



Global Intelligence Review

January 28, 2025

Edition 29



AMER

United States: Economic pressure on Colombia to accept migrant deportees foreshadows the administration's foreign policy strategy over the coming years. On 27 January, a resolution to a short-lived, but intense disagreement with Columbia was reached. In response to turning away US military flights of deported immigrants, President Donald Trump immediately escalated with a stack of threats that included imposing steep tariffs. President Gustavo Petro of Columbia quickly capitulated under this pressure and agreed to allow the flights. The dispute marks a change in how the US can be expected to wield its power and influence over the next four years. President Trump's success using economic hard power to force the hand of an ally to cooperate with him on foreign policy suggests he will employ this tactic frequently in the future with traditional allies and adversaries of the US. The Trump administration's ambitions for US influence over Greenland and the Panama Canal are probable future targets of this new strategy – among others. Stakeholders should monitor the likely increased use of economic threats in foreign policy negotiations that could create an uncertain landscape for operations and business.

Brazil: Severe weather in Sao Paulo is expected to persist over the coming days, causing disruption. Since 24 January, severe weather has caused extensive flooding and damaged infrastructure across Sao Paulo. Approximately 180,000 people experienced power outages at the height of the storm in the Greater Sao Paulo area, and transportation disruptions are taking place citywide, including to the metro and train services. Exercise caution as severe weather conditions will persist through at least 31 January. Anticipate further disruption to transportation and essential services.



EMEA

Russia: Large-scale Ukrainian drone strike foreshadows increased strikes targeting critical infrastructure and military sites, posing an incidental risk to non-combatants. On 24 January, a large aerial attack of approximately 120 drones hit an oil refinery station in Ryazan – 110 miles southeast of Moscow – resulting in a large fire breaking out. An electrical components factory that manufactures chips for fighter jets and missiles was also hit in the attack. Drones targeting Moscow caused the closure of regional airports, although no damage was reported. The targeting of critical infrastructure – especially oil refineries – is a strategic bid by Ukraine to place pressure on Russia’s financial coffers that fund the war and stifle domestic opposition. US President Trump and Ukrainian President Zelensky have recently emphasized the importance of degrading Russia’s oil revenue. As the pressure mounts on both parties to reach a ceasefire deal, an increase in aerial attacks on critical infrastructure throughout the conflict’s theater can be anticipated. In December 2024, an Azeri commercial flight to Russia was accidentally downed by Russian air defense near Grozny, which misidentified it during a large-scale Ukrainian drone attack on the intended arrival city. Increased drone traffic in the airspaces of both countries poses a significant risk of incidental harm to commercial air travel. It is recommended to limit non-essential proximity to military installations or critical infrastructure and limit non-essential flights into Russian or Ukrainian air space.

Germany: Knife attack in Aschaffenburg highlights the growing trend of mass stabbings carried out by asylum seekers with no extremist backgrounds. On 22 January, two people were killed and three injured during a knife attack targeting a kindergarten group at a playground. Officials identified the assailant as an Afghan refugee who recently had his application rejected. The attack follows a series of



similar attacks carried out by refugees in Germany in 2024, including in Solingen in August and Mannheim in May. Although all three attacks were carried out citing Islamist extremist motives, authorities assessed there were no signs of extremism prior to the attacks. This highlights the increasing difficulty law enforcement faces in preventing attacks in cases where the assailant has displayed no prior disposition toward extremist thinking. Considering the large refugee population in Germany, and readily available weapons such as knives, this trend is liable to persist through 2025. Travelers should exercise heightened awareness in public spaces.

Israel/Palestinian Territories/Lebanon: Continue to monitor the potential for escalation amid the fragile ceasefires and ongoing counter-militancy operations in the West Bank. On 22 January, the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) launched a new operation, 'Iron Wall', in the city of Jenin and Tulkarm (West Bank). This follows the collapse of a truce agreement between the Palestinian Authority (PA) and Hamas and Islamic Jihad affiliated militant groups in Jenin on 17 January, which was preceded by several weeks of PA counter-militancy operations. The IDF noted the operation is a part of their multifront war against Iranian-backed militant groups in the West Bank, Gaza, southern Lebanon, and Yemen.

The ceasefire in Gaza continues to hold. Thousands of Palestinians were allowed to return to northern Gaza on 27 January after a dispute over the order in which Hamas released hostages was settled. However, continuing disagreements and delays between Hamas and Israel, as well as within Netanyahu's unstable cabinet, highlight the fragility of the agreement. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's far-right government currently controls only a slim majority in the Knesset, which it will lose if certain factions follow through on the threat to quit Netanyahu's coalition should the ceasefire enter phase 2. Given Netanyahu's continued legal and political troubles,



combined with Hamas overt displays of its continued survival and control in Gaza, there is a probability of the war restarting once Phase 1 has ended.

The IDF has also refused to fully remove its troops from southern Lebanon, claiming that the original terms of the ceasefire have not been fully complied with by Hezbollah and that the Lebanese Government has not done enough to enforce compliance. Israel has renegotiated the ceasefire to extend the deadline for a full withdrawal until 18 February with the Lebanese government. However, Hezbollah has refused to agree to this. This asymmetrical discordance highlights a possible resurgence in open fighting between the IDF and Hezbollah, although this remains unlikely.

Sweden: Monitor the increasing trend of bombing across the country and exercise caution. On 24 January, the 19th improvised explosive device (IED) since the beginning of 2025 detonated at a home in Stockholm, killing one person. In 2024, a total of 124 IEDs were reported – an anomaly within the surrounding region. The perpetrators of these attacks are diverse, including gang members, violent anti-Israel protesters, Islamist fundamentalists, and young people engaging in mischief. The capabilities of the Swedish security forces to mitigate this escalating shift in crime are currently stretched thin – resulting in opportunities for assailants to carry out attacks. Travelers should maintain vigilance and monitor their surroundings, especially in urban settings.

Slovakia: Protests in defiance of Prime Minister Robert Fico’s pro-Russia government intensify and can be expected to persist over the coming weeks. On 24 January, an estimated 100,000 people participated in protests across urban centers, with an estimated 40,000 in the capital, Bratislava. This turnout is more than



double the previous weeks, though they remained peaceful. Anti-government national protests have been occurring periodically since 2023 in response to Fico's rapprochement with Russia and his moves to distance the country from NATO, EU, and Ukraine. The recent increase in protest attendance can be attributed to the developments of the past week, which include Fico accusing the opposition party of planning a "Maidan-style coup" (referencing Ukraine) and announcing his intention to deport foreign agents allegedly assisting the opposition party to topple him in advance of a no-confidence vote in parliament. Slovakia's domestic intelligence service – the SIS – provided the evidence for Fico's claims. However, its veracity was called into question as the agency is widely regarded as a corrupt institution due to being led by the son of an MP of Fico's party. Travelers should remain abreast of announcements for future protests and avoid non-essential proximity to these events or government infrastructure that may serve as inflection points.



APAC

Pakistan: Monitor for potential protests over the coming weeks following the end of negotiations between former Prime Minister Imran Khan and the government. On 24 January, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) pulled out of negotiations with the government after three rounds of talks. The end of the negotiations was ordered by Imran Khan, the former prime minister and chairman of the PTI party, after he claimed the government would not form judicial commissions to investigate clashes between security forces and pro-PTI protestors during 9 May 2023 and 26 November 2024. The protests occurred after Imran Khan was accused and detained for alleged corruption, which he was convicted of on 17 January 2025. The government denied refusing to form the commissions and stated that it was attempting to avoid rushed decisions. Negotiations between the two groups began in December 2023 after the PTI government lost power, which led to significant political tension between the new government and the PTI. Ali Khan, the acting chairman of the PTI, promised to continue organizing protests and agitations across the country after ending the talks. Based on precedent, it remains probable that PTI loyalists will use the period during the Cricket Champions Trophy tournament, beginning on 19 February, to sow civil strife.

Japan: Knife attack in Nagano highlights growing trend of attacks at metro stations that is likely to persist over the coming years. On 22 January, one person was killed, and two people were injured by a knife-wielding assailant at a bus terminal outside of Nagano Station. The police arrested a suspect on 26 January at a housing project 3km away from the attack site and labeled it as a random attack. Though Japan has a reputation for being a safe country, it has recently seen an uptick in knife violence over the last few years – especially at crowded metro stations, which present



ideal targets. Two of the country's most deadly mass stabbings occurred on Tokyo's metro system in August and October of 2021. Railway companies have acknowledged the increased risk and have begun to equip employees and passengers with new safety equipment, including knife-proof umbrellas, in an effort to protect employees and commuters. The growing rate of attacks could be linked to isolation and ascribing blame to society for personal failures becoming increasingly common. This attitude leads some to seek revenge on society at large. Travelers should maintain a heightened awareness of their surroundings at metro stations despite the nation's reputation for safety.

Asia: Expect delays during the Lunar New Year across Asia due to the travel rush. The Lunar New Year will last from 28 January -12 February this year. It is a widely celebrated holiday period, characterized by overcrowded transportation, health concerns, and potential weather disruption. These challenges could significantly impact travel and strain transportation systems, causing delays and cancellations. Health risks will rise in accordance with dense crowds, while weather disruptions could further complicate travel. Public safety and cybersecurity concerns are also relevant due to an increased reliance on digital platforms. Effective planning, health measures, and weather monitoring are essential to managing these challenges and ensuring safe and timely travel during the holiday period in Asia.