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AMER

Panama: Demonstrations are likely to persist over the coming days in urban centers in response to proposed controversial social security reforms. On 12 February, protesters, in opposition to government initiatives to raise the retirements age and privatize social security, attempted to block Balboa Avenue and were confronted with security forces who dispersed the rally with tear gas. During the ensuing confrontations, 400 people were arrested and 16 police officers were injured. Demonstrations on 18 and 20 February blocked several routes throughout the capital, Panama City. President Jose Raul Mulino labeled the union, which led the protest – the National Union of Workers of Construction and Similar Industries (SUNTRACS) – as akin to a terrorist organization. This has prompted widespread criticism of the harsh treatment of the protesters as reflective of his increasingly repressive regime. Travelers can expect increased instances of unrest linked to demonstrations, which can pose incidental risk to bystanders.

Cuba: Ongoing power crisis can be expected to persist over the coming weeks due to vulnerabilities in the national grid and crippling fuel shortages. Since February 2024, rolling blackouts, lasting as long as 20 hours, have been reported across the country. However, major urban centers – which are usually insulated from disruptions – are now increasingly experiencing the effects as well. Only six of the nation’s fifteen oil-fired plants are running due to a severe fuel shortage. While essential services continue to operate, there is a heightened possibility of disruptions to power and services in urban centers.

Brazil: Soaring number of Dengue cases recorded in Sao Paulo underlines a major public health crisis. Since the start of 2025, there have been 124,000



confirmed cases of Dengue fever and 113 deaths, with another 82,908 cases and 233 deaths under investigation. The incidence rate is nearing the WHO's threshold for an epidemic, with a peak expected in April. While the government is distributing extra medical supplies, limited vaccine availability and exceptional pressure on the healthcare system are posing challenges. Controlling mosquito breeding sites, which favor stagnant water, and raising public awareness about prevention strategies are crucial for reducing transmission. Travelers should protect against mosquito bites, stay updated on the dengue outbreak, and seek medical help if symptoms arise.

Colombia: Avoid non-essential travel to the Choco, Cauca, and Notre de Santander regions amid a deterioration of the security environment due to ELN's expanding operations. On 18 February, the National Liberation Army (ELN) initiated a three-day armed strike in the Choco region in response to alleged collaboration between Colombian state forces and paramilitary groups combatting ELN rebels. The region has seen escalating violence due to ELN's growing territorial control, fueled by its expansion into resource-rich areas in Colombia and its use of Venezuela as a strategic safe haven. On 17 January, President Gustavo Petro canceled peace negotiations with the ELN following significant violence, initiated by the ELN, in the Catatumbo region. The suspension of the peace talks by President Petro signaled a shift away from the 'total-peace' strategy and an embrace of direct confrontation, which has yet to dampen hostilities or yield a resolution. On 20 February, several explosions were reported in Villa del Rosario (Notre de Santander region), including an improvised explosive device (IED) attack at a toll booth that wounded six people. Also in Notre de Santander, clashes between the ELN, dissident FARC elements, and Colombian security forces have intensified since late January, prompting the deployment of additional military reinforcements. The governor of Santander department has warned of potential FARC attacks in Barrancabermeja. Additionally, the security threat has extended into the Cauca region, where government forces anticipate heightened insurgent activity. Travelers should avoid



the Choco, Cauca, and Notre de Santander regions and other ELN contested areas, as the ongoing attack has disrupted transportation and destabilized the security environment.

Idaho, United States: Expect disruption on Highway 21 over the coming days amid a high risk of avalanches. On 22 February, Idaho state officials closed a section of State Highway 21 between [Grandjean](#) and [Banner Summit](#), impacting travel between [Boise](#) and [Stanley](#). This section, known as “Avalanche Alley”, is particularly prone to snow slides during the winter, with closures occurring frequently within the past years. While alternative routes exist, they require significant detours, adding hours to travel time. The lack of a reopening timeline suggests prolonged travel disruption, especially with the continued snowfall and heavy rainfall expected in the region. Travelers should continue to monitor the Idaho Transportation Department updates and consider alternative routes well in advance to avoid delays.



EMEA

Germany: Elections end in victory for the mainstream conservative and far-right parties, attributed to a buildup of anti-immigrant sentiment sparked by increasingly frequent terrorist attacks. On 23 February, Germany held highly anticipated national elections. The conservative Christian Democracy Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU) and the far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) received 28.5% and 20.8% of the vote respectively. The more liberal Social Democratic party and Green party received 16.4% and 11.6% of the votes. Both the CDU/CSU and the AfD capitalized on frustration over the economy, migration, and the rise in terror attacks perpetrated by immigrants. There have been six deadly attacks in the past nine months – two of them recent. On 21 February, at the Berlin Holocaust Memorial, a stabbing attack was carried out by a Syrian refugee who was recently radicalized and inspired to act against Jewish people because of the Israel-Hamas conflict. On 13 February, a vehicle ramming attack was carried out by an Afghan asylum seeker, also recently radicalized online and motivated by Islamist extremist thought. It remains to be seen whether the CDU/CSU will break the post-World War II norm of non-collaboration with the far-right and form a government with them in it – creating a coalition without them would be challenging. An emboldened far-right is likely to celebrate their electoral victory through rallies and marches, which in turn may draw large groups of counter protesters, increasing the likelihood of civil unrest and clashes. Travelers are advised to avoid any political demonstrations over the coming weeks due to the possibility of clashes between protestors or with law enforcement.

Austria: Profiles of recent terrorist assailants are emblematic of increasing online radicalization for violent extremists. On 19 February, law enforcement



arrested a 14-yr old Austrian citizen of Turkish ethnicity suspected of planning a militant attack on the Westbahnhof train station in Vienna. Authorities announced that the detainee was a supporter of the Islamic State (IS) who had been radicalized online and possessed numerous weapons and materials for bombs. The detainee had come to the attention of authorities due to TikTok videos he had posted espousing extremist viewpoints. This foiled plot comes within a week of the stabbing in Villach by a Syrian national, with legal residence status while seeking asylum, which killed one person and injured five others. The perpetrator was reportedly also an IS supporter and had been radicalized online within a short time period. Both incidents highlight the pervasive risk of online radicalization that can escalate quickly, making prediction and prevention difficult for law enforcement. Additionally, elevated societal tensions over migration and Islam enhance the risk environment for radicalization across the ideological spectrum.

France: Two extremist attacks highlight societal inter-communal tensions and heightened incidental risk to bystanders. On 17 February, twenty masked individuals were recorded storming the courtyard of a building in Paris housing the Cultural Association of Turkish Immigrant Workers (ACTIT), where a socialist youth group, Young Struggle France, was hosting a film screening. Police report that the assailants were armed with broken bottles, which they used to beat and stab a man – later identified as an activist from ACTIT – who had been standing outside the building. Although many of the attackers escaped, six perpetrators were arrested, all linked to radical far-right groups. On 22 February, an Algerian man armed with a knife and screwdriver, was arrested after killing 1 civilian and injuring 3 police officers. An Islamist extremist motivation was announced by authorities citing his recent conviction for glorifying terrorism after the October 7 attack by Hamas on Israel. These latest incidents are symptoms of a larger trend. Societal tensions over the



presence of migrants in European countries continue to motivate violent attacks perpetuated by two main factions: far-right anti-immigrant extremists and radicalized migrants, whose frustration with the immigration system and lack of effective assimilation, makes them vulnerable to Islamist extremist ideology.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC): M23 continues to advance south toward the strategic city of Uvira, a gateway to further southward expansion. As of 24 February, M23 has made further progress toward their expansionist goal to control the entirety of North and South Kivu states at the expense of 7,000 lives since January 2025. On 18 February, the DRC Minister for Regional Integration met with the President of Chad to solicit military assistance in combating M23; no commitments have been announced yet. On the same day, Uganda had announced it would be directing troops, already in the DRC helping to fight Islamist terror groups, to assist Congolese forces in response to escalating violence by M23. On 20 February, the US imposed sanctions on a senior member of M23 and the Rwandan Minister for Regional Integration for his role in providing state support to M23. Additionally, on 22 February the UN Security Council issued a unanimous resolution condemning the advances of M23 with the support of Rwandan Defense Forces. The DRC appears to be attempting to incentivize increased Western pressure on Rwanda by offering the US and Europe a stake in the vast mineral wealth currently being fought over – a sector traditionally dominated by China – whose influence in Africa both parties would like to weaken. International sanctions were a key part of the strategy that resulted in Rwanda halting their support for M23 in 2012 when the rebels first captured Goma. However, the broad and forceful international consensus that exerted significant pressure in the past continues to appear out of reach, as reflected in the limited scope of US sanctions. Avoid non-essential travel to the DRC and to monitor developments in the wider regional dynamic closely.



Uganda: Continue to monitor situation as Ebola outbreak appears to be contained. On 18 February authorities announced that all infected patients had recovered, and no new cases had been recorded. The Ugandan Health Department's success in contact tracing – which is essential to containing Ebola – seems to have managed to mitigate a wider spread of the virus. Travelers should proceed with appropriate caution and follow all local health authority and World Health Organization (WHO) hygiene directives if operating within the capital, Kampala.

Israel/Hamas: Negotiations for phase 2 of the ceasefire are slated to begin this week as tensions rise, heightening the chances of the conflict resuming. The Israeli foreign minister Gideon Sa'ar announced talks would begin during the upcoming week, despite the rise in tensions over the weekend due to a failed bus bombing plot, and a setback during the most recent hostage exchange. Several buses exploded in an attack that officials have tied to Tulkarm Brigade militants in the West Bank. Two Jewish Israelis and one Palestinian have been detained in connection. Hamas' initial failure to send the correct remains during the handover of a dead hostage and the transformation of the handovers into grotesque public performances have antagonized Israel. Tensions are expected to rise even further during the second phase of negotiations as Prime Minister Netanyahu continues to demand Hamas disband and end its governance in Gaza. Hamas wants a full withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza before they release the last of the hostages and they are unwilling to disband or surrender control of Gaza. It remains unlikely that negotiations will go smoothly, and the chances of the conflict resuming are high.



South Africa: Murder of openly gay Imam in suspected hate crime highlights rise of violence targeting the LGBTQ community. On 15 February, Imam Muhsin Hendricks was ambushed by two masked assailants in [Gqeberha](#) (Eastern Cape Province), who blocked his vehicle and fired multiple shots from a handgun. The Imam founded the Al-Ghurbaah mosque in Cape Town, which provided a safe space for LGBTQ Muslims. The motive remains under investigation, but he had a documented history of receiving threats from conservative Islamic religious groups. LGBTQ rights in South Africa are constitutionally protected and urban areas have thriving queer communities, despite facing increasing stigmatization and violence since 2022 – reflective of an overall general rise in anti-LBGTQ legislation and backlash across Africa. This incident highlights persistent tension between the socially progressive legal environment, sporadic enforcement, and conservative religious communities in South Africa – a nation grappling with high rates of violent crime.

Belgium: Expect transportation disruptions amid a public transportation sector 10-day strike. On 21 February, a nationwide rail strike by unionized workers in public transportation initiated a strike that is slated to last until 2 March. The strike has already caused significant travel delays to all modes of public transportation, including buses, trams, and trains. However, international rail lines remain unaffected. The strike follows walkouts by airport employees and mass protests against the government’s plan to change the pension system. Airport workers have stated that they will continue to strike on the 13th of every month while negotiations with the government continue. Travelers should make plans with consideration to transportation delays in major cities over the coming week and refrain from air travel, a day before or after the 13th of each month, while negotiations continue.



APAC

China: Presidential high-profile meeting with private sector CEOs signals an attempt to project a friendlier business environment. On 17 February, President Xi Jinping convened the widely publicized assembly of business leaders in a spectacle that suggests intentions to assure entrepreneurs that the government is committed to promoting a healthy environment for domestic companies to operate. The ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has been struggling to revive an economy disrupted by the pandemic and an ongoing real estate crisis. However, the real aim of this meeting appeared to be the announcement of the start of a new era for private companies after a regulatory crackdown on the tech industry was launched in 2020 to break apart monopolies and implement strict data regulations. Companies that criticized this action by the CCP were subsequently blacklisted and targeted politically, producing an atmosphere of fear for entrepreneurs and investors. President Xi appears to be seeking to change that perception and – at least symbolically – welcome private business back as a valued partner to the CCP. The conference signaled a de-prioritization of the tech industry and a reemphasis on manufacturing, agriculture, and hardware industries. Despite promises of stability and a desire to remain competitive, this stance could be quickly reversed at the direction of Xi if he feels that private industry oversteps the authority of the CCP again. Stakeholders should continue to monitor developments and proceed cautiously operating within China.

Hong Kong: Democratic Party takes initial steps towards disbanding, signaling the Chinese Communist Party's dominance over the city's governance in accordance with the national security law. On 20 February, Hong Kong's Democratic Party, the city's largest pro-democracy group founded in 1994, initiated



steps toward disbanding by forming a task force to explore the dissolution process. This decision reflects the increasingly repressive political environment following the imposition of the controversial national security law in 2020, which criminalized anything considered as secession. This has led to the prosecution, exile, and silencing of numerous activists and the shutdown of civil society groups. Additionally, this will weaken Hong Kong's reputation as an international financial hub, as the erosion of political freedoms raises concerns about legal transparency and regulatory stability, potentially driving investors and businesses toward more politically predictable regional financial hubs like Singapore. Travelers to Hong Kong should remain aware of heightened political sensitivities, avoid discussing pro-democracy issues in public, and stay informed about potential legal risks under the national security law.

Indonesia: Further student-led demonstrations are likely over the coming days in response to government spending cuts and newly elected President Prabowo. Since 17 February, various civil society groups have been involved in demonstrations in Jakarta – the capital – in response to President Prabowo's plan to slash funding for education in order to fund a free-meal program for children. Protests have remained peaceful thus far, only posing occasional transportation delays. However, the possibility of sudden escalation, including confrontations with law enforcement and unruly behavior by protesters, remains a persistent risk. This is the first significant opposition to face Prabowo since he took office in October 2024 – the response of the government and law enforcement will set a precedent for future interactions during his tenure in office. Travelers are advised to avoid any political demonstrations or rallies and exercise heightened situational awareness.