



Global Intelligence Summary

REPORTING PERIOD: 01 NOVEMBER – 08 NOVEMBER





Global Intelligence Summary

Week 45: 01 November – 08 November

Executive Summary

- The election of Donald Trump as the 47th US President will **almost certainly** affect the geopolitical landscape of Europe. It will **likely** result in an increased threat of political violence in the US.
- Despite a 72-hour humanitarian pause, large-scale unrest will **almost certainly** continue in **Bolivia** due to protestors' unmet demands and the president's refusal to resign.
- A **Russian**-linked plot to ignite incendiary devices on **Western**-bound planes is **likely** indicative of an escalation of the Kremlin's hybrid warfare strategy.
- The government's use of violence and the opposition's repeated calls for protests will **almost certainly** sustain widespread violent unrest throughout **Mozambique**.



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

AMER

- 1 US:** Trump wins presidential elections
- 2 Bolivia:** Protestors instigate 72-hour humanitarian pause

EMEA

- 3 Germany:** Incendiary device planted on UK-bound plane
- 4 Chad:** President threatens to withdraw from regional task force
- 5 Sudan:** RSF on the offensive in Darfur
- 6 Mozambique:** Violence nationwide unrest continues to escalate

APAC

- 7 India:** Jammu and Kashmir's assembly demands restoration of special status
- 8 The Philippines:** Manila holds military exercises simulating island landings





Americas (AMER)

United States:

Donald Trump wins presidency.

On 5 November, US citizens voted to elect their 47th President, as well as representatives for the two houses of Congress. Donald Trump, the former president and Republican Party candidate, defeated Kamala Harris by winning all seven “swing states” and, most notably, winning the popular vote, a feat that no Republican candidate, winning or losing, had achieved in two decades. The Republican Party also obtained positive results in Congress, winning control of the Senate and (as of the time of writing, this is still unconfirmed but appears almost certain) retaining control of the House. The victory will put the new Trump administration – set to take office in January 2025 – in a strong position, with control over both the executive and legislative branches, alongside the continuing presence of a right-leaning Supreme Court. Harris and current President Joe Biden have conceded the election and called for an orderly transfer of power.

Assessment: A new Trump presidency is likely to provoke important changes in the US’ foreign relations. On hearing the election results, a notable signal towards likely changes was sent by the leaders of European powers. French President Macron and German Chancellor Scholz almost immediately released a statement calling for the EU to become more united and independent on defence matters. The statement almost certainly reflects widespread European worries about US commitments towards the defence of Eastern Europe, and especially Ukraine, under Trump’s second term. Trump has repeatedly stated his position that the Ukraine war was at least partially caused by Zelensky and that Western aid to support Ukraine’s war efforts is, at best, misplaced. Russia’s recent, and likely future, battlefield progress in Donetsk, is likely to confirm the new administration’s worries regarding the feasibility of Ukraine’s long-term defence and the prospect of drawing out the conflict at huge expense to the US. Russian forces will likely increase their long-range attacks on Ukrainian population centres and critical national infrastructure (CNI) to deplete Ukraine’s air defence stock, hoping that a future suspension of US aid will put Kyiv in a difficult position, increasing the chances of forced negotiations.

Domestically, Trump’s election is likely to be a driver of civil unrest and increased political violence. On the night of 5 November, clashes between far-left militants and police officers were recorded in Seattle, although these have had a limited impact. There is a realistic possibility of targeted political violence following the elections and in the months approaching the inauguration of the new administration. The two (possibly three) assassination attempts on Trump have had a massive level of political visibility, and have demonstrated that copycat attacks represent an increasingly realistic threat. Likewise, recent cases demonstrate a growing threat from radical groups carrying out sabotage actions in efforts to destabilise national and local governments. There is a realistic possibility that such groups, mostly but not exclusively on the far left, will seek to stage sabotage actions similar to the ones that targeted the Tesla “megafactory” in Germany or the French high-speed railway service just before the Olympics.

Bolivia:

Protestors instigate 72-hour humanitarian pause of blockades after a week of intensified unrest.

On 6 November, protestors announced a 72-hour suspension of blockades amidst rocketing food and fuel prices. According to the Bolivian Highway Administration, no roadblocks remain in Bolivia as of 6 November. While some were peacefully dismantled, there were multiple incidents of violence as security forces attempted to remove the roadblocks by force. Because of Bolivia’s topography, protestors commonly use roadblocks to pressure the government by isolating major cities and slowing economic activity. The government has, therefore, blamed the rise in food and fuel prices on these blockades, a fact disputed by protestors.

The humanitarian pause comes after a week of steadily escalating unrest after an alleged assassination attempt on ex-President Evo Morales on 27 October. 1 November saw alleged armed supporters of Morales reportedly taking over 200 military personnel hostage and seizing weaponry and ammunition in Cochabamba. On the same day, Morales called for an end to the blockades, launching a hunger strike to demand a meeting with the government. Protests, primarily in locations with strong support bases for Morales such as Cochabamba and Mairana, have developed into violent clashes with the police as protestors have utilised projectiles including firecrackers, homemade explosives, and stones fired from slingshots. According to government figures, 127 people have been injured, 92 of which were police officers, and 180 arrests have been made, with demonstrators being accused of various crimes including terrorism.

Assessment: The past week of intensified violence comes after an alleged assassination attempt on Morales. The facts are disputed, with the government instead claiming that shots were fired at Morales' vehicle after it ran a police checkpoint and hit a police officer. Given the tension between Morales' supporters and the government, the disputed event has likely been enough to energise an escalation in popular unrest in support of Morales.

Unrest is highly likely to continue over the coming week since the government is unlikely to bow to protestors' demands of President Luis Arce's resignation and their allowing Morales to run in the 2025 election. Given its effectiveness at pressuring the government, reportedly causing USD 1.7 billion in economic damages by preventing food and fuel from entering major cities, there is a realistic possibility that protestors will restore blockades once the 72-hour pause ends if the government does not adhere to their demands. This will likely trigger Arce, who has already threatened to use his constitutional powers if blockades do not cease, to take more forceful measures. If a state of emergency is declared, the government may utilise the military and impose curfews to quell unrest. This would likely cause protests to spread further and affect the administrative capital, La Paz, which has been relatively free of unrest.

In the longer term, given Bolivia is set for a presidential election in 2025, unrest will likely ignite periodically until then. Morales, an Indigenous Bolivian, has a large support base amongst the Indigenous members of the population, who feel marginalised by the Arce government and oppose its economic and environmental policies. Furthermore, protests were sparked over issues of the economy, before Morales' arrest warrant was issued, which means that they are not solely tied to Morales achieving a positive outcome. Should Morales be allowed to run in 2025 and achieve dialogue with the government, the economic pressure on Bolivia's population means that protests will likely re-ignite into 2025 until there is a change of government or the economic issues are addressed.

AMER Summary and Forecast:

Politics, Economics and Civil Unrest:

Mexican Supreme Court fails to curb judicial reform.

The Supreme Court of Mexico has rejected a last-ditch attempt by the opposition to limit the incumbent government's controversial reform of the country's judiciary. The result has likely averted a threatened constitutional crisis between the court and the newly elected government of President Claudia Sheinbaum. The original reform, which will make it mandatory for all Mexican judges and magistrates to stand for election, was heavily criticised over concerns it would politicise the judiciary and weaken the separation of powers. This has been a major catalyst for unrest throughout the country and there is a realistic possibility of renewed protests in response to the Supreme Court's decision.

Nightly curfews and other security measures end in Martinique.

On late 4 November, the Prefect of Martinique released a statement announcing the end of the nightly curfew and all other administrative police measures from 5 November. This decision was justified by the Prefect as being "no longer justified by serious risks to public order", due to a "week without urban violence or roadblocks". During the past week, the impact of civil unrest and protests in Martinique has been minimal. On 3 November, however, a solidarity protest did take place in Paris, with leaders from the primary protest

organisers the Rally for the Protection of Afro-Caribbean Peoples and Resources (RPPRAC) in attendance, having flown from Martinique. François-Noël Buffet, the Minister of Overseas Territories, will be officially visiting Martinique on 14-16 November, and RPPRAC have stated that they wish to meet the minister, with or without an invitation. While the unrest in Martinique has considerably diminished in intensity, there is a realistic possibility that with the lifting of the curfew, the forthcoming visit from the Minister of Overseas Territories, 'solidarity' protests in mainland France and the continued demands of RPPRAC, civil unrest may resurface in the coming weeks.

Security, Armed Conflict and Terror:

Increase in terrorist messaging in the US during and after the election.

Multiple far-right and mostly online-based groups in the United States have called on supporters and sympathisers to carry out acts of terrorism against government and security institutions during the elections. Groups that have significantly increased calls to violence in the days surrounding the elections include fringe formations like the "satanic" far-right Order of the Nine Angels (ONA) or identitarian groups like the Blood Tribe (BT). Alongside far-right calls to violence, Islamist and far-left channels have also called for attacks and targeted assassinations of US officials. On 6 November, the FBI arrested one individual in Michigan for reportedly calling for further assassination attempts on President-elect Trump from an Anarchist position.

Environment, Health and Miscellaneous:

Cuba suffers another major blackout.

On 6 November, Cuba experienced a further nationwide blackout caused by Hurricane Rafael, which brought winds of up to 185 km/h (115 mph) to the island nation. The hurricane's impact led to the failure of the national energy grid, leaving millions without power. This blackout is part of a series of recent outages that have severely affected the country, exacerbating the ongoing economic and infrastructure challenges which may result in unrest.

Severe flooding in northern Panama.

There have been several days of severe flooding and landslides in Panama, particularly in Veraguas and northern regions. As of 8 November, hundreds remain in shelters and the current death toll stands at five. More than 30 landslides in Veraguas have forced hundreds to evacuate, while infrastructure damage includes destroyed bridges, especially in Coclé Province, which has disrupted travel. The government has maintained a Red Alert in five provinces and is working with emergency services on evacuations, rescue efforts, and aid distribution.



Europe, Middle East & Africa (EMEA)

Germany:

Western officials accuse Russia of planting incendiary device on UK-bound plane.

Western intelligence officials have implicated Russia in a July plot which involved the ignition of an incendiary device on a plane heading to the UK after an incendiary device hidden in a DHL package containing massage pillows and erotic gadgets caught fire in Leipzig, Germany. The device is similar to one that ignited at a DHL warehouse in Birmingham, UK. The devices are thought to originate from Lithuania but have also been found in Poland, leading to the arrest of four Polish individuals. Western intelligence assesses that Russia's Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU) orchestrated the plot and that the UK-bound flight may have been a dry-run for a more ambitious flight heading to the US.

Assessment: In response to the West's support for Ukraine, Russian intelligence has leveraged multiple attack methodologies like sabotage as part of its comprehensive "hybrid" warfare campaign. This has included multiple incidents of arson and other forms of physical attacks on facilities and infrastructure linked to the facilitation of lethal aid to Ukraine, such as warehouses and the railway network. To date, these attacks have not resulted in any civilian loss of life; however, as Russia continues to lose personnel and materiel on the battlefield, there is a realistic possibility that it may seek to escalate its hybrid strategy. Moreover, the expulsion of Russian intelligence officers from Europe after the invasion of Ukraine has forced Russia to rely heavily on criminal entities and disaffected populations to carry out cash-induced and highly deniable, but often reckless acts of sabotage. However, an attack on an aircraft would mark a major and likely deadly escalation of Russian tactics. There is a realistic possibility that the attack was designed to fail, to send a clear strategic message to the West without escalating. Nevertheless, Russian-sponsored acts of sabotage will almost certainly continue and likely escalate as the West continues to support Ukraine. However, Donald Trump's and the Republican Party's victory in the US elections will likely lead to decreased arms deliveries to Ukraine, forcing Kyiv to rely more heavily on European assistance. This dynamic will almost certainly shift Russian intelligence's operational focus to Europe, resulting in both an expansion and escalation of its sabotage campaign.

Chad:

President threatens to pull out of regional task force.

Chadian President Mahamat Idiss Deby has stated that his country is ready to withdraw its commitments from the Multinational Joint Task Force of the Lake Chad Basin Commission (MNJTF). Déby cited inadequate coordination among member states in countering extremist threats, like Boko Haram, as the reason for the move. The decision follows the 27 October Boko Haram attack on a Chadian Army garrison near Ngouboua, close to the Nigerian border, which killed over 40 soldiers.

Assessment: The MNJTF, originally organised in the 1990s, was reactivated in 2015 by the African Union to combat the rise of jihadism and cross-border security issues in the Lake Chad region. Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Niger, and Nigeria currently all contribute troops to the MNJTF, which has approximately 10,000 soldiers, which according to some assessments is less than the size of Boko Haram. Boko Haram and other militant groups like Islamic State West Africa (ISWA) have long exploited the Lake Chad Basin's weak governance, poverty and porous borders to establish safe havens and to facilitate operations in Nigeria, Chad, Niger, and Cameroon.

The recent Boko Haram attack is likely indicative of a worsening security situation in the wider region and has almost certainly served as a catalyst for Chad's withdrawal from the MNJTF. However, there are likely more strategic justifications for Chad's threat to withdraw. Chad may view its withdrawal as a way to achieve

more operational flexibility by not having to rely on or coordinate with underperforming or overstretched partner militaries.

The withdrawal could also enable Chad to expand its operations into neighbouring countries, especially Nigeria, by removing the constraints of coalition agreements. Whilst this may allow Chad to take more direct action against militants, there are some potential major disadvantages with this course of action. Uncorroborated reports indicate that the Chadian Army has already conducted operations in Borno State, Nigeria and killed dozens of misidentified fishermen in retaliation for the recent Boko Haram attack.

An increase in Chadian cross-border operations without sufficient local intelligence is likely to lead to more collateral damage, and displacement and will almost certainly play into the hands of groups like Boko Haram that will exploit these trends for propaganda and recruitment. In addition, if Chadian forces are perceived to be filling a security vacuum within Nigeria, this could force Abuja to recommit forces to the Lake Chad region, drawing resources away from other critical security priorities, such as operations against banditry and insurgent activities in other parts of Nigeria, leaving gaps that violent extremist groups could exploit to expand their influence.

Sudan:

Rapid Support Forces (RSF) try to take al-Fasher.

According to local media, on 4 November the RSF launched a new offensive against the government-controlled city of al-Fasher, the last stronghold of the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) in Darfur. Efforts to take the city, which would grant the RSF complete control over Darfur, began in April 2023, with the most recent phase of the fighting starting in April 2024 with renewed RSF operations. The SAF has conducted some partly successful relief efforts, including the successful deployment of reinforcements in October.

Assessment: Both the RSF and SAF consider al-Fasher vital for their strategic objectives. Gaining control of the city would allow the RSF to mobilise considerable resources towards the pacification of Darfur and the creation of a more stable political authority alternative to Khartoum. Moreover, it would allow them to shift troops towards areas of the front where government forces have applied increasing pressure over the past weeks. The RSF's control of Darfur will almost certainly result in escalating violence against civilian populations, particularly against ethnic groups seen as sympathetic to opposition forces. This could lead to widespread displacement, mass killings, and a systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing

It is highly likely that the timing of the offensive follows development elsewhere in Sudan. In late September, the SAF launched its biggest offensive so far in the conflict towards the capital of Khartoum. While the attack succeeded in pushing RSF out of positions in Omdurman and the portion of Khartoum north of the Blue Nile, it has stalled with much of the capital remaining under RSF control. The Khartoum operation was launched to coincide with General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan's address at the United Nations' General Assembly and was highly likely meant to provide both a political boost to the government, and to leverage a localised weakness of RSF units' positions in the area.

Mozambique:

Violent unrest continues throughout Mozambique.

Violent unrest has continued throughout much of Mozambique since the declaration of the winner of the general elections on 24 October. On 7 November, the largest protests to date were organised in the capital Maputo and in other major cities like Beria and Nampula. The police fired tear gas at protestors in Maputo and there have been multiple reports of police firing live ammunition, with Amnesty International reporting that at least 20 people have been killed. The government has continued to shut off access to internet sites and social media platforms, resulting in a record number of Virtual Private Network (VPN) users. The opposition leader, Venâncio Mondlane, has fled to Johannesburg, South Africa, where he has alleged that he was a victim of a government-sponsored assassination attempt. Trucks entering Mozambique from South Africa have been forced to stop by protestors with reports of trucks being looted. South African officials have temporarily closed its busiest border crossing with Mozambique due to violence on the border and the

attempts of Mozambicans to flee into the country, leading to incidents of South African police firing rubber bullets and stun grenades toward Mozambique nationals.

Assessment: The scale of unrest in Mozambique has almost certainly escalated in response to police tactics, the opposition's sustained calls for unrest, and the alleged assassination attempt on Mondlane. The widespread use of VPNs has likely enabled protestors to circumvent government restrictions and disseminate media or organise protests at a greater scale. Increased internet access has also provided more fidelity on the government's response, which will likely contribute to further unrest. Due to the scale of unrest, there is a realistic possibility that the government will deploy further troops in support of the police, a move that is likely to result in higher casualties.

The looting of trucks on the border and South Africa's closure of a major border crossing will likely disrupt trade, potentially leading to critical shortages and will also restrict options to leave Mozambique. There are early indications that the Islamic State Mozambique (ISM) is exploiting the unrest to expand its operations, with reports of increased attacks and activity in the Cabo Delgado region. If the government redeploys troops from the region, it is almost certain the ISM will seek to leverage this development, with increased attacks on civilians and possibly the oil and gas industry.

EMEA Summary and Forecast:

Politics, Economics and Civil Unrest:

Thousands of Serbs protest after collapse of railway station.

On 5 November, thousands of Serbian opposition supporters gathered in Novi Sad to protest the recent collapse of the city's railway station which killed 14 people. Protestors have blamed the government for the disaster, levelling accusations of negligence and corruption. Protestors broke windows at the city hall, threw flares and firecrackers, and sprayed liquid manure. They also targeted the Serbian Progressive Party's office with eggs, bottles, and bricks. The police have deployed tear gas to disperse crowds and cordoned off access to state and municipal offices in the city.

Protests erupt over Turkey's replacement of elected Kurdish mayors.

Almost one hundred people have been arrested in Turkey's Kurdish-majority regions of Mardin, Batman, and Halfeti after protests were sparked by the government's replacement of elected Kurdish mayors with appointed trustees due to "terrorism-related" charges. The police have used plastic bullets, water cannons, and tear gas to disrupt the protests; these measures will likely escalate protests in the short term.

French gendarmes arrested by Israeli police in Jerusalem.

The two police officers were arrested on the evening of 7 November and briefly detained, while they were guarding a church compound owned by France. The arrest took place as the French Foreign Minister prepared to visit the compound. The incident highly likely constitutes a violation of the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, which enshrines the principle of diplomatic immunity in international law. The episode is highly likely to increase domestic pressures on the Macron government to distance itself from Tel Aviv.

Mali set to criminalise homosexuality.

Mali's de facto parliament, the National Transitional Council, has passed a law which will criminalise same-sex acts and any activity which promotes it. The law still requires approval from the ruling military junta, who are likely to pass it. The penalties for breaking the law are yet to be determined, although they are expected to be harsh and could include the imposition of the death penalty.

Kenyan government accused of human rights abuses during anti-finance bill protests.

Recent reporting from Human Rights Watch has accused the Kenyan government and security services of abduction, arbitrary arrests, torture, and extra-judicial killings between June and August during the

country's anti-finance bill protests. The accusations also allege that even after the unrest, government forces continued to target protest leaders, detaining them in secret and without legal rights. There is a realistic possibility that the accusations will reignite tensions and lead to further unrest.

Mauritius to hold general election on 10 November.

Mauritius is preparing for elections on 10 November, amid growing tension and controversy. The government had initially imposed a social media blackout in response to a wiretapping scandal but reversed the decision on 4 November following widespread public backlash. The scandal, which involved the leak of private conversations among high-ranking officials, has deepened political divisions and eroded trust in the government. Heightened security measures are in effect, with protests and rallies expected to take place during the election.

Security, Armed Conflict and Terror:

Israeli football fans and pro-Palestine protesters clash in Amsterdam.

On the evening of 7 November, clashes erupted between football supporters and protesters after the Ajax-Maccabi Tel Aviv Europa League game in Amsterdam. At least ten people were injured in the clashes, and 60 were arrested as of the time of writing. Videos available online show early tensions beginning before the game started, with police clashing with demonstrators in the city centre during the afternoon, as well as cases of vandalism reportedly carried out by Maccabi fans. Other footage from later in the day shows apparent mob attacks on isolated individuals in different parts of the city. The incident follows previous cases of harassment and attacks on Israeli nationals during sporting events.

Germany arrests members of far-right group.

Eight members of a group known as "Saxony Separatists" ("Saechsische Separatisten", a name that is a reference to the Schutzstaffel or SS, the Nazi state's paramilitary wing) were arrested on 5 November during multiple raids in eastern Germany, near the German-Polish border. Authorities report that the group, potentially consisting of several dozen members, aimed to establish an independent neo-Nazi state in eastern Germany following what they viewed as the "inevitable" collapse of the German state. Elements of the group's ideology signal that it may espouse a form of far-right "accelerationism", a set of beliefs which sees society as in terminal decline due to structural factors, and importantly claims that a revolution can only be obtained by promoting, rather than opposing, these destabilising trends. Accelerationist ideology inspired, among others, the perpetrator of the 2019 Christchurch Mosque shooting.

Islamists imposing religious tax on Mali's Christian community.

Jihadist militants in Mali are increasingly persecuting the country's Christians by imposing an Islamic jizya tax on the community. Recent reporting from the village of Douna-Pen indicates that a tax of 25,000 CFA francs (approximately USD 41) is being imposed on Christian adults in one of the world's poorest countries where GDP per capita is less than USD 900. Those unable or unwilling to pay face threats of church closures or violence. Groups like Jama'at Nasr al-Islam wal Muslimin (JNIM) and Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS) have been implicated in this practice and are almost certainly using it to generate funds to facilitate operations against the junta government and its foreign allies.

Nigerian authorities warn of new Islamist group in Sokoto state.

On 5 November, state officials reported an increase in activity from a newly formed group named "Lakurawas". While little is currently known about the group's activity beyond possible attempts at creating alternative administrative structures in Sokoto, their apparent use of "Arewa" as a term designating their area of operations likely highlights some possible strategic objectives. Arewa is sometimes used to refer to the part of northern Nigeria under the control of the 19th century Sokoto Caliphate. Its use by the group therefore likely indicates an intention to create a politico-religious entity in the north of Nigeria.

Environment, Health and Miscellaneous:

Anger at authorities as Spanish floods death toll rises.

The death toll from the flooding that devastated Valencia in Spain has risen at least 217, with more than 60 of these deaths in a suburb of the city Valencia, Pairporta. The Spanish King and Queen visited Pairporta, and were pelted with mud by furious crowds. The anger against the management of the natural disaster by authorities has been significant, with particular criticism being made against the tardiness of flooding alerts. Vigilante protection groups have been reported as setting up patrols in towns such as Pairporta, highly likely due to the perception that the authorities have failed to provide adequate support. The Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez has stated that 15,000 personnel from the military and police forces have now been deployed to aid in recovery efforts. It is likely that the backlash against authorities stemming from the floods, which were almost certainly the most deadly natural disaster in modern Spanish history, will continue to lead to instances of civil unrest.

No humanitarian aid to enter north Gaza Strip, state Israeli officials.

On 5 November, Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) officials stated that, due to the threat of Hamas re-infiltration and the exodus of civilians, no humanitarian aid will be allowed to enter the “northern Gaza Strip” (highly likely indicating the area north of the new corridor that cuts off Beit Lahia, Beit Hanoun and Jabalia from the rest of the Gaza Strip). The announcement, which coincides with a significant increase of Israeli operations to clear remaining Hamas fighters from the north of Gaza, highly likely signifies the long-term displacement of residents of northern Gaza to the south. It is highly likely that such a scenario will put further pressure on the already overstretched humanitarian efforts present elsewhere in Gaza.

Nigeria suffers ninth major blackout of 2024.

Nigeria's national power grid experienced a partial collapse on 5 November causing widespread blackouts, marking the ninth such incident in 2024. The Transmission Company of Nigeria (TCN) stated the disturbance was caused by multiple line and generator failures which destabilised the system. Power was quickly restored to Abuja, but outages persisted in other regions, with the grid currently only capable of distributing a third of Nigeria's energy output. Suspensions in power often force people to rely on costly fuel generators and have often been a trigger for unrest in Nigeria, exacerbated by other underlying issues such as high inflation and accusations of corruption.



Asia Pacific (APAC)

India:

Jammu and Kashmir's assembly passes resolution demanding a restoration of special status.

On 6 November, Jammu and Kashmir's legislative assembly passed a resolution demanding partial autonomy be restored to the Indian-administered territory. While the resolution is non-binding, it calls for dialogue to be initiated with the government of India. This decision comes in the wake of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (NC) winning the first regional election in a decade on a platform of a return to self-rule.

Assessment: The resolution is highly likely to lead to unrest. The BJP has rejected the resolution, labelling it illegal and akin to “waging a war against the Indian constitution, Supreme Court, and Parliament”. This is a tense issue since India's Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) rejected the territory's special status in 2019 by repealing Article 370, which had granted the region semi-autonomy since 1954. While resonating among the Indian Hindu community, Kashmir's Muslim population heavily opposed the decision, fearing demographic changes in the region from Hindus purchasing land. Because of the expected unrest, the BJP initiated a heavy security crackdown, consisting of a curfew, the arrest of political leaders, the suspension of internet and communications services, and the deployment of tens of thousands of additional troops to the territory to prevent unrest. Widespread unrest occurred, nevertheless, with protestors defying curfews and clashing with security forces. Security forces responded forcefully, using tear gas and rubber bullets to quell unrest.

If significant unrest breaks out in Jammu and Kashmir, it is highly likely to spread amongst the Muslim community in India. Tensions have been high between Hindus and Muslims since Modi's winning of power in 2014. A Hindu nationalist, Modi has been accused of marginalising the Muslim community and encouraging anti-Muslim sentiment. Since Jammu and Kashmir is the only India-administered region with a Muslim majority, protests in support of the territory have erupted during periods of heightened tension. After the rejection of Article 370, for example, Muslim demonstrations occurred across multiple major cities including Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata. The NC's mandate to negotiate the issue of self-rule for Jammu and Kashmir is, therefore, likely to act as a trigger for unrest.

Philippines:

Filipino forces simulate island invasion.

On 6 November, Filipino forces staged a military exercise in the South China Sea which, for the first time, included a mock scenario in which allied forces retake an island after its invasion by a hostile force. The exercise took place in Kota/Loaita Island, part of the Spratly Islands chain, contested by China, Vietnam and Taiwan. Chinese warships were present in the waters near the island for the duration of the exercise, although Beijing avoided reacting to the episode.

Assessment: The exercise, the first Filipino combat exercise in the contested area, is almost certainly meant to send a signal to Beijing regarding Manila's determination to defend the Spratly Islands. The Chinese and Filipino coast guards have recently engaged in low-intensity clashes in the South China Sea, with repeated cases of vessel collisions and clashes between crews. Chinese vessels have also recently had incidents with the coast guards of Indonesia and Malaysia. Furthermore, the exercise coincided with the announcement that Filipino forces have almost finished improving hangar facilities and other infrastructure on Pagasa Island, also in the Spratly chain. The improvements carried out on Pagasa, which cost at least USD 50 million, are likely meant to strengthen the Philippines' position in its western waters while simultaneously also seeking closer cooperation on defence with the US and other Western partners. It is notable in this sense that recent Filipino procurement efforts have moved in directions favourable to Washington, for instance

via the purchase of Aero-class gunboats from Israel as part of its efforts to bolster its South China Sea maritime presence.

For Manila, increased spending and high-visibility military exercises may also be a way to “keep Washington close” during the next administration’s term. While the first Trump administration began an openly confrontational stance vis-à-vis China, the President-elect has also repeatedly stated that he sees US defence assistance as dependent on partners’ willingness to play to Washington’s global economic interests and to “foot the bill” of military expenditure. As in the case of Taiwan, whose leaders approved the purchase of USD 2 billion in arms from the US in October, the Philippines likely has an interest in demonstrating its capability to incur greater costs in directly containing Chinese expansion in the southwestern Pacific Ocean.

APAC Summary and Forecast:

Politics, Economics and Civil Unrest:

Myanmar junta chief on rare foreign trip.

On 6 November, the leader of Myanmar’s Tatmadaw junta, Min Aung Hlaing, arrived in China for his first visit since the 2021 coup that precipitated the country’s civil war. In addition to meeting their Chinese counterparts, Tatmadaw officials also held informal talks with representatives of Thailand, a key neighbour of Myanmar with which it shares a 2,400 km border. The junta’s talks with China are likely meant to restore some level of political confidence in Min Aung Hlaing, whose handling of the civil war has been marked by increasing setbacks for the junta in its fight against a myriad of ethnic and nationalist rebel groups. This has likely worried officials in Beijing, challenging their willingness to possibly bear the growing political cost of maintaining the junta as its preferred diplomatic interlocutor. The question of the Myanmar-Thailand border is likewise almost certainly essential. The area has become an active conflict zone, with some clashes having spillover effects into Thai territory. Moreover, the breakdown of stability has created room for manoeuvre for organised criminal groups engaged in smuggling weapons and drugs. Myanmar has returned, in 2023, to being the biggest producer of opium globally, after the Taliban cracked down on opium farming in Afghanistan.

Security, Armed Conflict and Terror:

Iran and Pakistan conduct joint operations in Balochistan.

Uncorroborated reports indicate that Iran and Pakistan are conducting joint operations against militants in Iran’s Sistan and Balochistan province, and Pakistan’s Balochistan province. The intended targets of the strikes are reportedly senior leadership of the Baloch Sunni militant group, Jaish Al-Adl, and follow a recent meeting between the Iranian and Pakistani Foreign Ministers in Islamabad, where they agreed to cooperate on cross-border security and terrorism. It is highly likely that Jaish Al-Adl will conduct reprisal attacks in both countries as a result of the strikes.

Militants establish pattern of attacking police officers in southern Thailand.

On 4 November, a senior police officer in Thailand’s troubled Pattani province was shot at and injured by assailants after returning from evening prayers. This marks the third recent attack on serving or former police officers returning from mosques in southern Thailand and may indicate a trend of separatist militants targeting Muslim police who they perceive as collaborators.

Indonesia holds first ever joint naval drills with Russia.

On 4 November, the Indonesian Navy conducted joint military exercises with elements of the Russian Federation Navy’s Pacific Fleet in the Java Sea. The drills are the first to be held between the two respective navies and likely mark a step towards greater defence ties after the recent inauguration of Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto. However, Jakarta has stressed it remains committed to a non-aligned foreign policy with the exercises aimed at promoting regional security rather than being directed against any other country or military alliance.

New Zealand mosque targeted in arson attack.

On 5 November, a mosque in Auckland, New Zealand, was reportedly deliberately set on fire. While attribution for the fire remains unclear, reports from 6 November indicate that authorities charged a 19-year-old man over the arson. If confirmed, there is a high likelihood that the attack was an ideologically motivated action meant to terrorise the local Muslim community. Arson targeting places of worship frequently appears in anti-Islam rhetoric within far-right online spaces. Furthermore, arson is often linked to conspiracy theories and narratives alleging that events such as the 2019 Notre Dame fire were caused by Islamist terrorists.

Environment, Health and Miscellaneous:

Pakistani regional government shuts schools over high air pollution levels.

On 6 November, authorities in the Punjab province of Pakistan ordered schools in some areas to shut down for up to two weeks over extremely high pollution levels, which pose a significant threat to the health of children. The province contains Lahore and about half of Pakistan's total population and is characterised by high levels of vehicle-linked pollution. Swiss group IQAir assessed that the Air Quality Index (AQI) of Lahore was 730 on 7 November, making it the most polluted major city in the world (for comparison, Delhi is in second place and recorded a score of around 360 on the same day).

Indonesia's Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki erupts, killing several.

On 4 November, Indonesia's Mount Lewotobi Laki-laki erupted, killing at least ten people and impacting seven villages on Flores Island in East Nusa Tenggara province. Authorities have issued the highest alert, mandating a 7 km evacuation zone and relocating residents to areas 20 km away. Indonesia's disaster agency has declared a 58-day state of emergency to support 10,000 affected residents, warning of potential flash floods and cold lava flows. Smaller eruptions occurred from 5-7 November and due to fears of further deadly eruptions, the government is planning to permanently relocate thousands of people.

