



Global Intelligence Review

May 6, 2025
Edition 42



AMER

Latin America, South America, Caribbean: Global uncertainty decreases region's economic growth outlook for 2025. On 23 April, the World Bank decreased the region's overall growth outlook for 2025 from 2.5 percent to 2.1 percent. This was in response to persistent global uncertainty driven by delayed interest rate cuts, increasing global trade restrictions, and China's economic slowdown. Mexico's projection dropped to 0 percent from its 1.5 percent projection earlier in the year, while Brazil's was reduced to 1.8 percent from 2.2 percent. The region's vulnerability to external shocks — particularly from the US and China — continues to undermine economic resilience. Countries throughout the region are often overly reliant on commodity exports, which generates dangerous exposure to the effects of tariffs and other market instability. Businesses in Latin America, South America, and the Caribbean should prioritize reducing dependence on single export markets, investing in supply chain resilience, and aligning with regional trade initiatives to buffer against global economic volatility.

Guatemala: Arrest of Indigenous Deputy Energy Minister is emblematic of increased democratic backsliding and subsequent uncertainty. On 23 April, Guatemalan authorities arrested Luis Pacheco, a K'iche' Indigenous leader and Deputy Energy Minister, on charges of terrorism and illicit association brought by Attorney General Consuelo Porras. Pacheco led peaceful nationwide protests in October 2023, involving 48 Indigenous communities, to defend then President-elect Bernardo Arevalo's electoral victory. He also pushed for the resignation of Attorney General Consuelo Porras, who attempted through various vectors to annul the election results and prevent Arevalo's inauguration. The US State Department and the European Union (EU) have designated Porras as a corrupt and undemocratic official who frequently violates the rule of law. President Arevalo has tried to ask for Porras' resignation to no avail and faces significant obstacles to removing her from power at this juncture. Pacheco's arrest has been condemned by Arevalo as unconstitutional and unfounded. Human rights organizations view the arrest as emblematic of the endemic corruption and the criminalization of peaceful protest that has occurred under Porras' tenure, as state institutions appear to be weaponized to suppress dissent. It is



advised to exercise caution when publicly commenting on the political situation within Guatemala and to stay abreast of any planned protests through local media.

Brazil: Foiled bombing plot at Lady Gaga concert highlights global trends within violent far-right extremism, including anti-LGBTQ sentiment, online radicalization, and recruitment of teenagers. On 4 May, police released a statement detailing the foiling of a bomb plot targeting a Lady Gaga concert being held on Copacabana beach (Rio De Janeiro). Police have arrested at least two people involved in the plot, including the individual responsible for orchestrating the plan and spearheading recruitment efforts. The plot consisted of attempting to recruit teenagers online to carry out coordinated attacks during the concert using improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and Molotov cocktails to target members of the LGBTQ+ community and gain notoriety on social media. The online forums and groups to which the arrested individuals belonged employed anti-LGBTQ hate speech and extremist symbols to promote the radicalization of teenagers and children to perform violent acts and self-harm as a demonstration of ‘belonging’ and ‘strength’. This incident is emblematic of the shifts in extremist group recruiting methods, which now skew toward online methods and target juveniles for radicalization. The observed surge in anti-LGBTQ sentiment is also motivating a significant segment of right-wing radicalization efforts. Travelers should always maintain a heightened awareness in large crowds, especially when attending events associated with the LGBTQ+ community.

New Jersey, United States: Anticipate persistent air travel disruptions, delays, and cancellations at Newark Liberty International Airport (EWR) over coming weeks due to staffing shortages and construction-related disruptions. On 4 May, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) implemented a Ground Delay Program in response to multiple accumulating factors. This convergence of operational challenges included a multi-day air traffic control staff walkout over the past week, a nationwide shortage of air traffic control staff, outdated equipment, and ongoing runway construction limiting airport capacity until June. Starting on 3 May, United Airlines canceled 35 daily flights at EWR representing approximately 10 percent of the airport’s domestic schedule. The resulting delays have been substantial, lasting an average of four hours and incurring a cascade of cancellations. The



disruptions have had a ripple effect, impacting major international airports nationwide, including in Los Angeles, Chicago, and Atlanta. In response to the crisis, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy reemphasized initiatives to recruit and retain air traffic controllers and modernize outdated FAA equipment. However, the immediate outlook for EWR remains uncertain, with continued delays and cancellations expected to persist. Travelers with itineraries that go through EWR should monitor flight status closely, arrive early, and consider alternative airports due to the ongoing delays. Additionally, travelers should monitor announcements regarding operational cutbacks at EWR from other major airline carriers.



EMEA

Western Balkans: Dueling military alliances generate uncertainty in a recently tumultuous region. On 1 April, Serbia and Hungary signed a new military pact; the Republika Srpska, the semi-autonomous Serbian area within Bosnia and Herzegovina, announced its intention to join the alliance as well. This action follows the recent announcement of a military alliance between Kosovo, Albania, and Croatia on 18 March. Serbia does not recognize the independence of Kosovo and has alleged that the agreement is a gross provocation aimed at isolating Serbia and bolstering “paramilitary structures” within Kosovo. The military alliance’s stated goal is to reinforce the frameworks of mutual security under NATO and establish a structure for enhanced cooperation amongst defense industries and joint training exercises. Authorities from the three participating countries have insisted the alliance is not hostile. The Serbian-Hungarian counter-pact also expands on existing collaboration on specific projects and is not an all-encompassing military alliance. Despite increasing armament, all the Balkan states possess insufficient resources for direct conflict, lowering the short-term risk of regional conflict. However, the Balkans have been experiencing a revival of tenacious student-led anti-corruption protests within various nations, in addition to differentiated internal security issues that have provoked civil unrest and strained stable governance. This deterioration of the wider security context calls into question how these alliances might be utilized in the event of domestic escalation by aligned member states.

England (United Kingdom): Uptick in rural crime targeting high-value farming equipment demonstrates increasing capacity of criminal networks. Since 2020, rural crime has been increasing in occurrence and sophistication at a steady rate. Recently released statistics recorded a 4.3 percent increase in the cost of rural crime in 2023 — approximately 57 million USD — with all indicators pointing toward a similar increase during 2024. This increase is also reflected in the more general crime trend, which saw a significant uptick in the rate of robberies and shoplifting. However, farms are especially lucrative targets for thieves due to the substantial value of their vehicles and equipment in combination with common security



vulnerabilities on farming properties. Perpetrators frequently employ higher-tech tactics to carry out their robberies, often utilizing drones to scout for expensive machinery and observe security protocols on the land. Rural criminal networks operate similarly to transnational shipping companies, transporting goods to be sold at a profit abroad. Local authorities have acknowledged the escalating issue and responded with plans to buff up the rural crime-fighting apparatus. Stakeholders should continue to monitor rising rural crime rates and reassess security plans for any static businesses, as well as ensure compliance throughout supply chains to avoid inadvertently dealing in illegally obtained goods.

France: Recent arrests indicate involvement of organized crime networks connected to transnational drug trafficking in coordinated attacks on prison infrastructure. As of 6 May, French authorities charged 21 individuals in connection with a coordinated series of violent attacks on correctional facilities and personnel between 13–21 April. Several of those arrested are currently incarcerated, reinforcing suspicions that the attacks were at least partially orchestrated from within the prison system. Justice Minister Gerald Darmanin has attributed the attacks to drug trafficking syndicates retaliating against a recently announced plan to transfer 200 of France’s approximately 700 most dangerous drug traffickers into two newly designated top-security prisons designed to sever external communications. These transfers are scheduled to occur between late July and mid-October 2025. While the arrests represent an initial tactical disruption, authorities caution that retaliatory momentum may persist. France, like much of Europe, has seen a sharp rise in organized criminal activity tied to transnational drug trafficking organizations. In 2024, authorities seized a record 47 tons of cocaine — more than double the amount from the previous year — highlighting the surge in narcotics entering the country. The illicit drug market in France is now estimated to be worth between 3.5 and 6 billion EUR annually, fueling violent turf wars and an expansion of trafficking networks to include incarcerated members and leadership. Businesses operating adjacent to prison infrastructure should reassess security measures and prepare contingency plans for potential further disruption tied to organized criminal retaliation.



Burkina Faso: Military junta government announces plan to nationalize additional industrial mines, underscoring regional shift toward state control of natural resources in the Sahel. On April 29, Prime Minister Apollinaire Kyelem de Tambela stated that the government would prioritize national ownership over foreign investment in the mining sector. Nationalization of industries has already occurred in various other sectors. Burkina Faso, one of Africa's top gold producers, currently relies on mining for approximately 13 percent of its GDP, with gold accounting for nearly 80 percent of total exports. Nationalization reduces current profits for private companies by revoking access to assets, will deter future investment due to increased political risk, generate disruptions in the global supply chain, and may result in the introduction of export restrictions on critical minerals. Military juntas in Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger have all consolidated power by rejecting Western partnerships and asserting sovereignty over natural resources. This trend undermines broad Western economic influence throughout the Sahel region, particularly in the gold and uranium sectors, while creating openings for Russia, Turkey, and China to expand their strategic and economic footprint. The rise in nationalization also reflects an ideological pivot toward anti-imperialist narratives and may signal deeper integration within the Alliance of Sahel States (AES), with shared security, economic, and diplomatic postures that challenge the previous norms in West Africa.

Syria: Outbreak of ethno-religious violence highlights continued division that threatens efforts toward unification and stability. Between 29 April-2 May, over 100 people were killed in clashes between government security forces and Druze militiamen after an audio clip criticizing the Prophet Muhammad was attributed to a Druze cleric, Marwan Kiwan. The fighting began in a suburb outside Damascus and spread to Sakhnaya, a town in the south. Israel, which has vowed to protect the Druze from persecution by the new government, launched several airstrikes in response to the violence, including one that landed next to the Presidential Palace. By 2 May, a deal was struck between the government and Druze leaders in which Druze gunmen would hand over their heavy weapons and allow government security forces into Sweida province, a stronghold of the Druze. This is likely to lead to heightened tensions, as Israel has de facto banned Syrian security forces from a



demilitarized occupied buffer zone bordering Israel, which is comprised of territory in Sweida province. The Druze continue to formally refuse Israel's offer to support them. However, continued acts of violence by government security forces could prompt Druze leadership to formally accept Israeli support and break away from the new government in a substantial manner. These recent clashes follow other outbursts of violence against various ethnoreligious minorities, including Christians and Alawites, by security forces. Although these incidents have been resolved thus far, continued ethnoreligious violence between minority groups and security forces weakens the cohesion of the nation. Large ethnoreligious minority groups, such as the Kurds in the north and Alawites in the east, may fracture the country by declaring autonomy in response to persistent insecurity. This dynamic of cyclical outbursts of violence serves to prolong and heighten societal tensions, which present both immediate risks to travelers, as well as longer-term risks for potential investors and businesses looking to operate in Syria, given the potential for national fragmentation.

Ukraine: Rare minerals deal with the US marks new era for business investment. On 30 April, the long-awaited and fraught natural resources deal was signed, aiming to provide economic recompense and incentive for continued US aid toward the Ukrainian war effort. The Trump Administration has not only advertised the deal as a way to address monetary concerns regarding US expenditure on aid, but as a necessary step toward ensuring Ukraine's future security. This argument asserts that a formal US presence in Ukraine through investment and privileged access to natural resources would act as a deterrent to Russia from engaging in further aggression at the risk of directly harming US vital interests. Therefore, this deterrent, posturing as an economic investment, may be a more realistic and creative step toward some iteration of tangible security guarantees from the West, which Ukraine has requested, as opposed to a military or diplomatic pact. Ukraine possesses vast reserves of critical minerals such as graphite, titanium, and lithium, which are all valuable resources in the renewable energy and military technology sectors. US firms should seek to take advantage of the deal and seek out opportunities to invest in resource development in Ukraine, especially as the US continues to lead the movement for global diversification of



supply chains in an effort to decouple from critical dependence on China, which is currently where 90 percent of the world's current rare-earth stocks are sourced. Stakeholders should continue to monitor the status of the deal as it is ratified by the Ukrainian parliament on 8 May.

Portugal: Expect disruption to rail services on 7-14 May due to strike organized by unionized workers. Unionized workers affiliated with the Comboios de Portugal (CP) state rail operator have announced plans to walk out over demands for higher wages. The strike action will impact nationwide rail services, causing an uptick in demand for alternative modes of transportation. Allow extra time for travel and secure alternative transportation during the period of strike action.



APAC

China: Vehicle ramming into crowd of children outside elementary school is emblematic of surge in mass casualty incidents largely motivated by societal dissatisfaction. On 22 April, a woman rammed her vehicle into a gathering of students and parents outside a school in Jinhua (Zhejiang Province) at the end of the school day. This attack has resulted in an unconfirmed number of casualties ranging from 6 to 14 in various reports. The exact nature of the casualties and total remains unclear due to state media monitors removing all mention of the attack from the internet and providing no official statement regarding the event, as of 6 May. Over the past year, at least four other attacks comprising vehicular ramming's and stabbings, motivated by varied disillusionment with society, have occurred. The persistent nature of these incidents demonstrates that the lack of comprehensive support and services from the state has yielded heightened social disharmony and tensions that continue to motivate outbursts of indiscriminate violence. This recent instance follows five months after a previous major vehicle ramming in Zhuhai, Guangdong Province, where 38 people were killed and 48 others injured.

Vehicle ramming's has grown to be an increasingly common modus operandi globally for mass casualty attacks. This is due to vehicles being readily available to the public and the lack of specialized training needed to cause massive damage with little preparation. The success and publicity of these attacks globally appear to be inspiring, to some degree, copycat attacks. The increasingly tenuous economic environment in China, due to a stagnating domestic market and burgeoning trade war, has left segments of the population increasingly feeling overlooked, as social support services are not very robust or comprehensive. Additionally, acknowledging economic hardship can inadvertently be interpreted as a criticism of the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and is therefore discouraged. The state continues to appear more interested in mitigating the discussion of these attacks rather than directly addressing the circumstances generating societal dissatisfaction.



India: Continue to monitor deterioration in diplomatic relations with Pakistan due to fallout from terror attack in Kashmir. Following the terror attack in Kashmir on 22 April by The Resistance Front (TRF), a proxy of Pakistani Islamist terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba, which resulted in 26 fatalities, tensions between India and Pakistan have risen. Reciprocal retaliatory steps have been taken on multiple fronts, including the mass revocation of respective foreign visas, suspension of bilateral trade, closures of access to airspace, mutually exchanged small arms gunfire over the Line of Control (LoC) separating Pakistani and Indian controlled Kashmir, and announced mutual threats of escalatory military action. Additionally, inter-communal tensions continue to be high, producing an elevated risk of ethno-religiously motivated hate crimes as well as unruly demonstrations in both India and Pakistan. As of 6 May, India's initial decision to suspend the Indus Water Treaty had reportedly been implemented to restrict Pakistani water access via Indian controlled dams. India briefly stopped water flow through the Bagilar dam on the Chenab River and is now planning similar steps with the Kishanganga Dam near Bandipore. Any water flow restriction through the dams is inherently limited by the infrastructure constraints, which cannot accommodate an infinite amount of water accumulation. Stakeholders should continue to monitor all facets of the current iteration of conflict between India and Pakistan, including water diplomacy, for indicators of potential escalation as well as easing of tensions.