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AMER

Mexico: Intensification of urban warfare between factions of the Sinaloa Cartel departs from norms and foreshadows increased indiscriminate violence.

The root of the conflict can be traced to the July 2024 capture of Ismael Zambada Garcia (El Mayo), leader of the Mayiza faction of the Sinaloa Cartel, which has been attributed in part to a set up by the Chapitos faction — run by several sons of the former boss Joaquin Guzman Loera (El Chapo). The formerly aligned factions broke off relations over this allegation in September 2024 and began a mutual crusade of indiscriminate intra-cartel violence. The fighting mainly centers around the city of Culiacan, the group's historic power base, within Sinaloa state. Where at least 1,000 people have been killed and thousands more have disappeared. The characteristics of this conflict significantly depart from the established norms of past schisms, representing a shift within the dynamics of the Sinaloa Cartel. However, the sustained high-intensity daily fighting between the two sides reflects the deep personal nature of the betrayal felt by the Mayiza faction and each side's sophisticated understanding of the other's key pressure points. The new generation of young urbanite leaders has transitioned the feud to the urban arena — away from the traditional rural sphere. They have demonstrated an affinity for frequent public displays of extreme violence and a persistent disregard for the historic, unspoken rules protecting the families of sicarios. The violence has resulted in a dramatic increase in forced disappearances (*cifra Negra*) — now at a historic high — which has become a preferred tactic by both sides during the latest war. Stakeholders should monitor the developments as the conflict continues to intensify and possibly expand more significantly beyond the borders of Culiacan. Bystanders and businesses run a constant risk of being inadvertently caught up in this conflict as both sides pursue each other with a recklessness that is likely to permanently change the structure and capacity of the Sinaloa Cartel.



Mexico: Anticipate severe weather over the coming months amid predictions of an active hurricane season in 2025. Meteorologists are forecasting that Mexico is set to experience an above-average hurricane season in 2025. The hurricane season is set to begin on 15 May for the northeast Pacific Ocean and 1 June in the Atlantic, with both lasting until 30 November. Thirty-six tropical cyclones across the Pacific and Atlantic coasts have been forecasted so far, with eight storms expected to develop into major hurricanes (Category 3-5). This heightened activity poses significant operational and supply chain risks for companies with assets in coastal and central Mexico, including disruption to infrastructure, manufacturing zones, and transportation corridors. Above-average rainfall is also expected in key agricultural and industrial regions. It is advised to ensure comprehensive storm preparations are in place, in addition to contingency plans. Travelers are advised to monitor the development of tropical cyclones in the area, as they may develop into stronger hurricanes rapidly.

Canada: Vehicle ramming at Filipino festival in Vancouver highlights increasing frequency of modus operandi for carrying out mass casualty attacks. On 26 April, a vehicle rammed into a crowd gathered for a Filipino cultural festival celebrating Lapu Lapu Day, killing at least 11 and injuring over 20. The attacker did attempt to flee but was eventually detained by law enforcement. Police have stated that while the ramming appears to have been deliberate, they are confident it was not an act of terrorism. A specific motive for the attack has yet to be confirmed. However, law enforcement was familiar with the attacker and had received treatment for serious mental health issues, with reports indicating he suffered from paranoia and delusions. The attack is emblematic of the increased use of vehicles as the preferred modus operandi for those galvanized into committing violent acts for a variety of reasons globally. A vehicle does not require specialized training to



operate, but it still possesses the capacity to inflict harm against a large group. The lack of a common ideological thread in the various recent vehicular rammings suggests that a variety of actors have been exposed to previous attacks, can internalize the method as accessible, and adopt it for their own purposes. The popularity of this method also underlines how heightened societal or communal tensions produce conditions ripe for radicalization and can agitate those suffering from unaddressed mental health issues. Travelers should maintain a heightened sense of awareness in large crowds and avoid any possible ensuing protests or civil unrest in connection with the incident.



EMEA

Somalia: Capture of key areas in central region signals a strong intent to push offensive and put pressure on Federal Government. Over the course of April, the Islamist militant insurgent group Al-Shabaab seized Aboorey and Adan Yabal - two operationally critical areas of central Somalia. If Al-Shabaab is allowed to reestablish their foothold in these areas, it would reconnect essential support zones with their base of control in the south. The second front opened to the south of Mogadishu — the capital — in March 2025 has similarly resulted in the capture of various operationally key towns. Underprepared Somali government forces are struggling to counter this two-front offensive, and international partners providing air support are similarly ill-equipped to handle the expanding front. Al-Shabaab's current position fortifies their ability to reinforce and resupply their troops in the central region, amplifying the conflict. While an offensive to seize Mogadishu is highly unlikely in the short-term, continuous gains and further insulation of their position will allow Al-Shabaab to chip away at the federal government's legitimacy and bolster their own shadow governance apparatus. Targeted attacks on high-profile political figures, such as the recent assassination attempt on the president in March 2025, are likely to continue as a method of destabilization. Stakeholders should continue to monitor the strategic advancements of Al-Shabaab and consider how their improved capacity could spill over and impact other regional conflicts.

Democratic Republic of Congo: Joint statement announcing mutual truce in conflict provides cautious indicator toward implementation of a broader peace agreement in coming weeks. On 23 April, representatives from the Congolese government and the Rwanda-backed insurgent group M23 released a report detailing their commitment to a truce following a first round of peace talks in Qatar.



M23's renewed offensive gained momentum in January 2025 when they recaptured the key city of Goma (North Kivu Province) and later Bukavu (South Kivu Province). The conflict is defined by a struggle for control over the mineral-rich region of eastern Congo and pre-existing historical tensions between various ethnic groups. Direct negotiation with M23 used to be labeled as a 'red line' for the Congolese government. However, the significant deterioration in their military capabilities and deterioration of the security environment may have succeeded in bringing them to the negotiation table. Previous unilateral truces have not produced any lasting cessation in hostilities, much less a long-term peace agreement. Reports of continued clashes place this fragile truce and the likelihood of a lasting framework for peace in jeopardy. On 26 April, the DRC and Rwanda announced that they intended to draft a peace deal by 2 May to halt funding non-state armed groups — although the parties avoided naming M23 specifically. It is yet to be determined what kind of formal role the US or other African nations might play in the development and implementation of such an agreement. However, reports that the US is optimistic about an impending deal giving US firms access to rare mineral deposits may prove to be the essential binding factor in any future peace deal. Stakeholders should closely monitor the implementation of truce conditions on the ground and continue to follow the various facets of ongoing negotiations for a lasting peace.

Jordan: Ban on political activity for the Muslim Brotherhood may heighten risk of acts of domestic violence by affiliated members. On 23 April, the Interior Minister, Mazen al-Faraya, announced the nation's decision to ban the Muslim Brotherhood, a political Islamist group, following an alleged attempt by members to destabilize the government in recent weeks. The government arrested a group of party members on accusations of storing weapons and manufacturing explosive-laden drones intended for domestic attacks. Faraya claimed that other Muslim



Brotherhood members attempted to smuggle out or destroy several documents from their headquarters, which were evidence that the party is working in secret to undermine stability, security, and national unity. The leaders of the Muslim Brotherhood have denied these accusations and denounced the actions of those arrested. The group's political wing, the Islamic Action Front (IAF), has yet to be outright banned by the government, though police also raided its offices. The group is the largest opposition party in the government and has become increasingly popular, winning almost a third of the votes in the last election. Wael Saqqa, the IAF General Secretary, has denied any organizational ties to the Muslim Brotherhood, claiming the IAF is an independent political party. The Muslim Brotherhood has a long history of militantism both in Jordan and throughout the Arab world, but officially renounced violence in the 1970s. However, the recent incident demonstrates that at least some members of the group are still willing to engage in radical violence to achieve their end goals. The ban placed on the Muslim Brotherhood increases the risk of more radicalized members engaging in acts of violence or stoking civil unrest. The likelihood of this occurring will rise significantly if the government decides to dissolve the IAF. The elimination of any access to the formal avenues for exercising political power will funnel members and supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood to express themselves through informal means, increasing the risk of violence and clashes with law enforcement.

Spain/Portugal: Expect residual disruption over the coming days following widespread power outages in the Iberian Peninsula. On 28 April, the entire Iberian Peninsula and parts of Southern France lost power. The power was quickly restored to the affected parts of France. As of the morning of 29 April, 90 percent of Spain and Portugal's electricity supply has been restored. Both countries declared a state of emergency. The outage caused major transportation delays, including



halting traffic lights, trains, metro lines, and airports across both countries. Nuclear Safety Council (CSN) of Spain has deemed that Spanish nuclear sites are safe, after operations were shut down following the outage. While there is still no clear cause for why the outage occurred, no evidence has been presented that the incident was the result of a cyber-attack. Travelers should expect residual delays over the coming days, especially related to air and train travel, as the backlog slowly gets cleared.



APAC

India: Terrorist attack in disputed Kashmir region deepens inter-communal tensions, and generates significant diplomatic fissure with Pakistan. On 22 April, militant gunmen opened fire on visitors to Baisaran Meadow, a popular tourist destination southeast of Pahalgam in Indian-controlled Kashmir. The attack has resulted in at least 28 deaths and several injuries. The Resistance Front (TRF), a proxy of the Pakistani Islamist terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba, claimed responsibility, citing anger over the settlement of more than 85,000 “outsiders” in Kashmir. TRF has vowed to target this group, viewed as illegal settlers, which they define as non-Muslim Indian nationals — primarily Hindus. India has historically labeled all militancy in Kashmir as Pakistan-backed terrorism. However, Pakistan frequently denies this, as they have in this case. Many Muslim Kashmiris view the violent actions taken by militant factions as part of a broader campaign against what they perceive as India's oppressive and assimilationist policies. Historically, Kashmiri militant groups have oscillated between targeting security forces and civilians, often depending on strategic goals and public sentiment. However, the Pahalgam attack appears to mark a deliberate shift back toward high-visibility civilian terror attacks — indicating that TRF and its affiliates may be recalibrating their strategy to maximize political leverage and sectarian polarization amid declining international attention. In the following days, the dormant conflict between India and Pakistan has reemerged, and inter-communal tensions between Muslims and Hindus have risen considerably.

Diplomatically, the Indian government has responded by suspending its participation in the Indus Waters Treaty commission with Pakistan, closing the Attari-Wagah border indefinitely (a key land crossing between India and Pakistan), revoking visas for Pakistani nationals, and expelling Pakistani diplomats. In turn, Pakistan has condemned India's reaction, canceled visas for Indian nationals, suspended all trade



with India (including via third countries), and closed its airspace to Indian aircraft. Pakistan has additionally warned that any attempt to detrimentally divert water flows would be considered an act of war and responded to with full force. Sporadic exchanges of ordnance have already been reported along the Line of Control (LoC), which separates Pakistani and Indian controlled Kashmir, elevating the risk of a sustained and broader cross-border escalation.

Since the attack, protests and strikes have erupted in several Indian cities, which have resulted in clashes with law enforcement and inter-communal unrest due to the use of extreme rhetoric and perceived anti-Islamic sentiment. Acts of harassment and retaliatory hate crimes targeting Muslims have been reported across India and Kashmir and are liable to increase in fervor and coordination. Travelers should avoid non-essential travel to the Kashmir region and monitor local news to avoid areas in India experiencing heightened protest activity, greater communal tensions, or delays from strikes. Travelers are advised to account for ongoing border closures and disruptions to common transportation infrastructure — monitor official advisories closely. Coordinating with vetted local security providers is recommended to track updated route conditions and insurgent activity. Stakeholders in the region should follow the diplomatic dynamic closely and monitor for signs of dangerous deterioration that could lead to sudden escalation.

China: Government targeting of US companies opens a new front in the trade war and implies robust capacity to impose steep costs on firms. In response to US President Trump's levying of dramatic tariffs on Chinese products in April 2025, Beijing imposed its own retaliatory tariffs on US goods. However, China appears to be maneuvering to retaliate through multiple non-tariff vectors to put pressure on the US economy. Boeing airplanes are being returned to the US after China reportedly told its domestic airlines to halt deliveries, Hollywood imports have been



restricted, and the export of critical minerals used in manufacturing has been suspended. This strategy appears to be aimed at incentivizing US companies to lobby the Trump administration on behalf of Beijing to de-escalate the anti-China tariff campaign. While targeting US firms, Beijing appears to be simultaneously moving to reinforce its sluggish domestic economy under a nationalistic banner. Several e-commerce companies have launched campaigns to assist Chinese exporters pivot to the domestic market, an effort that reflects President Xi Jinping's recent pro-business shift. In combination, Beijing is effectively broadcasting that China is capable of inflicting considerable cost through diverse tools, willing to ratchet up the trade war, and able to tolerate significant US economic pressure. Stakeholders should remain closely attuned to the ongoing negotiations between the US and China and reinforce their supply chain resiliency to prepare for multiple outcomes.

Iran: **Chemical explosion at Shahid Rajaee port raises domestic health risks.** On 26 April, a large chemical explosion occurred at the port near the city of Bandar Abbas, killing at least 40, injuring over 1,000, and leaving fires raging. The government declared a public health emergency, closed schools, and warned residents in neighboring cities to stay indoors due to concern over airborne toxins released in the explosion. Shahid Rajaee Port handles 80 percent of the nation's imports, amplifying concerns that the explosion will cause shortages throughout the country. The port's customs office stated that the cause of the explosion was likely due to the port's improper chemical storage. Contradictory statements have been made regarding the type of chemicals involved in the explosion, with various sources alleging that it could be ammonium nitrate, used to make fertilizers and industrial explosives, or sodium perchlorate, which is a key ingredient used in the fuel for ballistic missiles. Shipping logs show that the port had received a delivery from a Chinese ship in February carrying sodium perchlorate. However, certain governmental elements appear eager



to deny the latter explanation for the explosion against the backdrop of renewed nuclear talks with the United States. The perception that the Iranian regime is attempting to revitalize its conventional and nuclear defense program can be expected to heighten tensions throughout the region. Travelers in and around Bandar Abbas should stay inside, wear KN95 masks outside, monitor air quality, and follow official directions.