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**Changes This Week:**

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

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

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

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**Country Travel Advisory List:**

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

- Afghanistan
- Burundi
- Central African Republic
- Gaza Strip
- Libya
- 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.**

- **Cameroon:** Due to the heightened threats of crime, kidnapping and general lawlessness, red24 currently advises against all travel to areas within 50km of Cameroon's shared border with Nigeria in the country's Far North, North, and Adamaoua administrative provinces. red24 further advises against all travel to areas located within 50km of Cameroon's shared border with the Central African Republic (CAR) and Chad.
- **Chad:** Due to ongoing insecurity, red24 advises against all travel to the eastern regions of Ennedi, Wadi-Fira, Ouaddai and Sila, which border Sudan, as well as to the southern regions of

Logone Oriental, Mandoul, Moyen-Chari and Salamat, which border the Central African Republic.

- **Cote d'Ivoire (Ivory Coast):** All travel to the western administrative regions of Dix-Huit Montagnes, Moyen-Cavally and Bas-Sassandra, which border Liberia, is advised against, as these areas are known to be particularly insecure due to the presence of numerous criminal groups and armed militias.
- **Democratic Republic of Congo:** As clashes between rebel and government forces are regularly reported in the Haut-Uele and Bas-Uele districts of Orientale province, red24 advises against all travel to these areas.

**Ituri:** All travel to Ituri is advised against due to regular reports of clashes between rebel and government forces and ethnic violence.

**North Kivu and South Kivu:** The North Kivu and South Kivu provinces experience elevated levels of insecurity, and red24 advises against all travel to these provinces. Numerous rebel groups operate in these regions. Violence regularly leads to the displacement of tens of thousands of civilians. Security may be higher in major urban centres in these provinces; however, overall security in these areas cannot be assured by the local military/police.

- **Egypt:** red24 advises against all travel to the North Sinai governorate due to the extreme threat of terrorism and conflict and the secondary threats of crime and kidnapping. The risk is particularly elevated in the vicinity of the shared borders with the Gaza Strip and Israel.
- **Ethiopia:** A number of rebel groups are known to operate in Ethiopia's northern Afar region. The most significant rebel group, the Afar Revolutionary Democratic Unity Front (ARDUF), has launched several attacks on government security forces and conducted a number of kidnappings in recent years. The Red Sea Afar Democratic Organisation (RSADO), a Djibouti-based rebel group fighting for the self-determination of the Afar ethnic group, is also known to have carried out attacks in the region. Due to the presence of these groups and the limited capabilities of security forces in this region, red24 advises against all travel to the Afar region.

Regular clashes between different ethnic groups in northern Kenya and southern Ethiopia continue to be reported amid ongoing competition for grazing rights in the area. Kenyan groups often launch reprisal attacks into southern Ethiopia. Similarly, instability in Sudan and South Sudan also result in communal violence along these countries' borders with Ethiopia. The borders between Ethiopia and the aforementioned countries remain porous and security forces maintain a limited capability in dealing with insecurity. As such, red24 advises against all travel to within 20km of Ethiopia's borders with Kenya, Sudan and South Sudan.

The population of the western Gambella region comprises several ethnic groups and competition for the control of natural resources remains high. Given the widespread availability of arms, largely from South Sudan, communal violence is often reported in the region. Although foreign nationals are generally not directly targeted in incidents of communal, an incidental risk to bystanders remain and red24 advises against all travel to the region.

Security threats in Ethiopia's eastern Somali regions stems largely from insecurity in neighbouring Somalia, as well as the activities of the the Ogaden National Liberation Front (ONLF) in the region. The Ethiopian military is involved in an ongoing conflict with Islamist extremist groups in Somalia and, given the porous nature of borders between Ethiopia and Somalia, conflict has been known to spill over into Ethiopian territory. Furthermore, the ONLF, a group fighting for the self-determination of ethnic Somalis in the Somali region, have carried out several attacks against the Ethiopian military and foreign interests in the Somali region. Due to the ongoing threat posed by the ONLF and the general insecurity in neighbouring Somalia, red24 advises against all travel to the Somali region.

- **Iran:** red24 advises against all travel to the south eastern province of Sistan va Baluchestan, as well as to within 100km of the Iran-Afghanistan border, due to the threats of crime, kidnapping, conflict and terrorism.

**Iraq:** red24 advises against all travel to the disputed territory between the KRG and Iraq's northern governorates due to generally poor security levels as well as the risk of terrorism, stemming from Islamist extremists and other terrorist groups.

red24 advises against all travel to the governorates of Baghdad, Anbar, Salah ad-Din, Kirkuk, Diyala, Ninewa, Karbala and Babil due to the elevated conflict and terrorism risks.

- **Israel:** red24 advises against all travel to the Gaza Strip due to the threats of conflict and secondary threats of kidnapping and terrorism.

red24 advises against all travel to within 2km of the shared Gaza Strip-Israel border due to the threat of cross-border conflict and the threat posed by rocket attacks into southern Israel.

- **Kenya:** red24 currently advises against all travel to within 50km of the shared border between Kenya and Somalia. Somali bandits and militants regularly cross the porous border and conduct kidnappings in towns in the border region. Furthermore, conflict between militants and troops aligned to the Somali government may directly or indirectly affect Kenyan border towns.
- **Lebanon:** red24 advises against all travel to the numerous Palestinian refugee camps located across the country due to ongoing insecurity in these areas.

red24 advises against all travel to within 15km of the shared border with Syria in the Bekaa and North governorates due to various security threats, including the threat of conflict spillover from Syria into Lebanon, increased levels of criminality, including smuggling, and the heightened threat of kidnapping, stemming from militant and criminal groups.

red24 advises against all travel south of the Litani River in the Ej Jnoub and Nabatiye governorates, due to the risk of a resumption of conflict between Hezbollah and Israel, as well as the threat posed by unexploded landmines and other ordnance.

red24 advises against all travel to the city of Tripoli due to the persistent threats of civil unrest and conflict.

- **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 all states bordering the US, namely Baja California, Sonora, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas. This advisory extends to the states of Durango, Sinaloa, Jalisco, Michoacan, Guerrero, and Veracruz.
- **Niger:** Due to the high risks of crime, kidnapping, conflict and terrorism, red24 advises against all travel to areas located within a 100km radius of Niger's shared borders with Chad, Algeria, Libya and Mali, and to locations situated within a 50km radius of Niger's shared border with Nigeria in the administrative regions of Diffa and Zinder.

**Nigeria:** red24 advises against all travel to the Niger Delta states of Akwa Ibom, Bayelsa, Cross River, Delta and Rivers and against all non-essential travel to the Imo, Edo and Abia states due to the risks of conflict, terrorism, kidnapping, civil unrest and crime. Note that in these areas the risk is particularly acute in coastal and riverine areas, secondary urban centres and rural and remote locations.

red24 advises against all travel to the north eastern states of Adamawa, Borno, Yobe, Jigawa, Katsina, Kano, Kaduna, Bauchi, Gombe and Plateau and against all non-essential travel to Sokoto, Zamfara, Kebbi, Taraba and Nassarawa due to elevated conflict, terrorism, kidnapping, civil unrest and crime risks.

- **Pakistan:** red24 advises against all travel to the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA), as well as Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa provinces, due to the elevated conflict and terrorism risks.
- **Philippines:** red24 advises against all travel to the southern Mindanao region and the Sulu Archipelago due to ongoing operations by rebels and terrorists, as well as regular clashes between these groups and the Philippine military. This advisory does not extend to Mindanao's eastern Caraga and Davao regions, to which non-essential travel is advised against.
- **Russia:** Due to high levels of violence, instability and terrorism, red24 advises against all travel to the semi-autonomous regions of Chechnya, Ingushetia, Dagestan and Kabardino-Balkaria (including the Mount Elbrus region).
- **Saudi Arabia:** red24 advises against all travel to within 10km of the shared border with Yemen and Iraq. red24 also advises against all non-essential travel to a further 20km beyond the 10km extreme-risk zone due to the risk of conflict and terrorism.
- **Sudan:** Due to ongoing insecurity, red24 advises against all travel to the states of North Darfur, West Darfur and South Darfur in the Darfur region, and to the states of South Kordufan and Blue Nile, on the border with South Sudan. This advisory also includes all areas located with a 10km buffer zone along the Sudan and South Sudan border which are currently claimed by both of the aforementioned countries.
- **Thailand:** red24 advises against all travel to the southern provinces of Yala, Narathiwat, Pattani and Songkhla due to an ongoing Islamist insurgency.

- **Tunisia:** red24 advises against all travel into the Djebel Chambi National Park, including the Jebel ech Chambi mountain range, due to the threats of terrorism and conflict.
- **Turkey:** red24 advises against all travel to within 10km of the shared border with Syria in the Turkish provinces of Hatay, Kilis, Gaziantep, Sanliurfa, Mardin and Sirnak, due to the threat of conflict spillover from Syria and an increased risk of terrorism.
- **Uganda:** Ongoing conflict in the eastern regions of the DRC, as well as ongoing insecurity throughout South Sudan, adds to broader insecurity in the regions bordering these countries. Regular clashes between armed rebel groups and DRC government forces continue to be reported in the neighbouring Kivu provinces in eastern DRC. There is a possibility that these clashes may spill into the immediate borders regions of Uganda. Similarly, tribal clashes and banditry are of concern in the southern regions of South Sudan and sporadically affect the border regions. As such, red24 advises against all travel to within 30km of the country's borders with the DRC and South Sudan.

The north eastern Karamoja sub-region has been adversely affected by ongoing banditry, tribal clashes and cross-border raids in recent years. Communal conflict related to livestock theft and disputes over grazing rights sporadically results in clashes in the area. Due to the continued insecurity, red24 advises against all travel to this sub-region.

- **Ukraine:** Due to political uncertainty and the presence of armed personnel, including Russian forces, throughout the region, red24 advises against all travel to Crimea.

Due to increasing instability, civil unrest and the activities of non-state armed groups, red24 advises against all travel to Ukraine's eastern regions of Donetsk and Luhansk.



4 April 2016

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## Americas

### **ARGENTINA (Country risk rating: High); 4 April; Teachers' strike and associated protest called**

Teachers affiliated to the CTERA union are set to undertake strike action in [Argentina](#) on 4 April. Associated demonstrations have been called in major urban centres. In the capital, [Buenos Aires](#), reports indicate that the striking teachers will gather at the Congreso Nacional (National Congress) and march to Casa Rosada (presidential office and residence). The strike and associated protests have been called over a number of labour- and salary-related issues, as well as to demand justice for the 2007 killing of a teacher by police in a demonstration in the city of Neuquen, in its eponymous province. In addition to the disruption in education sector activities, the planned protests are likely to result in localised road travel disruptions in impacted areas. The risk of [violence](#) at strike-related protests is considered low; however, confrontations between demonstrators and the police remain possible.

**Advice:** Clients in Argentina on 4 April are advised to avoid all street protests as a standard precaution. Itineraries should be kept flexible to accommodate potential localised disruptions.

### **BOLIVIA (Country risk rating: Medium); 4 March; Countrywide union-led strike and protests anticipated**

The Bolivian Confederation of Guilds has called for strike action across [Bolivia](#) on 4 April. The strike has been called to demand changes to the Tax Code. Organisers have further called for [protests](#) and road blockades in all state capitals, including [La Paz](#). The strike is expected to result in the closure of all markets and the disruptions to commercial operations. Related protests are anticipated in major urban centres and along primary road routes. These, as well as potential roadblocks, are likely to result in localised road travel disruptions. The risk of violence at all related protests cannot be discounted, and increases in the event that police attempt to disperse protesters or dismantle roadblocks.

**Advice:** Clients in Bolivia on 4 April are advised to avoid all street protests and should not attempt to move towards or through any unofficial roadblocks. Allowances should be made for potential localised disruptions.

### **COLOMBIA (Country risk rating: High); 31 March to 2 April; (Update) Security incidents related to Los Urabenos in the north west**

An armed strike initiated by the paramilitary group, Los Urabenos (Clan Usuga) in various parts of north western [Colombia](#) on 31 March left at least six people dead. Additionally, on 2 April, the group blockaded the road between [Caucasia](#) and [Nechi](#) in Antioquia department and abducted 33 locals travelling along the road. Security forces have increased their operations against the group, including in the departments of Choco, Antioquia, Cordoba, Magdalena and La Guajira. Los Urabenos is known to predominately engage in a number of organised crime activities, including trafficking of drugs and weapons. The group reportedly has a strong operational presence in a number of Colombia's western departments, including Antioquia and its regional capital, [Medellin](#). It should be noted that the recent incidents take place amid ongoing negotiations between the government and the [Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia \(FARC\)](#) and the start of formal peace talks with the National Liberation Army (ELN). Los Urabenos has previously expressed its desire to begin negotiations with the government and the recent spike in security incidents, including the armed strike, is likely a tactic to press the government into negotiations; this tactic has been employed by both the FARC and the ELN in the past as well. However, president Juan Manuel Santos has stated that the government will not engage in talks with the group; as such, further security incidents involving Los Urabenos are anticipated in the near-term at least.

**Advice:** Clients in the affected areas are advised to monitor local media for updates on any related incidents and

associated advisories. Furthermore, clients are advised against all non-essential travel to rural and remote areas of Colombia, specifically to areas outside of secure urban and tourist centres (Bogota, Cartagena, Barranquilla, Santa Marta, Medellin and Santiago de Cali) due to high levels of insecurity.

### **GUATEMALA (Country risk rating: **High**); 4 April; Teachers' protest expected in Guatemala City**

A teachers' [protest](#) is expected in [Guatemala](#)'s capital, Guatemala City, on 4 April. Participants are expected to gather at Plaza de la Constitucion at 08:00 local time and proceed to the Congress building. The protest has been organised against legislation relating to pensions. The protest is expected to be well attended and will likely result in localised travel disruptions along the protest route. The risk of violence is low; however, the possibility of low-level skirmishes cannot be discounted.

**Advice:** Clients in Guatemala City on 4 April are advised to avoid all street protests as a standard precaution. Allowances should be made for potential localised disruptions.

### **MEXICO (Country risk rating: **High**); 31 March; Casualties following repelled criminal attack in Tamaulipas**

At least eight members of a criminal group were shot and killed after an attempted attack on police forces in the municipality of Valle Hermoso, in [Mexico](#)'s north eastern Tamaulipas state, on 31 March. The attack took place while police were conducting patrols along the Victoria-Matamoros highway near Las Yescas. The incident underscores the elevated risk in Tamaulipas, located along the US-Mexico border; the area is considered a strategic transit point for drug trafficking, and experiences high rates of conflict related to the drug trade and affiliated criminal groups. Tamaulipas has experienced a spate of criminal security incidents in recent weeks; in response, authorities deployed hundreds soldiers to the area during the week of 21 March, including to the border city of Reynosa, to contain the violence. Further public shooting incidents and shoot-outs between criminals and security forces, are expected in the medium-term at least.

**Advice:** Heightened caution is advised across Mexico, including Tamaulipas, due to the threats of crime and kidnapping and the incidental risk of organised crime-related conflict. Persons travelling in this state should consider doing so with a local escort or trained security driver.

### **PERU (Country risk rating: **Medium**); 5 April; Countrywide protest to be held ahead of elections**

Countrywide [protests](#) are expected in [Peru](#) on 5 April, ahead of country's upcoming presidential election which is scheduled to take place on 10 April. The protests have been organised to denounce a decision by Peru's National Jury of Elections (JNE) against the exclusion of Fuerza Popular (FP) presidential candidate Keiko Fujimori, in the election. In the capital, [Lima](#), protesters are expected to gather at Plaza San Martin; the exact time of the protest gathering has not been disclosed. Tensions in Peru have been elevated following the disqualification of two other presidential candidates, including Julio Guzman of the Todos por el Peru (TPP) political party, on 9 March. Additionally, at least 39 congressional candidates are under assessment for alleged irregularities. These developments take place amid allegations of campaign fraud and violations against Fujimori, who is currently the presumed front-runner in the election. In light of the recent developments, further protests, rallies and campaigns by rival groups should be anticipated in the run up to the election. Given the contentious nature of the legitimacy of the presidential candidates, protests in response to election results are also anticipated. While related protests have been peaceful to date, the possibility of low-level violence at all related gatherings, including at the 5 April protests, cannot be discounted.

**Advice:** Clients in Peru during the election period are advised to monitor local media for updates on related developments and potential upcoming events. All protests and demonstrations should be avoided as standard precaution. Persons operating in the country, particularly Lima, on 5 April, are advised to make allowances for potential localised disruptions.

### **PERU (Country risk rating: **Medium**); 29 March to 4 April; Ongoing strike in Tayacaja**

A general strike initiated in the province of Tayacaja, located in [Peru](#)'s Huancavelica region on 29 March, remains ongoing. The strike was organised to demand that the government recognise the Organizing Committee of the Autonomous University of Tayacaja (UNAT). Several people were wounded in clashes between protesters and police forces on 31 March, after the police attempted to clear a blockade along the main highway between Huancavelica and

Junin's regional capital, Huancayo. Although the blockade has been cleared, regular [protests](#) have been held in Tayacaja's regional capital, Pampas. Business operations and transport services in Pampas have also been disrupted as a result of the strike. It is unclear when the strike will end. As such, further disruptions to business and transport services should be anticipated over the near-term. In addition, any further roadblocks may lead to additional road travel disruptions. Associated protests, along major roads and in major cities, such as Pampa, are also anticipated. In light of the recent violence the threat of low-level confrontations between the police and protesters is assessed to be credible.

**Advice:** Clients in the Huancavelica region are advised to monitor related developments closely. Clients are further advised to avoid all street protests and should not attempt to move towards or through any unofficial roadblocks. All scheduled transport services should be reconfirmed with your travel provider or the relevant transport authority prior to departure.

## **UNITED STATES (Country risk rating: [Medium](#)); 3 April; Rail incident causes disruptions in Northeast**

In the [US](#), Amtrak regional rail services in the Northeast Corridor, which extends from [New York City](#) to Philadelphia, were suspended following a fatal rail incident on 3 April. An Amtrak train was travelling from New York City to Savannah, Georgia state, when it struck a mechanical digger that had been left on the tracks, partially derailing the train, in Chester, Philadelphia, at approximately 08:00 local time; two passengers were killed.

**Advice:** Persons operating in the affected area who plan to travel by rail are advised to contact the relevant transport authority for an update on the status of rail services.

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## **Asia and Pacific**

### **BANGLADESH (Country risk rating: [High](#)); 4 April; Countrywide opposition protests set to be held**

The opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) has called for countrywide [protests](#) across [Bangladesh](#) on 4 April. Although details pertaining to the protests have yet to be made clear, BNP leaders called for protests in district headquarters across the country. The action has been called to protest against an arrest warrant issued for BNP leader Khaleda Zia, who was charged on 30 March with manslaughter over fatal protest action that took place on 23 January 2015. The protests are likely to be well attended, and may result in travel disruptions in impacted areas, including in the capital, [Dhaka](#). As with all protest action in Bangladesh, there is a heightened threat of violence between BNP supporters and security forces, and between BNP supporters and supporters of the ruling Awami League. Should clashes ensue, it is also possible the BNP will call for further protests or associated strike action.

**Advice:** Persons in Bangladesh on 4 April are advised to avoid all demonstrations and concentrations of security forces, due to the risk of violent civil unrest. Itineraries should be kept flexible in order to make allowances for possible travel disruptions.

### **MALAYSIA / PHILIPPINES; 1 April; Kidnapping incident off Sabah state**

Four Malaysian nationals were [kidnapped](#) from a commercial vessel off the coast of [Malaysia's](#) Sabah state on 1 April. According to reports, they were on a barge (MV Masfive 6) that was making its way from the [Philippines'](#) capital, [Manila](#), to Tawau, on the east coast of Sabah, when it was stopped and boarded by eight armed assailants near Palau Ligitan, an island off the coast of Sabah. The assailants transferred the Malaysian nationals into a small, high-powered vessel and then departed with them in the direction of the Sulu Archipelago, in the Philippines. Three Myanmar and two Indonesian crew members were left behind on the barge. Further details remain unavailable, and no ransom demand has publicly been made or received. There are a number of criminal and militant groups which are capable of carrying out such an abduction. These groups are largely based in the southern Philippines region of Mindanao, particularly in the Sulu Archipelago, and carry out kidnapping operations there. However, as this latest incident and other previous incidents demonstrate, these groups also conduct abductions from the east coast of Sabah, as well as in the waters between the southern Philippines and Malaysia. It should be noted that the majority of incidents target locals and are financially motivated, as opposed to being politically or ideologically motivated.

**Advice:** Clients are advised against all travel to the southern Mindanao region and the Sulu Archipelago, including Sulu

province. This advisory does not extend to Mindanao's eastern Caraga and Davao regions, to which non-essential travel is advised against. Heightened caution is also advised in the coastal areas and islands of Malaysia's Sabah state. Persons in or planning travel to the area are advised to adopt heightened security precautions at all times.

### **PAKISTAN (Country risk rating: **High**); 2 and 3 April; Weather-related fatalities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa**

At least 46 people were killed and 41 others injured following torrential rains and resultant [flooding](#) in [Pakistan](#)'s north western Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, on 2 and 3 April. Most of the deaths were reportedly caused by collapsed buildings. The worst affected areas include Kohistan and Shangla districts, where at least 36 of the deaths were reported. Additionally, several rivers in the area, including the Swat River, have reportedly overflowed. Parts of Gilgit-Baltistan province have also reportedly been affected by flooding, although further details are unavailable. Although further heavy rain has not been forecast, travel delays and disruptions to amenities such as water, electricity and telecommunications remain possible as floodwaters are likely to take several days to recede. It should be noted that there is an increasing risk of waterborne diseases.

**Advice:** Persons currently in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province are advised to monitor local media for updates and advisories from the authorities and defer travel to flood-affected areas until the situation improves. Caution is advised in low-lying areas. Seek to avoid contact with floodwaters. If contact is unavoidable, wash thoroughly after leaving a flooded area. In addition, due to a number of ongoing security concerns, all travel to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is advised against.

### **SAMOA (Country risk rating: **Low**); 4 April; Disruptions due to fuel tank explosion in Apia**

At least one person was killed due to a fuel tank explosion at the Matautu Wharf in [Samoa](#)'s capital, Apia, on 4 April. Hundreds of people have been evacuated from the area due to fear that the resultant fire may trigger further explosions. Emergency personnel are at the scene; several roads in the vicinity of Matautu Wharf have been cordoned off.

**Advice:** Clients in Apia are advised to avoid the affected area and abide by the directives of the authorities. Allowances should be made for localised disruptions in the vicinity of Matautu Wharf.

### **VIETNAM (Country risk rating: **Medium**); 1 April; Bus accident reported in Ha Giang province**

At least one foreign national was killed and two others injured as a result of a bus accident in [Vietnam](#)'s Ha Giang province on 1 April. The tourist bus was reportedly en route to [Hanoi](#) from Halong Bay when a head-on collision occurred; the South Korean Embassy confirmed the death of the victim. This incident serves to highlight the poor safety standards associated with road travel in Vietnam. The country's underdeveloped infrastructure, particularly its road and public transport network, as well as its natural terrain, can result in dangerous road conditions. Further incidents of this nature cannot be discounted.

**Advice:** Clients in Vietnam are advised to make adequate transport arrangements when travelling within the country. Only well-maintained busses operated by reputable and recommended companies should be utilised; any vehicles that are overcrowded or in a state of disrepair should be avoided.

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## **Europe and Russia**

### **ARMENIA / AZERBAIJAN; 1/2 April; Armed clashes reported near Nagorno-Karabakh**

According to latest reports, heavy fighting between the military of [Azerbaijan](#) and [Armenia](#)-backed forces killed at least 32 people, including two civilians, overnight on 1/2 April. The fighting took place near the de facto border of the predominantly Armenian-populated enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh. The use of heavy weaponry, mortar fire and aircraft was reported, in what marks a significant escalation in the conflict. Both sides have accused the other of instigating the latest round of conflict. Nagorno-Karabakh is internationally recognised as Azerbaijani territory, but is claimed by both Armenia and Azerbaijan, and occupied by Armenian troops. Supported by Armenia, the region has been governed by a Karabakhi separatist administration since 1994. However, Azerbaijan has not relinquished its claims on the territory, and despite a long-standing ceasefire agreement, low-level skirmishes and border clashes involving Karabakhi separatists and Armenian and Azeri armed forces take place intermittently. Skirmishes also occur sporadically along Armenia's north

eastern and south western borders with Azerbaijan. It should be noted, however, that the latest round of violence appears to be an escalation in conflict between the two states. Due to the insecurity in the region, further such incidents are likely to persist.

**Advice:** Clients are advised against all non-essential travel to the greater Nagorno-Karabakh region due to the unresolved conflict and the continuation of sporadic clashes. In light of the recent escalation in conflict, local developments should be closely monitored.

### **BELGIUM (Country risk rating: **Medium**); 3 April; (Update) Brussels Airport re-opens**

The Belgian Civil Aviation Authority has confirmed the re-opening of [Brussels](#) Airport in [Belgium](#) on 3 April after an agreement was reached with police unions regarding additional security precautions. The airport was initially scheduled to restart operations late on 1 April; however, the restart was delayed due to strike action by airport security personnel. It should be noted that, due to the extensive damage caused to the departures terminal by the suicide blasts on 22 March, the airport will only process approximately 20 percent of the usual volume of departing passengers. Additional security checks, including baggage inspections at the airport entrance, are expected to cause further travel disruptions.

**Advice:** Persons scheduled to transit Brussels Airport in the coming days are advised to contact their travel provider or airline for an update on the status of their flight(s). Clients are further advised to report all suspicious packages or persons to the relevant authorities immediately.

### **BELGIUM (Country risk rating: **Medium**); 2 April; Rival demonstrations held in Brussels**

Rival far-right and anti-fascist gatherings were held in the Molenbeek area of [Belgium](#)'s capital, [Brussels](#), on 2 April, despite the banning of the [protests](#) by the authorities. Police arrested several protesters following confrontations between the rival groups. One person was wounded after being hit by a speeding car near the protests. The demonstrations were banned following clashes at a similar gathering in Place de la Bourse, in central Brussels, on 27 March. Far-right demonstrators, under the banner of the Generation Identitaire group, stormed a memorial gathering in Place de la Bourse, clashed with police and harassed individuals who appeared to be of North African or Arabic descent. In light of ongoing tensions following the 22 March Brussels attacks, further protests by far-right groups remain a possibility.

**Advice:** Clients in Brussels are advised to avoid all street protests as a standard precaution.

### **FRANCE (Country risk rating: **Medium**); 5 and 9 April; (Update) Unions call for further nationwide protests and strike action**

Numerous unions, including the CGT, FO, Solidaires, FSU, UNEF, FIDL, UNL, have called for further strike action and [protests](#) across [France](#) on 5 and 9 April. The action has been called to protest against labour policy reforms. In the capital, [Paris](#), major protests are expected at Place de la Bastille at 13:00 local time on 5 April, and at Place de la Republique at 14:00 on 9 April. Other prominent urban centres such as [Marseille](#), [Lyon](#), Toulouse and Nantes are also likely to be affected. The unions have warned that further protests will be held until the draft labour bills are withdrawn. The upcoming action is the latest in an ongoing campaign against new labour legislation in the country. Related protests on 31 March were attended by hundreds of thousands of people, resulting in localised disruptions. The strike also caused significant disruptions to services, including to air and rail transport and utility services. It should be noted that isolated clashes between protesters and security forces have been reported at related demonstrations in the past. Recent agitations against labour reform, held in Paris and Nantes on 31 March, as well as in Paris on 24 March, were forcibly dispersed by police following incidents of vandalism and clashes with security forces. The possibility of similar incidents at the upcoming protests cannot be discounted.

**Advice:** Persons in France on 5 and 9 April are advised to monitor local media for updates on the strike action and announcements of related demonstrations. Clients are advised to adhere to the directives of the authorities, and avoid all protests as a standard precaution. Itineraries should be kept flexible to make allowances for disruptions to transport services and road travel.

### **FRANCE (Country risk rating: **Medium**); 4 April; Taxi drivers' strike to affect Toulouse**

Taxi drivers have reportedly embarked upon a strike and associated protest in Toulouse, located in [France](#)'s Midi-Pyrenees region, on 4 April. Taxi drivers were expected to block access to Toulouse Airport and other thoroughfares from 06:00 local time. It is unclear if the protest has proceeded, as of writing. It should be noted that previous strikes by taxi

drivers in France over general issues have been characterised by disruptions to travel to various airports and other transport hubs, as well as small-scale incidents of violence. An increased demand for alternative transport services is also likely on the day. Furthermore, localised disruptions are anticipated in the vicinity of the affected sites.

**Advice:** Clients in Toulouse on 4 April should anticipate road congestion related to the protest and allow additional travel times on the day. Clients should avoid all street protests, unofficial roadblocks and exercise heightened personal security awareness near all major transport hubs, including Toulouse Airport.

### **GERMANY (Country risk rating: **Low**); 4 April; PEGIDA protests expected in Dresden and Munich**

The far-right group Patriotic Europeans against the Islamisation of the Occident (PEGIDA) is expected to conduct a protest march in Dresden, located in [Germany's](#) Saxony state, on 4 April. The march is expected to commence at 18:00 local time in Augustusplatz. An associated march is expected to take place in Munich at 18:30 at Wiener Platz. Counter-demonstrations by anti-fascist groups are expected to accompany the aforementioned gatherings. Further details are currently unavailable. The upcoming demonstrations are the latest in a series of weekly protests initiated by PEGIDA. Most of the demonstrations have concluded without incident, although they have often prompted counter-demonstrations by rival groups. Nevertheless, [violent confrontations](#) involving participants, counter-demonstrators and/or security forces remain possible. The upcoming gathering may result in localised travel disruptions.

**Advice:** Persons in Germany on 4 April are advised to avoid the upcoming protest, as well as any counter-demonstrations, as a standard precaution. Itineraries should be kept flexible in order to make allowances for localised travel disruptions.

### **NORTHERN EUROPE; 2 April; (Update) Border controls extended between Germany and Denmark**

The Danish Ministry for Immigration, Integration and Housing has extended the border controls currently in place along [Denmark's](#) shared border with [Germany](#) until 3 May. The initial border controls were enforced from 4 January; however, these have been extended several times amid concerns regarding the influx and accumulation of illegal immigrants near the affected area. Although unconfirmed, given past precedent, it is likely that [Sweden's](#) Interior Ministry will also announce the extension of its border control measures beyond 8 April, when its current movement-restrictive measures are due to lapse. Local authorities across the region have struggled to cope with the unprecedented immigration, and several states have taken or are taking steps to secure their borders. The Schengen Borders Code only permits border controls for a period of 30 days at a time, after which time these measures are subject to renewal. As such, a continuation of this trend in the medium-term cannot be discounted.

**Advice:** Clients planning land travel between Sweden, Denmark and Germany in the near-term should confirm the status of scheduled transport services with their travel provider prior to travel. Furthermore, the status of border crossings should be checked prior to departure.

### **SPAIN (Country risk rating: **Low**); 2 April; Foreign nationals killed in car collision in Catalonia**

According to media reports on 2 April, seven foreign nationals were killed when the vehicles they were travelling in collided at high speed on [Spain's](#) N-II highway in Pont de Molins, in the Catalonia region; one other person, a local, was injured. Authorities have indicated that the collision was caused by the excessive speed of one of the vehicles, which was carrying five passengers. Three Moroccan nationals, two French nationals, one Tunisian and one Colombian died in the collision.

**Advice:** Clients travelling by road in Spain should abide by local traffic regulations, including rules regarding speed limits.

### **TURKEY (Country risk rating: **High**); 1/2 April; Bomb attack in Mardin province results in casualties**

At least one person was killed and 11 more wounded in a suspected car bomb attack in Mardin province, located in south eastern [Turkey](#), overnight on 1/2 April. The attack is said to have targeted a police building in the Kiziltepe district. Mardin

province has been affected by low-level violence between security forces and Kurdish militants allied with the [Kurdistan Workers' Party \(PKK\)](#) since mid-2015. The authorities have responded with heavy police and military deployments, and have implemented curfews in many areas. A similar incident was reported on 25 March, when at least three soldiers were killed and a further 24 wounded as a result of a car bomb attack in neighbouring Diyarbakir province's Lice district. Given the current dynamics, conflict is expected to persist for the short-term at least.

**Advice:** Persons in the Kiziltepe district are advised to avoid the affected area. Clients are advised against all travel to within 10km of the shared border with Syria in a number of provinces, including Mardin, due to the threat of conflict spillover from Syria and an increased risk of terrorism. Heightened caution is advised elsewhere in the province.

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## Middle East and North Africa

### **BAHRAIN (Country risk rating: High); 1 to 3 April; Protests reported amid motor racing event**

The Formula One Grand Prix was held in [Bahrain](#) from 1 to 3 April. Anti-government protests, coinciding with the event, were reported in Diraz, located west of the capital, Manama, and elsewhere during this period. No significant acts of violence were reported. Opposition protests have been ongoing in Bahrain for a number of years. Major events, including the annual race event in Sakhir, have been affected by a spike in protests in the past as demonstrators have attempted to gain attention for their political objectives.

**Advice:** Clients are advised against all non-essential travel to Bahrain, excluding Manama, the Bahrain International Airport and main roads leading from the airport to the capital. Persons travelling in the country should avoid travel at night and should avoid all street protests as a precaution.

### **IRAQ (Country risk rating: High); 1 April; Kuwaiti businessman kidnapped in southern governorate**

A Kuwaiti businessman, Khaled Abdulrazzaq Al Sarhan, was reportedly [kidnapped](#) by unidentified assailants in southern [Iraq](#) on an unspecified date in late March. The victim was travelling on a business trip to the city of Nasiriyah (Dhi Qar governorate) when he was abducted. The victim was expected home on 23 March. On 27 March, the victim's family was reportedly contacted by his apparent kidnappers, who requested US\$1 million for his safe release. Further details are unavailable. This recent incident serves to highlight the high risk of kidnapping in southern Iraq. Reasons for kidnappings vary and include both criminal/financial and political motives. These kidnappings have involved all demographics, including foreigners, and have involved ransom figures of varying amounts.

**Advice:** Clients are advised against all non-essential travel to several southern governorates, including Wasit, Muthanna, Najaf, Basra, Dhi Qar, Maysan and Qadisiyah due to ongoing insecurity. Clients operating in these areas should travel with a security escort and maintain a low public profile.

### **SAUDI ARABIA (Country risk rating: High); 3 April; Fatality following bombing in the Riyadh region**

Two bomb explosions targeting a police station in the town of Ad Dilam, located in [Saudi Arabia's](#) Riyadh region, left one person dead on 3 April. The victim is believed to have been an expatriate, although details of the nationality of the victim have not been disclosed. The attack was claimed by an affiliate of the [Islamic State \(IS\)](#) militant group, called Najd Province. There is a high risk of terrorism in Saudi Arabia, stemming primarily from Sunni Muslim extremist groups, including IS and Najd Province. IS is ideologically opposed to the al-Saud-led regime, particularly in light of Saudi Arabia's military involvement against IS in Syria and Iraq. The number of attacks is lower than in other states in the region, such as Iraq and Yemen. This is due to the good counterterrorism capabilities of the security forces; in recent years, the ability of the local security forces to identify and thwart planned attacks has been enhanced, and the number of incidents has been low. However, an increased number of [attacks](#) in late 2014 and through 2015 has been noted. In light of this and the 3 April attack, the threat remains elevated and is likely to remain so for at least the medium-term.

**Advice:** Clients in the Riyadh region should exercise a heightened level of personal security awareness and limit time spent travelling near personnel and/or facilities affiliated with the Saudi security forces.

## Sub-Saharan Africa

### **CAMEROON (Country risk rating: **High**); 4 to 9 April; Anti-government protests planned**

'Stand Up For Cameroon', a coalition of four opposition parties, has reportedly called for a series of protests across [Cameroon](#) between 4 and 9 April. Specific details surrounding the protests have yet to be announced; however, protest action is likely to centre on the capital, [Yaounde](#), and the largest urban centre, Douala. The action has been called to protest plans by incumbent president Paul Biya to amend the constitution, in order to extend his term in office, which ends in 2018. It is unclear how well attended the protests will be, and although organisers have called for the protests to be peaceful, the risk of [violence](#) cannot be discounted. On 29 March a press conference in Yaounde organised by the Cameroon People's Party (CPP) was forcefully dispersed by police, while dozens of CPP supporters in attendance were detained. In addition to the threat of violence, localised road travel disruptions should be anticipated in the vicinity of all protests.

**Advice:** Clients in Cameroon between 4 and 9 April are advised to avoid street protests as a precaution, and to make allowances for potential localised disruptions.

### **CHAD (Country risk rating: **High**); 5 April; (Update) Protests to proceed in N'Djamena despite ban**

Civil society organisations in [Chad](#) are expected to hold [protests](#) in the capital, N'Djamena, on 5 April, despite the government's ban on related gatherings. The protests will be held to denounce the detention of the four civil society leaders from the Chadian Convention for the Defense of Human Rights (CTDDH), IYINA Citizen Movement (MCI), 'Ca Suffit' and the Union of Trade Unions of Chad (UST) between 21 and 23 March. The organisations are also protesting against the postponement of the trial of the leaders which was initially scheduled for 31 March; the trial has been postponed until 7 April, further prolonging the detention. Although further details regarding the protest are unclear, prominent urban centres such as Moundou, Sarh, and N'Djamena are likely to serve as focal points for unrest. The arrested leaders were reportedly detained on charges related to the incitement of unsanctioned gatherings and attempts to disturb public order between 21 and 23 March. The detention of these leaders followed calls by their respective civil groups for demonstrations against incumbent president Idriss Deby, who intends to extend his term in office at Chad's forthcoming presidential ballot on 10 April. In addition, several union members have withdrawn from a number of state institutions, as well as the Independent National Electoral Commission (CENI). The timing of their arrests, as well as the reasons given by the authorities, has led to claims that the detentions were politically motivated and illegal. It should be noted that the risk of violence at all related protests cannot be discounted.

**Advice:** Persons in Chad in the coming days are advised to avoid all demonstrations and large street gatherings, including those on 5 April, as a standard precaution. Local media should be monitored for updates on planned protests and related strike actions, including possible gathering points.

### **LIBERIA (Country risk rating: **High**); 31 March to 3 April; Ebola cases in Monrovia area**

The World Health Organization (WHO) issued a statement on 1 April stating that a new [Ebola](#) case had been confirmed in [Liberia](#). The person who contracted the disease died on 31 March in the capital, Monrovia. On 3 April, another person in Liberia, a relative of the deceased, was confirmed to have contracted the disease. The incident follows four recent deaths in neighbouring Guinea's Nzerekore area, which led to the closure of the shared border between Liberia and Guinea. Liberia was declared Ebola free in May 2015; however, a number of cases have been reported since then. The WHO has warned of further flare-ups in the country and in Guinea and Sierra Leone and maintains a large contingent of staff in the region to assist local health authorities. West Africa experienced an Ebola outbreak between late 2013 and early 2016, which left over 11,000 people dead. The worst-affected countries were Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Travellers should note that in addition to further cases, international land border and domestic travel restrictions may be imposed at times in response to incidents.

**Advice:** Clients in or planning to travel to Liberia should consult with a medical practitioner prior to travel regarding required vaccinations and other preventative action against common local diseases, such as Ebola. All travellers should take adequate safety precautions with regard to the ingestion of food and water and proximity to bodily fluids.

### **RWANDA (Country risk rating: **Medium**); 4 April; Genocide Memorial Day to be**

## commemorated countrywide

[Rwanda](#) will commemorate Genocide Memorial Day on 7 April amid increased police deployments countrywide. Memorial commemorations will be held throughout the country, continuing until 13 April, with the largest events expected in the capital, Kigali. Tensions between survivors and those who participated in the Rwandan Genocide in 1994 persist in the country. There is an elevated threat of civil unrest and ethnically motivated attacks during this time. Cases of ethnically motivated violence customarily experience a spike in reporting during the memorial period. In addition, there is an elevated threat of terrorist attacks during this time with attacks targeting commemoration events occurring most recently in 2010. Although there are no known terrorist groups based in Rwanda at present, responsibility for terrorist incidents generally falls on the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), which is currently in exile in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The FDLR consists predominantly of Rwandan Hutus who participated in the 1994 genocide; the group reportedly conducted a series of grenade attacks in Kigali in 2008. Several similar attacks have been reported in recent times, including a grenade attack in March 2013, three grenade attacks in March 2012, at least two significant attacks in 2011 and a string of attacks in 2010. Despite being sporadic in nature, the threat from terrorism remains; as such, the possibility of further terrorist attacks cannot be discounted.

**Advice:** In light of the Genocide Memorial celebrations and the associated increase in the risk of terrorism, clients are advised to anticipate a heavy security presence, particularly in Kigali. Caution is advised at this time, particularly in the vicinity of commemoration processions and the Gisozi Genocide Memorial Centre, located in the capital. Travellers are advised to report any suspicious packages or persons to the relevant authorities immediately. Furthermore, all street gatherings and concentrations of security forces should be avoided as a precaution against being caught in civil unrest.

## **SENEGAL (Country risk rating: **Medium**); 4 April; Disruptions anticipated in Dakar on Independence Day**

[Senegal](#) commemorates its Independence Day on 4 April. Associated commemorative events are anticipated in the capital, [Dakar](#). A joint civil military parade will be held in the city's Place de l'Obelisque area. The event is likely to be accompanied by a heavy security force presence given the likely attendance of numerous prominent persons. Associated road travel disruptions should be expected in the vicinity of Place de l'Obelisque through the course of 4 April.

**Advice:** Clients in Dakar on 4 April should adjust itineraries to cater for potential disruptions in the city on the day.

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