Publish Date: 12/04/2017

No Changes This Week:

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


Should you have any questions, please contact me directly. Thank you.

Henry Judah, AIC CPCU CLU ChFC | Associate Director
System Risk Management
hjudah@tamus.edu

1262 TAMU | College Station, TX 77840-7896
Tel. 979.458.6234 | Cell 979.820.2006 | Fax 979.458.6247 | www.tamus.edu

Country Travel Advisory List:

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

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

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


- **Armenia**: Within 2km of the line of contact in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region
- **Azerbaijan**: Within 2km of the line of contact in the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region
- **Cameroon**: Far North (Extreme-Nord) region and within 50km of Cameroon's shared border with Nigeria in the country's North (Nord) and Adamawa (Adamaoua) regions.
- **Chad**: Ennedi-Est, Ennedi-Quest, Wadi Fira, Quaddai and Sila (which border Sudan), the southern regions of Logone Oriental, Mandoul, Moyen-Chari and Salamat, the northern regions of Tibesti, Borkou and Ennedi-Qest (which border Libya) and the western Kanem and Lac regions.
- **Democratic Republic of Congo**: The eastern Nord-Kivu, Sud-Kivu, and Tanganyika provinces, as well as the north eastern Ituri, Haut-Uele and Bas-Uele provinces and the southern Kasia Central province.
- **Egypt**: North Sinai 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 a 20km radius of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Okuma.

• **Lebanon**: An area within 15km of the shared border with Syria in the Bekaa and North governorates and Palestinian refugee camps across the country.

• **Mali**: Gao, Kidal, Mopti and Timbuktu regions

• **Mexico**: Due to the high risks of kidnapping, violent crime and an escalating drug cartel-related conflict, red24 currently advises against non-essential travel to the countryside outside of major cities and primary resort areas as well as the states of Tamaulipas, Michoacan, Coahuila, Sinaloa, Nayarit and Guererro.

• **Niger**: Within a 50km radius of Niger’s shared border with Nigeria in the administrative regions of Diffa and Zinder and to within a 100km radius of Niger’s shared borders with Chad, Algeria, Libya and Mali.

• **Nigeria**: Adamawa, Borno, Yobe and Gombe in the northeast. Rural and remote areas within Kaduna, Bauchi, Plateau, Benue, Zamfara, Enuge and Taraba states in the “Middle Belt” and the Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta and Rivers states in the south.

• **Pakistan**: Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan provinces

• **Philippines**: The southern Mindanao region and the Sulu Archipelago.

• **Russia**: Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria (including the Mount Elbrus region).

• **Saudi Arabia**: Within 10km of the shared border with Yemen

• **Somalia**: Most of Somalia except Puntland and Somaliland.
- **Sudan**: Dafur region, South Kordufan state, Blue Nile state and the disputed Abyei region.

- **Tunisia**: The Djebel Chambi National Park (Kasserine governorate) and South of but not including the towns of El Borma and Dhehiba (Tataouine governorate)

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

- **Uganda**: Areas within 30km of Uganda’s shared borders with the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and South Sudan, excluding major towns.

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

---

**December 04, 2017**

**News summary**

**Africa**

**CAMEROON** - Gunmen Kill Five Police Officers in Eyoumojock, Manyu Division

**CONGO** - US Embassy in Brazzaville Reopens amid Increased Security Measures

**NIGER** - State of Emergency Imposed in Diffa, Tahoua, and Tillaberi Regions due to Threat of Militant Attack

**NIGERIA** - Officials Announce Death of Portuguese National in Captivity; Victim Kidnapped in Kogi State

**NIGERIA** - Three Suicide Bombers Attack Market in Biu, Borno State, Killing at least 13

**SOUTH SUDAN** - Fighting between Armed Groups Continues near Leer

**ZIMBABWE** - President Appoints New Cabinet

**Asia**
AFGHANISTAN - Bomb Targeting Military Recruits Injures at least Four in Bagh-E-Qazir, Kabul

AFGHANISTAN - Suicide Bombing in Jalalabad Kills at least Six

BANGLADESH - Ongoing Measles Outbreak Reported in Cox's Bazar District

BANGLADESH - Transport Owners Launch Indefinite Strike in Chittagong

INDIA - Nationwide Rallies, Sectarian Unrest Possible amid Anniversary of Babri Masjid Demolition in Ayodhya

INDIA - Tropical Cyclone Ockhi Weakens while Turning Northeast in Arabian Sea

INDONESIA - Dockworkers' Strike at Ports Nationwide

INDONESIA - Periodic Flight Disruptions Likely to Continue in Bali and Lombok amid Ongoing Volcanic Activity

MALAYSIA - Flooding Ongoing in Northeastern States

MALAYSIA - Security Forces Kill Suspected Cross-Border Kidnapper in Sabah's Lahad Datu

MYANMAR - Fighting Breaks Out between Military and Ethnic Armed Group in Kachin State

PAKISTAN - Casualties amid Grenade Explosion in Chaman

PAKISTAN - Hardline Religious Group Ends Sit-in in Central Lahore

PHILIPPINES - Militants Release Six Local Hostages in Patikul in Sulu

PHILIPPINES - Transport Groups Call off Scheduled Nationwide Strike; Protests Planned in Manila

THAILAND - National Council for Peace and Order Hints at Prolonged Ban on Political Activity amid Security Concerns

THAILAND - Roadside Bombing Injures Two in Narathiwat

Caribbean

JAMAICA - US National Killed in St. James

Central/South America

HONDURAS - Government Declares State of Emergency; Increased Security, Violent Protests to Continue

Europe

GERMANY - Security Increased in Brandenburg following Bomb Scare in Potsdam

GERMANY - Winter Weather to Persist Nationwide

GREECE - EasyJet to Reroute Flights to and from Thessaloniki through Athens and Kavala Airports
SPAIN - Strike Planned by Road Transport Workers in Toledo Province

Middle East/North Africa

ISRAEL and SYRIA - Airstrikes Target Iranian-Syrian Base South of Damascus

KUWAIT - Expect Increased Security, Traffic Disruptions in Kuwait City for Gulf Cooperation Council Summit

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY - Gaza Power Transfer from Hamas to Palestinian Authority Delayed

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES - Authorities Deny Al-Houthi Rebel Claim of Missile Launch toward Unfinished Nuclear Power Plant in Abu Dhabi

YEMEN - Clashes between Al-Houthis, Saleh Supporters Spread to Ministries, Airport in Sana’a

North America

CANADA and UNITED STATES - Winter Storm to Bring Snow and Strong Winds

Russia/CIS

UKRAINE - Opposition Activists Continue Protest Series in Kyiv with Rally in Taras Shevchenko Park

South Pacific/Oceania

AUSTRALIA - Heavy Rainfall Forecast to Continue in Southeastern Region

Africa

CAMEROON (Country Risk Rating: High) - Gunmen Kill Five Police Officers in Eyoumojock, Manyu Division

Gunmen ambushed a police convoy, killing at least five officers and wounding two others near Eyoumojock, Manyu Division, Nov. 30. Anglophone militants demanding independence for the Northwest and Southwest Regions, such as the Ambazonian Defence Force (ADF), likely conducted the attack.

Analysis: Authorities will likely increase security in the Manyu division over the coming days, following a similar incident Nov. 29. Exchanges of gunfire are possible if police or soldiers encounter resistance from suspects. Security personnel may establish roadblocks, conduct vehicle searches, and enforce curfews and movement restrictions without warning.
Authorities could also restrict telecommunications networks. Security measures and restrictions could cause delays to ground transportation and freight deliveries. Eyoumojock is 200 km (124 miles) northwest of Douala.

Attacks by Anglophone militants in the English-speaking Northwest and Southwest regions are increasing in frequency and scale, and at least 16 security personnel have died amid the escalating violence. Militants started targeting security personnel with crude bombs in mid-2017 and began ambushing checkpoints manned by small numbers of security personnel in November. Gunmen stole a large quantity of weaponry during an assault that killed four soldiers near the town of Mamfre, capital of the Manyu division, Nov. 29. The weapons could enable militants to conduct more sophisticated ambushes targeting security forces’ convoys. President Paul Biya convened a meeting of senior officials to discuss the government’s response to secessionists Dec. 1, which will likely result in the intensification of security measures.

Relations between Cameroon’s Francophone government and its English-speaking Northwest and Southwest regions have worsened considerably since the government’s crackdown on Anglophone protests in late 2016. The protests began as requests for government resources and expanded to include demands for the devolution of political power. Security forces have reacted to activists with heavy-handed responses on multiple occasions. The government’s refusal to adequately address local grievances appears to have increased local support for separatist elements, some of which are increasingly adopting violent tactics. Stringent security measures - including curfews, mass arrests, and public assembly bans - are likely increasing the support of moderate Anglophone activists for armed resistance. Over the past year, the government has used increasingly violent tactics to suppress protests in the two Anglophone regions.

CONGO (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - US Embassy in Brazzaville Reopens amid Increased Security Measures

On Dec. 1, the US Embassy in Brazzaville reopened following its Nov. 30 closure due to a terrorist threat directed at the US and French embassies. The government of Congo provided additional security personnel to ensure the safety of the facilities. Officials said the security measures would be kept in place around both embassies until further notice. The French Embassy has announced plans to heighten security at other French interests in Brazzaville and Pointe-Noire.

Analysis: Officials did not name these specific locations, but they may include Brazzaville’s French Institute (Institut Francais du Congo), Pointe-Noire’s French consulate, and Pointe-Noire’s Charlemagne high school. The offices of French oil and gas companies in Pointe-Noire could also be affected. Expect transport disruptions, including road closures, in all areas where extra security forces are deployed.

On Nov. 30, Congolese Communication Minister Thierry Moungalla confirmed the terrorist nature of the threat, citing “an imminent terror attack against French and American interests in Congo.” Authorities have apprehended a Congolese individual as part of their investigation. The minister’s statement marks the first time that the Congolese government has issued a terrorism warning aimed at foreign interests. There are currently no known transnational terrorist groups operating in Congo.

NIGER (Country Risk Rating: High) - State of Emergency Imposed in Diffa, Tahoua, and Tillaberi Regions due to Threat of Militant Attack

A state of emergency is currently active in Diffa region, and the border areas of Tahoua, and Tillaberi regions, through Dec. 18. The state of emergency will almost certainly be extended; however, the government often delays the notification of such augmentations of security measures. The measure gives the regions’ governors the authority to enact restrictions without passing additional laws, including curfews, clothing and vehicle prohibitions, and additional powers to conduct arrests and property searches without a warrant.

Islamist militants will continue to pose a serious security threat across Niger for the foreseeable future due to the presence of Boko Haram in the Diffa region bordering northeast Nigeria and western Chad, and various organisations operating in the northern and western border areas with Algeria, Chad, Mali, and Libya.

Indiscriminate raids by Islamist militants associated with the Boko Haram organisation in the Diffa region pose a persistent threat along the southeastern border with Nigeria; however, the official reporting of such attacks is unreliable. Humanitarian organisations’ reporting on those displaced by violence provides a strong proxy indicator of militants’ continued activity. In November 2017, the UN reported more than 255,000 people in Diffa remain displaced by Boko Haram. Militants in Diffa tend to target local nationals and
villages, ambush security personnel, launch suicide bombing attacks against military and civilian targets, and lay landmines and improvised explosive devices. Boko Haram would likely kill or kidnap foreign nationals in Diffa if the opportunity arose. Two suicide bombers killed two people, and injured at least 11 others, during an attack on a UN-run displaced persons camp near Kabelawa, Diffa Region, the night of June 28.

Militants loyal to Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and a loosely connected Islamic State affiliate, pose an increasing and significant threat of kidnapping and targeted attack to foreign travellers in northern and western Niger. This threat is most severe along the Burkinabè and Malian borders in Tahoua and Tillabéri regions; but militants are also likely to be active along the Algerian, Libyan, and Chadian border areas of Agadez regions. Militants tend to target security facilities and patrols in remote locations near the border with Mali, and occasionally attack soldiers guarding refugee camps. The self-described Islamic State in the Greater Sahara group (ISGS) is suspected of killing four US military advisors during an ambush near the Malian border outside Tongo, Tillabéri Region, Oct. 4; one of the soldiers was likely briefly abducted before being killed.

Bandits and rebels have also kidnapped and then sold hostages to militants, or held them for ransom. Kidnappers often release hostages once they receive ransom payment, but have also killed abductees for political reasons. Unidentified gunmen kidnapped a US NGO worker in the town of Abalak, Tahoua Region, in October 2016; his whereabouts and condition remain unknown.

Militants, rebels, and criminal organisations are linked to the smuggling of people, arms, narcotics, and untaxed goods between West and North Africa. Nigerien and French troops have conducted joint operations against traffickers in Niger as part of France's regional Barkhane mission to target militants associated with AQIM. Although traffickers avoid confrontations with security forces, such incidents are highly likely to result in violence; however, proceeds from smuggling have been used to bribe state authorities, reducing their effectiveness.

Analysis: A faction of Boko Haram is understood to be located in the area where the borders of Cameroon, Chad, Nigeria, and Niger - including the southeastern corner of Diffa Region - converge, at Lake Chad. Although a multinational military effort ejected Boko Haram from urban centres in these countries 2015-2016, increasingly frequent ambushes and suicide bombings in northern Cameroon and eastern Nigeria in 2017 negate claims of victory. A lack of coordination and political tensions between national leaders appear to have stymied equivalent security efforts in Niger. Boko Haram has evolved into a more flexible insurgency, likely composed of several networked and roving sub-groups, and may be exploiting the challenging riverine geography and the porous border in Diffa as a staging ground. While Boko Haram and AQIM-associated militants are actively involved and supported by similar illegal trafficking networks, there has been limited recent evidence indicating the two are linked operationally.

Widespread and pervasive insecurity in Mali enables militants affiliated through the Jamaat Nasr al-Islam wa al-Moumin (Group for the Victory of Islam and the Faithful; JNIM) alliance to threaten neighbouring countries including Niger. This network of Al-Qaeda-affiliated Islamist militants has launched attacks targeting foreign nationals in the capitals of Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, and Mali. Similar assaults on hotels and bars in Niamey are a viable possibility, and the alliance's affiliates have previously targeted foreigners in Agadez and Arlit. In October 2016, the self-described ISGS launched a failed attack on a prison 50 km (31 miles) northeast of Niamey. ISGS has not claimed any subsequent attacks but is suspected of targeting security forces along the Niger-Malian frontier on a monthly basis. JNIM claimed a July raid targeting security forces near Midal, Tahoua Region, and is also suspected of conducting other cross-border attacks. ISGS and JNIM might have at least reached a nonaggression pact, but it is unclear if they are actively colluding with each other.

NIGERIA (Country Risk Rating: High) - Officials Announce Death of Portuguese National in Captivity; Victim Kidnapped in Kogi State

On Dec. 1, Nigeria's Foreign Ministry announced that a Portuguese national, who was kidnapped Oct. 23 along Kogi State's Obajana-Kabba road, had died in captivity. The government did not disclose any details as to the exact date or circumstances of his death.

Analysis: On Oct. 23, around 15 unidentified gunmen attacked a group of expatriates and Nigerian workers who were inspecting a construction project on the Obajana-Kabba road, killing two Nigerian police officers and abducting the
Portuguese national. Police deployed to the area following the attack, which occurred about 180 km (110 miles) southwest of Abuja.

Most abductions in Nigeria are carried out by criminal gangs to obtain ransom payments, although militant groups have occasionally made political demands in exchange for the release of victims. While most kidnapping victims are eventually released after a ransom is paid, criminal gangs and militants have occasionally killed hostages.

NIGERIA (Country Risk Rating: High) - Three Suicide Bombers Attack Market in Biu, Borno State, Killing at least 13

Three suicide bombers, all young women, attacked a market in Biu, Borno State, Dec. 2, killing at least 13 people and injuring over 53 others. Only two of the suicide bombers died; the third was arrested after her device failed to detonate. The attack took place during food distribution by charity workers. Biu is about 161 km (100 miles) southwest of Maiduguri on the A4 Highway and Gombe Highway.

Analysis: Competing factions of Boko Haram pose a very high threat of targeted attack in northeast Nigeria, and often target vulnerable camps at the periphery of urban areas that house those displaced by associated violence. Boko Haram suicide bombings occur weekly, and such attacks in northeast Nigeria and bordering countries have increased significantly over the past six months. The group has also attacked mosques, markets, security checkpoints, and government buildings throughout Borno State. On Nov. 15, four suicide bombers launched an attack near Muna Garage in the eastern outskirts of Maiduguri, killing at least 12 people and injuring more than 20 others.

SOUTH SUDAN (Country Risk Rating: Extreme) - Fighting between Armed Groups Continues near Leer

Fighting between troops loyal to President Salva Kiir and the Sudan Peoples’ Liberation Movement/Army in Opposition (SPLM/A-IO) continued in areas surrounding Leer, including Gandor and Thonyor, former Unity State, Dec. 1. Humanitarian sources report gunfire struck vehicles and tents and the nearby UN Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) peacekeeping base. Each side accused the other of instigating the clashes Nov. 30, and each claims to be acting in self-defence. The SPLM/A-IO claims its fighters killed 53 government soldiers and wounded 93 others while sustaining five casualties. A government minister claimed Kiir’s troops also inflicted heavy casualties at the cost of six wounded soldiers.

Analysis: Additional violence is likely. Armed groups could use heavy weaponry, including artillery, and government forces could launch airstrikes, all of which would pose a severe threat of collateral damage. Fighting near Malakal could result in flight disruptions and cancellations of UN Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS) to the Leer airstrip.

A ceasefire between Kiir and the SPLM/A-IO is all but obsolete, and intermittent fighting between government forces and several opposition groups continues nationwide. Both sides likely inflated their achievements and downplayed their losses in the recent fighting at Leer. So-called revitalization talks planned in December, intended to restore a collapsed 2015 peace accord, are unlikely to result in an improvement in South Sudan’s security environment. International donors are demanding the government abandon its attempts to end the country’s civil war through a military victory, and are threatening to enforce sanctions.

Although Kiir’s troops are militarily dominant, they lack the numbers to win the conflict decisively. Widespread violence and insecurity in South Sudan have been catalysed in 2017 by increased competition for resources among various armed factions amid the economic crisis. The civil war has evolved from a dispute between two sides into a multi-dimensional conflict of several connected but geographically-separated rebellions.

ZIMBABWE (Country Risk Rating: High) - President Appoints New Cabinet

On Dec. 1, President Emmerson Mnangagwa appointed a Cabinet, composed of 22 members. Mnangagwa appointed soldiers and members of the former regime to key positions, including the foreign, security, and finance ministries. Some critics in the country charged that Mnangagwa did not make as significant a break with the past as many Zimbabweans had hoped following the military takeover that ushered in the end of long-time leader Robert Mugabe’s rule.
Analysis: The opposition, including the main group, Movement for Democratic Change - led by veteran opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai (MDC-T) - expressed concerns over the new Cabinet, citing the lack of fresh representation. Mnangagwa also did not include in his government members of the younger generation from the ruling party, dubbed Generation 40 (G40), who opposed him as a successor to Mugabe. Zimbabweans have high expectations for the Mnangagwa administration. Though many citizens unconditionally welcomed the Mugabe's departure by embracing the military takeover, their tolerance for inconvenience and patience with Zimbabwe's enduring political tension may begin to fade amid evaporating hopes if a return to status quo is perceived to be the norm under Mnangagwa's leadership. Under such circumstances, opposition to the new government will likely increase, especially if the economic situation does not improve, as many Zimbabweans had anticipated. Ultimately, activists may begin to demonstrate to demand the promised changes.

Asia

AFGHANISTAN (Country Risk Rating: Extreme) - Bomb Targeting Military Recruits Injures at least Four in Bagh-E-Qazir, Kabul

A bomb attack in Kabul's Bagh-e-Qazir District left at least four people injured Dec. 2. The blast occurred around 1130; the explosive device consisted of a magnetic bomb planted in an unspecified location at a military recruiting station. No organisation has immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

Analysis: Government and military targets are frequently hit in Kabul, where even high security zones are vulnerable to attack. The use of magnetic bombs, however, is a relatively new tactic, with the devices typically deployed when targeting security forces. Both the Taliban and local affiliates of the Islamic State (IS) militant group continue to carry out frequent mass-casualty attacks in Kabul, including in high-security zones, underlining the deteriorating security situation in the capital. In addition to popular government/military targets, militants have increasingly targeted places of worship, religious leaders and worshippers, particularly those belonging to the minority Shi'a sect.

AFGHANISTAN (Country Risk Rating: Extreme) - Suicide Bombing in Jalalabad Kills at least Six

A suicide bombing in Jalalabad, eastern Nangarhar Province, killed at least six people and injured 13 others the afternoon of Dec. 3. Initial reports indicate the bomber drove up on a motorcycle and detonated explosives near a sports stadium in Police District 1. The attack took place as supporters of President Ashraf Ghani were gathering for a political rally, suggesting the casualty count could rise.

Analysis: Localised traffic disruptions are likely through early Dec. 4 as authorities continue to investigate the incident. No group has claimed responsibility for the attack, but the Islamic State (IS) and the Taliban are known to operate in Nangarhar Province.

BANGLADESH (Country Risk Rating: High) - Ongoing Measles Outbreak Reported in Cox's Bazar District

Health officials have identified 1,270 cases of measles in Cox's Bazar District Sept. 6-Nov. 18, with at least 858 cases reported Nov. 4-18. The outbreak has mainly affected Rohingya refugees; however, activity has also been reported in their host communities. According to officials, the majority of cases have occurred in the village of Ukhia.

Analysis: The surge of Rohingya refugees from Rakhine State, Myanmar to Cox's Bazar District since late August has severely strained available resources in Bangladesh. Many of the refugees in Cox's Bazar District live in overcrowded settlements that lack proper sanitation, increasing the risk of infectious disease outbreaks, such as measles. Measles is a recurring threat in Bangladesh. According to international officials, an average vaccination rate of 92-95 percent is needed to prevent wider community transmission of measles. The national vaccination rate in Bangladesh was 81 percent during 2016, and officials estimate that the vaccination rate among refugees who arrived since late August is only 35 percent.
Measles spreads through airborne droplets created when an infected individual coughs, sneezes, or speaks. Infected individuals can also expose people around them by contaminating surfaces with secretions from the nose, mouth, and throat. Symptoms of measles typically appear seven to 21 days after exposure, but patients become contagious up to five days before symptoms appear. Such symptoms generally include fever, cough, runny nose, red eyes, and a red rash that begins on the face and spreads downward. Serious complications - including pneumonia - can occur, especially in children younger than five years old, adults older than 20 years old, and people whose immune systems are weakened by other acute or chronic health conditions. Visit a doctor to ensure vaccination against measles or immunity through previous infection. Emphasise basic health precautions, especially frequent hand washing with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser if soap and water are unavailable. If you suspect measles infection, call ahead before visiting a doctor to prevent the spread of the disease at clinics or hospital.

BANGLADESH (Country Risk Rating: **High**) - Transport Owners Launch Indefinite Strike in Chittagong

An ongoing transport strike is causing ground transport disruptions in Chittagong as of Dec. 4. Members of a Chittagong Metropolitan Public Transport Owners' Association faction launched the strike at around 0600 Dec. 3 to press the government to address their 11-point demand, which includes ending alleged police harassment and reducing licencing barriers. Members have taken more than 1,500 vehicles off the road. Additionally, participants are enforcing the action in the city, preventing public buses, minibuses, and taxis from operating.

**Analysis:** Strikers may stage protests and erect roadblocks in the city. Minor bombings, arson, vandalism, and clashes between protestors and security personnel cannot be ruled out.

INDIA (Country Risk Rating: **High**) - Nationwide Rallies, Sectarian Unrest Possible amid Anniversary of Babri Masjid Demolition in Ayodhya

Dec. 6 will mark the 25th anniversary of the destruction of the Babri Masjid in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh State. The date typically prompts increased sectarian tensions between Muslims and Hindus. Religious tensions will be particularly high around the anniversary this year, as the Supreme Court is slated to begin final hearings in the Babri Masjid land dispute case on Dec. 5. The court will decide whether a temple for Hindu god Rama (Ram) can be built at the disputed site, and its final verdict will be binding for both Hindu and Muslim groups. Terrorism warnings are possible, and bomb threats and other security scares could cause localised disruptions around the anniversary.

**Analysis:** Right-wing Hindu groups will likely organise rallies in many parts of the country to push for the construction of a proposed temple at the site where the former mosque stood. Muslims observe the date as Youm-e-Gham (Day of Sorrow), and Islamic groups may organise mass gatherings and/or localised shutdown strikes to push several Babri Masjid-related demands. Sizeable rallies are possible in larger cities, resulting in localised traffic disruptions, although some urban administrations may prohibit street marches, demonstrations, sit-ins, and public meetings.

Religious tensions will likely be high in many areas, and seemingly minor incidents could spark localised violence and clashes between Muslims and supporters of right-wing Hindu groups. Problems are more likely in Uttar Pradesh and other parts of northern India, although unrest associated with the Ayodhya dispute is possible throughout the country, including in major cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, and Hyderabad. Expect increased security around major religious sites throughout the country. Elevated security is also probable throughout Uttar Pradesh, especially in Ayodhya, the neighbouring city of Faizabad, and other urban centres.

Religious unrest, riots, and terror attacks with direct and indirect ties to the Ayodhya dispute have claimed the lives of thousands of people in India since 1992. Right-wing Hindus believe that Mughal (Mogul) invaders built the Babri Masjid on the exact site of the birthplace of Lord Ram. On Dec. 6, 1992, tens of thousands of Hindu zealots converged on the site and members of the crowd dismantled the historic mosque brick by brick to pave way for the construction of the Ram Janmabhoomi Temple. Muslims observe Dec. 6 as a day of protest; right-wing Hindus celebrate it.

The Ayodhya incident sparked widespread rioting that spread from Uttar Pradesh to other parts of the country, including Mumbai. At least 2,000 people died during weeks of unrest after the mosque's destruction. Serial bombings in Mumbai in March 1993 are widely believed to have been in retaliation for the deaths of hundreds of Muslims who perished in post-
Ayodhya rioting in that city. The mosque/temple dispute also had direct links to communal clashes that claimed the lives of hundreds of people in Gujarat State in 2002. The violence started in the town of Godhra when a mob attacked and burned a train car carrying Hindu pilgrims from Ayodhya. Both Hindu and Muslim hardline groups continue to use the mosque/temple dispute to push extremist agendas.

**INDIA (Country Risk Rating: High)** - Tropical Cyclone Ockhi Weakens while Turning Northeast in Arabian Sea

Tropical Cyclone Ockhi has begun weakening, but remains a very severe cyclonic storm, as it begins turning to the northeast in the Arabian Sea. As of the evening of Dec. 3, the centre of circulation was about 778 km (483 miles) southwest of Mumbai, Maharashtra State, India. Meteorologists predict the storm will continue to weaken gradually through Dec. 4, as it completes its turn to the north-northeast and begins tracking back toward the Indian coast. The system is expected to weaken more rapidly over Dec. 5, with landfall forecast near Surat, Gujarat State, late Dec. 5 to early Dec. 6. Ockhi will quickly weaken further as it moves inland, becoming a tropical depression between Ahmedabad and Vadodara in Gujarat State by late Dec. 6.

**Analysis:** Heavy rainfall, strong winds, landslides, and transport and business disruptions are possible from Dec. 4 onward in Gujarat and Maharashtra as the system approaches. The centre of circulation is forecast to pass within 171 kilometres (106 miles) of Mumbai late Dec. 5. Sustained wind speeds of up to 83 kph (50 mph) may affect coastal areas from Mumbai to Daman and Diu. Although the system is expected to significantly weaken before it makes landfall, landslides and areal flooding are likely as Ockhi brings heavy rain to the region. Associated flooding could cause localized ground transport disruptions throughout Gujarat, Daman and Diu, and western Maharashtra. Areal flooding, landslides, and downed trees may disrupt road and rail travel. Utility interruptions are also possible in the area. Ockhi has the potential to disrupt maritime shipping and port operations in the eastern Arabian Sea. Anticipate flight delays and cancellations at airports serving regional destinations, including Mumbai (BOM), Surat (STV), and Ahmedabad (AMD).

**INDONESIA (Country Risk Rating: High)** - Dockworkers' Strike at Ports Nationwide

Dockworkers have organised a strike at ports across Indonesia Dec. 4 to protest the government's planned revocation of a decree that grants the Dockworker Labour Cooperative (Inkop TKBM) exclusive permission to manage them, among other grievances. The strike is reportedly affecting 97 ports in Indonesia. The ports operator, PT Pelabuhan Indonesia IV, said it has contingency plans in place to minimise disruptions resulting from the strike.

**Analysis:** Authorities may increase security at larger facilities during the action. The labour action may cause disruptions, particularly to cargo handling in busier ports including the Port of Tanjung Priok in North Jakarta. Lingering delivery delays are possible after the strike ends due to cargo backlogs at ports. Larger protests may cause localised traffic congestion.

**INDONESIA (Country Risk Rating: High)** - Periodic Flight Disruptions Likely to Continue in Bali and Lombok amid Ongoing Volcanic Activity

Periodic flight disruptions are likely to continue at airports in Lombok and Bali amid ongoing volcanic activity at Mount Agung. As of Dec. 4, Lombok International Airport (LOP) and Bali's Ngurah Rai International Airport (DPS) remain open. However, some airlines have cancelled scheduled relief flights to clear passenger backlogs out of concern for additional eruptions. Jetstar (JQ) cancelled seven flights slated for Dec. 2-3. The airline, along with Virgin Australia (VA), continues to defer inbound flights to DPS to prevent stranding additional passengers. AirAsia (AK) is limiting flights during the evening hours due to reduced visibility until further notice.

**Analysis:** Minor eruptions and ash plumes have continued at Mount Agung, though officials say overall seismic activity has decreased relatively. Regardless, a change in wind direction is possible with the departure of Cyclone Cempaka from the region. Short-notice closures are possible if winds change direction and columns of smoke and ash from the rumbling volcano pose a risk to flights. Airport closures could be protracted if volcanic activity continues at the current level or intensifies. Disruptions have so far been concentrated around Bali, Lombok, and the easternmost part of Java; however, depending on winds and the duration of the eruption, ash could be carried aloft and affect operations at other airports in eastern Java, the Lesser Sunda Islands (Kepulauan Nusa Tenggara), or northern Australia. Previous airport closures have affected airline network operations, particularly since DPS handles many flights to and from destinations in eastern Indonesia. Transcontinental flights between Australia and Asia and the Middle East have been largely unaffected; some
planes have detoured away from normal routes over Bali, but this has not added much time to flights. The governor of Bali has extended a state of emergency on the island until Dec 10, due to the possibility of a large eruption of Mount Agung in the coming days. The alert status of Mount Agung remains at four - the highest on Indonesia's four-point scale - since early Nov. 27. Authorities have ordered residents living near the volcano to evacuate, and more people could be ordered to leave an exclusion zone that has been extended up to 10 km (6 miles) from the volcano. Many foreign governments are advising their citizens to defer travel to Bali until the situation improves.

The volcano became active in September, prompting the evacuation of 140,000 people. Early Nov. 26, three minor eruptions emitted ash and smoke as high as 4,000 metres (13,120 feet). Prevailing winds carried the plumes eastward, prompting the issuance of a red aviation alert, which signifies that an eruption with significant ash emission is imminent or underway. Red alerts typically remain active until an eruption has definitively ended. The volcano's last major eruption occurred in 1963 and killed nearly 1,600 people. Dangerous pyroclastic flows and lahars (debris flows) could occur in valleys and watercourses descending from the slopes of Mount Agung, but these hazards pose no direct threats to Denpasar or tourist areas southwest of the volcano. Heavy ashfall and poor visibility may cause significant ground transport disruptions on Bali.

MALAYSIA (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Flooding Ongoing in Northeastern States

Flooding continues in several northern states of Malaysia amid monsoon rainfall. Flooding has been reported in Terengganu, Kelantan, and Perak states. More than 14,000 people are in evacuation centres from parts of Kelantan, including Kota Baru, while more than 700 people evacuated from villages in Manjung District in Perak. Several hundred residents were displaced from various areas in Terengganu.

As of early Dec. 4, a Malaysian Meteorological Department (METMalaysia) heavy rain warning will be in effect for several districts within the Johor, Kelantan, Pahang, Terengganu states, between Dec. 7-Dec. 10. Authorities report that water in the Golok River has risen at least 1 metre (3.2 feet) above danger levels at several monitoring sites, suggesting that flooding could continue for several days.

Analysis: Further rainfall will likely worsen flooding near riverbanks. Additional flash and areal flooding are possible, especially in low-lying and coastal areas. Landslides could occur in hill and mountain regions of the affected states. Flooding and landslides could block roads and damage or destroy bridges, causing significant ground transport disruptions. Some rail traffic may be delayed or cancelled due to flooding and landslides, and severe weather could cause flight disruptions at regional airports. Utility disruptions and telecommunications outages may also occur, especially in more remote communities.

MALAYSIA (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Security Forces Kill Suspected Cross-Border Kidnapper in Sabah's Lahad Datu

Security forces shot dead a member of a cross-border kidnap group in the waters off Lahad Datu in Malaysia's Sabah State at about 0300 Dec. 4. Police have identified the suspect as Commander Paliyak from the Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG), which is based in southern Philippines. The deceased was killed after he opened fire at security personnel who approached his boat.

Analysis: Intelligence reports in late October indicated that certain groups based in the southern Philippines were planning to launch kidnap raids in the Sabah waters. Officials have reported 16 kidnap-for-ransom and piracy attacks in the waters off Sabah’s east coast in 2016; however, none have been reported in 2017. This has been largely attributed to the Philippines’ security operations against armed groups operating in southern Philippines, as well as tighter security in the eastern coast of Sabah. Malaysian authorities established the Eastern Sabah Security Zone (ESSzone) - which encompassed seven districts in eastern Sabah - in March 2013 and implemented an overnight curfew in the area in July 2014 after a period of intensified attacks in the area.

MYANMAR (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Fighting Breaks Out between Military and Ethnic Armed Group in Kachin State

A military official announced Dec. 1 that fighting between the military and the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) has escalated again in Tanaing Township in Myanmar’s Kachin State. A spokesperson for KIA blamed the recent clashes on the military’s ongoing
The group claimed the fighting first broke out Nov. 27-28 after the military entered an area about 10 miles (16 km) from the township, which is controlled by the KIA’s 14th battalion.

**Analysis:** The KIA, which controls large areas of northeastern Kachin State has regularly engaged in fighting with government troops. The group’s control of Tanaing Township includes the gold and amber mining region, whose natural resources are a source of income for the group. Most residents in the township have left the area after the army dropped fliers in June, warning them to evacuate to allow for clearance operations. The KIA is among several ethnic armed groups that did not sign the nationwide ceasefire agreement with the government in October 2015. Even though the group has participated as an observer in recent peace conferences with the government, periodic clashes continue to erupt.

**PAKISTAN**

(Country Risk Rating: **High**) - Casualties amid Grenade Explosion in Chaman

An explosion at the gates of Christian Colony in Chaman killed one child and injured two other people the evening of Dec. 1. Reports conflict as to whether a grenade or planted device caused the blast. Officials increased security in the area following the attack. No group has claimed the bombing, and police have not arrested any culprits in the attack.

**Analysis:** Small-scale attacks occur regularly near Chaman, which is home to a prominent border crossing between Afghanistan and Pakistan. More sophisticated attacks have also occurred in the region, typically targeting military convoys or security personnel. A suicide bomb explosion at the Chaman border crossing killed one person and injured nearly two dozen others in September. Baloch separatists and the Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan frequently operate in the area, and Islamic State has also launched attacks on both sides of the porous Afghan-Pakistan border.

**PAKISTAN**

(Country Risk Rating: **High**) - Hardline Religious Group Ends Sit-in in Central Lahore

Tehreek Sirat-e-Mustaqeem founder Ashraf Asif Jalali called off his ongoing sit-in demonstration at Charing Cross in front of Punjab Assembly in downtown Lahore at around midnight Dec. 2 after successful negotiations with the Punjab government. Jalali and hundreds of his supporters launched the protest Nov. 25, demanding money for those injured in a crackdown on protests in Islamabad, publication of an investigation into the Elections Act 2017, as well as the resignation of Rana Sanaullah, the provincial law minister. The government has promised to release the Elections Act 2017 report by Dec. 20. Jalali has threatened to launch new protests if the government fails to make the document public.

**Analysis:** The demonstration caused disruptions near the Provincial Assembly of Punjab and nearby areas, including Mall Road for a week. In addition to Sanaullah's resignation, Jalali supporters were also calling for the minister to appear before the court of Sunni Ulema (religious scholars). Any efforts to allow Sanaullah to remain in office or bypass the Sunni Ullema proceedings could also renew demonstrations in Lahore. Jalali has also called for disqualification of all parliamentarians involved in the proposal of the amendment in Khatm-e-Nabuwwat clause, an oath sworn by elected officials. Although the amendment in the Khatm-e-Nabuwwat clause was quickly withdrawn, leaders of Pakistan's Sunni Barelvi sect - including Jalali and Tehreek-e-Labaik Ya Rasool Allah Pakistan (TLYRAP) chief Khadim Hussain Rizvi - have been demanding action against those involved in the change, accusing them of blasphemy. The TLYRAP withdrew its protracted sit-in demonstration at the Faizabad Interchange between Islamabad and neighbouring Rawalpindi Nov. 27 after Federal Minister of Law and Justice Zahid Hamid - who Rizvi and his followers accuse of blasphemy - resigned from office.

**PHILIPPINES**

(Country Risk Rating: **Medium**) - Militants Release Six Local Hostages in Patikul in Sulu

Officials announced Dec. 3 that Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) militants released six local hostages in Buhawan-Buhawan, Barangay Latih, in Sulu Province's Patikul town at approximately 1400 Dec. 1. The militants had abducted the six locals during an attack in the Kalimayahan area of Barangay Latih Nov. 14. The Joint Task Force Sulu commander said military operations forced the ASG to release the hostages "unconditionally."

Despite the official statement, it is unclear if any ransom payments were made. The militants had initially demanded a ransom of PHP 1 million (USD 19,800), which was later reduced to PHP 700,000 (USD 13,860) and subsequently to PHP 350,000 (USD 6,930).

**Analysis:** ASG militants regularly engage in kidnappings in the southern Philippines, especially in their strongholds of
Basilan and Sulu provinces, located southwest of the Zamboanga peninsula. Most abductions are financially motivated and used to fund ASG operations. The group typically beheads its hostages if ransom payments are not made. The military has been conducting clearing operations - including artillery fire and airstrikes - against ASG positions in the southern Philippines; however, it is unclear how much impact the actions have had on the group’s capability to operate. Due to the persistent threat of kidnapping from ASG and other security risks, many foreign governments recommend against travel to the southern Philippines and coastal areas of eastern Sabah State, Malaysia, as well as the waters in between.

PHILIPPINES (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Transport Groups Call off Scheduled Nationwide Strike; Protests Planned in Manila

On Dec. 3, the No to Jeepney Phase Out Coalition cancelled its planned Dec. 4-5 nationwide strike. The delay in the labour action, aimed at forcing the government to abandon its plans to modernise and phase out older jeepneys vehicles, comes after Senator Grace Poe asked coalition leaders to appear before the Senate Dec. 7. Organisers have postponed the transport strike until January 2018.

Analysis: Jeepney drivers plan to hold several demonstrations in Metro Manila Dec. 4-6 ahead of the Senate hearing. Drivers will assemble at the Welcome Rotonda the morning of Dec. 4, before meeting additional protesters at the University of Santo Tomas around 1100. Drivers will then march to Mendiola. On Dec. 5, driers will rally at either the Department of Justice or the Metropolitan Trial Court. Organisers are planning to hold a vigil at Mendiola the evening of Dec. 6. The largest rally is likely on Dec. 4 and could draw several thousand participants. Reduced jeepney availability is likely and could lead to increased traffic congestion in Metro Manila. Expect crowded conditions on alternative mass transit during protest actions. Localised ground transport disruptions are also likely near rally sites Dec. 5 and 6. Though the events are likely to remain peaceful, clashes with police and other minor security incidents cannot be ruled out during the demonstrations. Jeepney drivers could also stage protest convoys (caravans) before their rallies; if repeated, convoys could intensify traffic disruptions in Metro Manila.

THAILAND (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - National Council for Peace and Order Hints at Prolonged Ban on Political Activity amid Security Concerns

National Council for Peace and Order (NCPO) officials indicated Dec. 1 that it might not lift an ongoing ban on political activity in the country until closer to the election slated for late 2018. The announcement came amid increasing security concerns after officials discovered a weapons cache in Chachoengsao Province. Authorities have also said intelligence suggests that groups may be seeking to cause instability in the country

Analysis: The announcement has angered political groups, including the Democrat Party and Pheu Thai, which argue that the NCPO has to lift the ban so they can meet provisions of the organic law on political parties that came into effect Oct. 8. The law sets a time frame for parties to meet several conditions before they can contest the upcoming general elections. The latest announcement has heightened tensions, as it comes just before a Dec. 5 deadline for political parties to update their membership information with authorities. The ruling military junta claims that the deadlines imposed by the law can be adjusted and that parties can update their membership information without holding formal meetings. NCPO leaders remain cautious ahead of the upcoming elections and are unlikely to lift the ban while there are any possible threats to stability. However, consistent delays in updating the ban has raised suspicions that the military is actually attempting to consolidate its position before political activity resumes.

THAILAND (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Roadside Bombing Injures Two in Narathiwat

A roadside explosion injured two civilians in Tambon Chuap, Cho Ai Rong District, Narathiwat Province, Nov. 30. The blast took place at around 0845 along the Cho Ai Rong-Ban Yaning Road as two military vehicles passed. The blast did not damage the vehicles, but shrapnel from the explosion injured two civilians near the detonation site. Authorities have blamed insurgents for the attack.

Analysis: Insurgents in the restive Deep South region typically do not claim responsibility for any attacks, but authorities have blamed most of the violence in the region on the militants. The attack bears the hallmark of most insurgent attacks, which typically target military or police in the region using roadside bombs, grenades, and gunfire. Violence continues on a near-daily basis in Thailand’s Depp South, despite sporadic peace talks between the insurgents and the government.
Several nations advise against nonessential travel to the region due to poor security conditions and the persistent threat of collateral damage.

### Caribbean


Residents found a US national dead on a road in Anchovy, St. James, Jamaica Nov. 26. The woman was in Jamaica visiting relatives who own a Montego Bay hotel and had been in been in the country for about a month before her murder. Authorities have not made any arrests in the case so far.

**Analysis:** St. James is experiencing one of the sharpest crime increases in the nation. Over 290 homicides have been recorded in the parish, surpassing the record of 264 homicides that was set in 2016. Meanwhile, the number of resolved murder cases and resulting convictions in the country remains minuscule. Most of the increased violence is attributed to clashes between gangs, and police have repeatedly asserted that most homicide victims are gang members. Nevertheless, there have been multiple cases of those believed to be uninvolved with criminal activity, including minors and foreigners visiting for vacation or charity work, being injured or killed during attacks. Visitors to the country are not typically targeted for homicides, but they may be targets for robbery due to their perceived wealth. Criminals in Jamaica are often armed and will likely use force if a victim resists.

### Central/South America


The government declared a state of emergency in Honduras late Dec. 1 amid ongoing violent protests. Under the measure, officials have ordered a 1800-0600 curfew daily through at least Dec. 11. The curfew went into effect as of 2300 Dec. 1. The order also allows the armed forces to support the National Police or carry out operations to establish security if necessary. Troops have reportedly been deployed to several areas of the country.

Protests and rioting broke out in major cities after the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE) failed to meet its self-imposed deadline of Nov. 30 to release the final results of the Nov. 26 general election. Supporters of opposition candidate Salvador Nasralla - who has accused the TSE of engaging in electoral fraud - have staged most of the demonstrations. Opposition supporters have blocked highways, looted and vandalised stores, and clashed with police as well as with supporters of incumbent President Juan Orlando Hernandez. The government has authorised security personnel to arrest demonstrators to re-establish security in the country.

**Analysis:** Further violence is possible in the coming days, particularly if opposition protesters attempt to continue their protest campaign. Demonstrations have been particularly violent in Tegucigalpa, where at least seven demonstrators were shot and several others hospitalised with serious injuries as of Dec. 1. Centroamerica Boulevard is one of the worst-affected roads in the city. Protesters blocked the roadway near its intersection with Highway CA-6, looted nearby businesses, and destroyed a rapid-transit Metrobus station in the vicinity. Demonstrators have also pelted rocks at police, who subsequently fired tear gas to disperse the crowds. Protesters also have gathered near the TSE building near Kuwait Boulevard in Colonia El Prado. Authorities have deployed a large contingent of riot police to the area. Demonstrators also blocked highways that provide access to Tegucigalpa, severely disrupting ground transport to and from the capital. Protesters have established roadblocks on Highway CA-5 near El Durazno and Loarque, Highway CA-6 near Colonia Los Pinos, and Suyapa Boulevard near its intersection with Anillo Periferico 2. In the adjacent city of Comayagua, demonstrators set up roadblocks and fires on Fuerzas Armadas Boulevard and blocked Anillo Periferico 3 near Colonia Divino Paraiso. Additional protests could materialise outside the Presidential Palace, the Parque el Obelisco, and the National Pedagogical University (UNPFM) in the capital. Opposition supporters could also stage further demonstrations in other major localities. Clashes between protesters and security forces could occur, especially if security forces attempt
to disperse gatherings by force; police may use tear gas and other crowd control measures. Ground transport disruptions are likely near any demonstration.

In La Ceiba, protesters blocked the portion of Highway CA-13 that forms a bridge across Rio Cangrejal, effectively making transit between the two sides of the city impassable. Government and opposition supporters clashed near the CA-13 bridge over Rio Danto; at least one person died in the violence. Demonstrators also blocked CA-13 in the nearby municipalities of Tela, San Juan Pueblo, and Jutiapa. Opposition supporters set fires near the mayor's office and the local cathedral and broke into and heavily damaged a bank. Police attempted to disperse the crowds with tear gas. Security forces reportedly arrested hundreds on suspicion of looting. Protesters seized tollbooths on Highway CA-5 in Siguatepeque and burned another tollbooth on CA-5 in Zambrano, significantly disrupting traffic on the route. Demonstrators have also blocked Highway CA-4 between Santa Rosa de Copan and Ocotepeque. Press reports indicate that portions of the rural highway between Tegucigalpa and Olancho have been blocked. Protesters have occurred near the confluence of Highways CA-11 and CA-4, located near the border with Guatemala.

Controversy regarding the legitimacy of the election results has intensified after updated count results were released Nov. 29, indicating that Nasralla's initial five-point lead had decreased to less than one point. The updated count was publicised following a long pause in result reporting, and although the TSE said it would declare a winner of the election by Nov. 30, it failed to do so. Nasralla has called upon his supporters to hold street demonstrations to protest the alleged fraud. Hernandez' re-election bid had generated significant controversy as the Honduran Constitution prohibits the president from running for a second term. Both Nasralla and Hernandez have declared victory since polling took place Nov. 26.

Europe

GERMANY (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Security Increased in Brandenburg following Bomb Scare in Potsdam

Authorities increased security across Brandenburg Dec. 2, after a bomb scare near a Christmas market in Potsdam the evening of Dec. 1. Police evacuated the market following the discovery of the device - which reportedly included a metal cylinder and nails but no explosive materials or detonator. Police plan to increase patrols near markets in the state, especially Potsdam. While increased security measures are unlikely to cause major disruptions, minor localised transport delays remain possible, particularly in the event of future bomb scares.

Analysis: Germany remains on heightened terrorist alert. The Ministry of Interior announced Nov. 27 that the popular Christmas markets were likely terrorist targets. Authorities have already increased security at markets across the country, with police erecting barriers at entrances, among other security measures. A vehicular attack at a Christmas market in Berlin in December 2016 killed 12 people and injured nearly 60 others.

GERMANY (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Winter Weather to Persist Nationwide

The German Meteorological Office (DWD) forecasts additional snowfall will affect the country through at least Dec. 5. An Orange level weather warning, the third-highest level on a four-tier system, is in effect for parts of eastern Bavaria and southwestern Saxony for strong winds and wintry conditions. All of southern Germany is under a yellow level weather warning. Up to 76 cm (30 inches) of snow could fall in some areas, particularly in mountainous areas of Bavaria and Saxony. Milder conditions are expected in elevations between 500-700 metres (1,640-2,300 feet) during the daytime and may result in sleet and rain.

Analysis: Winter weather conditions are likely to result in air, ground, and rail service disruptions. On Dec. 3, officials cancelled more than 80 flights at Frankfurt Airport (FRA), and further disruptions are likely in the coming hours. InterCity Express (ICE) trains in central and southern regions were forced to run at reduced speeds due to snowfall. Road conditions are likely to remain affected by inclement weather; over the past 24 hours, more than 300 vehicular accidents resulting in three fatalities occurred in Bavaria, while another person died in Lower Saxony.

GREECE (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - EasyJet to Reroute Flights to and from Thessaloniki through Athens and Kavala Airports
On Dec. 1, EasyJet (U2) airline announced that it will temporarily reroute all its flights to and from Thessaloniki International Airport "Macedonia" (SKG) to Athens International Airport "Eleftherios Venizelos" (ATH) and Kavala International Airport "Alexander the Great" (KVA) in Greece until at least Dec. 21. The airline cancelled its flights Dec. 1, due to the start of maintenance works on SKG's main runway and the absence of an up-to-date instrument landing system on the auxiliary runway.

EasyJet plans to use ATH until Dec. 6 and KVA from Dec. 7, offering passengers bus transportation from SKG, as well as meals, refreshments and hotel accommodations where necessary. Other airlines offering flights to and from SKG could similarly adjust their operational plans.

**SPAIN** (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Strike Planned by Road Transport Workers in Toledo Province

Road transport workers affiliated with the Workers' Commission (CCOO) and the General Union of Workers (UGT) in Toledo Province, and employed by the ASTOTRANS haulage operator, have planned a 48-hour strike Dec. 4-5 to demand salary increases. The exact starting time of the strike is unclear.

**Analysis:** The company employs 8,000 workers, and the action will likely lead to supply chain delays for road freight. Residual supply chain disruption could persist for several days after the end of the action, particularly as Dec. 6 and 8 are national holidays. Strike participants could also stage protest roadblocks and go-slow convoys on major highways such as the E-5 and E-90, causing transport delays and congestion on alternative routes. Security forces will likely quickly dismantle any highway blockades, though isolated clashes are possible between strikers and police. The action could be averted if the unions reach an agreement with ASTOTRANS. If no agreement is forthcoming, unions have warned that they could extend the strike indefinitely through the Christmas holiday period.

**Back to top**

**Middle East/North Africa**

**ISRAEL** (Country Risk Rating: High) and **SYRIA** (Country Risk Rating: Extreme) - Airstrikes Target Iranian-Syrian Base South of Damascus

Arab and Israeli media reported that five air-to-surface missiles, likely fired by Israel, targeted a military installation between the town of Al Kiswah and the Damascus suburb of Sahnaya early Dec. 2, causing damage to the installation and possibly power outages in Damascus. Syrian sources reported that Syrian air defences downed at least two of the missiles. There were no reports of casualties.

**Analysis:** Syrian media identified the target as a Syrian Arab Army base; however, Israeli media reported the target was an Iranian-built base that was publicly revealed by the BBC in November. Iran and the Syrian Army are working together to support President Bashar al-Assad's control of the country; however, Iran also uses its foothold in Syria to transfer weapons to Hizballah, a Lebanese armed group, and possibly also Islamic Jihad, a Gazan group with the ability to launch mortars and tunnel into Israel. Israel targets such transfers when it discovers them. Israeli authorities also broadcast a statement Dec. 2 in which they said they would not allow Iran to become "entrenched militarily" in Syria and hinted that they attacked an Iranian base. The power supply in Damascus is not reliable and it is unclear if the missile strikes caused the outages.

**KUWAIT** (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Expect Increased Security, Traffic Disruptions in Kuwait City for Gulf Cooperation Council Summit

Kuwait will host the 38th Gulf Cooperation Council Summit Dec. 5-6 in Kuwait City. The exact list of attendees has not been released; however, multiple high-level leaders from the Gulf States will be present. Conference activities will be centred around Bayan Palace, Kuwait's main diplomatic conference centre, on the Fifth Ring Road in eastern Kuwait City.

**Analysis:** While there have been no specific, announced threats to the summit; a gathering of so many government leaders could pose an attractive target for terrorist groups, such as Islamic State (IS). Increased security measures are highly likely at and near Bayan Palace and Kuwait International Airport (KWI). The Airport Road leading to the King Faisal Highway, the Sheikh Zayed (Fifth Ring Road), the King Faisal Highway and the Fahaheel Expressway, in addition to
surrounding roads, will be closed from 1200-1400 Dec. 5. Additional, unannounced closures of these and nearby roads are likely Dec. 4-7 as attendees travel to and from the venue. Flight delays are possible at KWI Dec. 4-7 to allow for summit attendees to arrive and depart.

PALESTINIAN AUTHORITY (Country Risk Rating: High) - Gaza Power Transfer from Hamas to Palestinian Authority Delayed

Rival Palestinian governments announced Nov. 29 that the transfer of administrative control of the Gaza Strip to the Palestinian Authority (PA) would be delayed until Dec. 10. The two governments, Hamas and Fatah, based in Gaza and the West Bank, respectively, said the delay was due to logistical issues and disputes over the transfer process. Reports indicate that Egyptian delegates may have been instrumental in pushing the two sides to agree to a 10-day extension to break the political deadlock. The delay could result in public protests in the Gaza Strip and increased political tensions between the rival administrations.

Analysis: Expect increased security and localised traffic disruptions near demonstrations; protesters could gather at Al-Saraya Square. Clashes between demonstrators and security forces, or between supporters of the rival regimes are possible. Some protests could be staged by Hamas; these are likely to be relatively orderly. Spontaneous demonstrations, however, have the potential to be more disruptive.

The delay underscores the difficulties faced by the Palestinian Authority (PA) in forming a unity government including Hamas, and of resuming governance of the Gaza Strip. The unity deal signed in Cairo in October called for the Palestinian Authority (PA), which is dominated by Fatah, to resume full administrative control of Gaza over several stages by Dec. 1; Hamas dissolved its governing Administrative Committee in September. The terms include the deployment of 3,000 PA police officers into Gaza and assumption of control of the Rafah border crossing by PA presidential guards. On Nov. 26, the PA said that it only controls about 5 percent of financial, administrative, and security administration in the Gaza Strip due to deliberate delays by Hamas.

An important question is the fate of approximately 45,000 Hamas workers in Gaza and whether they will remain employed by the PA. The delays indicate that the Palestinian government cannot afford to cover the salaries of Hamas' employees, which amount to roughly USD 600 million a year. The inability of the PA to absorb these costs could prompt an increase in demonstrations.

Further compounding the disagreements between Fatah and Hamas is the fate of Hamas's armed wing, the 25,000-member-strong Al-Qassam Brigades. The group announced on Nov. 27 that it would refuse to disarm as part of the unity deal. A full handover is unlikely to occur by Dec. 10; instead, a gradual transfer of administrative functions will likely take place, barring a major breakdown in relations between the rival governments.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Authorities Deny Al-Houthi Rebel Claim of Missile Launch toward Unfinished Nuclear Power Plant in Abu Dhabi

On Dec. 3, the United Arab Emirates' National Crisis and Emergency Management Authority (NCEMA) denied claims by the Al-Houthi rebel group in Yemen of having fired a cruise missile toward the Barakah nuclear power plant in Abu Dhabi. The NCEMA further stated that no missile had been fired toward UAE territory and reassured residents that the nation's missile defence system could intercept any such attacks. According to local sources, no evidence of such a launch - including debris from missile impact or intercept - have been reported. The Barakah nuclear power plant, which is still under construction, is located about 230 km (143 miles) west of Abu Dhabi city; the facility's four reactors are scheduled to go into operation successively over the course of 2018-2020.

Analysis: The UAE is a member of the Saudi-led coalition to defeat the Al-Houthi rebels in Yemen. In addition to actually firing short-range mortars and rockets against southern Saudi Arabia, the rebels have engaged in propaganda about missile strikes in the kingdom, and occasionally, the UAE. The frequency of such incidents will very likely increase in the coming days as the Al-Houthis lose ground in Yemen due to attacks by their former allies in Sana'a. Competing propaganda published by Riyadh's allies makes claims of such launches difficult to verify. However, in late 2016, Al-Houthi forces acknowledged possessing Burkan-1 and Burkan 2H missiles, which purportedly have ranges of up to 800 km (497 miles), enabling Al-Houthi rebels to target areas as far away as Abu Dhabi. It is unclear how many projectiles with this extended range the Al-Houthis possess, and how accurately they are able to target them. The UAE possess the Terminal
High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) missile system, which is designed to counter short-, medium-, and intermediate-range ballistic missiles.

YEMEN (Country Risk Rating: Extreme) - Clashes between Al-Houthis, Saleh Supporters Spread to Ministries, Airport in Sana’a

Clashes between Shi’a Al-Houthi rebel fighters and supporters of former Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh spread to Sana’a International Airport (SAH), several ministries, and other points north in the Yemeni capital Dec. 2. Fighting is also said to have continued at its epicentre around the Saleh Mosque in Al-Sabeen, and in the Haddah and Siyasiya districts since then. Saleh appeared on television to offer the Saudi-led coalition besieging the country a new relationship if they would lift the siege and open airports, signalling a firm break of his alliance with the Al-Houthi rebels. The Al-Houthis have called the message a “coup.” Saleh’s speech will likely cause the fighting to spread further, potentially into areas outside of Sana’a. Several days of violence have so far killed at least 100 people, but the casualty count is likely higher.

Analysis: Additional clashes between the two sides will likely occur in the coming days and could spread across Sana’a and its environs. The latest violence began late Nov. 29 after rebels tried to instal surveillance cameras at several of the Saleh Mosque’s minarets; however, guards impeded their access, leading to a gunfight. This is the worst violence to occur between supporters of the rebels and those of former President Saleh since the current civil war began in March 2015.

If Saleh remains estranged from the Al-Houthis and works with the Saudi-led coalition, the schism would further complicate already tenuous security conditions in Sana’a brought on by the ongoing civil war. While the Al-Houthis and Saleh’s supporters have been aligned against Yemeni President Abd Rabo Mansour al-Hadi’s government and its backers, which include Saudi Arabia and the UAE, there has been growing animosity between the two groups. On Aug. 26, clashes in Al-Sabeen Square killed two rebel fighters and two members of Saleh’s General People’s Congress (GPC) party. The two sides eventually agreed to a truce following mediation efforts. However, the continuing alliance was likely only established out of convenience, and relations between Saleh and the Al-Houthis have historically been strained.

North America

CANADA (Country Risk Rating: Low) and UNITED STATES (Country Risk Rating: Medium) - Winter Storm to Bring Snow and Strong Winds

A developing low-pressure system is forecast to move through parts of the Upper Midwest, US, and Northern Ontario, Canada, bringing moderate snowfall and strong winds Dec. 4-5. Snowfall will push into the Dakotas from the Intermountain West early Nov. 4, with precipitation starting as rain in Minnesota. By the evening of Nov. 4, rain is forecast to transition to snow over central and northern Minnesota. Snow and wind will probably intensify into Nov. 5 as the system moves into Northern Ontario. The US National Weather Service and Environment Canada have issued winter storm watches for portions of North and South Dakota, Minnesota, and Northern Ontario. Both weather services could expand and upgrade the watches to warnings as the system transits the region through Nov. 5.

Moderate snowfall accumulations of 7.5-15 cm (3-6 inches) are likely in northern Minnesota and interior portions of Northern Ontario; localised amounts of up to 30 cm (12 inches) are possible. Elsewhere, widespread snow totals of up to 7.5 cm (3 inches) are forecast. In addition to the potential for snowfall, strong winds are forecast in parts of Minnesota and Northern Ontario as the system strengthens; gusts in excess of 80 kph (50 mph) could produce near-blizzard conditions late Nov. 4 and into Nov. 5.

Analysis: Low visibility, slippery conditions, accidents, and snow-clearing operations will likely affect commercial trucking throughout the region. Disruptions are likely along the I-29, I-35, I-90, and I-94 corridors in the US; similar problems could occur on the Trans-Canada Highway in Northern Ontario, as well as along provincial roadways. Expect difficult and potentially dangerous driving conditions on secondary and rural roadways, as maintenance crews will prioritise clearing of major highways. Strong winds could pose a hazard to high-profile vehicles and create whiteout conditions. Flight disruptions due to ground stops and deicing operations could occur at regional airports, including those serving Duluth (DLH), Fargo (FAR), Grand Forks (GFK), Minneapolis (MSP), Rapid City (RAP), and Thunder Bay (YQT).
Russia/CIS

UKRAINE (Country Risk Rating: High) - Opposition Activists Continue Protest Series in Kyiv with Rally in Taras Shevchenko Park

Supporters of Mikheil Saakashvili’s Movement of New Forces party staged a mass demonstration in central Kyiv Dec. 3. Although localised disruptions were reported in the vicinity of the protest route, including Taras Shevchenko Park and Yevropeiska Square, the event concluded without major incident.

Analysis: The Dec. 3 protest was the latest in series of anti-corruption protests led by various activist groups, including Saakashvili’s Movement of New Forces. The participants were demanding the creation of an anti-corruption court and the implementation of an amendment to the Electoral Code that would allow for impeachment proceedings against a sitting president. It should be noted that although several opposition activists have previously called for the resignation of President Petro Poroshenko, the opposition has been demanding the creation of a legal framework for impeachment proceedings for several years. Further related protests are likely.

South Pacific/Oceania

AUSTRALIA (Country Risk Rating: Low) - Heavy Rainfall Forecast to Continue in Southeastern Region

As of early Dec. 4, heavy rainfall continues in southeast Australia as a low-pressure system brings severe weather to the region. Areal flooding has been reported in parts of Victoria, New South Wales (NSW), and the Australian Capital Territory. Authorities have advised residents of Buckland, Myrtleford, and Wangaratta in north east Victoria to evacuate, as flood waters continue to rise. The Bureau of Meteorology (BOM) has warned of continued heavy rains, thunderstorms, and hail in affected areas; up to 30 cm (12 inches) of additional rain is forecast in Southeast Australia through Dec. 5.

Analysis: Storm-related transportation disruptions are likely to continue in the coming days. Several domestic flights and at least one international flight were diverted from Melbourne (MEL) to other airports Dec. 1. Additional flight disruptions - including delays, cancellations, and diversions - are possible at MEL, Canberra (CBR), and other regional airports. Authorities have suspended commuter train service along the Melbourne-Albury and Hurstbridge lines. Flooding and downed trees could block roads, making some routes impassable. Electricity and telecommunications outages are also possible due to the severe weather.