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AMER

Brazil: The attack on a high-profile foreign politician in Rio de Janeiro by a criminal organization underscores the need for secure transport in potentially dangerous urban areas. On 12 December, the former tourism secretary for Bariloche and president of the Argentine Chamber of Student Tourism was severely injured in Rio de Janeiro after mistakenly driving into the [Morro dos Prazeres favela](#), a dangerous low-income neighborhood with high gang activity. This follows similar incidents targeting European tourists in the Morros dos Prazeres favela in 2016 and 2017. Such incidents highlight the importance of executive protection services, including secure transportation, as they are crucial for safeguarding individuals in high-risk environments and mitigate threats such as targeted assaults, kidnappings, and accidental navigation into dangerous areas. These services provide trained personnel, pre-vetted routes, and secure vehicles to ensure safe passage for travelers, professionals, and high-profile individuals. Travelers and business executives are advised to use secure transportation services to ensure safe passage when traveling.

Bolivia: Continue to monitor the worsening economic conditions as resulting protests are likely to intensify and become more unruly over the coming months. The country has been facing a severe economic crisis since 2023, characterized by high inflation, stagnant wages, and a scarcity of USD, leading to fuel shortages and increased prices. The country's natural gas exports, a prior key source of foreign income, have slowly declined over the past decade due to a lack of investment. This has caused the central bank's international reserves to dwindle to nearly zero in 2024. This economic downturn has also intensified political instability, exemplified by a failed coup attempt in June and the arrest warrant of former



president, Evo Morales, in October. The persistent protests over the political and economic instability are liable to intensify over the coming months as high inflation further erodes citizens' purchasing power. Foreign companies should prepare for potential operational disruptions and consider implementing risk mitigation strategies.

Nicaragua: The recent arrest and extortion of a businessman by security forces highlights an increasing pattern of asset confiscation by the Ortega regime. In December 2024, Prosegur was informed by contacts on the ground that a US-Nicaraguan businessman was arrested on falsified charges after being summoned to court for supposed traffic violations. Security forces subsequently extorted the victim's family the sum of 60,000 USD in unmarked bills in return for his release. This follows a pattern of self-enrichment schemes by officials targeting local or dual nationality businessmen through a series of extortion or confiscation methods enabled by the Daniel Ortega regime. Further, Prosegur sources have pointed to a new phenomenon of police stopping citizens for alleged traffic violations and then proceeding to extort victims. Both tourists and business travelers should remain cognizant of potential extortion schemes by officials while traveling in Nicaragua.

Mexico: Increased use of roadside IEDs by drug cartels highlights heightened incidental risk to travelers. On 17 and 19 December, security forces were struck by two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in [Michoacan](#) state. At least four soldiers were killed and 5 injured in the attacks, underlining the danger of this increasingly popular modus operandi. Officials have noted that the army is encountering an increase in IEDs compared previous years. These devices are often planted near surrounding drug labs or cartel encampments purportedly to ward off rival gangs and not necessarily target state armed forces. Over half of all explosive devices found or detonated in recent years are linked to the ongoing turf wars in Michoacan state



between the Jalisco New Generation Cartel and United Cartel. The recent spike in successful IED detonations indicates a heightened incidental risk to civilians in the Michoacan state.



EMEA

Europe: Anticipate heightened security measures across all Christmas markets following a vehicular ramming attack in Magdeburg (Germany). On 20 December, a driver rammed his vehicle through a crowded Christmas Market in [Magdeburg](#), killing at least 5 people and injuring 200. The assailant has been identified as a 50-year-old doctor from Saudi Arabia who had resided in Germany since 2006. It is yet unclear how he circumvented the barricades surrounding the market area. The perpetrator was taken into police custody, but a motive has not yet been confirmed. In response, increased security measures at Christmas markets across Europe have been announced. Germany's domestic intelligence agency had warned of an increased threat level for the holiday season linked to the Israel-Hamas War in the Middle East. Travelers should exercise heightened vigilance in the vicinity of outdoor Christmas markets.

Syria: The military buildup of Turkish forces and aligned militant groups near the border with the Kurdish autonomous region suggests an offensive operation is imminent. Since 9 December, a substantial Turkish military buildup near [Kobani](#) (Ayn al-Arab district), a Kurdish-majority city on the Syria-Turkiye border, has prompted concerns of an imminent offensive. The Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), a key US ally in Syria, are encircled by the Turkish military and aligned militant forces. Turkiye considers the People's Defense Units (YPG), the main faction of the SDF, as a branch of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), a group it deems a terrorist organization. The military build-up includes Turkish commandos, artillery units, and proxy militias positioned strategically along the border. This mirrors Turkish movements prior to its 2019 invasion of northeast Syria, where the Turkish military forces drove YPG forces from several regions bordering southern Turkiye. The recent US-mediated ceasefire talks have failed, escalating the regional tensions further.



Moldova: Declaration of State of Emergency highlights lingering vulnerabilities to the energy sector due to reliance on Russian energy. On 16 December, the country began a 60-day state of emergency in response to the expected cutoff of Russian natural gas supplies on 1 January 2025. Gazprom, a Russian state-operated company, has historically provided most of Moldova's energy supply. The natural gas flows through Ukraine into the country's largest power plant located in the Russian-supported breakaway region of Transnistria. The move by Russia is likely a retaliation to the October 2024 re-election of a pro-Western president and the passage of a pro-EU accession referendum in Moldova. This underscores a normative aspect of Russian hybrid warfare that seeks to destabilize the society and government of countries opposing Russia's geopolitical ambitions.

West Bank (Palestinian Territories): An uptick in violence in Jenin is likely over the coming days amid counter-militancy operations by Palestinian Authority (PA) security forces. On 14 December, PA forces surrounded and raided a refugee camp in [Jenin](#) (Palestinian Territories) following a ten-day siege. The area has historically been the sight for counter-militancy operations due to the strong presence of fighters from various Palestinian militant factions. In the exchange of small arms, a Jenin Brigades commander, Yazid Ja'ayseh, was killed along with a young civilian, while several others were injured. Earlier this month, the PA announced 'Operation Protect the Homeland' to "eradicate sedition and chaos" in the West Bank – this latest raid is part of that effort. The operation by the PA to root out militant factions in the West Bank is likely part of a broader effort to signal their ability to take control of and govern the Gaza Strip. Palestinian armed groups such as Hamas have responded by calling for an expansion of violence directed at the PA. Therefore, anticipate a high likelihood of an increase in violence in the West Bank, particularly in Jenin, over the coming weeks.

Sweden: Serious injury caused by IED explosion in Stockholm County highlights the incidental risk to bystanders due to ongoing high-levels of gang violence.



On 17 December, an improvised explosive device (IED) was detonated at the entrance of an apartment building in Tyreso (Stockholm County), seriously injuring a woman. This incident is part of a broader pattern of gang-related violence in Sweden, which has experienced a surge in incidents over the past decade. Gangs within the country have increasingly relied on violent tactics such as shootings and explosive devices. Despite intensified police efforts and enhanced surveillance leading to a 35% decrease in gang-related deaths in 2024 compared to 2022, the persistence of violent events underscores the ongoing challenges authorities are facing in combatting organized crime. As of November 2024, Sweden saw over 195 shootings and 72 bombings related to gang violence, resulting in 30 deaths.

Mayotte (France): Continue to postpone all travel until further notice due to the widespread destruction caused by Cyclone Chido. The weather system struck on 14 December, causing widespread damage, killing at least 35 people and injuring approximately 2,500 others. Officials believe the number of fatalities will continue to increase over the coming days. Up to 70 percent of the population remains without electricity, and there remains a shortage of potable water. Operations at Dzaoudzi-Pamandzi International Airport will remain suspended until further notice following damage, and a nightly curfew from 22:00-04:00 (local time) was put in place in response to looting. The cyclone's impact has disrupted transportation and communications and severely damaged roads, particularly in more remote areas of the country. If currently in the country, ensure access to secure accommodations and essential supplies such as food, water, medication, fuel, and communication devices.



APAC

Vanuatu: Expect residual disruption over the coming days following a 7.3 magnitude earthquake. The earthquake that struck just offshore [Efate](#) on 17 December collapsed buildings, induced landslides, damaged infrastructure, and disrupted communications. As of 23 December, at least 12 people have been killed and over 200 injured. Downtown Port Vila was reportedly most impacted by the quake, where several buildings collapsed. Operations at Bauerfield International Airport are slowly being restored, along with communications. Several roadways remain blocked or damaged, and repair to the electric grid remains ongoing. Officials have put in place a curfew from 18:00-06:00 (local time) until at least 24 December. Monitor for a potential extension to the nightly curfew and follow official directives.

South Korea: Continue to monitor protests regarding the President's impeachment process amid persistent heightened political tensions. On 21 December, tens of thousands gathered in Seoul for rival protests related to the impeachment of President Yoon Suk Yeol. Anti-Yoon protesters convened in [Gwanghwamun](#) carrying glow sticks and displaying signs demanding Yoon's arrest and imprisonment. Concurrently, several thousand pro-Yoon supporters assembled nearby, advocating for the restoration of his presidential powers. Despite the proximity of the two groups, the protests remained peaceful, with no reported clashes. The Constitutional Court is holding a preparatory hearing on 27 December regarding the President's potential impeachment. Avoid popular protest locations as a precaution and anticipate related disruption.