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 Shinille).

- **Iran**: Sistan va Baluchestan province

- **Iraq**: Baghdad, Anbar, Salah ad-Din, Kirkuk, Diyala, Nineveh, Kerbala 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, 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.
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- PUERTO RICO - Salvage operations continue in wake of Hurricane Maria

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- INDIA - British nationals robbed in Pandarak, Bihar
- INDIA - Gujarat State to hold legislative assembly elections
- INDIA - Railway maintenance to cause disruptions across south east
- INDONESIA - Rallies possible at Bandung district court
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- THAILAND - Rubber farmers to rally in Bangkok over falling rubber prices

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- FRANCE - Union-led strike to cause flight disruptions nationwide
- POLAND - Protesters disrupt independence day events in Warsaw
- PORTUGAL - Labour confederation to stage demonstration in central Lisbon
- SPAIN - Large pro-independence rally held in Barcelona

**Middle East and North Africa**
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- EGYPT - Casualties reported following militant attack near Nekhel, North Sinai
- IRAN / IRAQ - Scores killed following earthquake in border region
- LEBANON - Saudi national abducted in Kesrouan
SAUDI ARABIA - Authorities heighten security at oil facilities nationwide
TUNISIA - President extends nationwide state of emergency
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES - Dubai Airshow taking place at Dubai World Central
YEMEN - Transportation blockade developments

Sub-Saharan Africa
ANGOLA - Foreign national kidnap and release in Huila Province
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC - Grenade attack in PK5, Bangui
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO - Train derailment near Lualaba
GUINEA - Violent protests likely in Boke Prefecture after demonstrations in Sangaredi
MAURITANIA - (Update) US Embassy issues advisory warning of demonstrations in Nouakchott
NIGERIA - (Update) Six crew members released after abduction from cargo vessel in Onne, Rivers State
NIGERIA - Activists plan to resume daily protest marches in Abuja
NIGERIA - Flight disruptions possible during harmattan season
TOGO - Nationwide opposition protests expected
UGANDA - Ongoing nationwide public health sector strike

Americas
COSTA RICA (Country risk rating: Medium); November 12; Earthquake near Jaco, Puntarenas Province

A powerful magnitude-6.5 earthquake occurred near the town of Jaco in Costa Rica's western Puntarenas Province at 2028 November 12. The tremor occurred offshore at a depth of about 19 km (12 miles). Moderate-to-strong shaking was felt in Puntarenas Province along the Pacific Coast. Tremors may have also been felt in San Jose, about 63 km (39 miles) northeast of the quake's epicentre. Some minor infrastructure damage was reported in Jaco, but the Costa Rican Red Cross has thus far not reported any casualties. Moderate aftershocks could occur. No Pacific-wide tsunami advisories have been issued.

Advice: Seek updated information on road conditions before driving in the region, especially in hilly areas. Consider vacating multistory buildings close to the epicentre until authorities assess their structural integrity.

PUERTO RICO (Country risk rating: Medium); November 11; Salvage operations continue in wake of Hurricane Maria

Significant power and telecommunication outages persist in Puerto Rico following the September 20 passage of Hurricane Maria, despite ongoing salvage operations; at least 55 hurricane-related deaths have been reported. Several roads and bridges remain impassable, particularly in rural areas. Damaged or blocked drainage infrastructure exacerbated flood conditions following heavy rains from November 7 to 9. Over 50 percent of the island remains without power; however, authorities hope to restore the majority of power with the next week. Telecommunications outages continue in south eastern parts of the island. Most major pharmaceutical and manufacturing plants are operational, but they have been reliant on generator power and have been operating below full capacity. National Guard and military police units remain deployed nationwide to bolster security and aid reconstruction efforts. The island has experienced a spike in residential burglaries, likely due to the high number of damaged and/or abandoned properties. A flash flood warning remains in place for areas below the Guajataca Dam on the northwestern part of the island. The advisory will likely be extended repeatedly because the structure is compromised, and a catastrophic failure is still possible despite ongoing repairs.

Advice: Seek updated information on road conditions before driving. Plan accordingly for protracted commercial, transport, and logistics disruptions. Charge battery-powered devices when electricity is available; restrict the use of cell phones to emergencies only. Use SMS messaging when possible to conserve power and reduce resource use in cell towers, freeing up more bandwidth for emergency responders. Power down mobile devices when not in use.
Asia and Pacific

FRENCH POLYNESIA (Country risk rating: Low); 12 November; Air France strike action impacts flights

Unionised Air France (AF) cabin crew based at Fa’a’a International Airport (PPT) in Papeete, Tahiti, began strike action from November 10 after talks with management collapsed. AF operates three weekly international flights between PPT and Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), as well as limited domestic service within French Polynesia. Some flights are a codeshare with Delta Air Lines (DL). The airline will provide accommodation in the event of a work stoppage, with priority given to non-residents due to limited hotel rooms. It is currently clear if the strike is ongoing, but even if it has ceased, lingering disruptions may remain.

Advice: Confirm flight schedules with booking agents or airline representatives.

INDIA (Country risk rating: High); November 20 to 23; (Update) Farmer groups plan rallies in Delhi

Farmer groups in India are organising a series of protests in Delhi from November 20 to 23 after months of nationwide agitation. The Akhil Bhartiya Kisan Sangharsh Samanvay Samiti (ABKSSS) - a conglomeration of nearly 200 farmer organisations - plans to hold a massive rally at the Ramtila Ground beginning November 20 to pressure the government to meet their demands. Organisers say hundreds of thousands of farmers from throughout the country will assemble for the rally. Additional protests are likely in Delhi, as some farmer organisations plan three days of agitation. Authorities will likely significantly boost security in and around central Delhi from November 20 to 23. Demonstrators could gather in large vehicle convoys, which could prompt localised transport disruptions. Police may also temporarily close roads and sections of highways and detour traffic in affected areas. Major violence is unlikely, though localised clashes with police cannot be ruled out, particularly if law enforcement attempt to block protesters from proceeding. Agitation by groups representing farmers has been ongoing since July. Farmer groups began major protests in Maharashtra State, but have since organised demonstrations nationwide. The farmer groups continue to demand that Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s administration fulfil its election promise of ensuring a minimum 50-percent profit on farm production costs. In addition, the groups are pushing for a loan waiver programme from the Modi government, citing a financial burden on farmers due to drought and poor returns to their produce.

Advice: Avoid all demonstrations. Use alternative routes to avoid rally sites. Remain alert and immediately depart the area if a rowdy crowd begins forming near you. Allow additional travel time due to increased security and traffic disruptions from November 20 to 23 as the protesters gather and disperse. Monitor local media or contact trusted local sources to verify the status of roads before attempting travel in central Delhi during rallies.

INDIA (Country risk rating: High); November 5; British nationals robbed in Pandarak, Bihar

Two armed assailants allegedly robbed a British couple travelling on a boat in the rural Pandarak area of Bihar State on November 5. The incident occurred around 2000, while the pair were setting up camp on an island in the Ganges River about 70 km (43 miles) east of Patna, the state capital. The couple fled the scene after the two assailants threatened them and looted their belongings. Police arrived after the victims reported the robbery to locals. Officials have launched an investigation into the incident and arrested two suspects, who were then positively identified by the victims. The overall threat of violent crime targeting foreign nationals is medium in India. These threats may be elevated in rural areas, especially when foreign visitors are camping in insecure, temporary shelters. Violent crime against foreign nationals is not uncommon in India; however, most incidents are either robberies or burglaries gone wrong, or situations linked to business or personal disputes. Several foreigners have also been victims of sexual crimes, especially in popular tourist areas, in recent years.

INDIA (Country risk rating: High); December 9 to 18; Gujarat State to hold legislative assembly elections

The western state of Gujarat will hold legislative assembly elections in two phases in December. Election results will be announced December 18. Polling in the districts will take place on December 9 in Amreli, Bhavnagar, Bharuch, Botad, Dang, Devbhoomi Dwarka, Gir Somnath, Jamnagar, Junagadh, Kutch, Morbi, Narmada, Navsari, Porbandar, Rajkot, Surat, Surendranagar, Tapi, and Valsad. On December 14, polling will take place in Ahmedabad, Anand, Aravali, Banaskantha, Chhota Udepur, Dahod, Gandhinagar, Kheda, Mahisagar, Mehsana, Panchmahal, Patan, Sabarkantha and Vadodara. Thousands of police and paramilitary personnel will be deployed throughout the state in the run up to and during the vote. Security will be extremely tight at campaign rallies attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Indian National Congress (INC) leaders, and other high-profile politicians. These rallies could cause significant transport delays, especially in urban centres. Politically motivated attacks against and clashes between rival political groups are highly likely in the run up to and during the vote. Security disturbances may also occur in the aftermath of the vote, especially if there are any allegations of
poll irregularities. Increased security at campaign events and election-related sites may prompt militants to strike soft targets such as crowded markets, religious venues, and transport hubs.

Advice: Prepare for increased security - potentially including roadblocks and identification checks - in Gujarat State at least through December 14; allow additional time to reach destinations. Avoid political party offices, political rallies, polling stations, and government buildings due to the potential for protests and clashes. If a large gathering begins forming, immediately leave the area or seek shelter indoors. Use extreme caution in areas commonly identified as militant targets such as crowded markets, restaurants, shopping malls, transport hubs, and places of worship. Confirm all business appointments and transport reservations on polling days as a precaution.

INDIA (Country risk rating: High); November 16 to 21; Railway maintenance to cause disruptions across south east

Indian Railways has cancelled, diverted, short-terminated, or rescheduled at least 60 trains originating and passing through the East Coast Railway zone to facilitate maintenance at Kharagpur Junction railway station in West Bengal from November 16 to 21. The zone extends across most of Odisha, northeastern Andhra Pradesh, and southern Chhattisgarh states. Overcrowding and delays are highly likely on alternative services, including busses and taxis. Increased traffic congestion is also possible on primary motorways, as reduced rail services could force passengers to resort to using private vehicles.

Advice: Confirm rail schedules before checking out of hotels. Consider alternative travel arrangements.

INDONESIA (Country risk rating: High); November 14; Rallies possible at Bandung district court

Authorities will likely increase security around the Bandung district court on November 14, when the court is scheduled to deliver a verdict on a local for allegedly spreading hate speech. Buni Yani has been charged with inciting religious and ethnic hatred under the Electronic Information and Transactions Law, for posting an edited video of former Jakarta governor Basuki Tjahaja Purnama (alias Ahok) making a speech that was perceived as blasphemous against Islam. Prosecutors are demanding a two-year imprisonment sentence and a fine of IDR 100 million (USD 7,384) for Buni Yani. Activists from conservative Muslim groups have staged small rallies during previous trial sessions, and additional demonstrations in support of Buni Yani are possible. A senior politician from the National Mandate Party (PAN), Amien Rais, has said he and other conservative Muslim activists would also attend the court session on November 14. Roadblocks and security cordons are possible near the court building, which may result in localised traffic disruptions.

Advice: Consider avoiding the Bandung district court on November 14 as a precaution. Allow additional time to reach destinations near the affected area, or consider taking alternative routes.

MYANMAR (Country risk rating: Medium); November 15; Protests possible during US Secretary of State's visit in Naypyidaw and Yangon

Buddhist nationalists may stage protests in Naypyidaw and Yangon in conjunction with US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson’s visit to Naypyidaw on November 15. Tillerson is expected to meet senior officials, including State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and Army Chief General Min Aung Hlaiing, to discuss the Rohingya crisis in Rakhine State, among other issues. In Naypyidaw, activists may rally near government offices including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In Yangon, activists could protest near the US Embassy; Buddhist nationalists have previously demonstrated outside the embassy to protest the US use of the term Rohingya for the Muslims minority in Rakhine State. Authorities will likely increase security in Naypyidaw and Yangon during Tillerson's visit as a precaution. Police could erect roadblocks and security cordons around rally sites, particularly if large demonstrations occur. Clashes could break out if police forcibly disperse protesters. Traffic disruptions are likely near rally sites.

Advice: Use caution around possible protest sites including the US Embassy, public squares, stadiums, and government offices. Seek updated information from trusted local contacts on actual protests. To the extent possible, avoid large gatherings due to the possibility of clashes. Allow extra time for travel if protests take place.

PAKISTAN (Country risk rating: High); November through February; Fog and haze to cause transport and power supply disruptions; increased air pollution likely

Fog and haze routinely affect transport services during winter in Pakistan, especially in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh provinces. Reduced visibility can cause periodic flight delays through at least February. Poor visibility also affects passenger and freight train movements during winter. Heavy fog and air pollution pose a significant safety hazard when driving, and officials could close sections of roads and intercity highways due to low visibility. Air pollution levels typically spike in many parts of Pakistan during winter, with Punjab Province being the worst affected. Authorities may issue health warnings in the affected areas during periods of severe air pollution. Periods of heavy smog have also tripped power
transmission lines in the past, resulting in localised or region-wide temporary blackouts. Transport and power supply disruptions have frequently sparked protests in affected areas. Some of these protests could turn violent; in the past, demonstrators have engaged in arson and vandalism, blocked roads and highways, and clashed with police.

**Advice:** Confirm all flights and check the status of train services; do not check out of hotels without first verifying onward travel. Limit long-distance driving in the affected areas to the extent possible during winter months; consider booking accommodations that are close to offices or job sites. Drive cautiously in areas experiencing heavy fog or air pollution, and allow extra time to reach destinations due to possible low visibility and road congestion. Plan for possible delivery delays; confirm road conditions before routing shipments through affected areas. Review contingency plans, including telecommuting options, in the event of significant air pollution. Ensure the availability and functionality of backup electric generators.

**PAKISTAN (Country risk rating: High); November 11; Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan leads peaceful demonstration in Karachi**

Leaders and supporters of the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) held a peaceful rally in Karachi on November 11, despite police warnings to refrain from doing so. Significant security measures, including police roadblocks and large deployments of police, were implemented in the Azizabad area of Karachi. Despite the aforementioned warning and related security measures, the MQM-P rally proceeded to the Jinnah Ground without major confrontations. The party plans to hold a series of rallies in the city in the coming weeks. The campaign has prompted official concern over the potential for unrest in the city, and authorities are likely to increase security ahead of future rallies and marches.

**Advice:** Avoid all demonstrations due to the potential for violent clashes.

**PAKISTAN (Country risk rating: High); November 10; Ongoing trial against ousted prime minister to prompt periodic rallies, disruptions in Islamabad**

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) court in Islamabad is conducting a corruption trial against ousted Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and some members of his family. Sizeable crowds of supporters and leaders from Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party have gathered outside the court premises during previous trial sessions. The gatherings of PML-N supporters may increase in size as the trial progresses. Expect heightened security at and around the Federal Judicial Complex (FJC) in Sector G-11 - where the NAB court is located - on days when Sharif is slated to attend the court. Security personnel will also almost certainly deploy in large numbers to secure the route of the former premier, who has been travelling to the court building from Punjab House in Islamabad's Sector F-5/2. Security measures may include roadblocks and could result in localised traffic disruptions. Minor clashes between Sharif's supporters and law enforcement are possible, particularly if PML-N members try to breach security cordons around the court. However, significant unrest is not anticipated. The court on October 19 indicted Sharif - along with two other members of his family - in three corruption cases filed against them by the NAB in early September. On July 28, a five-judge panel of the supreme court disqualified Sharif from office over undeclared assets and ordered NAB - the country's chief anti-corruption watchdog - to file criminal charges against him, several of his family members, and Federal Finance Minister Ishaq Dar by September 8. It further directed the NAB court to complete a corruption trial and pronounce its verdict within six months. A guilty verdict could see Sharif imprisoned for at least seven years. Monitor local media or check with trusted sources to determine when Sharif will attend the NAB court.

**Advice:** Avoid all demonstrations due to the potential for violent clashes.

**PHILIPPINES (Country risk rating: Medium); November 10; Hostage rescue near Sumaluc Island, Tawi-Tawi Province**

On November 10, the Philippine military rescued four Vietnamese sailors who had been seized by Abu Sayyaf Group (ASG) militants who boarded the Vietnamese-flagged MV Giang Hai 5 in February near Pearl Bank off the Philippines' Sulu Archipelago. The hostages were rescued near Sumaluc (Kang Tipayan Dakula) Island, Tawi-Tawi Province, about 100 km (62 miles) south-south east of the area where the cargo ship was initially boarded; the vessel was later found drifting near the Philippines' Turtle Islands, which are close to Sandakan, Malaysia. One Vietnamese ASG hostage was found dead on Sumalac, apparently due to illness. The ASG is reportedly still holding at least seven foreigners and nine Filipinos hostage in the southern Philippines. ASG militants attempted to kidnap 17 Vietnamese crewmembers in the February 2017 attack. Ten escaped, three died, and four were rescued. The ASG engages in kidnapping-for-ransom across much of the southern Philippines and in coastal areas of eastern Sabah, Malaysia. Since early 2016, the group has attacked numerous foreign vessels and seized crewmembers in the Sulu and Celebes seas, which separate the Philippines' Mindanao region from Borneo. Foreigners are attractive targets due to the perception that they can be ransomed for large amounts of money. The ASG has killed several hostages after ransoms were not paid. Many foreign governments advise against travel to the
islands in the far south of the Philippines, coastal areas of eastern Sabah, and waters between the Sabah and the southern
Philippines.

**THAILAND (Country risk rating: Medium); November 13; Rubber farmers to rally in Bangkok over falling rubber prices**

Rubber farmers from provinces across Thailand plan to stage a rally at the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives in
Bangkok on November 13, to protest Agriculture Minister General Chatchai Sarikulya's alleged failure to address falling
rubber prices. Various rubber farmer groups are also unhappy that under Sarikulya, the Thai Rubber Authority formed the
Thai Rubber Joint Venture Co. Ltd. with five big rubber firms to the disadvantage of small-scale farmers. The rally will likely
remain small, attracting no more than several hundred people. Authorities will likely increase security around the ministry
during the protest. A significant turnout could result in localised traffic disruptions. Due to an ongoing ban on gatherings of
more than five people, police may forcibly disperse demonstrators, possibly resulting in minor skirmishes.

**Advice:** Avoid the protest site as a precaution. Allow additional time to reach destinations near the affected area.

**Europe and Russia**

**FRANCE (Country risk rating: Medium); November 10; Police respond to vehicular incident near school in Blagnac**

An individual deliberately drove his car into a group of pedestrians leaving the IGS Alternance campus in Blagnac, near
Toulouse, around 1600 November 10, injuring three people. Two of the victims sustained serious injuries and were
transported to local hospitals. The victims are believed to be Chinese students. Authorities arrested the driver following the
incident. Police claim the driver purposely drove into the pedestrians; however, the incident is not confirmed as being terror-
related. Unconfirmed reports state the driver had a history of mental illness.

**FRANCE (Country risk rating: Medium); November 16; Union-led strike to cause flight disruptions nationwide**

Air traffic controllers (ATC) associated with the Trade Association of Civil Aviation-General Confederation of Labour (USAC-
CGT) have announced plans to participate in a 24-hour nationwide general strike November 16. The ATC action will likely
cause flight disruptions - including delays and cancellations - at airports throughout France from 1900 November 15 through
at least 0600 November 17. CGT leaders have also called on Air France (AF) employees to join the walkout, probably
exacerbating disruptions across the carrier's network. Other labour organisations, including the Force Ouvriere (FO),
Solidaires, and the main educational and civil service union, the FSU, are planning to join the walkout, which will probably
have widespread support in the public and private sectors. Such solidarity strike action is anticipated to result in disruptions
to public services, including all transport services, education, health and utility services across the country. Associated
protests are also expected across major urban centres. In Paris, protesters plan to gather at Place de la Republique at
1400 and march toward Place de La Nation. Participation at related events will vary by location, though the Paris
demonstration will likely draw thousands of unionised workers. Expect an increased police presence near rally locations.
Clashes between protesters and police are possible; if necessary, security forces may use tear gas and other riot-control
measures to disperse unruly demonstrators. Expect localised ground transport disruptions around announced protest sites.
The strike is the latest action protesting the government's labour reform agenda, which began in 2016, though unions are
now also opposed to President Emmanuel Macron's free-market policies.

**Advice:** Confirm all bookings with French transport operators November 15-17. Allow additional time to reach destinations
in large cities. Avoid all demonstrations as a routine security precaution.

**POLAND (Country risk rating: Low); November 11; Protesters disrupt independence day events in Warsaw**

Thousands of nationalist protesters disrupted commemorative events to mark Poland's independence day on November
11. Police estimate approximately 60,000 people attended a protest march in Warsaw. A smaller counter-protest by an
anti-fascist movement also took place; however, tightened security kept the two groups apart. Although localised travel
disruptions were reported, no major incidents of violence occurred. The November 11 celebrations marked the date when
Poland regained its independence after being partitioned between Russia, Prussia, and Austria in 1918. Independence
Day demonstrations in Warsaw have been increasingly violent since 2011; each year, breakaway groups of protesters
have clashed with riot police, leading to several injuries and hundreds of arrests. Although the majority of people gather to
attend peaceful celebrations, the day has become an occasion for far-right nationalist groups to revive allegations of
Russian historical influence over Poland, and also to protest the acceptance of ethnic and other minorities in Polish society.
PORTUGAL (Country risk rating: Low); November 18; Labour confederation to stage demonstration in central Lisbon

The General Confederation of Portuguese Workers (CGTP-IN), Portugal's largest labour organisation, plans to stage what it has dubbed a 'National Demonstration' in central Lisbon on November 18. The purpose of the event is to demand greater appreciation for workers and labour, as well as to protest job insecurity. The demonstration will take place at Praca Marques de Pombal starting at 1500. Several unions affiliated with the CGTP-IN have also filed notices of intent to strike on November 18 to ensure their members are able to attend the event; these include at least the Financial Business Workers' Union (SinTAF), the Social and Public Sector Workers' Union of the South and Autonomous Regions (STFPSSRA), the Commercial, Office and Services Workers' Union of Portugal (CESP), and the Portuguese Federation of Construction, Ceramics, and Glazing Labour Unions (FEVICCOM). Other CGTP-IN affiliates will almost certainly file similar strike notices. The demonstration will likely draw large numbers of participants, including many from different parts of the country. While the gathering will probably remain largely peaceful, isolated scuffles or other minor security incidents cannot be ruled out. Authorities will deploy increased security near Praca Marques de Pombal during the event as a standard precaution; police could impose localised road closures and detours. Expect traffic disruptions near the rally venue, as well as crowding on public transportation serving the Praca Marques de Pombal area, through the evening of November 18.

**Advice:** Implement contingency plans to mitigate the potential for increased absenteeism among unionised employees November 18. Allow extra time for travel in central Lisbon between at least 1400-1900 on the demonstration date. Consider alternative driving routes to avoid the rally venue and any associated traffic congestion. Heed the instructions of local authorities.

SPAIN (Country risk rating: Low); November 11; Large pro-independence rally held in Barcelona

Pro-independence bodies in Catalonia held a large-scale rally in central Barcelona November 11 to mark the conclusion of a series of protests dubbed 'Freedom Week,' which began November 5. Approximately 750,000 participants gathered on Carrer de la Marina to show support for the issue of Catalanion independence; the rally passed without major incident. In addition, the pro-independence Intersindical-CSC union held a 24-hour strike in the region on November 8, prompting significant transportation disruptions and protest roadblocks of major routes. Further such strikes are possible and pro-independence protests are likely to intensify ahead of the Catalanion regional elections, which are scheduled for December 21. Freedom Week was held to call for the release of pro-independence leaders who have been arrested for their part in the October 1 Catalanion independence referendum, as well as events leading up to the unilateral declaration of independence by the Catalanion Parliament. Former Catalanion President Carles Puigdemont and four former ministers gave themselves up to police in Belgium following the issuance of an EU arrest warrant for their part in the referendum and independence declaration. They are to appear in a Belgian court before November 17; legal proceedings regarding the accused will have the potential to prompt further demonstrations in Catalanion urban centres.

**Advice:** Avoid all demonstrations as a standard precaution. If violence occurs, leave the area immediately. Plan alternative routes circumventing demonstrations to avoid congestion. Seek updated information on traffic conditions from trusted local sources and contacts. On strike days, check the status of transport services and overland routes before setting out, and allow significantly greater time for travel.

Middle East and North Africa

BAHRAIN (Country risk rating: High); November 11; Authorities claim oil pipeline fire near Buri was terrorist act

The Interior Ministry stated that an oil pipeline fire near Buri that was contained by authorities early on November 11 was a terrorist act. Physical evidence collected by investigators at the incident site allegedly indicated that the fire was started intentionally. The blaze was reportedly brought under control in coordination with the Bahrain Petroleum Company (Bapco); Bapco officials temporarily halted the flow of oil in the pipeline and activated an evacuation plan for residents near the work site. No injuries or casualties were reported. Bahraini officials frequently use the term 'terrorism' to refer to acts of violence committed by Shi'a dissidents. The fire coincides with the Shi'a observance of Arba'een, during which opposition activists called for anti-government protests in several locations around the country. It is possible that a member of the Shi'a opposition was responsible for the fire; however, it is likely that Bahraini officials are using the fire as part of an anti-Iranian propaganda campaign during a period of increased tensions. Bahrain's Sunni government frequently accuses Iran and its proxies of supporting militants in the country.

EGYPT (Country risk rating: High); November 9; Casualties reported following militant attack near Nekhel, North Sinai
Militants reportedly ambushed a convoy of cement trucks on a road near Nekhel, North Sinai Governorate, late on November 9, killing two soldiers and eight civilians. No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack; however, some officials stated Islamic State (IS)-affiliated Wilayat Sinai (formerly known as Ansar Beit al-Maqdis) perpetrated the attack. Reports indicate that the militants burned several trucks and stole weapons. Wilayat Sinai is one of the more capable and effective groups operating in Egypt and frequently targets security personnel in North Sinai, particularly in and around its strongholds in El Arish, Sheikh Zuwiyyed, and Rafah. The militant organisation appears to be increasing its frequency of high-profile attacks in recent months. Extremists in Egypt continue to conduct frequent shootings and bombings against military and police forces nationwide. Most militant attacks take place in the northern Sinai Peninsula, but occasional attacks also occur in mainland Egypt. Islamist extremists have targeted the country's Coptic Christian community. Additionally, IS militants downed a Russian passenger aircraft in Sharm El Sheikh in 2015, killing 224 passengers and crewmembers, which indicates that attacks targeting foreign nationals cannot be ruled out.

IRAN / IRAQ; November 12; Scores killed following earthquake in border region

A strong magnitude-7.1 earthquake struck in the Iran-Iraq border area, approximately 22 km (14 miles) south-south east of Derbendixan, Iraq, at 2118 on November 12. The quake struck at a depth of 33 km (20 miles). While the epicentre was located in a remote area, strong shaking was felt throughout Iraq's Kurdistan Region, as well as Iran's Western Azerbaijan and Kermanshah provinces; shaking from the tremor was also reported from as far away as south eastern Turkey and the city of Lenkaran in the Republic of Azerbaijan. At least 140 people have been killed thus far, with death tolls likely to rise as authorities continue emergency response on clean-up operations. Moderate-to-strong aftershocks are likely in the region over the upcoming days. Expect ground and air transport delays in areas near the epicentre as authorities inspect infrastructure for potential damage.

Advice: Consider vacating multistory buildings in areas near the epicentre until authorities assess their structural integrity. Due to the threat of landslides, seek updated information on road conditions before driving in elevated areas in the affected region.

LEBANON (Country risk rating: High); November 10; Saudi national abducted in Kesrouan

Saudi officials confirmed that unidentified assailants kidnapped a Saudi national in the Kesrouan District of Mount Lebanon governorate on November 10. Unconfirmed reports suggest that the abduction, which occurred near the victim's home in Adma wa Dafneh, may be linked to a business dispute, possibly involving narcotics. The Lebanese army carried out raids in the Beqa Valley in a search for the victim, reportedly leading to an armed confrontation between soldiers and the suspected kidnappers in Dar al-Wasaa. Further details regarding the abduction are currently unavailable; no arrests have been made in connection with the incident. The kidnapping appears unrelated to the current diplomatic dispute between Lebanon and Saudi Arabia. For most foreign nationals, the threat of kidnapping in Lebanon is medium; however, it is higher in areas such as the Beqa Valley and near the border with Syria. Kidnappers are generally more likely to target locals. The threat stems from criminal gangs and militant groups, motivated by both financial and political factors.

SAUDI ARABIA (Country risk rating: High); November 11; Authorities heighten security at oil facilities nationwide

The Saudi Ministry of Energy, Industry, and Mineral Resources announced on November 11 that it would be increasing security precautions at oil facilities nationwide in Saudi Arabia in response to an alleged attack on a Bahrain Petroleum Company (Bapco) pipeline. The attack in Bahrain took place during the night November 10/11. The ministry also temporarily suspended pumping oil to Bahrain following the incident. While Saudi authorities are unlikely to make any public statement clarifying what security enhancements they plan to employ, the measures will probably bolster both physical and administrative security checks. Increased patrols, additional checkpoints, and stricter searches of vehicles entering the oil facility could result in localised traffic disruptions, particularly during shift change hours. More stringent access requirements may initially cause delays in processing visitor access requests. The announcement of increased security is likely as much of a symbolic measure as it is a practical one. Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are strong allies, particularly in relation to countering Iranian influence in the region. On November 11, the Bahraini Interior Ministry labelled an oil pipeline fire near Buri a terrorist act. Physical evidence collected by investigators at the incident site allegedly indicated that the fire was started intentionally. Bahraini officials frequently use the term 'terrorism' to refer to acts of violence committed by Shi'a dissidents.

Advice: Allow additional time for commuting near or gaining access to oil facilities in Saudi Arabia. If operating at an oil facility in the kingdom, submit requests for temporary visitor access as early as possible in the event of processing delays once the new security measures are in place. Remain courteous and cooperative if approached and questioned by security personnel.

TUNISIA (Country risk rating: High); November 12; President extends nationwide state of emergency
Tunisian President Beji Caid Essebsi extended the nationwide state of emergency for an additional three months beginning November 12, keeping the measure in force through at least February 12, 2018. The decision came following a meeting of the National Security Council, which assessed the current security situation in the country. The state of emergency allows security forces additional powers in countering militancy, including limitations on public gatherings and press freedom. The extension was expected, particularly after a stabbing attack that targeted two police officers near the parliament building in the Bardo area of Tunis on November 1; counterterrorism forces carried out raids in the assailant’s home neighbourhood of Cite Ettadhamen after the incident, and authorities stated that the attacker had extremist views. The emergency measure was first implemented following a series of major terrorist attacks in the country in 2015 and has been extended continuously since its introduction. Officials remain concerned about the possibility of Tunisian nationals travelling to conflict regions abroad - including neighbouring Libya - to join militant groups and receive training to carry out attacks in their home country. Additionally, low-level militant attacks, primarily targeting security forces, occur frequently in the mountainous areas of Kef and Kasserine governorates.

Advice: Follow the instructions of security personnel. Ensure travel documents are accessible at all times. Maintain contact with your diplomatic mission.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (Country risk rating: Low); November 12 to 16; Dubai Airshow taking place at Dubai World Central

The 15th Dubai Airshow, taking place at the Dubai Airshow Site at the Dubai World Central, part of Al Maktoum International Airport (DWC), is set to conclude on November 16. The event is open to aerospace industry representatives and trade visitors and runs from 1000 to 1730 daily. Business personnel must be credentialed to attend the airshow; a business card and passport are required for entry. Private and public transportation options to the venue are available. The event should not cause major road disruptions between Dubai city and DWC, although congestion is possible along the E11, E311, and the E611 roads. Large crowds can be expected at transit centres near DWC - and heavy traffic is likely on airport access roads - before and after events that are open to the public. Risks associated with the airshow are perceived to be low, but security will be tight due to prevailing terrorism concerns and the fact that the event draws many high-profile business travellers, corporate sponsors and government and military officials from numerous countries. Heightened security measures, including security checkpoints, random identification checks, and vehicle searches, will likely be implemented. Additional security patrols are likely in and around the venue, at transport hubs, and at sensitive locations across the facility. Localised travel disruptions are possible due to the elevated security procedures.

Advice: Allow extra time to reach DWC and nearby destinations until November 16. Demand for accommodation near the airport and in Dubai proper - as well as transport services - will increase; confirm hotel bookings and transport reservations in advance. Contact corporate aviation departments to ensure that all required documentation has been obtained before departure. Carry valid travel documents. Remain cognisant of the prevailing risks associated with industrial espionage.

YEMEN (Country risk rating: Extreme); November 12; Transportation blockade developments

According to the Yemeni Minister of Transportation, Saudi coalition forces allowed the resumption of commercial flights at Aden International Airport (ADE) and Seiyun Airport (GXF) on November 12; however, flight services remain unconfirmed. The announcement comes after the coalition reopened the Port of Aden on November 8 and the al Wadie border crossing on November 9, gradually easing the ongoing land, air, and sea blockade. The ports of Al Hudaydah and Saleef, as well as the Sarfait and Al-Mazyunah border crossings, remain closed; local reports indicate that humanitarian relief and commercial goods are still unable to transit these locations. A protracted blockade of aid and essential goods could lead to nationwide shortages, prompting unrest. Clashes are possible if security personnel disperse demonstrators using force. The blockade has also led to increased fuel prices nationwide, with some estimates indicating that prices have risen by 50 percent since November 6. Al-Houthi rebels in Sana’a reportedly ordered the closure of many fuel stations in the capital, accusing vendors of using the blockade to increase prices. Ground and road transportation service disruptions are possible. On November 6, the Saudi-led coalition closed all land crossings, airports, and seaports in Yemen. The blockade was in response to a November 4 ballistic missile launch toward Riyadh by the Shi’a Al-Houthi rebels; Saudi air defence forces successfully intercepted the missile, however, and the attack caused no casualties or damage. The blockade was reportedly intended to stop Iran from providing the rebels with weapons. Both the Saudi-led coalition and the government of Yemeni President Rabo Mansour al-Hadi have accused Iran of sending arms to the Al-Houthi rebels.

Advice: Prepare for ongoing supply disruptions, particularly in Al-Houthi-controlled areas, and review supply chain contingencies in the event the blockade becomes protracted. If a protest or unrest materialises nearby, immediately leave the area and seek shelter in a secure location.

Sub-Saharan Africa
ANGOLA (Country risk rating: High); November 12; Foreign national kidnap and release in Huila Province

According to belated reports from November 12, Angolan authorities arrested two Nigerians for kidnapping a Chinese bricklayer at gunpoint in Arimba township, Huila Province. The kidnappers held the victim for 72 hours before releasing him. A USD 11,700 (AOA 12 million) ransom was paid for his release. Angola's oil industry employs many foreign workers, particularly from China, increasing the risk that they will be kidnapped for ransom. Chinese expatriate businesspeople are seen as particularly prime targets. Colleagues and family readily pay ransoms and often work outside official channels to secure the release of abducted victims. Kidnapping incidents involving Chinese expatriates tend to be reported only if witnessed by uninvolved locals. The Chinese Embassy arranged for additional private security for expatriates after five Chinese nationals were kidnapped and killed in January 2016. Since then, China and Angola have agreed to engage in regular police cooperation.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (Country risk rating: Extreme); November 11; Grenade attack in PK5, Bangui

Two unidentified assailants riding a motorcycle threw up to four grenades into a cafe in Bangui's majority Muslim PK5 neighbourhood late November 11, leaving about 20 people injured. The attack apparently targeted a crowd of fans attending a pop concert at the establishment, named 'At the Crossroads of Peace'. Due to a history of such incidents escalating rapidly in PK5, authorities will very likely deploy additional security in and around the neighbourhood to quell any further unrest. Security forces may erect checkpoints or even seal off the affected area altogether until it becomes clear that the situation has stabilised. PK5 is adjacent to the capital's M'Poko International Airport (BGF). Security conditions remain poor in the Central African Republic (CAR). The PK5 neighbourhood has a long history of intense rivalries, including ethnic and religious conflicts between its Muslim and Christian inhabitants. Numerous clashes have occurred between rival militias, or so-called 'self-defence groups' in recent years. Individual killings often inspire retaliatory attacks, which can escalate into broader clashes. CAR has faced challenges in reforming its security sectors and creating a professional army since the country was plunged into a civil war in 2013. At that time, a coalition of Seleka rebels deposed former President Francois Bozize. The country continues to rely heavily on UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) troops to maintain peace.

Advice: Avoid the PK5 district and the immediate surrounding areas until it becomes clear that the situation is stable. If operating in the area is unavoidable, exercise extreme caution and carry proper identification and travel documents at all times. Remain courteous and cooperative if approached and questioned by security personnel. Be aware of your surroundings all times; be prepared to shelter in a secure place if clashes break out near you.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (Country risk rating: High); November 12; Train derailment near Lualaba

Emergency response and cleanup operations are ongoing on November 13 after a 13-carriage cargo train derailed near Lubudi, some 330 km (205 miles) northwest of Lubumbashi in southern Lualaba Province, the previous day. The train's cargo of fuel and heating oil caught fire, engulfing 11 carriages. At least 33 people were killed and another 26 were injured. The cause of the accident was not immediately clear. Passenger and cargo train services along the Lubumbashi-Bukama line will likely remain suspended over the coming days.

Advice: Adjust scheduling and transport itineraries to account for rail service disruptions. Consult with the local authorities and National Railway Company of the Congo (SNCC) officials for additional information as to when the Lubumbashi-Bukama line may reopen.

GUINEA (Country risk rating: High); November 9 and 11; Violent protests likely in Boke Prefecture after demonstrations in Sangaredi

Additional demonstrations are likely near mines and in urban centres of Boke Prefecture following violent protests in Sangaredi November 9 and 11. A widespread power cut triggered the unrest after several days of protracted supply disruptions; it is unclear when service will resume. Protesters blocked roads to sites operated by the Guinean Bauxite Company (Compagnie des Bauxites de Guinee, CBG), which they accuse of receiving preferential access to electricity and blame for the outages. Demonstrators also pelted stones at buildings associated with CBG and the Guinea Electricity (Electricite de Guinee, EDG) utility. Protests are more likely to occur in areas where unrest has recently occurred including Boke town, Kamsar, and Koulabou. Confrontations between police and protesters could trigger rioting and vandalism. Security personnel typically use tear gas to disperse crowds and are likely to fire live ammunition if violence occurs. Authorities could impose a curfew to restore security in the event of protracted unrest. Demonstrators could attempt to further obstruct Bauxite mining operations by setting up barricades on major roads, near ports, and at the entrances to mines. Traffic disruptions are likely near any protests, and crowds could attack vehicles perceived to be associated with
mining operations. Power outages and polluted water supplies frequently motivate violent protests near mining sites in Boke Prefecture; government talks appear to have failed to address these long-standing grievances.

**Advice:** Defer nonessential travel to urban centres in the Boke Region until the situation stabilises. Avoid demonstrations and large concentrations of police; use caution around government buildings and facilities associated with mining operations. Seek updated information on route and destination security and road conditions before conducting ground movements. If crowds form or violence occurs nearby, leave the area immediately and seek shelter in a secure, nongovernmental building. Restrict nighttime movements.

**MAURITANIA (Country risk rating: High); November 13; (Update) US Embassy issues advisory warning of demonstrations in Nouakchott**

The US Embassy issued an advisory warning that demonstrations are likely to continue in Nouakchott in the coming days. On November 10, crowds marched between the Saudi Mosque and the Presidential Palace to demand the retrial and execution of a blogger, after the supreme court reduced his death penalty to a fine and two-year prison sentence on November 9. Protesters blame Western countries for the court's decision and could hold demonstrations outside foreign embassies. Demonstrations could also materialise in other localities throughout the country. Authorities have deployed additional security personnel in Nouakchott and Nouadhibou following clashes at demonstrations in the two cities on November 8. Opposition groups have called for a 'popular uprising' and said they would stage street rallies at a festival in Nouakchott on November 25; exact locations have not been announced. Protests are likely to attract thousands of participants and involve marches along major roads, likely causing severe transport and commercial disruptions. Police will likely use batons and tear gas to disperse crowds if violence or vandalism occurs. Protesters may throw stones at police or block roads with burning debris if clashes occur. The reduced sentencing will likely exacerbate tensions. The supreme court did not annul the original verdict, and protesters likely perceive that Mkhaitir remains guilty of blasphemy. The court's decision effectively freed Mkhaitir, based on time already spent in detention and the payment of an MRO-60,000 (USD-170) fine.

**Advice:** Avoid all protests, religious buildings, or large concentrations of security personnel. If a crowd forms near you, immediately leave the area and seek shelter indoors in a secure, nongovernmental building due to the potential for violence. Confirm route and destination security conditions before conducting ground movements, including at diplomatic missions. Use alternative routes to circumvent any protest site.

**NIGERIA (Country risk rating: High); November 12; (Update) Six crew members released after abduction from cargo vessel in Onne, Rivers State**

According to belated November 12 reports, pirates released six crew members who were originally captured from the MV Demeter as they were entering the port of Onne, Nigeria, October 21. A spokesman for the shipping company operating the vessel did not elaborate on the exact date or circumstances of the release. Onne Harbour is around 21 km (13 miles) south east of Port Harcourt, in Nigeria's south eastern Rivers State. The already high threat of piracy and kidnapping across the Gulf of Guinea, which is especially elevated in waters closer to Nigeria, is reportedly increasing, with many attacks on ships taking place during daylight hours. During the October 21 attack, eight pirates apparently approached the Liberian-flagged container ship and exchanged gunfire with the crew. The pirates boarded the vessel and left after kidnapping six of its 18 crew members, allowing the other 12 to steer the vessel to safety. The nationalities of the abductees have not been disclosed. On September 18, pirates kidnapped five crew members from a merchant vessel near Parrot Island, around 16 km (10 miles) south west of the city of Calabar, in Nigeria's south eastern Cross River State. Pirates also kidnapped three Moroccan and two unidentified crew members from a cargo ship around 27 km (17 miles) south west of Bonny Island in July.

**Advice:** According to the International Maritime Bureau (IMB), around 80 merchant sailors have been kidnapped off the Nigerian coast since the beginning of 2017. At least two have been killed in pirate attacks, and three have been injured. Pirate abductions of foreign nationals are typically financially motivated, though kidnappers have occasionally killed captives. Falling oil prices may have motivated pirates to switch from bunkering (the theft of oil cargo) to kidnap-for-ransom as a more lucrative alternative.

**NIGERIA (Country risk rating: High); November 10; Activists plan to resume daily protest marches in Abuja**

On November 10, activists from the Bring Back Our Girls (BBOG) movement announced that they would resume daily protest marches to Abuja's Aso Rock presidential villa starting November 14. The activists seek greater government involvement in securing the release of the 113 schoolgirls still detained by Boko Haram militants. Organisers have not provided any details on the specific times and routes of the marches. While crowds are likely to remain relatively small, the demonstrations could cause traffic disruptions in the area. Authorities are likely to increase security near the marches. Police could use force to disperse participants if the protests become unruly. Hundreds of people have previously taken
part in peaceful marches near Abuja's government buildings to denounce perceived government inaction; 113 of the 276 schoolgirls captured by Boko Haram extremists in April 2014 remain in captivity. 83 of the girls were released in May, while government forces have freed dozens more. President Muhammadu Buhari's government has indicated that it will continue talks with the Islamist group for the release of the remaining.

Advice: Avoid all demonstrations. Allow additional commuting time if operating in downtown Abuja.

NIGERIA (Country risk rating: High); November to January; Flight disruptions possible during harmattan season

The Nigerian Civil Aviation Authority (NCAA) on November 12 cautioned airlines to anticipate potential flight disruptions nationwide as the country enters the harmattan season. The agency, in coordination with the Nigerian Meteorological Agency (NIMET), warned that the 2017-2018 harmattan season was likely to be severe due to low rainfall predictions. Already, dry and dusty harmattan winds have disrupted flight services in northern and western states. Expect flight delays, cancellations, and diversions through at least January across the country. Inadequate navigational equipment, including at major international airports, can cause facilities to suspend all flights for several hours. These disruptions often occur at short notice. Dusty winds during the harmattan season also pose health risks, particularly for those with pre-existing respiratory conditions. Dust and sand storms transported by the harmattan wind are common from mid-November through February-March. These storms may reduce visibility to less than 30 metres (100 feet), particularly in December-January, and annually result in hundreds of cancelled flights nationwide. Domestic routes are generally the most affected.

Advice: Confirm flights; do not check out of hotels before verifying onward travel. Drive cautiously in areas experiencing low visibility. Plan for possible delivery delays; confirm road conditions before routing shipments through affected areas. Travellers with pre-existing respiratory problems should carry sufficient medication during travel to affected areas, and should consult a physician before such travel.

TOGO (Country risk rating: High); November 14 to 18; Nationwide opposition protests expected

A coalition of 14 political opposition groups called for more nationwide anti-government demonstrations between November 14 and 18. Organisers say they intend to apply more pressure on President Faure Gnassingbe's regime, urging the leader return the country to the 1992 Constitution that limited presidential terms to two. Protests will almost certainly take place in Lome and other major urban centres, including Anie, Atakpame, Bafilo, Dapaong, Kara, Mango, Noepe, Sokonde, and Vogan, where the most recent opposition demonstrations have occurred since August. In Lome, previous protests have taken place in the Adewui, Agoe, Attikoume, Baguida, Be-Gakpoto and Kodjoviakope districts. Demonstrations could attract thousands of participants, likely causing severe transport and commercial disruptions. Violence is possible if security personnel are provoked or use force to disperse any unauthorised demonstrators. The threat of civil unrest has significantly increased in Togo since August, and associated violence and disruptions are intensifying. The opposition coalition held three-day demonstrations in at least 17 cities, including Lome, during November 7 to 9. However, few incidents were reported during these actions compared to previous protests, where clashes left at least 16 people dead and about 200 others injured. As tensions remain high over unresolved ongoing political issues, both planned and unannounced protests are anticipated for the short- to medium-term, at least. The government recently rescinded a decision to ban protests on weekdays after political groups defied the authorities' order and continued to stage demonstrations.

Advice: Monitor local developments and avoid all demonstrations, marches, and political party offices due to the potential for violence. Seek updated information about security conditions before making travel and business arrangements.

UGANDA (Country risk rating: Medium); November 6; Ongoing nationwide public health sector strike

A strike by doctors employed at public healthcare facilities continues in Uganda. The action - which started on November 6 - is the latest episode in a long-term dispute with the government over salaries and working conditions. It is unclear how long the action may last, as physicians at public hospitals in Kampala and other towns have pledged to continue the work stoppage until their demands are met. Public health facilities are continuing to provide emergency care with limited staff, but the availability of other services has been minimal. Expect high demand and increased wait times at private clinics. As of November 10, the Ugandan government has not appeared willing to reach an agreement with the striking doctors, and has threatened to sack those who do not immediately resume work. The Uganda Medical Association, which is leading the strike, has asked that doctors' base salaries be increased from USD 300 to 2,300 per month. Ugandan doctors have been demanding higher salaries and better working conditions for several years.

Advice: Confirm medical appointments at private clinics due to potentially higher demand than usual. If possible, contact healthcare facilities in advance for information about service availability and wait times, which could vary greatly at hospitals and clinics.