No Changes This Week:

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


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

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Country Travel Advisory List:

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

- Afghanistan
- 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.


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

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

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

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

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

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

• **Somalia:** Most of Somalia except Puntland and Somaliland.

• **Sudan:** Dafur region, South Kordufan state, Blue Nile state and the disputed Abyei region.

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

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

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

• **Ukraine:** The Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts and the Crimean Peninsula.
News summary

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- **COLOMBIA** - (Update) Avianca Airlines pilots continue strike
- **UNITED STATES** - (Update) Hurricane Nate weakens to a tropical depression over Gulf Coast region
- **UNITED STATES** - Storm results in snowfall in parts of Colorado and Wyoming
- **VENEZUELA** - Nationwide insecurity persists ahead of regional elections

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- **INDIA** - Dalit protest expected in Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar
- **INDIA** - Fuel station owners threaten to stage nationwide strike
- **INDIA** - Heavy rainfall forecast in the southern and eastern parts of the country
- **INDIA** - Leftist CPI-M party launches countrywide protests
- **INDONESIA** - Authorities extend highest alert status for Mount Agung in Bali
- **INDONESIA** - Public transport drivers to stage strike, protest in Bandung
- **MYANMAR** - (Update) Attacks and security operations possible in northwestern Rakhine State
- **PAKISTAN** - (Update) Groups from FATA plan sit-in outside National Assembly in Islamabad
- **VANUATU** - Authorities downgrade alert level for Manaro volcano on Ambae Island

**Europe and Russia**
- **BELGIUM** - Nationwide public service workers' strike
- **FRANCE** - (Update) Air traffic controllers' strike to disrupt flight services
- **GERMANY / POLAND** - (Update) Storm causes transport disruptions in northern Germany and central Poland
- **ITALY** - Cases of malaria confirmed in Apulia region
- **ITALY** - Chikungunya cases reported in Calabria and Lazio regions
- **RUSSIA** - Opposition protests held nationwide
**SERBIA** - Anti-government protests reported in Belgrade

**SPAIN** - (Update) Catalonian officials defy suspension of parliamentary session

**TURKEY** - US and Turkey suspend non-immigrant visa services at diplomatic missions

### Middle East and North Africa

**ISRAEL / PALESTINE** - Projectile lands in Israel's Eshkol Region Council near Gaza border

**MOROCCO** - Demonstration held in Casablanca

**SAUDI ARABIA** - Militant attack in Jeddah

### Sub-Saharan Africa

**GHANA** - Heavy rains cause flooding, traffic disruptions in Accra and Kumasi

**LIBERIA** - Runway maintenance underway at Roberts International Airport in Monrovia

**MAURITIUS** - Disruptions due an ongoing pilots' strike affecting flights countrywide

**SUDAN** - Gunmen kidnap Swiss national from residence in El-Fasher, West Darfur

**SUDAN** - Possible cancellation of UN Humanitarian Air Service operations

### Americas

**BOLIVIA (Country risk rating: Medium); October 10; Coca farmers' protest expected in La Paz**

Coca farmers are planning a large rally in La Paz on October 10 to protest a coca law enacted in March. The Departmental Association of Coca Producers (ADEPCOCA), which is organising the gathering, predicts that 15,000-20,000 supporters will join the action. Supporters will gather in Villa Fatima and then march into central La Paz. Organisers have not disclosed the march route or end point, but coca farmers have gathered and blocked traffic around Plaza Murillo, the city's main plaza, in the past, making it a likely destination. Previous demonstrations have been marred by clashes. Protesters may also block roads, causing significant traffic disruptions.

**Advice:** Avoid all protests due to potential clashes between demonstrators and police. Monitor local media for updates on the march route and final gathering point, as it may not be disclosed in advance. If a rowdy crowd approaches, immediately seek shelter inside a secure location or depart the area. Allow additional time to reach destinations in central La Paz.

**COLOMBIA (Country risk rating: High); October 6; (Update) Avianca Airlines pilots continue strike**

Pilots of Colombia's flag carrier Avianca Airlines are continuing an indefinite strike, despite a ruling by the Superior Tribunal of Bogota on October 6 that declared the action illegal. The pilots' union is appealing the decision, but Avianca may be able to fire workers if they do not return to the job. Avianca Airlines was also granted permission by civil aviation authorities to bring in foreign pilots to cover some routes. The pilots' strike started on September 20 and has prompted the cancellation of more than 3,200 flights as of October 7, affecting more than 300,000 passengers. Though the strike initially affected domestic routes, some international flights have also been affected as the walkout has continued. The strike has particularly affected flights to and from Bogota's El Dorado International Airport, which serves as Avianca's main hub. Striking pilots could picket outside the airport and the Avianca Holdings S.A. headquarters on Avenida El Dorado in Bogota during the strike, especially if the airline begins firing participants. Clashes and localised traffic disruptions are possible during any labour action.

**Advice:** Confirm Avianca flights before checking out of hotels or departing for the airport. Consider using other carriers for time-sensitive travel until the strike ends.
UNITED STATES (Country risk rating: Medium); October 8; (Update) Hurricane Nate weakens to a tropical depression over Gulf Coast region

Hurricane Nate rapidly weakened to a tropical depression over the US Gulf Coast region on October 8, after making a second landfall east of Gulfport, Mississippi, late on October 7 and crossing the Mississippi Delta. The system is forecast to move quickly to the north-northeast over the coming days, likely becoming a remnant low pressure system. All coastal watches and warnings associated with Tropical Depression Nate were discontinued on October 8. Most of the convection associated with the tropical system is displaced to the east and northeast of the centre of circulation. Widespread rainfall totals of 7.5-15 cm (3-6 inches), with localised amounts of up to 25 cm (10 inches), will be possible east of the Mississippi River from the Gulf Coast northward to the Tennessee Valley and southern Appalachians. Lesser accumulations of 5-10 cm (2-4 inches) are likely in portions of the Ohio Valley and central Appalachians through October 9. Isolated tornadoes remain possible throughout the Gulf Coast region as heavy rain bands move onshore. Flash flooding will remain a threat throughout the affected area, especially in low-lying areas with poor drainage.

Advice: Use extreme caution in low-lying coastal areas, and near streams, creeks, and other waterways due to the high potential for flash flooding and continued storm surge. Plan accordingly for lingering commercial, transport, and logistics disruptions in areas in the path of the storm. Never drive on flooded roadways or around established roadblocks. Seek updated information on road conditions before driving or routing shipments through areas where flooding has occurred. Confirm flights before checking out of hotels or driving to the airport; clearing passenger backlogs may take several days in some locations.

UNITED STATES (Country risk rating: Medium); October 8; Storm results in snowfall in parts of Colorado and Wyoming

A winter storm has resulted in moderate snow to portions of Colorado and Wyoming beginning the evening of October 8. Rain transitioned to snow along the I-25 corridor in Colorado and Wyoming, including the Denver metropolitan area, overnight on October 8/9. Accumulations of over 30 cm (12 inches) are possible in Colorado's Front Range, the Palmer Divide, and the Snowy Range in Wyoming, while up to 15 cm (6 inches) of snow is possible along the I-25 corridor and the Denver metropolitan area until the system exits the region during the afternoon of October 9. The National Weather Service has issued winter storm warnings for parts of southeastern Wyoming and northern and central Colorado; winter weather advisories also extend into the northeastern Colorado plains and parts of Colorado High County. Localised power outages are possible since trees are still in full leaf, and heavier accumulations could break limbs and bring down power lines. Strong winds gusting up to 64 kph (40 mph) could also significantly reduce visibility.

Advice: Seek updated information on road conditions before driving through areas where significant snowfall has been reported or is forecast; allow extra time to reach destinations on the morning of October 9. Plan accordingly for potential commercial trucking disruptions and freight delivery delays if routing shipments along I-25, I-70, or I-80 through Colorado or Wyoming. Charge battery-powered devices in case of prolonged electricity outages. Confirm flights.

VENEZUELA (Country risk rating: High); October 9; Nationwide insecurity persists ahead of regional elections

Significant security concerns will almost certainly continue for the foreseeable future in Venezuela, as the nation prepares to hold regional elections on October 15. Major instability and violent crime persist, prompting many countries, including Canada, the UK, and the US, to advise citizens to avoid nonessential travel to all or most parts of Venezuela. While protests have become much smaller and far less frequent, they are expected to persist following the regional elections. These are likely to occur in Caracas and other major cities ahead of, during, and immediately following the regional elections. Increased security is likely around polling stations and government buildings during elections. Authorities will also likely tighten security around government buildings in the event of any opposition protests. The threat of crime - including homicide, kidnapping, robbery, and extortion - remains elevated, especially near international borders and in large- and medium-sized cities. Economic conditions in Venezuela have worsened significantly in 2017 amid sanctions against high-ranking officials and the country's oil company, the PDVSA, as well as allegations that the Central Bank of Venezuela has limited foreign reserves. Food, water, and gasoline scarcity are becoming increasingly common due to fiscal shortages. The country's food crisis continues, and some Venezuelans take hours'-long journeys to cross into neighbouring Colombia each day to find work and food. The military continues to control supply chains and food distribution networks, causing many enterprises to go out of business while weakening consumer access to food and other basic commodities. Continued supply shortages could prompt increased violence.
Advice: Monitor local developments and strictly avoid all demonstrations due to the high likelihood of clashes between protesters and security personnel. Seek updated information on planned protests from local and opposition media outlets and plan travel arrangements accordingly. Register and maintain contact with your diplomatic mission.

Asia and Pacific

AFGHANISTAN (Country risk rating: Extreme); October 7; Police rescue kidnapped Indian national in Maidan Wardak

Police rescued a kidnapped Indian national during a security operation in Maidan Wardak (Wardak) Province on October 7. Authorities said that the victim had been kidnapped more than six weeks previously from the Maidan Shahr area, where he was working for an electrical company. Security forces said that three prior rescue attempts failed before the October 7 operation. It is unclear who was behind the abduction. The incident is the latest to demonstrate the extreme kidnapping threat throughout Afghanistan. The threat is especially high for foreign nationals, who are targeted by both criminal and militant groups due to the perception that such victims can pay higher ransoms. Some kidnapped foreigners have also been used as bargaining chips by militant groups to obtain political concessions from the government. Although most hostages are eventually released, some have been held for extended periods, and others have been killed.

Advice: Take precautions to minimise vulnerability, including varying travel times and routes used to move between accommodations and worksites. Do not discuss personal plans or itineraries with anyone but trusted contacts. Travel in convoys with a security escort if driving is necessary outside cities.

BANGLADESH (Country risk rating: High); October 8 to 12; Lawyers to stage nationwide protests

Lawyers supporting the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) are forming human chains and holding protest rallies across Bangladesh through October 12. A pro-BNP faction of the Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) is sponsoring the five-day programme, which began on October 8. Organisers have not announced specific rally venues, but possible sites include outside court and government buildings or local press clubs. Demonstrators may also block roads, forcing detours and increasing traffic congestion. Counterdemonstrations by lawyers who support the ruling Awami League party are also possible. Clashes between the two rival groups and between protesting lawyers and police cannot be ruled out, though significant unrest appears unlikely. Expect increased security, possible road closures, and localised traffic disruptions near all protests. The association claims that the government forced Chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha to go on a month-long leave on October 3 after a supreme court panel he headed scrapped the 16th Amendment of the Constitution. The 16th Amendment, passed in 2014, allowed lawmakers to impeach court judges found guilty of misconduct and incompetence. The association says the incident demonstrates that the independence of the judiciary is under threat due to government influence. The government has denied the allegations and said that Sinha is on leave for health reasons.

Advice: Avoid all rallies as a precaution. Monitor local media or check with trusted local contacts for updates, as precise gathering sites may not be announced in advance; use caution near the supreme court and other popular gathering sites. Plan accordingly for localised traffic disruptions during the demonstrations; allow extra travel time.

CAMBODIA (Country risk rating: Medium); October 6; Anti-government protests possible countrywide following disbandment of opposition party

The opposition Cambodia National Rescue Party (CNRP) and its supporters could hold demonstrations in the coming days, after the government filed a petition with the supreme court on October 6 to disband the party. Government lawyers initiated the proceedings with the support of the smaller Cambodian Youth and Funcinpec opposition parties. In Phnom Penh, demonstrations are most likely to take place near the CNRP headquarters on National Highway 2 in Meanchey; however, gatherings could also occur near the supreme court or popular gathering spots in the city such as Freedom Park. Protests in other parts of the country will probably take place near local CNRP offices. Rallies are unlikely to be announced in advance due to the potential for conflict with security forces. Participation in the demonstrations is unclear; however, several thousand people could join protests if they occur. Authorities will likely increase security around possible rally sites, particularly the CNRP headquarters. Roadblocks and security cordons are possible, which could result in localised traffic disruptions. Clashes are possible if security personnel forcibly disperse demonstrators. The filing comes days after CNRP deputy head Mu Sochua and several other senior party leaders fled Cambodia due to fears that they might be arrested.
The government alleges the CNRP has colluded with the US to overthrow the government. The crackdown on the CNRP stems from video footage posted online showing its leader, Kem Sokha, speaking to supporters in Australia in 2013.

**Advice:** Avoid the CNRP headquarters and other local offices of the party. Avoid all protests or large concentrations of security personnel. Seek shelter in a secure location if a large crowd begins forming nearby due to the potential for violence. Heed the instructions of security personnel.

**CHINA / VIETNAM / LAOS; October 9; Tropical Depression 23 tracking northwestward in South China Sea**

Tropical Depression 23 formed in the South China Sea on October 8 and is tracking northwestward. Meteorologists predict the storm will strengthen as it passes south of Hainan Island, China, and will become a tropical storm before making landfall near Vinh, Vietnam, by October 10. The storm will weaken quickly after landfall, and will likely become a tropical depression as it continues moving northward into northern Laos. Moderate winds and rainfall are likely on Hainan as the depression passes south of the island. The impact will almost certainly be most significant in the southern part of the island. Storm-force winds, heavy rainfall, flash flooding, and storm surge are possible in Sanya and other areas along the southern coast. Flight and ferry disruptions are also possible. Offshore logistics disruptions are likely, particularly in the Qiongdongnan Basin and possibly the Beibu Gulf. Authorities may order evacuations in coastal areas of north-central Vietnam as the storm approaches. Rainfall accumulation of up to 10 cm (4 inches) is forecast and may produce flash and areal flooding. The centre of circulation is forecast to pass near the Vung Ang Economic Zone. Offshore logistics disruptions are highly likely in the Song Hong Basin and areas east of Da Nang. Moderate winds are possible in central and northern Laos as the storm tracks into the area on October 10/11. Rainfall from the depression may trigger flash and areal flooding. Landslides are possible.

**Advice:** Be prepared to move away from coastal areas in the path of the storm. After the storm moves inland, seek updated information on road conditions before driving or routeing shipments through mountainous areas or places where flooding regularly occurs. Confirm flights before checking out of hotels or driving to the airport. Stockpile bottled water, fuel vehicles, obtain emergency cash, and charge battery-powered devices.

**INDIA (Country risk rating: High); October 9; (Update) Separatists call for shutdown strike in Kashmir Valley**

Separatists are organising more protest actions in the Kashmir Valley in response to growing incidents of braid chopping in the region, as well as other concerns. Business and transport disruptions have been reported in various parts of the Kashmir Valley on October 9 following a call for a shutdown strike. Separatist leaders have called for a large rally at the TRC Ground in Srinagar on October 14. Additional, smaller demonstrations are possible across the Kashmir Valley in the coming days and may not be widely announced in advance. Possible protest sites include outside mosques and at prominent public squares; demonstrators could also march to nearby government and police buildings, leading to localised traffic and ground transport disruptions. Localised commercial disruptions are likely near protests; businesses will probably close at the first sign of unrest. Expect extremely tight security across the Kashmir Valley, especially in Srinagar. Officials have restricted the movement of people and vehicles in the Khanyar, Nowhatta, Rainawari, MR Gunj, Safa Kadal, Maisuma and Krakkhud police precincts of Srinagar to prevent protests. However, protesters regularly defy such police orders, resulting in clashes between the two groups. Authorities may impose curfew and shut down cellular and internet services if further violence erupts. More than a dozen braid chopping incidents, which separatists say are attacks on women's dignity, have occurred in different parts of the Kashmir Valley since early September, but authorities have yet to make any arrests.

**Advice:** Confirm all business and transport appointments and reservations during the strike. Strictly avoid all demonstrations throughout the Kashmir Valley. Immediately depart the area if a demonstration materialises nearby. Limit exposure to areas where protests may occur, such as government buildings, security installations, and religious sites. Heed all instructions from security personnel, and remain alert for possible curfews and movement restrictions.

**INDIA (Country risk rating: High); October 10; Dalit protest expected in Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar**

The Rashtriya Dalit Adhikar Manch (RDAM) has threatened to block the Indira Bridge on October 10 to protest recent attacks on Dalit youth, including a fatal incident on October 1. The RDAM is seeking a probe into the incidents, compensation for the youth's family, and other demands. The Indira Bridge is a primary route connecting Ahmedabad, Gujarat's financial capital, with Gandhinagar, the state capital. The protest could significantly disrupt ground travel between
the two cities, though alternative routes are available. If demonstrators block traffic on the bridge, it could also affect travel to the nearby Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International Airport (AMD), especially for individuals travelling from Gandhinagar. Police will probably move to quickly disperse any roadblock, which may lead to clashes with demonstrators.

**Advice:** Avoid the Indira Bridge as a precaution during the protest. Consider using the Subhash Bridge or Sardar Patel Ring Road as alternative routes connecting Ahmedabad and Gandhinagar. Allow additional time for travel to and from AMD and other destinations in the vicinity of the Indira Bridge.

**INDIA (Country risk rating: High); October 13; Fuel station owners threaten to stage nationwide strike**

The recently formed United Petroleum Front (UPF) has threatened to stage a nationwide strike on October 13 to demand the inclusion of petrol and diesel under the Goods and Services Tax (GST), a move petrol station owners claim would reduce the cost of fuel. The action, which is supported by the All India Petroleum Dealers Association (AIPDA), could affect as many as 54,000 of the approximately 57,000 fuel retail outlets nationwide. The strike could also affect the availability of taxi, autorickshaw, and bus services, especially in urban areas. UPF and AIPDA members could stage demonstrations in conjunction with the strike. Possible protest sites include near fuel stations, outside offices of state-owned oil companies Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL), or government buildings. Localised traffic disruptions will probably occur during larger demonstrations. Violence is unlikely, though minor skirmishes with police cannot be entirely ruled out. The UPF has threatened to launch an indefinite strike starting October 27 unless their demands are met.

**Advice:** Fuel vehicles before the planned actions. Expect long lines at filling stations ahead of the October 13 strike. Avoid all protests as a precaution.

**INDIA (Country risk rating: High); October 9 to 11; Heavy rainfall forecast in the southern and eastern parts of the country**

The India Meteorology Department (IMD) forecasts that three weather systems will continue to bring heavy rainfall to many parts of southern and eastern India through at least October 11. On October 6 the Karnataka State Disaster Management Advisory (KSDMA) declared flooding in Electronic City as Level-3 (on a scale of 5) and in HSR Layout as Level-2; both areas are located in the state capital, Bengaluru. Forecasts indicate heavy rainfall will continue in Chhattisgarh State from October 9-11, Goa and Konkan on October 9, Telangana State October 9-11, and Bihar and Jharkhand states October 10-11. Heavy rainfall will occur in central Maharashtra through October 9. However, meteorologists do not predict the severe weather will impact western parts of the state, including Mumbai, Navi Mumbai, and Pune. The southern states of Kerala and Tamil Nadu, as well as Puducherry, will also probably receive isolated widespread rainfall through October 11. Expect rail, road, and air traffic disruptions in the affected states during periods of torrential rainfall. Continued Flight disruptions are possible at impacted regional airports. Severe flooding in low-lying coastal neighbourhoods could prompt localised evacuations. Businesses may remain closed in flooded areas. Widespread power, municipal water, and telecommunications outages are also possible.

**Advice:** Confirm all transport reservations. Avoid travel to low-lying, flood-prone areas. Seek updated information on weather and road conditions before driving or routeing shipments through areas where heavy rainfall is expected. Carry a sufficient supply of water, nonperishable food, and emergency equipment. Stockpile bottled water for drinking and hygiene purposes. Charge battery-powered devices, and restrict cell phone use to emergencies only if electricity outages occur.

**INDIA (Country risk rating: High); October 9; Leftist CPI-M party launches countrywide protests**

The Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) launched nationwide demonstrations on October 9 to protest the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s ongoing 'Jan Rakhsha Yatra' (People's Protection March) in Kerala State. While demonstrations remain possible across India, the largest gatherings are expected during the course of the day in Kerala State - where the party heads the governing Left Democratic Front coalition - and in New Delhi. Large rallies are also possible in West Bengal and Tripura states, where CPI-M has significant support. Organisers did not announce specific protest venues prior to the launch of the campaign, but possible locations include outside government buildings, BJP offices, or at popular public squares and parks. Major security disturbances are not anticipated, though localised unrest cannot be ruled out, especially in New Delhi and in Kerala, West Bengal, and Tripura states. Expect an increased security presence around likely protest venues and localised transport disruptions. The CPI-M is protesting the 154-km (96-mile) padyatra (foot march) launched by the BJP through Kerala from October 3 to 17 to draw attention to political violence in the state. The BJP claims dozens
of party workers have died at the hands of CPI-M activists in Kerala in recent years, and that such attacks have become more frequent under the CPI-M-led government.

Advice: Avoid all protests due to the risk of violence. Use extreme caution near government buildings, political party offices, popular public squares and parks, and other likely protest venues. Immediately depart the area and seek shelter in a secure location if a large or unruly crowd begins forming nearby. Allow additional time to reach destinations, particularly in Delhi and urban centres in Kerala, West Bengal, and Tripura states.

INDONESIA (Country risk rating: High); October 9 to 15; Authorities extend highest alert status for Mount Agung in Bali

Indonesia's National Disaster Mitigation Agency (BNBP) extended the highest alert status for Mount Agung in Bali's Karangasem Regency through October 15 due to ongoing seismic activity. On October 5, 113 shallow volcanic quakes and 18 local tectonic quakes were detected. While the frequency of seismic events has decreased in recent days, the level of activity remains high. Authorities raised the volcano's alert status to its highest warning level 2030 on September 22 and expanded the exclusion zone, asking the public to stay 12 km (7.5 miles) from Mount Agung's peak. The number of evacuees has reached 150,000; officials have urged those living outside the 28 villages in the exclusion zone to return home. Authorities have been on standby to divert flights headed to Ngurah Rai International Airport in Bali since September 27, when they recorded unprecedented levels of seismic activity. Officials said flights might be diverted to 10 other airports in the country, including nearby Lombok International Airport, if an eruption occurs. Officials have prepared buses at DPS for possible tourist evacuations. The UK, Australia, US, and Singapore are among several countries that have issued advisories, warning travellers that an eruption at Mount Agung could disrupt regional flights and travel plans. Authorities have set up roadblocks leading to the exclusion zone to prevent anyone from entering the area. Ground transport disruptions are possible near the exclusion zone.

Advice: Confirm all transport arrangements if operating in the area. Do not check out of accommodations until you have confirmed onward travel. Plan for possible disruptions if a major eruption occurs. Heed the instructions of local authorities.

INDONESIA (Country risk rating: High); October 10 to 13; Public transport drivers to stage strike, protest in Bandung

Thousands of public transport and taxi drivers plan to strike in Bandung from October 10 to 13 to protest the operations of app-based ride-hailing services in the city. The drivers will hold demonstrations at Gedung Sate during the strike. The city government has mobilised more than 200 vehicles to provide free rides to stranded commuters. However, officials have also urged the public to arrange for alternative transportation during the strike. Authorities will likely increase security around Gedung Sate as a precaution. A vehicle convoy to the protest site will likely result in traffic disruptions. Increased demand for alternative modes of transport is possible during the action. Fears of potential attacks or harassment by striking public transport drivers may limit the availability of app-based ride-hailing services.

Advice: Avoid the rally site as a precaution. Plan for localised traffic congestion; use alternative routes to bypass the protest area. Confirm all taxi reservations. Consider using private car services for time-sensitive travel.

MYANMAR (Country risk rating: Medium); October 9; (Update) Attacks and security operations possible in northwestern Rakhine State

Tensions will remain high in Myanmar's Rakhine State after an Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA) unilateral ceasefire ends at 2359 on October 9. ARSA supporters could attack sites in the state; however, the group's capabilities remain in question following weeks of Myanmar military (Tatmadaw) clearing operations in the region. Most previous militant attacks in Rakhine have targeted border checkpoints and other security installations in northwestern townships of the state. Security forces will remain on high alert in north western townships and border areas with Bangladesh following the ceasefire expiration. The government claims that most operations have ended; however, media reports and refugee accounts suggest that clearance operations are ongoing in restive townships north west of Sittwe, particularly in villages around Maungdaw, Buthidaung, and Yathetaung. In Maungdaw, a 2100-0500 overnight curfew remains in place, and a ban on public assemblies of five or more people is still in place. A similar curfew was implemented in 11 villages in Rathedaung Township. Authorities may implement curfews in additional locations with no notice if more attacks occur. Checkpoints, roadblocks, and ID checks are likely, especially following militant attacks or security incidents. Authorities may also conduct more intense screenings of foreign visitors at Sittwe Airport.
Advice: Avoid travel to affected townships in Rakhine State; exercise caution if operating in Sittwe. Seek updated information on the security situation from trusted local contacts before travelling in areas where increased security measures are in place. Those who must travel to the region or are already in the area should follow all curfew restrictions. Allow additional time for travel state-wide due to possible security-related delays. Heed the instructions of security personnel, and carry appropriate identification at all times.

PAKISTAN (Country risk rating: High); October 9; (Update) Groups from FATA plan sit-in outside National Assembly in Islamabad

Political parties and other groups from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) have threatened to stage a sit-in outside the National Assembly building in Islamabad during the course of October 9 if their demands are not met. Organisers claim a large number of people from the semi-autonomous tribal belt would travel to Islamabad for the protest. Parliamentarians from FATA staged a token sit-in outside Parliament House on October 6. It is unclear if authorities will allow the October 9 protest to proceed. Officials will probably significantly bolster security around Parliament House and other likely protest sites in Islamabad. Police could block entry and exit routes in Islamabad and seal roads around Parliament House. Localised clashes are possible if security personnel attempt to forcibly disperse protesters, though widespread violence or disruptions are not anticipated. Protesters are demanding the federal government immediately declare FATA a part of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province and establish a new judicial system in the tribal belt. In March, the federal cabinet under former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif approved a set of measures for the legislature to vote on that would allow the proposed merger of FATA with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and a 10-year reform package to bring the semi-autonomous tribal region on par with developing areas of the country. However, protesters claim no significant progress has been made on any of those measures.

Advice: Avoid all protests due to the risk of violence. Use extreme caution near likely protest venues; immediately depart the area and seek shelter in a safe location if a large or unruly crowd begins forming nearby. Use alternative routes to avoid areas close to protests. Allow additional time to reach destinations, especially in the Red Zone.

VANUATU (Country risk rating: Low); October 6; Authorities downgrade alert level for Manaro volcano on Ambae Island

The Meteorology and Geo-Hazards Department lowered its alert level on October 6 for the Manaro volcano on Ambae Island from 4, the second-highest level, to 3, which indicates that moderate eruptions are occurring. Officials stated the volcano is stabilising and dispersing less ash than before. However, as of October 9, the government had not lifted evacuation orders for the island, and a state of emergency remains in effect. More than 10,000 people were moved off the island due to fears of an imminent eruption. Authorities say that ash has contaminated water supplies and damaged crops on the island, suggesting that evacuation orders will remain in place for at least several more days. Transport disruptions are likely if the government begins to return residents to the island. Ground and port cargo disruptions are possible. Officials will probably maintain roadblocks around the Red Zone, a 6.5-km (4-mile) exclusion zone, as flying rocks and volcanic gas could impact the area. Any increase in volcanic activity could prompt renewed warnings. Depending on the wind direction, additional eruptions could disrupt flights at the Longana Airport, Redcliffe Airport, and Walaha Airport on Ambae Island, as well as Maewo-Naone Airport and Sara Airport.

Advice: Heed the instructions of authorities. Confirm air travel and cargo arrangements once operations on the island resume, as lingering delays are likely. Maintain contact with your diplomatic mission.

Europe and Russia

BELGIUM (Country risk rating: Medium); October 9 and 10; Nationwide public service workers' strike

Unionised workers from the General Confederation of Public Service Workers (CGSP/ACOD) plan to stage a nationwide 24-hour general strike on October 10 to oppose federal government policies they claim adversely impact public sector employees. While the majority of CGSP/ACOD members will walk off the job from 0001 to 2359 on October 10, railway workers represented by the confederation plan to begin their strike at 2200 on October 9. The industrial action will affect many public services across the country. Federal and regional administrative offices may be forced to close or provide reduced services, in some cases. Disruptions to postal deliveries, as well as services at public hospitals and clinics are likely. Some schools may also close during the walk-out; however, the impact on the education sector should be minor as...
the CGSP/ACOD represents only a small number of teachers and school administrative staff. Liege Province will likely experience the greatest effect from the October 10 action, as the Liege-Huy-Waremme regional chapter of the General Labour Federation of Belgium (FGTB-ABVV) has called on its membership employed in both the public and private sectors to strike on that date. The most severe impact will be to transportation, including in the rail, maritime, public transit sectors, as well as aviation services. Expect increased traffic and road congestion, as commuters may be forced to rely on private vehicles for local travel. Workers will likely rally in city centres, and could block port entrances and transit hubs, exacerbating passenger and cargo transport delays. Spontaneous clashes between protesters and security forces are possible; anticipate a heightened security presence around demonstrations.

Advice: Monitor local media for additional information and updates on the upcoming action during the aforementioned affected period. Expect disruptions to both public transport and hospital services. As a standard precaution, avoid any demonstrations that may materialise.

FRANCE (Country risk rating: Medium); October 10; (Update) Air traffic controllers’ strike to disrupt flight services

The Directorate General for Civil Aviation has instructed airlines to reduce flights by 30 percent on October 10 due to a strike by air traffic controllers (ATC) associated with the Trade Association of Civil Aviation-General Confederation of Labour (USAC-CGT). Flight disruptions will likely be most significant at Paris Charles de Gaulle and Orly; Beauvais; Bordeaux; Lyon; Marseille; Nantes; Nice; and Toulouse airports. Short- and medium-haul passenger flights are more likely to be affected by cancellations than intercontinental routes. The strike could also cause ancillary delays at other airports across Europe, particularly on Air France (AF) flights, as aircraft are held at their points of origin. Many carriers that operate flights to France will probably offer flexible rebooking policies during the strike period. Reduced operations on the SNCF rail network are slated to occur from 1900 on October 9 until 0800 on October 11. Trains operating on the TER, Intercity, Transilien, TGV, Thalys, and Eurostar lines will likely also face disruptions during the strike period. Rail operators will publish updated schedules on their websites 24-48 hours before the strike begins. Employees in municipal governments, schools, the postal service, local law enforcement, hospitals, and fire departments may also take part in the strike. Labour unions are planning protests in all major cities during the action; a large rally is slated to take place at Place de la Republique in Paris. While most protests will likely remain peaceful, isolated clashes cannot be ruled out.

Advice: Prepare for flight disruptions throughout France during the walkout; disruptions may extend past the end of the strike as the backlog of cancelled flights is cleared. Confirm all air and rail bookings with transport operators. Avoid all demonstrations as a routine security precaution. If skirmishes occur nearby, leave the area immediately, and seek shelter in a secure location.

GERMANY / POLAND; October 6; (Update) Storm causes transport disruptions in northern Germany and central Poland

Heavy rains and strong winds, caused by Winter Storm Xavier, led to significant ground transport delays and widespread power outages in northern Germany and central Poland on October 6. Flooding, fallen trees, and other debris blocked roads and rail lines; electricity lines were also damaged. An estimated 35,000 people in northern Germany and 840,000 in Poland were without power; officials in both countries said that services may not be fully restored until October 9. At least nine deaths in Germany and Poland were blamed on the storms. Services on several rail lines in central and northern Germany were suspended or delayed by several hours, while long-distance routes between Hamburg-Berlin, Hannover-Berlin, and Hamburg-Hannover were closed. Officials suspended travel on short-haul routes between Hannover-Kiel, Bremen-Berlin, Dresden-Berlin, and Leipzig-Berlin. Several sections of the line between Berlin and Warsaw were also closed. Rail disruptions will likely continue through at least October 9, as track repairs continue on the affected networks. Weather conditions are forecast to improve in the region over the next few days. However, lingering ground transport disruptions are likely on major roadways as crews work to clean up any remaining debris.

Advice: Confirm all ground transport reservations. Seek updated information on weather and road conditions before driving or routeing shipments through areas under wind, rain, or flood warnings. Allow additional time for travel in the region.

ITALY (Country risk rating: Low); October 4; Cases of malaria confirmed in Apulia region

On October 4, media reports citing health officials announced four confirmed malaria cases in the Apulia region without recent travel outside the region. The affected individuals are agricultural labourers in the town of Ginosa, where officials believe the infections were acquired; their symptoms developed between September 20 and 27. Officials continue to investigate the mosquito population in the area; however, the risk of malaria in Italy remains minimal. The affected
individuals are immigrants from Morocco who arrived in Italy two months prior to the onset of symptoms. Since they were in Italy longer than the incubation period for malaria, it is unlikely they acquired the infection elsewhere. Malaria was declared officially eradicated in Italy by the WHO in November 1970. In September 2017, officials reported a confirmed locally acquired case in Trento; however, this case was likely acquired through accidental transmission between patients within a hospital, rather than transmission from a mosquito bite. 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. Uncomplicated 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 Apulia region.

ITALY (Country risk rating: Low); October 4; Chikungunya cases reported in Calabria and Lazio regions

As of October 4, at least 294 cases of chikungunya have been identified in Italy since August; of these, 239 were reported in Lazio Region, and 55 in the town of Guardavalle Marina in Catanzaro Province, Calabria Region. Chikungunya activity in Lazio Region has occurred in the city of Latina in Latina Province and the cities of Anzio and Rome in Metropolitan City of Rome. The US CDC maintains a Watch - Level 1 travel health notice due to local chikungunya activity in Italy. This level of notice emphasises the need for travellers to practise usual health precautions - predominantly preventing mosquito bites, in the case of chikungunya. Local chikungunya transmission is rare in Italy. The last known locally acquired cases occurred during 2007 in Ravenna Province, Emilia-Romagna Region, when officials reported more than 200 cases. Chikungunya is similar to dengue fever and is transmitted by the same Aedes mosquito. Symptoms generally appear within a week of exposure and include fever, joint pain, headache, muscle pain, joint swelling, and rash. The disease is rarely fatal, but symptoms can be severe and disabling during the acute phase. Most patients recover within seven days, but, in some cases, joint pain can persist for months. No vaccine is currently available to prevent chikungunya infection.

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 the number of biting mosquitoes. Seek medical attention if symptoms develop within three weeks of being in affected areas. Do not use aspirin or ibuprofen products if you suspect you may have chikungunya, as these could exacerbate bleeding tendencies associated with the disease.

RUSSIA (Country risk rating: High); October 7; Opposition protests held nationwide

Opposition activists in Russia staged rallies across the country on October 7. Demonstrators gathered in a number of cities, including Moscow, St Petersburg, and Yekaterinburg, with the largest of these having occurred in the capital and St Petersburg. The demonstrations were held despite the arrest of opposition leader Alexei Navalny. Navalny, who has been organising rallies across Russia ahead of the 2018 presidential election, was arrested and sentenced by Moscow's Simonovsky district court to 20 days of detention on October 2, for organising a number of illegal demonstrations. The demonstrations were accompanied by an increased police presence and concluded without major incident. As Navalny remains under arrest, further associated protests are expected to persist for the short- to medium-term, at least. It should be noted that while the majority of associated protests have largely been peaceful, the possibility of such events being marred by incidents of violent unrest, cannot be discounted.

Advice: Monitor local developments and monitor for information and updates on associated protest activity. As a standard precaution, avoid associated protest activity.

SERBIA (Country risk rating: Medium); October 6 and 7; Anti-government protests reported in Belgrade

Hundreds of members of multiple activist groups staged anti-government protests in central Belgrade on October 6 and 7. Supporters of the 'Free Citizens' Movement demonstrated in Republic Square around 1800 on October 6 to demand free elections. Police and military union members, as well as public-sector employees, gathered in front of the President of the Republic of Serbia building at 1400 on October 7 to call for reforms. The protests proceeded peacefully amid an elevated security force presence. Serbia has witnessed widespread anti-government protests since Aleksandar Vucic's victory in the presidential election held on April 2. Activists claim that the electoral process was unfair and plagued by irregularities.
Since the April elections, citizens have demanded the government cease privatisation of public resources, grant free healthcare and education, improve the rule of law, and guarantee freedom of speech. In the past few months, there have also been protests over socioeconomic issues and perceived efforts by media outlets to silence the opposition and manipulate public opinion. Opposition demonstrations can attract several thousand participants and will likely continue over the medium- to-long term.

**Advice:** All protests should be avoided as a standard precaution.

**SPAIN (Country risk rating: Low); October 6; (Update) Catalanian officials defy suspension of parliamentary session**

Members of the Catalanian government on October 6 announced their intention to meet to debate the issue of regional independence, in defiance of a federal suspension of a parliamentary session scheduled for October 9. It is unclear when the session will now be held; some sources suggest that it could be delayed until October 10. Catalanian President Carles Puigdemont had previously said he would declare independence by October 9, following the unofficial referendum on independence on October 1. It is unclear if this will indeed take place, but he is also scheduled to address the Catalanian Parliament on October 10. Widespread protests are particularly likely outside the Catalanian Parliament building in Barcelona on October 9 and 10, should security forces attempt to prevent regional officials from meeting. Anti-independence groups held a large-scale gathering at 1200 on October 8 in Urquinaona Square, Barcelona. Outside Catalonia, an anti-independence rally was held on October 7 in Madrid's Plaza de Colon. A demonstration is also scheduled in Valencia on October 9 to show solidarity with pro-independence activists; participants will gather in Placa de San Agustin at 1800. Any protests relating to the independence issue in Catalonia have the potential to be well attended and disruptive.

**Advice:** Avoid all demonstrations to minimise associated disruptions and the incidental threat from potential clashes. Exercise heightened caution if planning to visit areas near likely demonstration venues in Barcelona, as protests can occur at very short notice. Remain vigilant to the threat from petty crime near any crowds. Seek updated information on traffic conditions from trusted local sources and contacts. Consider alternative routes to circumvent congestion; allow significantly increased travel times. Plan for widespread business closures through October 13.

**TURKEY (Country risk rating: High); October 8; US and Turkey suspend non-immigrant visa services at diplomatic missions**

US and Turkish diplomatic missions both suspended non-immigrant visa services on October 8. Turkey froze all non-immigrant visa services at Turkish diplomatic missions in the US hours after the US indefinitely suspended the same services at missions within Turkey. The US Embassy issued a statement noting that the suspension would allow the US government to 'reassess' Ankara's commitment to the 'security of the US mission facilities and personnel'. Officials said that the action would minimise the number of visitors to US diplomatic missions until the assessment is complete. The measure comes just days after Turkish authorities detained a Turkish employee of the US Consulate in Istanbul on charges of espionage and links to the July 2016 coup attempt. Washington condemned the move, which may have been a contributing factor to the non-immigrant visa suspension. Embassies of both countries said that the move was intended to reassess the other country's commitment to the security of their mission facilities and personnel. Negotiations between Ankara and Washington to resolve the dispute will likely continue in the coming days.

**Advice:** Contact legal or consular representatives for updated information. Inform corporate counsel about any potential immigration concerns involving employees from the affected countries.

**Middle East and North Africa**

**ISRAEL / PALESTINE; October 8; Projectile lands in Israel's Eshkol Region Council near Gaza border**

A projectile, likely fired from the Gaza Strip, landed in the Eshkol Regional Council in southern Israel around 2110 on October 8. The incident did not cause any injuries or damage. Israel staged retaliatory airstrikes inside the Gaza Strip overnight on October 8/9, destroying a Hamas observation post. Gaza-based militants occasionally fire projectiles into Israel. The devices are tracked by Israel's missile defence system, and those headed toward populated areas are generally shot down. However, most of the projectiles are difficult to aim, leading them to fall close the Gaza/Israel border without
causing damage or injuries. Israel blames Hamas for all fire emanating from the Gaza Strip and typically retaliates against the group with airstrikes.

Advice: If operating in Israel, report to your local rocket shelter for 10 minutes or until given further instructions by authorities any time a siren sounds in your location. If operating in Gaza, seek shelter in a bomb-proof location until late morning on October 9.

MOROCCO (Country risk rating: Medium); October 8; Demonstration held in Casablanca

Hundreds of demonstrators held a peaceful rally at the Place de la Victoire (Ennaser Square) in Casablanca on October 8 to show solidarity with detained activists from the restive Rif region. The activists protested the ongoing detention of Hirak activists from the Rif region, some of whom have been held for months and have begun a hunger strike. Ongoing unrest over economic conditions in the Rif has been taken up as a national cause. Morocco’s Rif activist community was re-energised by the October 2016 death of a fish merchant in Al-Hoceima. The fisherman dove into a garbage truck to save his goods from confiscation by the authorities and was crushed to death. The event was seen nationally as indicative of the economic woes facing many Moroccans, as well as evidence of hogra, the purported indifference of ruling elites to the suffering or ordinary people. Local (Rif Mountain) Berber activists also saw the incident as symptomatic of their regional and ethnic marginalisation by the government. Local and national protests have occurred over both issues. Authorities have responded with alternating promises of development and the violent dispersal and arrests of protesters. As trials of Hirak activists continue, further associated protest activity is expected to persist.

Advice: Avoid all protests. Allow extra time to reach destinations near protest activity. Obey the instructions of security forces.

SAUDI ARABIA (Country risk rating: High); October 7; Militant attack in Jeddah

Authorities confirmed that a Saudi national attempted to attack the Al-Salam Royal Palace in Jeddah the morning of October 7. The gunman stepped out of a vehicle and opened fire at a gate to the palace, killing two royal guards and wounding two soldiers. Guards shot and killed the assailant, who was armed with an automatic gun and three firebombs. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack. This incident continues a trend in Saudi Arabia of poorly trained local militants carrying out attacks, several of which have been claimed by the Islamic State (IS). On October 4, Saudi security claimed to have conducted multiple raids against IS in Riyadh, killing at least two militants and arresting at least five. One suspect set off an explosive device before being captured. In July 2016, a suicide bomber detonated his device when confronted by security officers near the US Consulate-General in Jeddah, killing himself and wounding the security forces.

Advice: Plan for ongoing increased security around the palace. Heed all instructions from security personnel.

Sub-Saharan Africa

GHANA (Country risk rating: Medium); October 6; Heavy rains cause flooding, traffic disruptions in Accra and Kumasi

Ground transport disruptions were reported in Accra and Kumasi, following heavy rains and resultant flooding in the two cities on October 6. Significant traffic disruptions were reported on major roads including on the Accra-Tema (N1) Highway, Accra-Madina (N4) Highway, and at Okponglo Junction. The worst-affected areas in the capital included Circle, Kaneshie, Mataheko and Osu. No utility or amenity disruptions were reported; however, these are highly likely during periods of elevated rainfall and flooding in Ghana.

Advice: Avoid low-lying and flood-prone areas following a heavy downpour. The availability of public transportation should be confirmed before conducting travel.

LIBERIA (Country risk rating: High); October 9; Runway maintenance underway at Roberts International Airport in Monrovia

The Liberia Airport Authority suspended operations at Monrovia’s Roberts International Airport on October 9 and will continue to halt operations on Mondays and Thursdays to allow for the second phase of runway rehabilitation. Aircraft are not permitted to land or depart during the construction; airlines have rescheduled flights to account for the closure. The
duration of the construction work has not been disclosed; workers intend to lay a second layer of asphalt and install a new lighting system.

**Advice:** Confirm flights. Contact airline for updated information.

**MADAGASCAR (Country risk rating: Medium); October 6; Plague activity in the north-central regions**

As of October 6, at least 125 additional cases of plague have been identified since September 30. Both bubonic and pneumatic plague cases have been reported; however, per the WHO, most cases are of the pneumatic form. Disease activity has been reported in the cities of Antananarivo and Toamasina, as well as in the following regions: Alaotra-Mangoro, Analamanga, Betsiboka, Boeny, Haute Matsiatra, Itasy, Sava, and Vakinankaratra. An Alert-Level 2 travel health notice is currently in place due to plague activity; this level of notice encourages travellers to take specific actions and emphasises the need for travellers to enhance their usual health precautions. Plague is endemic to Madagascar, where 200 to 700 cases are reported each year, primarily bubonic form. Unlike prior outbreaks, the current outbreak is affecting large urban areas, which increases the risk of transmission. Furthermore, the risk of plague spreading to humans is elevated in Madagascar, where the fleas that transmit the disease are highly resistant to insecticide. People generally become infected through the bite of fleas, but infection can occur through direct contact with tissues or fluids from infected animals - such as a scratch or bite. Bubonic plague occurs when the Yersina pestis bacteria infects a person's lymph nodes. This form of plague is not easily transmissible from person to person. However, when the bacteria spread through the bloodstream to the lungs, pneumatic plague can transmit directly from person to person via cough droplets containing the plague bacteria. Initial symptoms of plague include fever, muscle pain, headache, and nausea, followed by swollen lymph nodes.

**Advice:** Emphasise basic health precautions and precautions to avoid flea bites when outdoors and wear long-sleeved shirts and pants when weather permits. Avoid individuals who are visibly ill. Several antibiotics can provide effective treatment and may also be used as prophylaxis against plague.

**MAURITIUS (Country risk rating: Low); October 5; Disruptions due an ongoing pilots' strike affecting flights countrywide**

An indefinite Air Mauritius (MK) pilots' strike has resulted in disruptions, including cancellations and delays to MK flights to and from Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam International Airport (MRU), since October 5. The strike began after MK's management failed to meet an Airline Employee Association (AEA) and the Mauritius Air Line Pilots Association (MALPA) deadline to improve pay and conditions. The airline cancelled flights to Hong Kong and Bangalore, India, and postponed flights to London Heathrow Airport, UK, and Perth, Australia. The unions claim that all means of negotiation have been exhausted, and the industrial action will likely continue until talks between pilots and MK's leadership resume, or management makes concessions.

**Advice:** Confirm flight status before checking out of hotels or accommodations. Flights on alternative airlines could overbook; check with your transportation provider.

**SUDAN (Country risk rating: High); October 7; Gunmen kidnap Swiss national from residence in El-Fasher, West Darfur**

Gunmen kidnapped a Swiss national in El-Fasher, West Darfur State, late on October 7. Police said that multiple assailants stormed the female victim's residence and forced her into a vehicle before fleeing the scene. Reports suggest that the victim is an aid worker. The motivation for the abduction remains unclear. The risk of kidnapping is high in Sudan's Darfur region. Kidnappings of foreign humanitarian workers likely occur due to the perception that such individuals are wealthy and can provide higher ransom payments and/or greater clout in political negotiations. Abductions are generally carried out by militiamen seeking a ransom. In October 2015, gunmen abducted a Ukrainian national working as a pilot for a non-governmental organisation, close to the border of North and West Darfur states. The victim was released a month later following a military operation.

**Advice:** Exercise a high degree of vigilance at all times if operating in the Darfur region due to the threat of kidnapping. Avoid sharing personal information, specifically regarding travel plans, with strangers. Change travel routines to prevent predictable patterns of movement. If possible, travel in a convoy with an armed escort, and stay in a residence with armed guards.
SUDAN (Country risk rating: High); October 5; Possible cancellation of UN Humanitarian Air Service operations

The UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) warned that significant budget shortfalls will likely force the cancellation of its operations in Sudan by mid-December without financial support. UNHAS in Sudan reported on October 5 that it had sufficient funds to continue operations until at least the end of November, but has reportedly already suspended flights to five of the 41 airstrips it services as a cost-cutting measure. The cancellation of UNHAS flights would significantly limit secure cargo and personnel transportation options for aid workers in Sudan and South Sudan. Humanitarian groups face extreme threats of banditry and kidnapping in Sudan’s Blue Nile, Darfur, and Kordofan conflict regions; these threats are heightened during ground movements. Furthermore, around 70 humanitarian organisations delivering aid in South Sudan rely on UN flights that operate out of Sudan. The UNHAS budget shortfall is likely linked to the US government’s decision to reduce its financial support to UN peacekeeping operations. Consequently, the UN plans a drawdown of its hybrid African Union-led Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) that will approximately halve the peacekeeping force by January. The UNAMID withdrawal will likely reduce the availability of armed peacekeeping escorts for aid convoy movements.