

Global Political Risk Calendar

July – December 2024



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AMERICAS

BRAZIL	18 – 19 November	G20 summit, Rio de Janeiro	Heads of state from the Group of 20 will be meeting in Rio de Janeiro's Museum of Modern Art, where sustainable energy, global hunger and the reformation of global institutions are expected to be on the agenda. A heightened security presence will be in place across the city, most notably in the vicinity of the venue.
BRAZIL	06 October	Municipal elections	Brazil has a history of violence around electoral periods and it is likely that this trend will continue during the October municipal elections. See below.
ECUADOR	29 November – 06 December	Fiestas de Quito	A week-long festival – involving street parades and block parties – commemorating the founding of Quito will begin on 29 November. This will naturally facilitate an increase in crime but may also lead to targeted gang violence against civilians and security personnel; the presence of which will be heightened.
URUGUAY	27 October	General election	In the 2024 general election, the ruling National Party will seek to maintain its control over the presidency and the legislature. Although civil unrest is improbable, there will likely be a heightened security presence around political centres and polling stations.
UNITED STATES	09 – 11 July	NATO summit in Washington D.C.	Heads of state and prominent functionaries of NATO will meet in the Walter E. Washington Convention Centre to discuss the invasion of Ukraine amongst other issues. Security measures will naturally be heightened in the capital (particularly near the convention centre), where anti-NATO protests may also occur.
UNITED STATES	15 – 18 July	Republican National Convention in Milwaukee	The Republican Party will hold its post-primary convention at the Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee, where Donald Trump is expected to be confirmed as the party's nominee for the 2024 presidential election. Due to the presence of VIPs and the potential for civil unrest, there will be a heightened security presence.
UNITED STATES	19 – 22 August	Democratic National Convention, Chicago	The Democratic Party will hold its post-primary convention at the United Centre in Chicago, where Joe Biden is expected to be confirmed as the party's nominee for the

			2024 presidential election. Due to the presence of VIPs and the potential for civil unrest, there will be a heightened security presence.
UNITED STATES	05 November	Nationwide elections	Presidential, legislative (both federal and state), gubernatorial and municipal elections will be held on this date in November. See below.
VENEZUELA	28 July	Presidential election	Nicolás Maduro of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela will be defending his position as president in what is likely to be a controversial election. See below.

Brazil Municipal Elections

On 06 October (and 27 October if a second round is needed), mayors, deputy mayors and councillors in over 5,500 municipalities will be elected. This includes jurisdictions such as Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo, the latter being described by President Lula da Silva as an indirect confrontation between himself and former President Jair Bolsonaro.

In 2022, Lula narrowly beat Bolsonaro in the presidential election, leading to widespread protests and an attempt to forcefully remove Lula from power with an attack on the congress building in Brasília. Residual tensions still linger between the two individuals and have the potential to exacerbate a precedent of violence: in the two months before the 2020 municipal elections, there were 200 candidate murders, attempted murders and assaults.

If the municipal elections are to serve as a referendum between Lula and Bolsonaro, violence is a possibility between their respective supporters. This would be most impactful in large urban centres such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, as well as in Brazil’s restive north and north-eastern states. However, demonstrations are more likely and may lead to local travel disruptions.

United States Elections

On 05 November, a myriad of elections covering federal, state and municipal positions will be held across the country. The most important of these will be the presidential election, which will see a controversial rematch between former President Donald Trump and incumbent President Joe Biden. National polls at this time suggest the result as a tossup and, in either situation, disruption is likely.

Although demonstrations against both candidates occurred after the 2020 election, it is easier to remember the “Stop the Steal” protests held by pro-Trump factions, some of which involved armed individuals and led to highways being blocked. The tensions following the election culminated in the events on 06 January 2021, when various members of the far-right tried to overturn the result by attacking the Capitol in Washington D.C.

Given the vitriolic nature of the contest between Biden and Trump, it is likely that civil unrest will occur regardless of which candidate wins. This would likely manifest itself near political centres such as state capitols, party offices and federal buildings in Washington D.C., as well as highways across the country. The likelihood of counterprotests and the prevalence of firearms increases the overall potential for violence and travel disruption.

Venezuela Presidential Election

President Nicolás Maduro, an individual who “relies on the military, paramilitary forces, and opaque support from foreign states to retain political power”, will be challenged for his position in an election scheduled for 28 July. During his tenure since 2013, Maduro has presided over a severe deterioration in political and civil rights, leading to a flurry of international sanctions against the country and complicit individuals.

Following the 2018 election, a crisis occurred with Maduro and opposition politician Juan Guaidó claiming the presidency, both with different domestic and international backers. Maduro by now has fully consolidated his control over the presidency and has already begun to swing the upcoming election in his favour: a multitude of parties have been disqualified and millions of the Venezuelan diaspora are not allowed to vote.

Deeply unpopular, a likely Maduro win is bound to lead to civil unrest, particularly in urban centres such as Caracas, Barquisimeto and Valencia. These are typically led by students, trade unionists and members of the opposition, and often lead to counterprotests from Maduro supporters and left-wing “colectivo” paramilitary groups. As such, there is considerable potential for violence and travel disruption, particularly if such unrest takes place on roads.

ASIA – PACIFIC

REGION-WIDE	07 July	Islamic New Year	Countries across the region, including Brunei, Indonesia, and Malaysia, will celebrate the Islamic New Year. As a public holiday, business hours are likely to alter, impacting operations and travel across the region. Religious festivities may also lead to public processions and subsequent road closures.
REGION-WIDE	17 September	Mid-Autumn Festival	The Mid-Autumn Festival will be celebrated across the region, particularly in East Asia. Several countries will hold public holidays to mark the event, considerably impacting business operations.
CHINA	01 – 07 October	Golden Week	During this time the country will celebrate the founding of the People’s Republic, making widespread travel and operational disruption likely. Business hours tend to reduce and congestion on roads and public transport tends to increase considerably during this time (particularly before and in the aftermath of the holiday).
INDIA; OTHER COUNTRIES	01 November	Diwali	India will mark the significant festival of Diwali, which is expected to lead to widespread business closures and disruptions to public transport due to extensive celebrations. Countries in the region (including Singapore, Pakistan and Myanmar) also observe Diwali as a public holiday, which may lead to some operational and travel disruptions, albeit of a lower intensity.
INDONESIA	17 August	Independence Day	During the public holiday, processions and reduced business hours are common, making travel and operational disruption likely. Some protests over democracy concerns in the country, in the context of Prabowo Subianto’s election victory, are possible, which may lead to isolated clashes with the police.
INDONESIA	20 October	Inauguration of Prabowo Subianto	Prabowo Subianto is a divisive figure, accused of past human rights abuses during the fall of Suharto’s regime. His inauguration is likely to attract some protests (particularly in Jakarta), which may lead to some violent clashes and the deployment of tear gas.

JAPAN	15 July	Marine Day	The country will hold a public holiday to mark Marine Day, when local nationals tend to hold processions and gatherings nationwide. Business hours tend to reduce considerably; increased congestion on roads and public transport alongside some road closures (particularly in coastal areas) are likely.
MALAYSIA	31 August	Independence Day	Malaysia will host nationwide celebrations and processions to celebrate Independence Day. Operational and travel disruption are likely; road closures in the major urban centres are likely, to facilitate marches and other patriotic events.
MYANMAR	Coming months	Internal conflict	The Myanmar civil war has entered its third year and there is considerable scope for deterioration. See below.
PAKISTAN	Coming weeks	IMF deal	Pakistan is expected to secure further funding from the IMF in July. See below.
PAPUA NEW GUINEA	16 September	Independence Day	Papua New Guinea has faced political and socio-economic crises throughout the year. Given the widespread nature of discontent, particularly towards Prime Minister James Marape, Independence Day may attract protests and unrest. Authorities could be stretched thin given their deployments to celebrations, raising further concerns of unrest and even opportunistic looting, particularly in Port Moresby.
SINGAPORE	09 August	National Day of Singapore	Among the most celebrated public holidays, National Day leads to widespread operational and travel disruption. Festivities tend to centre on the Padang; some road closures and increased security are likely in the area.
SOUTH KOREA	09 – 11 July	NATO summit	South Korean officials will be visiting Washington D.C. for the 75th NATO summit. See below.
VIETNAM	02 September	National Day	Vietnam will hold a public holiday alongside the hosting of festivities, parades and marches nationwide to celebrate National Day. Disruption is particularly likely in Ba Dinh Square in Hanoi (where independence was declared), which tends to attract the largest marches.

Myanmar Civil War

More than three years after the military coup, the dynamics in the Myanmar civil war have shifted profoundly. Since November 2023, a mix of government-aligned militias (collectively known as the People’s Defence Forces, PDF, who pledge loyalty to the National Unity Government, the government in exile) and ethnic revolutionary organisations (EROs, some of whom align with the government in exile) have seized considerable ground across the country. The military is now engaged in a multifront nationwide battle (Figure 1) with numerous armed groups. The military’s control is strongest in central areas around Mandalay, with rebels controlling much of the rural areas in the rest of the country. Demonstrating the military’s recent difficulties, in February 2024 it implemented a draft calling for men aged 18-35 and women aged 18-27 to serve up to two years in military service.

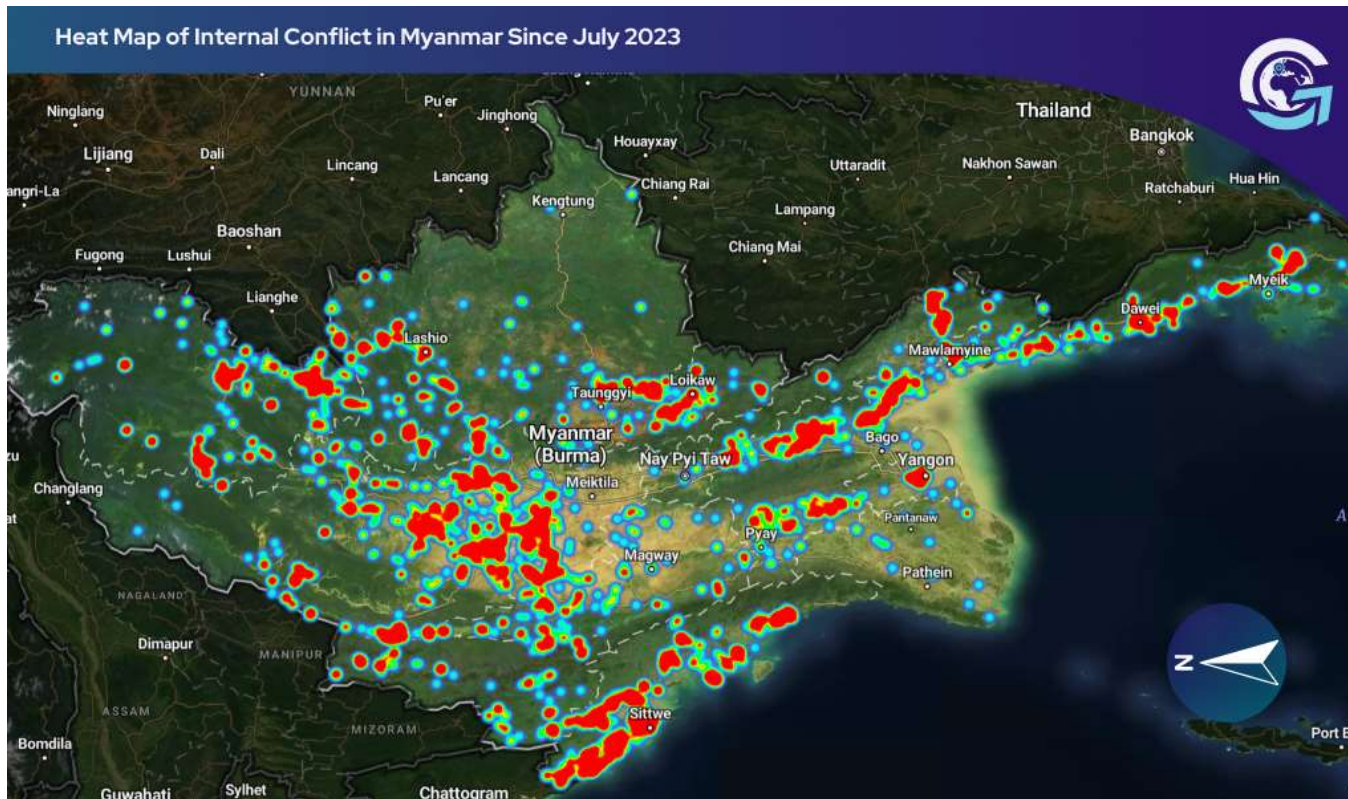


Figure 1. Concentration of internal conflict in Myanmar

These problems have only been exacerbated by the recent breakdown in the China-brokered ceasefire between the military and militia groups in northern Myanmar. Since late June, EROs and the PDF have seized territory across Shan State and northern Mandalay. This has culminated in militia advances towards one of the largest urban centres in Shan State, Lashio, in early July. These advances may stretch the military thin, attracting advances elsewhere. These gains would most likely target the major urban areas and strategic locations. For instance, militia groups have in recent months seized territory across the Bago Region, threatening the primary north-south arteries linking the capital to the largest city, Yangon. In April, ethnic Karen militia groups made gains around Myawaddy, a key import-export hub on the Thai border.

Myanmar has therefore fractured since the coup, with numerous sections of the country controlled by an array of militia groups, some of whom back the National Unity Government. In the extremely remote scenario that these groups manage to defeat the military over the third and fourth quarters, peace is far from guaranteed. Many of these groups care more for their own respective secessionist movements, making reconstruction efforts vulnerable to continued violence and conflict.

South Korean Participation in the 75th NATO Summit

Tensions on the Korean Peninsula have increased over the last couple of years, marked by the November 2023 breakdown in the Comprehensive Military Agreement (a 2018 agreement which established no-fly zones and a promise to de-militarise the border). Since then, North Korea has conducted repeated satellite and missile tests, a demonstration of its growing military capabilities and risk appetite.

The 75th annual summit of NATO in Washington raises legitimate concerns of a further uptick in tensions on the peninsula. Scheduled from 09 to 11 July, the summit includes a trilateral meeting with American, Japanese and South Korean officials. This builds on the August 2023 Camp David summit, where these countries committed to annual meetings to discuss geopolitical concerns and consider opportunities for cooperation. North Korea warned in June this year that this increased cooperation has formed “the Asian version of NATO” and warned of “fatal consequences”.

Over the last year, North Korea has tested numerous weapons, including an alleged test of a missile capable of carrying multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles (MIRVs) alongside multiple ballistic missile tests. Additionally, North Korea has constructed defences along the DMZ, occasionally triggering live fire warnings from South Korean troops. It has also launched around 1,000 balloons towards the South since June, leading to at least 115 flight disruptions according to South Korean authorities.

The recent mutual defence pact signed between North Korea and Russia in June 2024 raises concerns that the North's risk appetite will increase. In the context of the upcoming trilateral meeting in July, this aggression could manifest in further missile tests or additional balloon launches. This raises the risk of accidental impacts on South Korea and the sparking of a crisis. Consequently, the peninsula appears set for further security and travel concerns for the rest of the year, with limited prospects for improvement. Risks are particularly high during and a couple of months after the trilateral meeting.

Pakistan – IMF Deal

Pakistan has continued to struggle with numerous crises over the last year, including inconclusive election results that led to the formation of a fragile coalition government, an acute terror threat, and continued political tensions surrounding the imprisonment of party members and key politicians belonging to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party.

The country will likely face a slight uptick in civil unrest over the coming months, particularly following the receipt of IMF funds. A finance minister speaking with Reuters recently claimed that the country may receive USD6bn sometime in July. These funds and their terms have already been seen to have exacerbated the financial hardship on workers. In a bid to secure the funding (an effort to curtail a default), the 2024/25 budget focused on fiscal prudence, further aggravating an already disenfranchised population. Widespread poverty and inequality are key drivers of unrest, with at least 561 incidents being recorded in the last year according to ACLED (See Figure 2). Dozens of protests erupted in June with the passage of the budget, and while mostly peaceful they led to travel disruption in urban centres across the country.



Figure 2. Concentration of socio-economic protest in Pakistan

The anticipated IMF funds, expected to be agreed upon in July, threaten to serve as a catalyst for violent unrest and large-scale protests. In the most likely scenario, protestors view the passage of the funds as symbolic of wider economic hardship and mobilise in the hundreds or thousands to demonstrate their grievances. These protests are most likely to be concentrated in the major urban centres, particularly near sites associated with the government, the IMF, the United Nations, and political party headquarters. These protests are likely to lead to travel disruption in the major urban areas and, depending on scale and intensity, lead to some clashes with the police, which could prompt the deployment of tear gas. In the worst-case scenario, protestors could channel their grievances against the police, leading to violent clashes and the possible use of live-fire rounds by authorities. Protestors may also attempt to disrupt and even storm offices affiliated with the IMF and UN, though a heavy public order response would likely be deployed to disrupt any such actions.

EUROPE AND MIDDLE EAST

MIDDLE EAST	07 July	Islamic New Year	Islamic countries across the region will celebrate the Islamic New Year. In those which mark it with a public holiday, business hours are likely to alter, impacting operations and travel across the region. Religious festivities may also lead to public processions and subsequent road closures.
AUSTRIA	29 September	Parliamentary election	The far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ) is expected to take power from a Green-ÖVP coalition, with the polled electorate reportedly unhappy with high levels of inflation and particularly with uncontrolled immigration. On 09 June, the FPÖ narrowly defeated the ÖVP in elections for the European parliament, an early indicator of voting intentions. With the FPÖ's levels of support at about 30%, and no other parties polling above 20%, it is likely to need to form a coalition, suggesting several weeks before the final formation of a government.
AZERBAIJAN	01 September	Parliamentary election	A snap election was recently called by the popular President Aliyev. His New Azerbaijan Party is expected to win a new majority in the wake of recent conflicts against Armenia in Nagorno-Karabakh.
CROATIA	December	Presidential election	Croatia has been experiencing constitutional issues recently, with President Zoran Milanović running in the legislative election in April in the hope of becoming prime minister for the Social Democratic Party (SDP). Despite the SDP coming second, the constitutional court ruled that he could not become prime minister. It is unclear if he will run in the presidential election.
FRANCE	07 July	Parliamentary election	The second round of the legislative elections will occur, in which the right-wing National Rally (RN) is likely to continue to perform well after taking 33% in the first round on 01 July. RN president, Jordan Bardella, will be in a strong position to become the next prime minister.
FRANCE	26 July – 11 August	Olympic Games	33rd Olympiad. See below.
GEORGIA	26 October	Parliamentary election	Polling suggests a landslide victory for the government, Georgian Dream, leaving a very divided opposition. A majority of Georgians seek membership in the EU, but Georgian Dream has

			sometimes been accused of having pro-Moscow tendencies. The recent passage of a controversial “foreign agents” bill may exacerbate the potential for unrest around this period.
IRAN	05 July	Presidential election	A run-off between the conservative Saeed Jalili and the reformist Masoud Pezeshkian will be held after no clear majority was won on 28 June. A record low turnout was recorded (40% of the electorate): this widespread disengagement with the political process due to what many see as establishment-approved candidates, suggests that there is a possibility of some level of civil unrest in the wake of the election itself.
ISRAEL	07 October	Anniversary of Israel-Hamas conflict outbreak	One-year anniversary of Hamas attack in Israel. See below.
JORDAN	10 September	Parliamentary election	King Abdullah continues to modernise the national political system by encouraging licensed parties to run in multi-party elections. However, recent election turnout has been low: 30% in 2020; 37% in 2016. The conflict in Gaza and its impact on tourism and business may increase political engagement.
LITHUANIA	13 October	Parliamentary election	Unrest is not likely, but there may be increased attention on defence spending, NATO protection and diplomatic relations with Moscow in the weeks leading up to the vote.
MOLDOVA	20 October	EU referendum	If the referendum to join the EU is passed, then EU membership will become the long-term objective of the Moldovan government. Moldova is already a candidate for EU membership, but there are strong groups within the state that seek closer links with Moscow.
ROMANIA	08 December	Parliamentary elections	The far-right Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR) is rapidly growing in popularity and could enter a governing coalition after this election.
SYRIA	15 July	Parliamentary election	Candidates are limited to Ba’ath Party members, and any substantial change is very unlikely. Unrest may occur in government-controlled areas, which would be heavily policed.
UNITED KINGDOM	04 July	General election	A general election will be held several months earlier than expected. It is widely expected to result in a change of government, and potentially a complete rearrangement of the opposition. Despite the importance of the election, civil unrest is not expected or likely.

European Elections and the Conflict in Ukraine

Russia is operating a wartime economy and has likely been increasing its stocks of military hardware partly due to its well-publicised relationships with Iran and North Korea. Its army, despite limited territorial gains and heavy casualties, is now beginning to overcome the Ukrainian military in key conflict areas.

The United States eventually committed to a USD61 billion military aid package to Ukraine in April. Although this package includes top-tier munitions, there is unlikely to be a package of this scale in the next two years, particularly if an isolationist president, such as Donald Trump, is returned to office in November. Outright commitment from Western governments is not as obvious as it was in 2022, particularly as the conflict prolongs and the Ukrainian military fails to meet its planned strategic objectives.

At the same time, governments in the EU look to be heading towards the right, with expected legislative progress to be made by far-right parties in at least France, Austria, Italy, Sweden, Slovakia and the Netherlands. While such governments can be expected to increase military spending, they are also likely to take a more isolationist view on issues such as the Ukraine conflict, and will not push to send military or financial support. They may even have a positive view towards the Kremlin. In Austria, when the far-right FPÖ was last in power, its coalition collapsed after a video appeared to record its leader Heinz-Christian Strache offering lucrative government contracts to Russian investors. This may add up to reduced public support for Ukraine over the next six months, an improvement in Russian morale, and possibly more Russian successes on the battlefield, although it is unlikely that there will be an end to the conflict before the end of the year.

The Olympic Games in France

Between 26 July and 11 August, Metropolitan France and some overseas French territories will host the Olympic Games. Morale across the country is not positive, and civil unrest and strikes (prompted by the rise of the French right in the latest elections and by tensions with public sector workers) are very likely to cause operational and travel disruption during the games.

Travel disruption in Paris, where the majority of events will be held, is likely. An increase in petty crime is also likely to be recorded by the millions of visitors who are expected. Of greatest concern, the games will give opportunities for terrorist incidents by both Islamist and lone-wolf operators. Many thousands of French and international security personnel will be deployed to the country to protect athletes and spectators.

Anniversary of the Israel-Hamas Conflict

Anniversaries are held in high regard in the Middle East. There is a strong case to be made that Hamas launched its attack on 07 October to coincide with the anniversary of the start of the Yom Kippur War on 06 October 1973. As Gaza lacks both financing and leadership, and as the Israeli Defence Force appears not to have had a decisive victory in the territory, it is possible that Hamas will seek to conduct a major assault on Israeli territory around that time.

The Netanyahu government is increasingly isolated, as it has generated international opprobrium for the way in which it has conducted the conflict in Gaza. The UAE, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and other Arab states that have recently normalised relations with Israel may pull back on these, giving Hamas free rein to conduct similar attacks. Israel, already isolated, will have no alternative but to continue operations in Gaza.

The international focus will become how to ensure that the funding for reconstruction projects in Gaza is not wasted by the extension of conflict there. There will be no major attempt at reconstruction until a genuine peace deal can be agreed, and as the Netanyahu government is now committed to conflict, this is unlikely to be until well into 2025 at the least, with Israel becoming increasingly isolated as time goes on.

AFRICA

ALGERIA	07 September	Presidential election	The first ballot since President Abdelmajid Tebboune came to power in the 2019 election. That election was marred by an opposition boycott that led to activists storming polling stations. It remains unclear whether Tebboune will participate in the election given lingering concerns over his age.
BOTSWANA	October	General election	One of Africa’s most stable democracies, Botswana will hold a general election that will see President Mokgweetsi Masisi of the Botswana Democratic Party (BDP) stand for re-election. The BDP has dominated politics since independence but now faces a tangible prospect of losing power. An added dynamic to the election is the activities of former BDP president, Ian Khama, who is campaigning for the opposition UDC due to a deep personal feud with Masisi.

GHANA	07 December	General election	Ghana's election will see a new president elected, as incumbent Nana Akufo-Addo stands down having served the constitutional two-term limit. The election is anticipated to be extremely competitive between Akufo-Addo's New Patriotic Party and the opposition National Democratic Congress. The election comes following a period of prolonged economic hardship since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic; Ghana has faced an emergency IMF bailout and elevated inflation.
GUINEA-BISSAU	November	Presidential election	Guinea-Bissau's election comes amid a backdrop of instability, with President Embaló having faced two coup attempts since he won the previous election in 2019. However, this victory was itself termed a coup by opposition supporters, with Domingos Pereira having won the first round of the election, only to be controversially beaten by Embaló. The election is anticipated to be a re-run of the 2019 contest.
MAURITIUS	30 November	General election	Africa's most robust democracy will go to the polls that will see incumbent Pravind Kumar Jugnauth of the Militant Socialist Movement aim for a new five-year term.
MOZAMBIQUE	09 October	General election	The FRELIMO party has governed Mozambique since independence in 1975. However, the nation will have a new president as incumbent Filipe Jacinto Nyusi is constitutionally obliged to step down. Daniel Chapo will contest the election for FRELIMO in an election that is overshadowed by a deterioration in the security environment in the northern Cabo Delgado province.
NAMIBIA	27 November	General election	Namibia's election will see interim president Nagolo Mbumba step down and Netumbo Nandi-Ndaitwah contest the election on behalf of the SWAPO party, which has governed Namibia since independence in 1990. If she triumphs (as anticipated), she will become the country's first female president. However, it has been predicted that SWAPO's majority will be reduced due to stagnating living standards.
RWANDA	15 July	General election	President Paul Kagame is standing in his fourth presidential election, having won the previous three with vote shares of 95.1%, 93% and 98.8%. Having modified the constitution in the wake of a 2015 referendum, Kagame is now permitted to rule until 2034.
SOUTH SUDAN	27 December	General elections	South Sudan is obliged to hold its first election at the end of 2024 according to a 2018 transition agreement but doubts persist from international actors over the country's preparedness. This comes as high levels of intercommunal violence endure and the 2018 agreement that ended South Sudan's civil war appears increasingly precarious.

TUNISIA	06 October	Presidential election	Tunisia’s election comes amid a backdrop of enormous democratic backsliding since President Kais Saied won the previous election in 2019. Saied has shut down the elected parliament to rule by decree, assumed control over several state institutions and imprisoned journalists and opposition activists. The election is likely to be boycotted by some opposition groups, who claim a free and fair election is impossible in the current political climate.
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The Islamist Insurgency in Burkina Faso

Burkina Faso has been grappling with an Islamist insurgency that has seen the state lose control of much of the north and east of the country. The nation has also become a hub for Islamist terrorism, accounting for almost one-quarter of all terrorist deaths globally in 2023. Underscoring these security concerns is long-running political instability that has led to the imposition of a junta government and marginalisation from much of the international community.

In the second half of 2024, security concerns are set to become ever more acute. In June, the nation witnessed one of its deadliest attacks, leading to the deaths of over 100 soldiers. There are now reports of growing discontent and division within the beleaguered military, fuelling speculation over the regime’s slipping grip on power. Divisions within the military exacerbated by the detrimental security situation may lead to a potential coup, especially given reports of government budget shortages. Any further deterioration in the security environment will aggravate one of the world’s humanitarian crises: there are now over 2 million internally displaced people in Burkina Faso and 6.3 million (nearly a third of the population) are in need of humanitarian assistance.

Further Instability in DR Congo

Conflict remains ongoing in DR Congo’s eastern provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri. The conflict now encompasses a complex web of several armed militia groups and DR Congo’s military. The most prominent armed group is M23 – a group allegedly funded and supplied by neighbouring Rwanda. M23 has been active in the region for over a decade and has seized large swathes of territory in North Kivu and border regions with Uganda and Rwanda. Alongside M23, radical Islamist groups including Islamic State and the Allied Democratic Forces are also active in the region, conducting devastating attacks on civilians.

The fate of the conflict also remains determined by the influence of international actors. At the end of 2024, the longstanding UN peacekeeping mission in the region (MONUSCO) will fully withdraw. The force will be relieved by a Southern African Development

Community force spearheaded by South African troops. However, doubts linger over the force's capability following decades of underfunding, raising fears of a deterioration in the environment for the civilians in the region.

The Continuation of the Sudanese Civil War

The devastating civil war in Sudan is now in its second year and shows little sign of abating in the coming months. The Rapid Support Forces control much of the capital Khartoum, Darfur and areas of North Kordofan and Al Jazira states; the Sudanese Armed Forces in contrast retain control of much of Omdurman (situated across the Nile River from Khartoum), as well as much of the north and east of the country. Since the outbreak of the war in April 2023, more than seven million people have been internally displaced, triggering one of the world's largest humanitarian disasters. It is now estimated that more than 18 million people are facing food insecurity, leading to the World Food Program stating Sudan may become the site of "the world's largest hunger crisis". In total, the UN estimates more than half of Sudan's population (25 million people) needs aid and protection.

While the fighting rages on, prospects of a ceasefire seem distant. Last month, there was a heated exchange at the UN Security Council between Sudan's ambassador and his UAE counterpart. The SAF has consistently accused the UAE of funding and supplying the RSF, in the process prolonging the devastating war. The UAE dismissed such allegations and accused the SAF of refusing to resume ceasefire talks, following several failed rounds of talks in the first couple of months of 2024. While both sides remain locked in such intense conflict, room for a political conclusion to hostilities remains slim.

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