 'critical' to 'severe' on September 17. With the downgrade, soldiers deployed in public areas as part of Operation Temperer will be withdrawn in the days ahead. The threat level was raised to 'critical' for two days after a bombing at the London Underground (tube) at the Parsons Green station on September 15. The Islamic State (IS) claimed responsibility for the attack, which left 30 people injured. The casualty count could have been much higher, but the device, which is believed to have been constructed using TATP explosives, did not fully explode. The 'critical' designation officially means that an attack is "expected imminently", but the decision to increase the threat level was most likely tied to the fact that no suspects had

been taken into custody in connection with the Parsons Green case by the evening of September 15. Authorities have thus far made two arrests. Security has been tightened at major transit centres and around critical infrastructure in Greater London and other cities in the UK. Public sensitivity to the terrorism threat is high, and occasional bomb scares and other false alarms are possible. Unattended vehicles or suspicious packages may prompt a robust police response, street closures, and localised evacuations. Some of these incidents could be highly disruptive, especially if they occur in busy commercial areas, or at airports or other transport hubs.

Advice: Avoiding the innumerable sites that could be considered potential terror targets is impractical, but commonsense precautions can be observed to minimise risk. Remain attentive at events that draw sizeable crowds to large outdoor spaces. Familiarise yourself with corporate emergency procedures and evacuation routes at hotels, office buildings, and frequently used transit centres. Make allowances for travel disruptions due to elevated security measures.

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Middle East and North Africa

LEBANON (Country risk rating: **High**); September 15; French Embassy issues warning for possible attacks countrywide

On September 15, the Embassy of France in Lebanon issued a security warning stating that "due to a high risk of attack in public places, special care must be observed in the next 48 hours". The embassy did not provide any additional details about an imminent threat. The French Embassy message followed one by the US Embassy warning of an ongoing threat to the Casino du Liban in Jounieh. The US Embassy also did not say there was a specific imminent threat, but it called on all US government staff to avoid the casino. The security warnings may have been issued as precautionary measures due to vague intelligence suggesting that the Islamic State (IS) could carry out attacks in the country. IS has a presence in Lebanon and has carried out several bombings in the country since 2014, including in Beirut. Security forces have recently foiled several IS bombing plots. On August 7, authorities foiled a plot by a Syrian national to perpetrate a suicide attack in Lebanon, but officials have declined to name the exact target location. Further investigation revealed that the bomber was given orders by an IS recruiter. On June 6, security forces foiled a suicide bombing plot by IS militants in the Dahieh region of southern Beirut. Officials said police seized at least one explosive belt that was to be worn by a suicide attacker, but that the plot was in the early stages when it was foiled.

Advice: Vary times and routes if travelling in Lebanon. Avoid large gatherings as a precaution. Register and maintain contact with your diplomatic mission. Carry identification and travel documents at all times.

TUNISIA (Country risk rating: **High**); September 16; Activists in Tunis stage rally against controversial reconciliation law

Members of the Popular Front - a left-wing political alliance - and activists from the We Will Not Forgive (Manich Msamah) held a protest march in central Tunis on September 16. Over 2,000 people reportedly attended. Security forces were present. The march began at the statue of Ibn Khaldun before proceeding along Habib Bourguiba Avenue. Activists held the march to denounce the passing of the controversial economic reconciliation law on September 13. The law pardons those involved in corruption under the regime of former President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali if they return a portion of their illicit gains to the government. A number of activist groups, political parties, and the influential Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT) have denounced the law's passing, as they feel it hinders the progression of transitional justice following the ousting of Ben Ali in 2011. Future protests are possible in Tunis and in other urban centres. These may take place outside local government buildings or in public squares. Previous demonstrations against the law have not been violent; however, violence remains possible if police use force to try to disperse demonstrators. Expect increased security and localized traffic disruptions.

Advice: To the extent possible, avoid demonstrations. Allow additional time for commuting near popular protest venues. Obey instructions of local security personnel.

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Sub-Saharan Africa

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (Country risk rating: **High); September 15; Mass shooting of Burundian asylum-seekers in South Kivu Province**

A mass shooting left at least 35 Burundian asylum-seekers dead and more than 110 others injured in Kamanyola, South Kivu Province, on September 15. Burundian demonstrators were rallying outside the local National Intelligence Agency (ANR) office to protest the forcible repatriation of four people accused of possessing illegal weapons. According to most accounts, demonstrators started stoning the building, which prompted police and Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC) troops to open fire on them. Congolese security sources have stated that at least one FARDC soldier was killed when he was mobbed and dispossessed of his weapon. Kamanyola is about 30 km (19 miles) south south east of Bukavu. Violent protests against MONUSCO are possible in the coming days, as reports have circulated that Pakistani peacekeepers did not intervene to restore order. Some reports have claimed that Kirundi-speaking Imbonerakure gunmen may have been involved in the massacre, although most sources continue to assign blame to Congolese security forces. However, any rumours or evidence of Imbonerakure involvement could ignite ethnic hostilities between Hutus and Tutsis in the tri-border region between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi. The Imbonerakure is the youth wing of Burundi's ruling National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Forces for the Defence of Democracy (CNDD-FDD) party. Reports have been circulating for several years about the Burundian National Defence Force allegedly training Hutu Imbonerakure members in border areas of South Kivu, and members of the group reportedly wear uniforms that are very similar to those of the FARDC.

Advice: Avoid all demonstrations as a precaution against unrest.

NIGERIA (Country risk rating: **High); September 15; (Update) Officials elevate flood warning in multiple states**

Nigeria's National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) issued an indefinite heightened warning of imminent and severe flooding in Anambra, Bayesla, Delta, Imo, Kebbi, Kogi, Niger and Rivers states on September 13. NEMA increased the severity of its advisory after the Niger Basin Authority (l'Autorite du Bassin du Niger, ABN) maintained an Orange level alert (the second highest) for high water levels in the Niger River from September 6 to 13. NEMA warns residents living along the Niger River and its tributaries to be prepared to evacuate. Water is reportedly spilling over dams near Jebba, Kanji and Shiroro. Flooding is possible in other locations within the Niger River basin. Expect increased transport disruptions in the coming days in riverine areas of the Niger River; flooding could make many roads impassable, and floodwater may damage bridges. The incidence of water- and vector-borne diseases such as dengue fever, malaria and cholera may increase in the coming weeks. Electrical substations could be inundated or pre-emptively taken offline, exacerbating existing power problems. Crime could spike during outages, as alarm systems and electric fences could be rendered inoperable. NEMA reports that 26 of Nigeria's 36 states will likely experience flooding this year. The riverine flood threat in urban areas will likely be compounded by poor infrastructure, improper maintenance to ensure debris and silt are cleared from drains and sewers, and the frequent dumping of waste and refuse into waterways.

Advice: Avoid low-lying and flood-prone areas until waters recede. Confirm route viability with trusted local contacts before conducting ground movements or planning freight transport. Do not attempt to cross submerged sections of roadway. Ensure generators have a sufficient fuel supply in case of protracted power outages. Charge portable electronic devices when possible, and restrict cell phone use to emergencies if operating in an area without power.

NIGERIA (Country risk rating: **High); September 12 to 14; Suspected IPOB supporters attack police in Rivers and Abia states**

Further violence is possible in Nigeria's south eastern Rivers and Abia states following a spate of attacks on police by suspected supporters of the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) movement from September 12 and 14. At least one security force member was killed and several others wounded during the attacks. The attacks coincided with IPOB rallies and confrontations between members of the Igbo and Hausa communities in the cities of Port Harcourt and Aba. Police arrested more than 30 people in connection with these incidents. Security personnel will likely prevent additional unrest by firing tear gas to disperse crowds. Security forces could set up checkpoints and roadblocks. Expect traffic disruptions near security measures and areas where violent incidents have occurred. Attacks on security personnel appear to be a response to the military's Operation Python Dance II, which has resulted in an intensified crackdown on secessionists in Rivers and Abia. The planned withdrawal of soldiers from Aba and Umuahia on September 15 may lead to a de-escalation of tensions in the affected cities. The Nigerian government considers IPOB a threat to the country's unity and territorial integrity. Kanu's trial, which is set to begin in Abuja in October, could further galvanise the movement's supporters.

Advice: Avoid all protests and large concentrations of security personnel. Leave the area immediately or seek shelter in a secure location if violence erupts. Carry proper identification at all times. Consider deferring use of the A3 highway between Umuahia and the Eleme Junction in Port Harcourt until security conditions improve.

NIGERIA (Country risk rating: **High); September 18; ULC launches indefinite countrywide strike**

A coalition of Nigerian trade unions, the United Labour Congress (ULC), launched an indefinite countrywide strike on September 18. Although it is currently unclear how well the strike is being observed, the ULC has warned that banks, airports, seaports, markets and government offices would be forced to shut down. Crucially, the action has not received the support of the country's leading union coalitions, the Nigeria Labour Congress (NLC) and the Trade Union Congress of Nigeria (TUC). Nevertheless, transport, supply chain and business disruptions are possible, and is expected to worsen if the strike becomes protracted. Striking workers may also organise protests in large cities, opening the possibility of violent clashes with security forces. The organisation is demanding the immediate payment of all public sector salary arrears, an increase in the monthly minimum wage from NGN 18,000 to NGN 56,000 (USD 158), the cancellation of existing government plans to privatise the country's power utility, and the withdrawal of army soldiers from all oil exploitation sites in the Niger Delta, among other things. These demands are unlikely to be met in the near-term. The government does not currently recognise the ULC, and has called the strike illegal. The ULC emerged as an independent labour force in early 2017 following a split with the NLC, with which it was formerly affiliated.

Advice: Confirm flights and shipments; plan for possible supply chain disruptions starting September 18. Verify the status of roads before attempting to travel. Avoid all demonstrations due to the risk of violence. Stock up on non-perishable food items and essential products which may be unavailable during the strike.

NIGERIA (Country risk rating: **High); September 14; Violent unrest prompts curfew in Jos, Plateau State**

The Plateau State government initially imposed an indefinite daily from 1800-0600 curfew in Jos following clashes between residents and those perceived to be southern Nigerians on September 14. The daily curfew has since been relaxed to 2200-0600. Additional security personnel were deployed in the city to prevent further communal violence and unrest. The clashes predominantly occurred near Ahmadu Bello Way in the city centre and in the Apata, Chobe and Katakò neighbourhoods. Protesters blocked roads with burning debris and attacked businesses perceived to be operated by southerners, in response to recent violence associated with secessionists in the Niger Delta region. Security personnel may set up roadblocks and could fire live ammunition to stop vehicles violating the curfew. Although authorities state the situation is under control, additional violence could occur without warning. Security personnel are likely to forcibly disperse demonstrations with tear gas, but could use gunfire if violence occurs. Protesters could attack vehicles where unrest takes place. Looting and rioting are also possible. Commercial and transportation disruptions are likely.

Advice: Abide by the curfew and any other emergency restrictions. Complete all ground movements during daylight hours, and keep windows closed and doors locked at all times. Avoid all demonstrations and large concentrations of security personnel. If violence erupts near you, leave the area immediately, and seek shelter in a secure location. Carry proper identification, and be polite and non-confrontational if stopped at a security checkpoint. Maintain contact with your diplomatic mission.

SENEGAL (Country risk rating: **Medium); September 16; Activist-led demonstration in Dakar**

Anti-government protesters held a demonstration at Dakar's Obelisk Square (Place de l'Obélisque) to demand the return of a deported activist leader on September 16. Authorities stated that the event, which was sanctioned in Dakar and banned in the cities of Tambacounda and Kaolackm, was attended by approximately 400 people. Despite the low attendance figures, tensions are high following Kemi Seba's September 6 deportation, after he organised demonstrations against the use of the West African Franc (XOF) national currency. The possibility of further related protests cannot be discounted in the short- to medium-term.

Advice: Avoid the protest. Consider alternative travel routes to avoid Obelisk Square. If violence occurs nearby, leave the area immediately and seek shelter in a secure location.

SOUTH AFRICA (Country risk rating: **High); September 18; Disruptions ongoing due to taxi drivers' strikes in Cape Town and Pretoria**

Disruptions are ongoing across Cape Town due to a taxi drivers strike on September 18. There have been several reports that commuter busses and cars on major roads and highways, including the N2, have been attacked by demonstrators. Sporadic protests have been reported in numerous areas of the city and roads being blocked with burning tyres and debris. Additionally, the local authorities in Pretoria have deployed security personnel to several areas of the city as a precaution for a planned strike and associated protests. Protesters are expected to gather at the old depot for bus company Putco, and proceed to the Union buildings, on September 18. The Mabopane Winterveld Klipgat Taxi Association (MAWITKA) denounced the strike, and has requested that the police declare it illegal. Officials have warned motorists to avoid using Hebron Road, Hornsnek Road, Lucas Mangope Road (M21), the N4 highway (notably, in Mamelodi), the R80, R101, R104, R513, and R566 roads, Ruth First Road, Stormvoel Road (M8), and Tsamaya Avenue (M8). Police officers may fire teargas, rubber bullets, or stun grenades to disperse taxi drivers if violence erupts, and to end unauthorised demonstrations in central Pretoria. Heavy traffic congestion is likely on detours and alternative routes, including major highways. Transportation disruptions are likely to cause increased employee absenteeism, freight delivery delays, and other commercial disruptions.

Advice: Limit travel in Cape Town and central Pretoria for the duration of the strike and protest action. If violent unrest occurs near you, leave the area immediately and seek shelter in a secure location. Plan routes to avoid likely traffic congestion, and obtain updated information on road conditions from trusted local contacts. Keep vehicle windows and doors locked at all times. Confirm all business appointments ahead of travel. Review freight delivery schedules.

TOGO (Country risk rating: **Medium); September 20 and 21; (Update) Opposition groups call for further nationwide protests**

Political opposition groups have called for more nationwide marches on September 20 and 21. Large crowds are likely to gather in Lome. Opposition protesters have previously gathered in the Atikoume, Akossombo, and Be-Kondjindji areas, and marched through the city centre. Other major cities that could see massive demonstrations include Anie, Bafil, Kara, Noepe, and Sokode. As a precaution, authorities will almost certainly deploy security across the country on the march days. Expect localised traffic disruptions along march routes; large demonstrations could also disrupt commerce. Security personnel have fired teargas, rubber bullets, and live ammunition to break up previous opposition protests. Skirmishes between marchers and police cannot be ruled out. The main opposition groups - Fight for Political Change 2015 (CAP 2015) coalition and the Pan-African National Party (PNP), as well as their allies - plan to take part in the marches. The opposition has long been demanding political and constitutional reforms, including presidential term limits and the establishment of a run-off electoral system in presidential polls if no candidate obtains a majority during the first round. It has accused the regime of President Faure Gnassingbe of trying to delay these reforms.

Advice: Avoid all protests, areas with a heavy security presence, and political party offices on September 20 and 21 due to the potential for violence. Use alternative routes to circumvent demonstration sites; allow extra time to reach destinations. Leave the area immediately, and seek shelter in a secure, non-governmental building if violence erupts nearby. Maintain contact with your diplomatic mission.

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