



Global Intelligence Summary

REPORTING PERIOD: 16 AUGUST – 23 AUGUST





Global Intelligence Summary

Week 34: 16 August – 23 August

Executive Summary

- There is a **realistic possibility** that fighting will resume in **Libya** between the Government of National Unity (GNU) and the Libyan National Army (LNA), after four years of ceasefire.
- **Iran** continues to indicate that an attack on **Israel** is imminent but has **likely** delayed to evaluate ceasefire progress and to reassess the nature and timing of an attack.
- The Ruto administration’s decision to reintroduce elements of June’s controversial tax bill will **highly likely** provoke civil unrest across **Kenya**.
- Protests across **Indonesia** will **almost certainly** resume if the government re-attempts to reverse the decision of the Constitutional Court’s reform before local elections.



Figure 1: Significant activity identified during the current reporting period.

AMER

- 1 Canada:** Bomb threats sent to over 100 Jewish institutions
- 2 Nicaragua:** Government expands NGO bans
- 3 Argentina:** Plot to attack Jewish community thwarted

EMEA

- 4 Libya:** Chaos at central bank inflames tensions amidst troop mobilisations
- 5 Israel, Palestine Lebanon:** First Hamas suicide bombing since 2008
- 6 Israel and Iran:** Tehran continues to indicate attack on Israel is imminent.
- 7 Red Sea & Gulf of Aden:** Houthi attacks intensify after a week of inactivity
- 8 Kenya:** Ruto plans to reintroduce elements of controversial tax bill

APAC

- 9 Pakistan:** State cracks down on information space
- 10 Indonesia:** Protests as government attempts to limit opposition



Americas (AMER)

Canada:

Mass bomb threat targets over 100 Jewish institutions.

Canada's Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) has opened an investigation after an e-mail was sent to 125 Jewish-linked organisations on 21 August. The e-mail stated that bombs had been planted on their premises and that they would be detonated that day. No bombs have been identified by the RCMP with investigations still underway. The e-mail was sent to Synagogues, Jewish schools, Jewish community centres and other Jewish-linked institutions.

Assessment: It is highly unlikely that there is a genuine bomb threat and that this is part of a wider campaign to instil fear and disrupt the lives of the Jewish community. The e-mail is reported to be very similar to one sent to at least 100 hospitals, companies, shopping centres and government institutions in India. This suggests a coordinated effort and early investigations are attempting to identify the sender's IP address. Canada has likely been targeted for its Jewish diaspora, estimated at 400-450,000 and India for its staunch support of Israel, and there is a realistic possibility that the sender has connections to both countries given the large Indian diaspora in Canada. Whilst there may be no direct threat to life from the incident, it almost certainly indicates a rise in antisemitism in Canada that is also reflected in many other Western countries. Several Jewish schools in Canada have been targeted in shootings that were likely designed to scare the Jewish community rather than kill as they were often done at night. These trends will almost certainly continue in parallel to developments in the Middle East and are likely to increase in severity with ceasefire talks showing little promise and the situation in Gaza rapidly deteriorating.

Nicaragua:

Ortega administration bans a further 1500 NGOs.

On 19 August, the official gazette of the government of Nicaragua published a list of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) whose activities would be banned. Additionally, the government announced that it would move to confiscate assets owned by the groups. Most of the banned NGOs are religious groups, and the move thus continues the policy of widespread government crackdowns on local Church authorities. However, other humanitarian organisations, including the Red Cross, are also banned.

Assessment: In total, the government has so far shut down approximately 5,000 civil society groups. The Catholic Church has been a particularly prominent target, likely due to its continuing importance for Nicaragua's largely Christian population and its role as a mediator in past anti-government protests. The Nicaraguan government has been headed by Daniel Ortega for almost half a century. The Ortega regime faced one significant challenge in the waves of protests between 2014 and 2019 but has almost certainly managed to significantly decrease the opposition's viability and traction in the country, forcing the majority of leaders into exile. The latest wave of bans, which also interests cultural institutions (such as chess clubs), is highly likely meant to accelerate a shift towards the complete government oversight of civil society actors, with surviving NGOs forced to establish formal ties with government departments that highly restrict their freedom of operations. The Ortega regime has also recently increased its efforts to establish intelligence and policing partnerships with Russia, approving in March the establishment of a Russia-funded police training centre in Managua, which highly likely provides a stable

foothold for Russian intelligence to operate in the country. In late June, suspicions of Russia increasing intelligence activity in Nicaragua were raised by American observers, who reported on possible Russian-Nicaraguan cooperation to create a signals intelligence (SIGINT) base in the country similar to the (likely) one in Lourdes, Cuba. Ortega is likely to continue increasing moves to coup-proof the regime, including increased intelligence cooperation with Cuba, Russia, and Venezuela. In the immediate term, the latest wave of bans is almost certain to significantly decrease the security of foreign travellers and humanitarian workers in Nicaragua, increasing the threat of violence and arbitrary detention by local police. Most importantly, the disappearance of foreign humanitarian organisations is highly likely to worsen the extremely precarious conditions faced by the Nicaraguan people, nine out of ten of whom are estimated to live in poverty.

Argentina:

Police thwart terror plots on Argentinian Jews.

The Argentine Federal Police (PFA) announced the arrest of seven individuals allegedly part of a network of Salafi extremists, ideologically inspired by the Islamic State (IS) and other violent extremist organisations (VEOs), planning attacks in the country. The arrests occurred in Mendoza, and shortly after the 30th anniversary of the bombing of a Jewish community centre in Buenos Aires, which was however carried out by Shia extremists.

Assessment: While South America likely remains a low-priority target for transnational Islamist extremist organisations, it is highly likely that Argentina's risk profile is higher than that of its neighbours. This is due to structural factors as well as recent political developments. First, Argentina has the largest Jewish community in South America, assessed as numbering slightly less than 200,000. Jewish institutions and religion have a comparatively large prominence in Argentina's social fabric, and, relatedly, the Argentine Jewish community has strong links to Israel. Due to the country's long-standing economic woes, Argentinian Jews have migrated to Israel (the practice of "Aliyah") in large numbers, especially since the early 2000s, and there are now around 50,000 Argentine Jews and descendants in Israel. Second, the presidency of Javier Milei has resulted in the country's adoption of a highly internationally visible pro-Israel policy, and Milei has also reportedly raised the possibility of converting to Judaism. In the context of the ongoing war in Gaza, these elements almost certainly make Argentina a high-profile possible target for Islamist VEOs.

It is highly unlikely that the arrested individuals' relationship with IS went beyond mere "admiration", as there are currently no credible indications that the group has directly sought to form cells in the country. However, Islamist VEOs have long exploited the tri-border area (TBA) between Argentina, Brazil, and Paraguay to conduct illicit activity and generate funds for operations. There is a realistic possibility that independent (and possibly more radical) groups are taking advantage of the lack of state presence in the area to pursue similar activity.

The arrests are relevant as they are likely to have an impact on Argentina's domestic security approach to counterterrorism. Earlier in August, Defence Minister Luis Petri filed a bill that would allow the military to take over some policing operations in situations of "terrorism". Domestic NGOs and government opponents have criticised the bill on the basis that it does not define the threat, and that it grants the armed forces too much influence over domestic policing. The arrest of the group may increase the chances of the bill passing in parliament.

AMER Summary and Forecast:

Politics, Economics and Civil Unrest:

Canadian rail union dispute shuts down major railroads.

On 22 August, Canada's top railroads, Canadian National Railway (CN) and Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC), locked out over 9,000 unionised workers, leading to a major rail stoppage. The dispute arose from failed contract negotiations, with both the railroads and the Teamsters union blaming each other for the impasse. The work stoppage poses a significant threat to North American supply chains and could result in billions of dollars in economic damage, with Moody's estimating daily costs of over CAD 341 million. The Canadian government has urged the parties to resolve the conflict but has not yet intervened.

US House Republicans publish report accusing Biden of impeachable conduct.

The report alleges that the President committed offences that meet the bar for charges of abuse of power and obstruction, with some allegations dating back to his vice-presidency. Similar reports have historically resulted in Congress impeachment votes. However, the Republican Party lacks the votes to impeach the President, and therefore the report can highly likely be considered a political move in light of the upcoming election, and of Republican candidate Trump's own past impeachment and ongoing trials.

US Supreme Court blocks Biden administration rule on gender identity-based discrimination.

The ruling prevents the federal administration from implementing the rule, which focuses primarily on education institutions, against state wishes, and can be considered a victory for the conservative camp, which maintains a majority in the judicial branch. There is a realistic possibility that anti-transphobia protests will be staged in Washington D.C. and in Republican-led states in response to the ruling.

Mexican federal court employees strike over proposed reform.

The legislation was proposed by outgoing President Obrador, who leaves office in late September and would force judges to stand for election, also removing established barriers preventing inexperienced graduates from immediately becoming judges. While Obrador justifies the proposed reform as a way to combat corruption, opponents worry that it would remove the judiciary's independence and open opportunities for clientelism and to reduce the executive branch's accountability.

Security, Armed Conflict and Terror:

Las Vegas teenager indicted of planning IS-inspired lone wolf attack.

The individual was arrested in November 2023 after a tip was sent to authorities about one of his posts on the online platform Element – an encrypted messaging app – where he announced the planning of an attack. The case continues to highlight the shift, also seen in Europe, towards increasingly younger lone wolves planning attacks. Las Vegas, due to its visibility, famous nightlife scene, and notoriety as a gambling hub, is likely a particularly desirable target for Islamist terrorists. IS unsuccessfully tried to claim that the perpetrator of the 2017 Las Vegas shooting had been affiliated with the group.

Leaked US Nuclear strategy document emphasises Chinese, Russian, North Korean threat.

The document dates to March and highlights the rapidity in the growth and diversification of China's nuclear weapons stockpile. The document also called for the establishment of a revised strategy called "Nuclear Employment Guidance", to be reviewed every four years, which focuses on the possibility of coordinated challenges from Russia, North Korea and China. It is likely that the policy reflects the growing cooperation between Russia and North Korea.

Leader of the Jalisco Nueva Generación Cartel (CJNG) arrested in Mérida, Mexico.

Adrian Miguel Jarquín, alias "El Chaparrito," was arrested on 19 August after being a fugitive for two years. Jarquín is considered to be one of CJNG's main leaders and is allegedly particularly involved in the group's smuggling operations based in the port of Manzanillo, a key hub for the entry of narcotics in Mexico. In 2022, Jarquín was released from prison and allowed to continue his trial without precautionary detention and subsequently escaped. The arrest has a realistic

possibility of decreasing CJNG's operational capacity in Manzanillo and may create a power vacuum in the area, possibly favouring an increase in inter-gang violence.

Third prison break in a year in Haiti results in 12 prisoners killed.

On 16 August, prisoners broke out of a detainment facility in the coastal town of Saint-Marc. The breakout was reportedly caused by an escalated internal protest. However, it is almost certain that gangs played a role in favouring the breakout, or at least in arming the detainees, 12 of whom died in firefights with intervening authorities. The case highlights the continuing security and policing vulnerabilities in Haiti, which remain likely still severe despite the arrival of hundreds of Kenyan troops as part of a UN-backed mission.

US sanctions former Haitian president for drug trafficking.

The US government has imposed sanctions on Haiti's former president, Michel Joseph Martelly, over allegations of drug trafficking. Martelly, who served as president from 2011 to 2016, has been accused of abusing his influence to exploit the current chaos in Haiti to profiteer from the narcotics trade. Martelly is thought to have established connections to multiple Haitian gangs that are involved in the smuggling of cocaine, much of which ends up in the US. The US government has also accused him of being involved in money laundering at the behest of the gangs. Martelly is not the first Haitian senior politician to be accused of such criminal enterprises and their involvement has significantly contributed to the current destabilisation of Haiti. This endemic corruption at the highest levels of office continues to undermine governance and will make it difficult for the country to achieve stability.

Environment, Health and Miscellaneous:

Hurricane Ernesto makes landfall in Bermuda.

The hurricane made direct landfall over Bermuda on 17 August, causing mass power outages. While the category 1 storm was projected to cause potentially deadly flooding and notable damage, the British Overseas Territory was relatively unscathed, with the Minister of National Security reporting no injuries or major incidents. This was highly likely conditioned by Bermuda's strong hurricane preparation and resiliency measures. Ernesto, which moved past Newfoundland, Canada on 20 August, eventually weakened into a post-tropical cyclone. The storm's remnants caused unseasonably high rainfall and increased wind speeds in parts of the UK and is forecast to likely contribute towards a low-pressure system that will bring further poor weather in the UK next week.

Oil spill affects Morrocoy National Park in Venezuela.

The oil spill originated from the El Palito refinery operated by the state-owned oil company PDVSA, which has important ties to the Venezuelan armed forces. It is highly likely that the spill will result in increased discontent with the Venezuelan authorities and may result in an increase in sabotage actions against PDVSA assets. The company's operations have historically been characterised by extreme levels of corruption, and the delayed response to the spill may result in greater environmental impacts within the Golfe Triste area.

Brazil to establish action plan to tackle forest fires in Amazon and Pantanal regions.

The Brazilian federal government has developed a joint action plan with state governors to tackle forest fires in both the Amazon and the Pantanal wetlands. The plan will involve establishing Inter-Federal Multi-Agency Fronts, which will unite agents from various public institutions to collaborate with state and local authorities in preventing new fire outbreaks. Forest fires, which have been exacerbated by human activity and climate change, have led to over two million acres being burned in the Pantanal in 2024.



Europe, Middle East & Africa (EMEA)

Libya:

Libyan central bank upheaval further inflames tensions amidst mass troop mobilisation.

On 18 August, the head of the information technology department at the Tripoli-based Central Bank of Libya (CBL), Musaab Muslamm, was abducted by an “unknown party”. This led to the crucial entity, responsible for holding the revenues from Libya’s vast oil reserves, temporarily shutting down operations. The Government of National Unity (GNU), the Tripoli-based authority which contests sovereignty over Libya with the Libyan National Army (LNA), then unilaterally fired the central bank’s governor, Sadiq al-Kabir. Al-Kabir, a powerful figure who has led the bank since 2011 when Gaddafi was overthrown, rejected the decision and stated that he would continue in his role as normal. Muslamm was released on 19 August, leading to a resumption of operations at the CBL. Additionally, the LNA engaged in fighting with armed Chadian groups near gold mines at the Chad border on 18-19 August, and National Oil Corporation (NOC) engineers claimed on 19 August that the Shahara oil field’s production has resumed limited operation following an earlier shutdown following significant LNA troop movements earlier in August.

Assessment: In the context of substantial LNA mobilisation and the movement of several LNA battalions to southwest Libya near the Algerian border and the Shahara oil field, the upheaval at the CBL will likely further inflame tensions in Libya. The GNU (formerly GNA) and LNA agreed to a ceasefire in 2020 after the LNA failed to take Tripoli, ending a six-year civil war. For the last four years, despite sporadic clashes between armed groups, Libya has enjoyed relative calm. In early August, LNA forces led by Saddam Haftar, the son of the LNA’s leader Khalifa Haftar, mobilised en-masse in Fezzan, southwestern Libya. This led to the Shahara oil field, Libya’s largest oilfield, being taken offline. Libya controls Africa’s largest oil reserves, and the flow of oil from Shahara is highly likely being instrumentalised by the LNA to exert pressure on Tripoli.

The LNA troop movements have multiple possible strategic objectives. The LNA claims that the mobilisation is aimed at border security, however, this is unlikely. It is likely that the LNA wish to secure Ghadames Airport, which holds vital strategic importance. Full control of Ghadames and its surroundings would allow the LNA to isolate the northwestern GNU territory centred around Tripoli from southern GNU forces, facilitate control of border crossings with Niger, Algeria and Tunisia, and ultimately fulfil the LNA desire to fully control the entire south of Libya, from east to west. The Ghadames crossing between Algeria and Libya is closed, despite agreements in recent years for its reopening. Algerian military forces have been placed on high alert as a result of the LNA buildup around Ghadames. Concurrently, full control of southwestern Libya will allow the LNA to implement with greater effect a recently signed trade agreement with the junta in Niger, which highly likely involves the transfer of weapons for oil. The operations against Chadian armed groups are highly likely due to this trade deal, which currently relies on Nigerien weapons coming to Libya via Chad.

It is highly likely that recent August events have generated the most severe tensions in Libya since the 2020 ceasefire. In response to the recent tensions, the embassies of France, Germany, Italy, the UK and US have issued a joint statement expressing significant concern. On 13 August, the LNA-aligned House of Representatives unanimously approved a motion that the GNU is illegitimate and now out of power, which has no de facto legal consequence but gives the LNA a legitimising cause to renew hostilities. It is a realistic possibility that heavy fighting between the GNU and LNA will soon resume, focused on control around Ghadames.

Israel, Palestine and Lebanon:

Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) claim suicide attack, ceasefire talks continue.

On 18 August, a botched suicide attack in Tel Aviv injured a civilian. Both Hamas and PIJ claimed responsibility for the action. The attack was the first Hamas suicide bombing since 2008, and the group has threatened more attacks. In Gaza, Israel Defence Forces (IDF) operations are ongoing, with fighting reported in Khan Yunis. On 20 August, IDF units retrieved the bodies of six hostages. Ceasefire talks have continued in Cairo after last week's round in Doha. The US and Israeli delegations have expressed some cautious optimism, especially after Egypt dropped its demands for a clear timeline for the IDF's withdrawal from the Philadelphi Corridor, and after Iranian officials stated that they will "delay" retaliation while negotiations are ongoing. Hamas representatives have rejected the latest round of talks, stating that Israel has advanced unacceptable conditions. In northern Israel, Israeli forces launched airstrikes in the Bekaa Valley following a Hezbollah strike in Western Galilee which killed an IDF soldier.

Assessment: The suicide bombing carried out by Hamas is likely an important development in the conflict. Suicide bombings are almost universally condemned by the international community and a successful attack targeting civilians could weaken Hamas' negotiating position and potentially influence Israel to withdraw from ceasefire talks. The length of the conflict and scale of the destruction are likely to contribute to increased radicalisation and provide Hamas with volunteers willing to conduct suicide attacks. This methodology may also indicate a decrease in Hamas' combat capabilities and capacity to conduct more complex attacks outside of Gaza, with Israel recently claiming that Hamas' Rafah Brigade has been completely defeated.

Cairo's recent acceptance of Israel's demand for a sustained IDF permanence at the Gaza-Egypt border likely represents an important diplomatic defeat for the Palestinian militant group. Allowing the IDF to remain in the Philadelphi Corridor will dislocate Hamas from its main facilitation route for lethal aid, reducing its ability to sustain combat operations and enforce its authority. Long-term, Hamas' reduction in strength is likely to provide opportunities for alternative administrators in Gaza, such as the Palestinian Authority (PA).

Iran's statement about waiting until the end of ceasefire talks to retaliate for Israel's assassinations, or potentially refraining entirely if a deal is reached, is likely to further increase pressure on Hamas. Hamas' likely reaction is to refuse to accept the current ceasefire conditions and to pressure Iran and its proxies to adopt a more aggressive stance towards Israel. Hamas will intend to set the conditions to persuade Israel to accept ceasefire terms that are more favourable to itself.

Israel and Iran:

Tehran continues to indicate that major attack on Israel is imminent.

Iran has continued to produce rhetoric and conduct actions indicating that it is planning on conducting a direct attack on Israel. Senior Islamic Revolutionary Guards Corps (IRGC) officials have repeatedly signalled their intent to retaliate on Iranian state media but have stressed that it will happen "at the suitable time and place" and that Iran's retaliation will be larger than the previous attack. Iran's Permanent Mission to the UN has even suggested that Iran's Axis of Resistance could conduct a ground offensive into Israel. Conversely, Iranian officials have also indicated that an attack could be delayed if progress is made in ceasefire negotiations.

Assessment: It is highly unlikely that Iran will sponsor a ground offensive into Israel, and this is the most likely trigger for a regional escalation that Tehran cannot afford. Such a scenario would involve Iran's most capable proxy force, Hezbollah, invading Israel from the north. Currently,

Hezbollah serves as one of Iran's primary deterrents against Israel and Iran has spent decades facilitating lethal aid into Lebanon. A Hezbollah ground attack will almost certainly result in an IDF offensive into southern Lebanon, expanded air strikes and would significantly degrade Hezbollah's military capabilities. Tehran cannot afford this whilst it is still attempting to produce a nuclear deterrent, especially as Hamas has been severely degraded.

Iran's most likely course of action is still a coordinated rocket, missile and drone strike with its proxy forces but has delayed retaliating for several reasons. Firstly, it does not want to jeopardise current ceasefire negotiations despite a high likelihood of collapse. Secondly, Iran is likely trying to exert psychological terror on the Israeli public. Lastly, Iran is delaying for reasons relating to planning and logistics. Iran is attempting to reassert its deterrent but without escalating. This will demand a carefully planned attack that penetrates Israeli air defence, demonstrating Iran's ability to directly attack Israel, but without resulting in heavy civilian casualties. However, the delay has allowed the US to enhance its force posture in the region, likely forcing Tehran to reassess the nature and timing of an attack. Should Iran decide that a direct attack on Israel without escalating is too hard to achieve, it may seek to target Israeli interests via alternative means. This could include attacks on Israeli "secret bases" in third countries like Iraq, or the assassination of Israeli political and military leaders- two options that have been mooted on Iranian media.

Red Sea, Bab al-Mandeb and Gulf of Aden:

Houthi anti-merchant shipping attacks intensify after a week of inactivity.

After a week-long lull in Houthi attacks against merchant shipping, the Houthis attacked two vessels in one day on 21 August. The first was against the Greek-flagged oil tanker SOUNION (IMO: 9312145), 77 nautical miles west of al-Hudaydah, Yemen. Initially, two skiffs approached the merchant vessel, resulting in a brief exchange of small arms fire. Later, three unidentified projectiles struck the vessel, causing a fire onboard and disabling the engine. The vessel was abandoned on 22 August and is now adrift. Secondly, the Houthis attacked the Panama-flagged bulk carrier SW NORTH WIND I (IMO: 9514004), 57 nautical miles south of Aden, Yemen. The vessel reported a total of five explosions in close proximity to the vessel, with no damage reported. Then, on 22 August, the vessel came under renewed attack west of al-Hudaydah, Yemen. Whilst being followed by two skiffs, an uncrewed surface vessel (USV) struck the vessel on its portside beam and detonated, resulting in minor damage without breaching the hull.

Assessment: The SW NORTH WIND I's security team failed to destroy the USV with small arms fire, highly likely attempting to replicate the PUMBA's successful deployment of this countermeasure on 20 July when small arms fire ostensibly detonated a Houthi USV before it could make contact. It is likely that this countermeasure will not be consistently replicable, due to the accuracy and luck required. Commonalities between these two new incidents highlight the likely increasing role of skiffs in carrying out Houthi intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) to fix and track merchant vessels to increase the accuracy of subsequent attacks. Houthi ISR capabilities have likely been significantly degraded due to merchant vessels disabling their automatic identification systems (AIS) broadcasts, and the withdrawal of the Iranian spy ship BEHSHAD in April. The persistence of these Houthi attacks, particularly on the SW NORTH WIND I, which was separately attacked over multiple days, is also notable, likely suggesting that the Houthis are increasingly concentrating force against individual target vessels. These attacks also likely point towards the increasingly layered nature of Houthi anti-vessel operations which now integrate skiffs conducting ISR and armed with RPGs, anti-ship ballistic missiles (ASBMs), uncrewed aerial vehicles (UAVs) and USVs. It is likely that the successful disabling of the SOUNION will embolden the Houthis to increase their rate of vessel attacks in the coming weeks, reflecting earlier patterns.

Kenya:

Government plans to reintroduce elements of controversial tax bill.

The Kenyan government has announced plans to reintroduce certain tax measures that had been previously scrapped on 26 June in response to deadly protests. The finance minister, John Mbadi, stated that not all taxes will return. However, certain measures, including an eco-levy on most goods, are necessary to fund essential government expenditures such as teachers' wages. On 20 August, the Supreme Court of Kenya overruled an appeal that declared the finance bill unconstitutional which will pave the way for the government to introduce elements of the contentious tax bill.

Assessment: The reintroduction of the tax bill, even if limited, will likely reignite civil unrest across the country with a high likelihood of violent incidents. Previous civil unrest resulted in the deaths of at least 50 people, hundreds of arrests and widespread disruption. Critics of the bill are already suggesting that it will target basic goods that will increase the cost of living, with the original bill targeting goods like bread, cooking oil and other commodities. Moreover, the protests have primarily been youth-led, many of whom are unemployed and capable of quickly organising protests via social media. After repealing the original tax bill, President Ruto fired much of his cabinet but has remained in power despite widespread calls demanding his resignation. Many Kenyans likely hold him personally responsible for the deadly protests and for failing to address many of the underlying issues such as the cost of living, unemployment and corruption. Future demonstrations are likely to take on a distinct anti-Ruto character which could unify and energise various factions that oppose his rule, leading to larger and more sustained protests. However, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) is backing some form of economic reform programme in Kenya, which is being described as necessary to secure more funding. This indicates that the Ruto administration is under external pressure and has no option but to reintroduce elements of the controversial tax bill

EMEA Summary and Forecast:

Politics, Economics and Civil Unrest:

Anti-Islam protests scheduled for 24 August in Sweden.

Anti-Islam protests have been organised in Stockholm, Gothenburg, Orebo and Kristianstad for the 24 August. Heightened security measures will be in place and there is a high likelihood that the demonstrations will attract counter-protests, potentially leading to incidents of violence.

French far-left leader threatens Macron with impeachment, causes rifts in coalition.

Jean-Luc Melenchon, the leader of the far-left populist part France Unbowed (LFI) reiterated appeals to President Macron to appoint his coalition's candidate, Lucie Castets, as the country's new prime minister. The appeal also contained a threat of starting an impeachment procedure if Macron does not comply with LFI's demands. Melenchon's appeal was rejected by the other parties of the coalition, including the Socialists (PS). LFI activists have called for civil unrest if Castets is not selected, and there is a high likelihood that, if the left-wing coalition cracks due to disagreements over relations with Macron's executive, LFI-linked activists will seek to stage large and disruptive demonstrations to force a decision, possibly resulting in violence and vandalism.

Anarchist activists claim vandalism of Northvolt offices in Hamburg, Germany.

As part of an ongoing campaign of direct action by anarchist against the building of the North Bothnia Line railway project in Sweden, anarchists claimed they vandalised the Northvolt offices in Hamburg on 19 August. The protestors claim they injected butyric acid through the office door and then glued the doors. Butyric acid, made from rancid butter, has historically been used by anti-whaling activists due to its highly unpleasant odour. The North Bothnia Line is contentious

due to its planned location in the indigenous Sami people's area of northern Sweden. Earlier on 9 August, activists vandalised an Implenia AG office in Vienna, Austria using spray paint. Both Northvolt and Implenia AG are involved in the North Bothnia project. The transnational nature of this direct-action campaign highly likely indicates a concerted and well-organised effort by multiple different anarchist groups cooperating across national borders. It is likely that companies associated with the North Bothnia project will continue to be targeted in the coming weeks.

Multiple Neo-Nazi demonstrations in Saxony.

On 17 August, around 400 Neo-Nazi activists tried to disrupt an LGBTQ event in Leipzig, in the German state of Saxony. On 10 August, a crowd of approximately 700 activists marched through the town of Bautzen, also in Saxony. The groups that are reported to be associated with the protests in Saxony include "Deutsche Jugend Voran" (DJV, a name taken from a division of the Hitler Youth), Jung und Stark (JS), as well as a banned far-right group known as "Division 45". Saxony remains a stronghold of far-right groups in Germany, and statistics on right-wing violence in Saxony for 2023 report an approximately 20 per cent increase compared to 2022. In Germany, as in other Western European states, a trend can be observed of far-right groups seeking greater territorial control in areas where they already have a footprint, while staging more symbolic demonstrations in cities that have a higher visibility. Areas and cities including Lyon in France, Verona and Rome in Italy, and Madrid in Spain have a particularly high activity from local far-right groups.

Demonstrations scheduled in Berlin and for 24 August.

The scheduled demonstrations, which will take place in front of the Chancellery, follow the closure of the Islamisches Zentrum Hamburg (IZH). IZH was a Shia Muslim centre in Hamburg which authorities closed over deep ties to the regime in Iran. Counter-demonstrations are also scheduled to take place. Due to the nature of the event, and the overlap with the demonstrations in Sweden (see beginning of section), there is a realistic possibility of disorders and violence breaking out.

Belarus deploys a third of its army to Ukrainian border.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko stated that the deployment is in response to increased Ukrainian activity at the border, a claim that appears highly likely unsubstantiated. It is almost certain that the deployment of Belarusian troops near the border is meant to warn Kyiv's Western allies against providing further help to Ukraine – including by relaxing constraints on the use of Western-procured munitions in Russia – by threatening regional escalation of the conflict.

Ukraine bans Russia-affiliated religious organisations, including the Orthodox Church.

The draft law approved by the parliament prohibits the religious activities of groups associated with Russia. While the Russian government has successfully coopted the Russian Orthodox Church as an instrument of propaganda and legitimisation of its offensive in Ukraine, the Moscow Patriarchate continues to have significant influence among the Russian minorities of Ukraine. The decision will likely spark domestic unrest in Ukraine, and Moscow will leverage the development to launch information operations targeting Orthodox Christians in Europe, the Middle East and North America.

Suspected Kenyan serial killer escapes from police station.

On 20 August, the individual, who is allegedly responsible for dozens of murders, escaped from a police facility in Nairobi alongside 12 Eritrean nationals. The high domestic media profile of the case makes this police failure particularly significant, and it will likely contribute to inflaming already high anti-government and anti-police sentiment.

Security, Armed Conflict and Terror:

CIA Director in Bosnia due to secessionist concerns.

CIA Director William Burns visited Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina on 20 August to address concerns over the "worrying secessionist rhetoric and actions" from Bosnia-Herzegovina's Serb entity, Republika Srpska, led by pro-Russian President Milorad Dodik. Dodik has refused to adhere to Western sanctions on Russia and has threatened secession for decades. A separate conflict in Europe would almost certainly play into the Kremlin's hands by diverting attention and resources from Ukraine. Dodik has visited Russia multiple times and in recent visits, Russia has used the Republika Srpska's flag rather than that of Bosnia-Herzegovina, suggesting Moscow's support for its secession.

Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) ambushes Red Cross convoy in Niger.

The targeted attack took place in the region of Diffa and killed 14 of which at least eight were Red Cross staff. ISWAP and other branches of the Islamic State (IS) commonly attack humanitarian organisations as part of their strategy to force the local populations to become reliant on them for welfare. ISWAP has recently increased its operations in Niger and, although it remains relatively weaker than Jama'a Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin, it has multiplied efforts to gain a territorial presence, by imposing "taxes" on controlled villages and conducting da'wah (proselytising) activities.

Sudanese military to send a delegation to Cairo discussions.

After the Transitional Sovereign Council, the ruling government in Sudan on behalf of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF), did not attend US-led peace talks in Geneva, Switzerland, they have stated they will send a delegation to Cairo to have discussions with US and Egyptian officials. The SAF's absence from the Geneva talks had generated major doubts about the prospects for a peace settlement to the Sudanese Civil War between the SAF and the Rapid Support Forces (RSF), which has now been ongoing for 16 months. The delegation to Cairo, however, likely indicates that the SAF is considering a willingness to participate in future negotiations should certain conditions be met. The main points of contention raised by SAF officials have been the lack of implementation of the Jeddah agreement, which entailed RSF forces withdrawing from civilian areas, and the United Arab Emirates' presence at the talks, who have highly likely supported the RSF. As recently as 16 August, RSF forces reportedly attacked several villages, according to local media. In recent months, the momentum of the civil war has been on the most part favourable to the RSF, and it is likely that continuing RSF advances have coerced the SAF leadership to not rule out future peace negotiations.

Environment, Health and Miscellaneous:

Large fires in Madeira, Portugal

The fires have consumed 5000 hectares by 19 August, or approximately 5 per cent of the island's total surface area. Due to dry and hot weather conditions, fires on the island have spread rapidly and posed extreme difficulties to firefighters, with authorities stating that they expect the fires to subside "after running out of fuel". Increasingly common and severe fires are likely to continue having severe economic impacts on residents and businesses in southern European maritime tourist destinations.

First Polio case identified in the Gaza Strip after 25 years.

The disease is particularly dangerous for children under five. It spreads via aerosol, faeces or contamination, and progressively affects the nervous system causing paralysis. Currently, much of the sewage disposal infrastructure in the Gaza Strip has been destroyed, favouring the accumulation of waste in areas that are extremely densely populated. The WHO and other international organisations have called for a vaccination campaign to begin in late August. However, this is highly likely dependent on the approval of a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas.



Asia Pacific (APAC)

Pakistan:

State crackdown on information space.

For weeks, the internet in Pakistan has been extremely slow, with the government blaming the high number of domestic users for overburdening domestic capacity. Activist groups have instead increasingly raised warnings of a growing threat of government efforts to build a “firewall” to separate Pakistan from global online information spaces, thus imitating China and other states in Asia. Since the 2023 riots linked with former Prime Minister Imran Khan last year, the Pakistani government has increasingly curtailed access to social media platforms. Earlier this year, a new law allowed the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) a much greater reach in intercepting private citizens’ communications.

Solace Global Assessment: The growing efforts by the Pakistani government to curtail the local information space while granting ISI greater reach are highly likely reflections of self-perceived growing instability. Outside of its long-standing socioeconomic issues, Pakistan’s security environment is deteriorating due to a greater traction of regionalist movements – such as the Baluch independence movement – and ongoing tensions with neighbours in India and Afghanistan, the latter continuing to provide a safe haven for Violent Extremist Organisations (VEOs). Moreover, the continuing popular support for Khan, as well as the anti-foreigner sentiments linked with growing Chinese operations in the country, likely represent important worries for Islamabad. Faced with these popular and regionalist movements, the Pakistani government may seek to follow the Chinese lead in building a highly controlled information space. In doing so, however, Islamabad is likely to encounter a fundamental obstacle in its inability to provide indigenous online alternatives, including an independent digital infrastructure, capable of meeting public demand. In turn, it may therefore be forced to rely on China-sourced assets and platforms to offset some of the economic costs, thus contributing to a regionalisation of Asia’s information spaces. A growing opacification of the Pakistani information space is highly likely to have extremely adverse consequences for humanitarian operators in the country. A decreased flow of information, combined with Pakistan’s extremely precarious security situation, may multiply the risks of humanitarian actors operating in at-risk regions, for instance by decreasing their capacity to respond to security incidents in a timely manner.

Indonesia:

Huge demonstrations over government attempt to reverse Constitutional Court decision.

On 22 August, tens of thousands of protestors amassed in the former capital, Jakarta, as well as other major cities, including Padang, Bandung, Surabaya, Makassar, Yogyakarta and multiple other locations. Protestors attempt to storm the Indonesian parliament, and the House of Representatives, forcing the police to use tear gas and water cannons to disperse crowds. The protests were triggered by parliament’s decision to overturn a Constitutional Court ruling which reduced the threshold for local legislative seats needed by parties to field candidates for regional elections. Parliament postponed the amendments in response to the unrest.

Assessment: The proposed law change involved raising the threshold for parties to nominate candidates in regional elections. Previously, the Constitutional Court had lowered this threshold

to below 10 per cent from the original 20 per cent. The Constitutional Court's original ruling would have effectively allowed smaller parties or coalitions with fewer seats in local parliaments to field more candidates at the regional level. The ruling government, which is dominated by supporters of the outgoing President Joko Widodo (Jokowi), would have seen this as a mechanism to increase the influence of the opposition. The change opened the door for opposition figures like Anies Baswedan, a critic of the government, to run for influential positions such as the Jakarta governor. Parliament's decision to reverse this change has almost certainly been seen as a manoeuvre to maintain its power and reduce the voice of the opposition. Moreover, it has likely sparked fears over a constitutional crisis between the executive and the judicial branches, by eroding the checks and balances in Indonesia's democratic system. It is also part of a broader strategy by Jokowi and his supporters to consolidate power, which has led to accusations of authoritarianism, corruption, and nepotism. These moves have galvanised activists, students and even celebrities against the government, with protests rapidly mobilised on social media. Whilst the government has responded by postponing its amendment, it is currently unclear whether parliament will reconvene before the start of regional elections on 27 August. If parliament attempts to hastily pass the law before the local elections, it is almost certain widespread and sometimes violent protests will erupt across the country.

APAC Summary and Forecast:

Politics, Economics and Civil Unrest:

Taliban ban UN special rapporteur from entering Afghanistan.

The Taliban have barred the UN-appointed special rapporteur Richard Bennett from entering Afghanistan, after accusing the UN of spreading propaganda. Bennett, appointed in 2022 to monitor Afghanistan's human rights record, has been critical of the Taliban's treatment of women and girls. The Taliban's decision to deny Bennett a visa reflects their growing resistance to international scrutiny, particularly concerning human rights. This move could further isolate Afghanistan diplomatically and complicate efforts to address human rights violations, especially against women, under Taliban rule.

Protesters attempt to storm Pakistan's Supreme Court over blasphemy ruling.

On 20 August, thousands of protestors attempted to storm Pakistan's Supreme Court in Islamabad over a ruling in a blasphemy case, forcing the police to use crowd dispersal methods like tear gas. The protest was organised over the granting of bail to Mubarak Sani. Sani had been accused of blasphemy in 2019 for distributing pamphlets advocating for his Ahmadiyya religious beliefs- a messianic Islamic movement often persecuted by the Sunni majority. The incident likely reflects the sensitivities of blasphemy laws in the country, which can often lead to huge and sometimes violent demonstrations.

Pakistani opposition schedules nationwide strike for 28 August.

The Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) party has called for a nationwide shutdown strike on 28 August to protest alleged misgovernance, economic issues, rising electricity prices, and endemic load shedding. The protests are likely to only cause moderate disruption, and the authorities are likely to issue Section 144 orders in areas with a high turnout.

India PM Modi to visit Ukraine and Poland.

The diplomatic visits will take place starting on 21 August. Modi's recent visit to Russia attracted considerable criticism from Western observers, and the Indian leader likely sees meeting Zelensky as an opportunity to outwardly demonstrate the continued foreign policy "non-alignment" espoused by India. At the same time, the visit to Poland may offer an opportunity to further India-EU talks, especially in crucial strategic areas such as technology-sharing and security cooperation.

India doctors resume work but protests continue.

After a trainee doctor was raped and killed by a hospital security guard in Kolkata, widespread doctor and nurse strikes paralysed much of India's healthcare system. This resulted in the suspension of most non-emergency procedures and major protests across the country. After reassurances from India's Supreme Court to improve safety measures at hospitals, doctors have resumed work. However, some protests are still ongoing and there are backlogs within India's healthcare system after 11 days of strikes.

Thai opposition criticises Constitutional Court and vows to continue.

The former leader of the recently dissolved Move Forward Party (MFP), Pita Limjaroenrat, who has been banned from Thai politics for a decade has vowed to continue his agenda and demanded that Thailand reform its judiciary. MFP's dissolution was followed by the Constitutional Court removing the then prime minister, Srettha Thavisin, within the same week and resulted in 134 Thai academics and legal experts releasing a statement suggesting that the court had overstepped its jurisdiction and damaged the public's trust. Thailand's new Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra, the daughter of controversial magnate Thaksin Shinawatra, was then sworn in on 18 August. Whilst her premiership may partially placate the reformist camp, the Shinawatra family's continued domination of Thai politics will likely aggravate the conservative establishment.

Loyalist to outgoing Indonesian president appointed leader of Golkar party.

On 21 August, the Golkar party appointed Bahlil Lahadalia as its leader. Bahlil is a loyalist to outgoing president Joko Widodo, commonly known as Jokowi. Jokowi has consistently held high approval ratings but is scheduled to leave office in October 2024 due to presidential term limits. It is likely that Jokowi has attempted to implement a political dynasty, and a Constitutional Court ruling in 2023, chaired by Jokowi's brother-in-law, lowered minimum age limits which will allow Jokowi's eldest son to become the vice-president in October. Efforts to make his youngest son the deputy governor of Central Java, however, have been thwarted by a 21 August Constitutional Court decision to not change minimum age limits for regional elections. The appointment of Bahlil will highly likely contribute towards Jokowi maintaining a high degree of political influence once he leaves office.

Security, Armed Conflict and Terror:

Pakistan imposes Section 144 Punjab due to terror threat.

On 21 August, Pakistani authorities implemented Section 144 in the Punjab province which bans all public gatherings and protests. The order will last until 24 August and has been imposed over the threat of terrorism. However, Section 144 is often used to deny public assembly and stifle the opposition and has likely been implemented to disrupt rallies organised by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf.

Chinese and Philippine vessels collide in disputed South China Sea.

China and the Philippines have traded accusations after vessels from their respective coast guards were involved in a collision near the disputed Shabina Shoal in the South China Sea. Beijing has suggested that the Philippines vessel purposefully collided with the Chinese vessel. Manila has accused the Chinese Coast Guard of aggressive manoeuvres, a tactic it has become notorious when reinforcing its maritime claims. The repeated confrontations threaten to further escalate tensions in the South China Sea, potentially drawing in external powers like the US which has recently increased defence cooperation with the Philippines.

Indonesia to host major multi-national military exercise.

Indonesia's Super Garuda Shield 2024, starting on 26 August, will involve joint military exercises with at least 19 countries, including the US, Australia, Japan, and South Korea. Originally launched in 2009, this annual exercise aims to "safeguard a free and open Indo-Pacific region" and has become one of the largest multinational military exercises in the area, with significant US

participation. While China likely perceives the exercise as a challenge to its regional influence, Indonesia and China maintain friendly relations and have conducted joint military exercises. However, a recent treaty signed between Australia and Indonesia may indicate a gradual shift away from non-alignment.

Australia and Indonesia sign treaty-level defence agreement.

On 20 August, Australia and Indonesia signed a treaty-level defence cooperation agreement which allows their militaries to operate in each other's countries. This agreement likely signals a thawing of relations over Australia's historic support for East Timor and potentially a strategic shift by Indonesia away from non-alignment. The agreement, which follows from the AUKUS alliance, will likely be interpreted by China as yet another development designed by the West to counterbalance its influence in the Indo-Pacific. Canberra may seek to develop further bi-lateral defence relationships or strengthen existing ones as it aims to contain an increasingly assertive China.

Environment, Health and Miscellaneous:

At least nine Bangladesh districts at risk of major flooding.

Bangladesh's Ministry of Water Resources has issued emergency flood notices for the districts of Feni, Sunamganj, Moulvibazar, Habiganj, Comilla, Noakhali, Chittagong, Laxmipur and Khagrachari. 12 rivers are currently above the danger line due to heavy rains further north in India. Increased rainfall is likely to result in widespread flooding that will impact millions of people.

Thailand identifies first case of new mpox strain.

Authorities in Thailand have reported that they have identified the first case of the new strain of mpox, Clade 1b, in the country. The case involves a European man working in an unnamed African country where there is an ongoing outbreak. Thailand's Department of Disease Control has tracked down over 40 people who are thought to have been in contact with the patient, who will now be monitored for 21 days. However, the patient flew to Thailand via a Middle Eastern country and a thorough contact trace is highly unlikely.

Landslide kills several in Thai tourist resort Phuket.

At least eight people have been killed in the popular tourist resort of Phuket after heavy rain triggered a landslide which crashed into a luxury villa. Rescue efforts are ongoing, with as many as 50 buildings affected by the landslide and multiple people assessed as currently trapped. Monsoon rains have battered much of Thailand with further landslides highly likely.