

ZeroFox Intelligence Geopolitical Brief for March 2023



TLP: CLEAR

B-2023-03-01a

Executive Summary

March 2023 could see the U.S.-China political relationship worsen. In February 2023, China made its first public statements of support for Russia since the start of the war in Ukraine and presented a peace plan to end the war that heavily favored Russia. This shift in strategy could be significant, as China was surprisingly neutral in the first year of the war. While unlikely in the short term, if China were to escalate its political support of Russia with military backing, there could be a strong Western economic response that would further disrupt global supply chains and the fragile global economy. Russia also looks set for military gains that could prolong the war.

China also holds its important "two sessions" policy meetings in early March, which will provide rare insight into the inner-workings of Chinese policy-making and outline its foreign and domestic policy plans for the year ahead. Chinese President Xi Jinping will likely use the meetings to strengthen state control over the financial and technology sectors. This could be harmful to Western business interests inside China and those who trade with China, as those same interests had been hoping China would lift its control over those sectors to revitalize its COVID-19-damaged economy. Lastly, there could be further military and geopolitical responses from China after months of tensions with the United States over semiconductor chip manufacturing and alleged Chinese espionage attempts. This could see China double down on efforts to develop its own domestic advanced technology sectors and increase military threats towards Taiwan.

In Europe, mid-March will see a series of disruptive protests. The largest will be in France, where persistent protests are expected to influence politicians ahead of a key vote on pension reform. In the United Kingdom (UK), labor groups will attempt to influence the UK annual budget with a series of worker strikes.

There are also a number of key political and election-related developments. Following Nigeria's contested elections, there is a high risk of social unrest related to supposed election interference that could worsen the already dangerous security environment. The next large elections are in Turkey and are set for mid-May. Following his successful efforts to influence the country's electoral agency, Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) has also created a large anti-government protest movement that could last until the new elections in 2024. Lastly, March 2023 could see major geopolitical developments in the UK, where Prime Minister Rishi Sunak will be eager to push through his amendments to the Brexit deal despite opposition within his own party that could be damaging to business operations.

Key Findings

- El Salvador's successful anti-gang state of emergency has been in place for one year, and political allies of President Nayib Bukele are calling for similar policies across Latin America.
- Protests in Peru and Bolivia have lost steam but will likely resume several more times in 2023.
- Northern Ireland is seeing an increase in sectarian attacks that is possibly linked to progress between the UK and the European Union (EU) over the Northern Ireland protocol.
- Russia likely lacks the forces, weapons, and other materials necessary to achieve significant territorial gains in its renewed offensive in eastern Ukraine.
- Mexico is likely to see on-and-off protests against election reforms until 2024.
- Chile announced a 90-day state of emergency to halt migration from Peru and Bolivia that could worsen supply chain issues.
- There is a high risk of social unrest in Nigeria, with election results not expected until early to mid-March 2023.
- Bulgaria will attempt to elect a new parliament on April 2, 2023.
- France, UK, Belgium, and the Netherlands are expecting large protests against inflation and cost-of-living issues in March 2023.
- China issued its most significant backing for Russia since the war in Ukraine began.
- Turkey and Thailand will prepare for consequential elections by May 2023.
- Russian security and cyber threats targeting Moldova are relevant to many of Russia's neighbors.

Key Threats and Developments



Thailand will have new elections—possibly by May 2023.



The U.S. response to Chinese backing of Russia could cause global economic harm.



Instability regarding Nigerian elections are likely to remain in March 2023.



The UK economy could benefit from the proposed updates to the Brexit deal.



Large protests in Europe and Latin America are expected on International Women's Day.



France will likely continue to see protests and strikes through March.



China's Two Sessions summit on March 4 could be key to determining policy going forward.



Expect continued protests in Israel over judicial reforms and violent clashes with Palestinians.

SCOPE NOTE ZeroFox Intelligence is derived from a variety of sources, including—but not limited to—curated open-source accesses, vetted social media, proprietary data sources, and direct access to threat actors and groups through covert communication channels. Information relied upon to complete any report cannot always be independently verified. As such, ZeroFox applies rigorous analytic standards and tradecraft in accordance with best practices and includes caveat language and source citations to clearly identify the veracity of our Intelligence reporting and substantiate our assessments and recommendations. All sources used in this particular Intelligence product were identified prior to 5:00 PM (EST) on February 28, 2023; per cyber hygiene best practices, caution is advised when clicking on any third-party links.



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Russia-Ukraine Conflict

February 24 marked the one-year anniversary of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In honor of the anniversary, Western leaders introduced new sanctions on Russia and advocated for continued unified support for Ukraine. Ukraine continues to urge national unity and made fresh requests for Western weapons. [1]

Forward Look:

Russian has embarked upon a new offensive eastern Ukraine, specifically in Luhansk Oblast with modest gains. This offensive push has lacked the overwhelming forces that first began the Russian invasion in 2022. Russia likely lacks the forces, weapons, and other materials necessary to achieve significant gains. Russia has committed 90 percent of its 316,000 mobilized troops to the front lines, meaning it does not have significant untapped and combat-ready reserves. [2]

Ukraine is maintaining its current defensive positions in the hopes it can fend off the Russian forces and cause them to expend large amounts of men and weapons. As the Russian offensive continues, advanced Western weapons will arrive in Ukraine. After the Russians have exhausted significant numbers of troops and supplies during its offensive campaign, Ukraine then plans to utilize the Western weapons to launch its own offensive and regain territory in the spring.

Russia continues to cement relationships with other authoritarian governments to acquire weapons and supplies, including North Korea and Iran. U.S. officials are notably concerned China is considering providing Russia with lethal military support. Russia will continue to seek these relationships, as its military industrial complex cannot keep pace with the war effort. [3]

Moldova - Security Concerns

On February 13, Moldovan President Maia Sandu announced the recent discovery of Russian plans to destabilize Moldova and overthrow her pro-EU government. She detailed how Russia planned to disguise saboteurs with military training as peaceful protestors, who would launch violent attacks, seize control of government buildings, and take hostages. [4] On February 19, the pro-Russian Shor Party sponsored a mass protest in the capital, Chişinău, which officials were concerned could be a part of the Russian plot. [5]

On February 21, Russian President Vladimir Putin revoked a decree that had affirmed Moldova's sovereignty over the separatist region of Transnistria, indicating a possible reversal of Russian foreign policy over the region. [6]

Forward Look:

Moldova will likely continue to face security concerns from Russia; however, Russia does not have the troops to commit an invasion. Russia would need to use asymmetric tactics to disrupt the Moldovan government, which could include disinformation campaigns, cyberattacks, supporting separatists, and promoting the Shor Party.

European Protests and Policy Updates

- **UK:** Budget day protests on March 15, 2023
- **Bulgaria:** More parliamentary elections on April 2, 2023
- **France:** Nationwide protests on March 7, 2023
- **Belgium:** Upcoming strikes from March 6-10, 2023
- **Netherlands:** Rotating transportation strikes likely through April 2023

Forward Look:

- On March 15, the UK government will deliver the annual budget. Unions and workers' groups are expected to announce protests and work stoppages on and around that day. The largest London Underground service union, Aslef, has already announced strike action, as have civil servants from the Public and Commercial Services union. The last time Aslef held a London Underground strike in 2015, the entire network had to shut down. Similar strike action is likely along the entire UK transportation network, as well as among teachers and medical workers.
- Bulgaria is planning its fifth parliamentary election in two years on April 2. Following the last elections, a government has either not been formed, necessitating a new election shortly after, or a government formed briefly but then collapsed. The political instability has impacted other Bulgarian objectives like joining the EU, adopting the Euro currency, and shaping its stance on Russia's war in Ukraine.
- The next protests against proposed pension reform in France are set for March 7. Transportation unions and opposition political parties are leading the nationwide events, which are expected to attract over one million participants. This will be the sixth day of strike action since centrist President Emmanuel Macron officially tabled measures to raise the retirement age from 62 to 64 six weeks ago.
- Protesters staged strikes on February 7, 11, and 16 but have paused for three weeks during school holidays. Further protests in quick succession are expected, as Parliament is debating the bill, and a final version is needed by March 15. Chemical workers, including those at oil refineries, have already announced a strike for March 6, and March 8 is International Women's Day, which will also attract protests. On March 7, expect public transportation to operate at about one-third of its capacity and for only minimal public services, like emergency medical services. The largest protests are expected in the main cities of Paris, Lyon, and Marseille. Protesters, who have kept their protests to one day to maintain public support, are likely to merge into multi-day rolling protests if the reforms are not amended to their satisfaction. [7]
- Belgium will have a series of labor strikes starting on March 6 and culminating with a nationwide transportation strikes on March 10.

FOOTNOTES

- [1] [hXXps://www.reuters.com/world/us-targets-russia-with-sanctions-tariffs-ukraine-war-anniversary-2023-02-24/](https://www.reuters.com/world/us-targets-russia-with-sanctions-tariffs-ukraine-war-anniversary-2023-02-24/)
- [2] [hXXps://www.understandingwar.org/background/ukraine-conflict-updates](https://www.understandingwar.org/background/ukraine-conflict-updates)
- [3] [hXXps://www.wsj.com/articles/as-china-calls-for-peace-u-s-believes-beijing-is-mulling-artillery-and-drone-deliveries-to-moscow-aee2b62a](https://www.wsj.com/articles/as-china-calls-for-peace-u-s-believes-beijing-is-mulling-artillery-and-drone-deliveries-to-moscow-aee2b62a)
- [4] [hXXps://www.moldpres.md/ru/news/2023/02/13/23001132](https://www.moldpres.md/ru/news/2023/02/13/23001132)
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- [6] [hXXps://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-cancels-decree-underpinning-moldovas-sovereignty-separatist-conflict-2023-02-22/](https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/putin-cancels-decree-underpinning-moldovas-sovereignty-separatist-conflict-2023-02-22/)
- [7] [hXXps://www.rfi.fr/en/france/20230226-what-comes-next-in-france-s-fight-over-pension-reform](https://www.rfi.fr/en/france/20230226-what-comes-next-in-france-s-fight-over-pension-reform)



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Peru

- Protests in Peru will continue to decline in March 2023.
- The political situation and risk of protests reigniting will remain constant in 2023.
- Protesters will continue to call for new elections and the release of former President Pedro Castillo.
- A state of emergency in southern Peru will remain until at least April 6 2023.[8]

> Forward Look:

- Protests against the interim government of President Dina Boularte subsided in February and will likely remain muted in March 2023. However, the underlying cause of the protests, mainly anti-government sentiment in southern Peru against elites in northern Peru, will likely resurface.
- The easing of protests will weaken the strains on supply chains from Peru's important agricultural and mining sectors, which are based in the south. This could see an economic improvement.
- Protests could resume over key court decisions regarding imprisoned former President Castillo. Congress continues to reject moving the 2026 election forward to 2023 or 2024.

Northern Ireland Protocol

- UK and EU come to key economic agreement on Northern Ireland Protocol that could lead to social unrest [9]
- Deal pending acceptance by EU member states and UK and Northern Irish parliaments
- Key economic benefits for the UK if accepted

> Forward Look:

- On February 27, UK PM Sunak announced a key agreement with the EU regarding the Northern Ireland Protocol (NIP). The NIP was arguably the most difficult aspect of the UK and EU's Brexit agreement because it related to the one part of the UK that shares a physical border with an EU state, Ireland. The EU requires extensive checks on trade with non-EU border states that could have required a physical border wall between Northern Ireland and Ireland, potentially leading to sectarian violence between Catholics and Protestants on both sides and major trade issues.
- The updated NIP agreement includes a "green trade lane" for goods traded between the mainland UK and Northern Ireland and a "red trade lane" for goods going into Ireland or elsewhere into the EU. It is unclear whether the UK or the EU's laws will apply if a disagreement arises. Sunak said the UK will be able to veto the agreement if they do not like how it is going. The EU said it has the final say in legal disputes.
- The deal is seen as a political success for Sunak, although it still needs to be approved by EU member states—which are expected to do so—the UK parliament, and the Northern Irish parliament, where acceptance is unclear. In Northern Ireland, a lack of acceptance could lead to political deadlock and further acts of violence. In the week preceding the deal, there were two sectarian attacks in Northern Ireland and there have been a steady amount of attacks in recent years as developments emerged regarding potential changes to the NIP. Expect more attacks in the coming weeks and months.

Latin American Political Updates

- **Colombia:** Mid-sized anti-government protests likely to continue in March 2023
- **Nicaragua:** Opposition crackdown and overtures to largest trading partner, the United States, will continue
- **Ecuador:** President Lasso emerges weakened after failed referendum
- **Mexico:** Protests over electoral reform and counter protest on March 18, 2023[10]

> Forward Look:

- Colombia's opposition protest movement has struggled to exert influence on President Gustavo Petro, who took office in July 2022. However, the Colombian economy is likely to weaken in 2023, and the initial signs of a protest movement are emerging. If the economy continues to slow and Petro struggles with reforms, the movement could grow. Further protests are likely in March 2023 in Colombia's main cities.
- In February 2023, Nicaragua released political prisoners, many of whom went to the United States—a sign that President Ortega's authoritarian government realized it could no longer isolate its largest trading partner, the United States. However, a full reopening is unlikely, and opposition dissent will remain intolerable.
- Opposition protesters in Mexico are planning nationwide events against electoral reform passed by President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's (AMLO) Morena party. The reform of the National Electoral Institute (INE) will slash INE's budget, reduce its staffing, and lead to the closure of many of its local offices. A counter protest is planned for March 18 in Mexico City.

Latin American Security Updates

- **El Salvador's** anti-gang crackdown goes regional in March 2023
- Weather events causing supply chain disruptions regionally
- **Bolivia:** Anti-government protests subside in February and March 2023
- **Chile:** Northern state of emergency to combat immigration; southern state of emergency until May 2023[11]

> Forward Look:

- El Salvador's national anti-gang state of emergency will hit the one-year mark in March 2023. Other countries across the region, including Ecuador, Honduras, and Guatemala, are embracing the popular tactics. Opposition leaders in other countries are also supporting it and calling for similar measures as a wedge issue. El Salvador's weak economy is the main issue that could see the policy backfire.
- Flooding impacting Brazil, forest fires in Chile, and drought in Argentina and Uruguay are expected to continue in March.
- Bolivian protests subsided in February and will likely remain smaller in March. The protests represent deep-seated fissures between the opposition and the government of President Luis Arce, which has recently arrested key opposition figures.
- Protests will likely resurface throughout 2023.

FOOTNOTES

[8] <https://www.voanews.com/a/crisis-hit-peru-expands-state-of-emergency/6949343.html>

[9] <https://www.bbc.com/news/live/uk-politics-64779415>

[10] <https://www.jornada.com.mx/notas/2023/01/26/politica/el-18-de-marzo-fiesta-en-el-zocalo-por-el-rescate-de-pemex-y-cfe-amlo/>

[11] <https://www.infobae.com/america/america-latina/2023/02/26/chile-militariza-su-frontera-norte-los-detalles-del-decreto-que-habilita-el-uso-de-las-ffaa-para-frenar-el-paso-illegal-de-inmigrantes/>



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China Two Sessions Summit

- China Two Sessions Conference on March 4, 2023[12]
- President Xi Jinping preparing a restructuring on the tech and finance sectors, which have been harmed by a regulatory crackdown in recent years

> Forward Look:

- On March 4, China will hold several important government meetings, called Two Sessions, that will be key to determining its domestic and international policy in the coming years. Ahead of these, President Xi vowed to have a forceful government restructuring plan that would include the finance and technology sectors. It is unclear what this overhaul means, but it could suggest tighter government control over those sectors. If this is the case, it will likely harm international business sentiment towards China. Since China ended its COVID-19 restrictions in December 2022, it has sent out strong signals that it is focusing on economic growth and elevating the private sectors, including tech and real estate, which had been impacted by a regulatory crackdown that preceded the COVID-19 pandemic.

African Political Developments

- **Mozambique:** Proposed constitutional amendments to eliminate positions and allow third presidential term[13]
- **Ethiopia:** Massive refugee influx from Somalia
- **Burkina Faso:** Jihadists attacks continue; coup leaders across West Africa consolidate political power

> Forward Look:

- On February 23, the ruling Frelimo party of President Filipe Nyusi announced it was seeking to change the constitution in order to remove the requirement to hold elections for district administrators. The constitutional clause regarding district administrators was inserted in 2019 and allows for voting for district administrators to serve alongside similar administrators appointed by the office of the presidency. There are essentially duplicated positions that, when held by rival political parties, can create political impasses. Similar duplicated positions exist with elected governors competing with president-appointed state secretaries. The state secretaries were announced by Nyusi to act as a counterweight in states where Frelimo lost to the largest opposition party, Renamo. The constitutional changes are likely to lead to further efforts by Nyusi to seek a constitutional change permitting a third term. Since the end of the civil war between Renamo and Frelimo in the 1990s, Mozambican presidents, all Frelimo, have tried and failed to get a third term, but Nyusi has the best chance. Mozambique holds presidential elections in late 2024.
- Nearly 100,000 Somalis have fled to Ethiopia to escape violence from the disputed region of Somaliland. This creates potential security issues for the large neighboring states of Kenya and Ethiopia.

China Backing Russia

- China's explicit backing of Russia over its war in Ukraine will likely continue.
- China released a peace deal that was rejected by the West[14]
- Chinese military support for Russia would prompt a significant economic response from the West, but support on the scale that could change the outcome of the war is unlikely for now.

> Forward Look:

- One year into Russia's war against Ukraine, China offered a 12-point proposal to end the conflict calling for a cease-fire, peace talks, and an end to sanctions against Russia and the use of nuclear weapons. Both the EU and the United States questioned the credibility of China's position, claiming China's approach would help Russia use any pause in fighting to consolidate control over the territories illegally seized and replenish its forces for further attacks. China's deal was never likely to be accepted by the West, but is the first time China has taken a position on the war after months of trying to appease both sides. Russia has hurt China politically and economically with the war, but it remains a valuable ally. If China does escalate its support for Russia with more political or military aid, expect damaging economic sanctions from the United States. Given the vulnerable state of the Chinese economy, escalating its support for Russia beyond political rhetoric is unlikely.

Bird Flu's Impact on Supply Chains

- Ecuador has received four million bird flu vaccinations that it will start administering in the last week of February 2023. Latin America began reporting bird flu outbreaks in the fall of 2022, almost a year after North America and Europe reported damaging outbreaks that decimated poultry populations and led to an increase in the price of eggs in particular. The outbreak has not subsided, which is abnormal. Ecuador has lost about half a million birds since November 2022, and the industry is of vital importance to countless economies in the region.

> Forward Look:

- Farmers and customers have largely been against administering the vaccine. However, as this outbreak has not ended—unlike other seasons of bird flu—farmers are becoming more open to administering vaccines.
- In Cambodia, an 11-year-old girl died of bird flu and another family member was also infected, likely after coming into direct contact with an infected bird.[15] Human cases are extremely rare but could become more common as the virus spreads, and the UK's national health agency is the first to develop a plan if the virus becomes more common in humans. The strategy will be similar to COVID-19 prevention measures.

FOOTNOTES

[12] <https://www.verdade.co.mz/bancada-parlamentar-da-frelimo-antecipa-emenda-constitucional-para-evitar-eleicoes-distritais-em-2024/>

[13] <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/politics/article/3211875/china-two-sessions-2023-xi-jinping-vows-far-reaching-overhaul-finance-and-technology-sectors>

[14] <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/diplomacy/article/3211510/us-joins-eu-rejecting-beijings-peace-proposal-sanctions-more-chinese-firms>

[15] <https://www.euronews.com/next/2023/02/24/a-devastating-bird-flu-is-sweeping-the-world-but-is-it-a-threat-to-humans>



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Asia-Pacific Updates

- **Pakistan:** International Monetary Fund (IMF) deal likely in March 2023 [16]
- **Thailand:** PM announces House dissolution in early March; election on May 7, 2023
- **Japan:** New COVID-19 policies in effect March 13
- **India:** Using G20 presidency to call for reforms to IMF [17]
- **Vietnam:** Parliament to appoint new president in March 2023 as PM uses corruption drive to oust critics
- **Nepal:** Potential government collapse after coalition falls
- **Japan:** Unified local elections and by-elections for the House of Representatives to begin on April 9 and 23, 2023

> Forward Look:

- An IMF loan will help Pakistan avoid economic collapse, but some conditions—such as higher taxes on luxury imports and other tax increases—may cause political unrest. An already-large opposition movement could increase when the new austerity measures take effect. Pakistan has nationwide elections at the end of 2023, and the economic crisis and protests could see a political transition back to former Prime Minister Imran Khan, who was ousted in April 2022 but has since led a widespread protest movement calling for new elections. Pakistan has also announced snap provincial elections before June 2023 that could allow Khan's party gain more local power. Campaigning could also cause unrest in March.
- On February 21, Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-Ocha confirmed that the House of Representatives will be dissolved in early March, and a new election will be tentatively held by May 7. The four-year term of the House runs until March 24, but PM Prayut said the government would continue to work as a caretaker with or without a House dissolution until a new government is in place. Japan, Britain, and Italy are slated to hold defense ministerial meetings in Tokyo in March.[18] A major discussion topic will be international collaboration of new fighter jets.
- On April 9, 2023, the first round of Japan's unified local elections will begin. This first round consists of those running for prefectural governors, mayors for ordinance-designated cities, assembly members, and city council. On April 23, the second round of Japan's unified elections will begin.
- Critics argue the anti-corruption crackdown in Vietnam is an attempt by the ruling communist party and Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh to remove political opponents. Chinese President Xi was accused of the same when he assumed power in 2010.
- Nepal's government could collapse around March 9 during a new vote for President or during a no-confidence vote 30 days later.

Middle East Protests

- Protests in **Iran** saw a small resurgence in February after weeks of low activity. [19]
- Protests in **Israel** opposing the current government's efforts to curtail the authority of the High Court continue to be organized, drawing large participation. [20]

> Forward Look:

- Continued protests in Iran reflect simmering discontent with the government despite mass protests having largely subsided since the beginning of 2023. A harsh government crackdown, colder weather, and state executions of a handful of protesters have likely driven the movement underground. Small protest activities, such as refusal by women to don the hijab, will likely remain common. In the near to medium term, relatively small transgressions by the government may be met with disproportionately large responses by everyday Iranians.
- The recent introduction of legislation that would enable lawmakers to overturn High Court rulings with a bare majority drove massive participation at two daytime Jerusalem protests held outside the Knesset. Recurring Saturday evening protests have also been held throughout Israel, drawing especially large turnout in Tel Aviv. [21]

Additional Middle East Updates

- **Tunisia's** National Salvation Front, a coalition of political parties opposed to the policies of President Kais Saied, have called for a protest in Tunis on March 5. While a time and location have not been provided, most Front-organized protests have been held on Avenue Bourguiba near the Municipal Theater. [22]
- February's earthquake in **Turkey** and **Syria** has so far killed over 47,000 people and caused massive damage to buildings and infrastructure.

> Forward Look:

- Recent arrests of political and media leaders have prompted this latest call to protest. The arrests have also raised concerns internationally over perceived backsliding from the democratic breakthroughs of the last decade. Saied's popularity has waned but remains over 50 percent. Economic conditions in Tunisia remain dire, and the outcome of Saied's efforts to address them may determine whether he is able to maintain support.
- The earthquake has cost Turkey about USD 84 billion, equivalent to about 10 percent of its entire economy in 2022. Rebuilding will likely take years. Meanwhile, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has begun cracking down on construction companies ahead of important elections in May 2023.

FOOTNOTES

- [16] [hXXps://news.yahoo.com/pakistan-nears-imf-bailout-pact-100315694.html](https://news.yahoo.com/pakistan-nears-imf-bailout-pact-100315694.html)
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- [20] [hXXps://twitter.com/democratiOrg/status/1628674234418331650](https://twitter.com/democratiOrg/status/1628674234418331650)
- [21] [hXXps://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/b14u006eco#autoplay](https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/b14u006eco#autoplay)
- [22] [hXXps://www.webdoj.tn/fr/actualite/national/tunisie-samedi-14-janvier-journee-de-manifestations/201824](https://www.webdoj.tn/fr/actualite/national/tunisie-samedi-14-janvier-journee-de-manifestations/201824)



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Nigeria Election Outcome

- On March 1, 2023, the election commission announced that Bola Ahmed Tinubu of the ruling All Progressives Congress (APC) won the Presidential election.[23] By winning 36 percent of the vote and at least the 25 percent in at least 24 of the country's 36 states, there will be no second round vote.
- Nonetheless, his victory falls short of a majority, and his two primary opponents, Atiku Abubakar and Peter Obi, each commanded substantial vote totals of their own, and together won a majority of the vote. They have both protested voting irregularities and suggested that they will contest the election.

Forward Look:

- Tinubu has a difficult road ahead in unifying the country behind his leadership. Nigeria is a diverse country, with divisions along ethnic, religious, and territorial lines. Tinubu went against two unwritten rules, first by being a northerner running after another northerner had been president (typically the country has alternated between a president from the North and one from the South), as well as running on a dual-Muslim ticket (typically tickets include one Muslim and one Christian). This election demonstrated the deep fault lines in the country, and whether Tinubu can win over the predominantly Christian South, or the young voters who supported Peter Obi. Thus far, no major incidents have come to light that would allow an overturn of the election. Nor has widespread post-election violence broken out among supporters of these defeated candidates. Even without post-election violence, Tinubu will then be confronted with a worrying security situation and a struggling economy. Removing a key fuel subsidy will likely help the economy recover, but it could prompt violent protests over the cost of fuel.

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Cyber Updates

- EU** to launch new platform to counter disinformation campaigns from Russia and China
- Canada:** Google limits news access after media bill progresses
- Japan:** Major Japanese telecommunications company receives a cyber-attack on corporate networks
- North Korea:** Lazarus' new additions, Wslink Loader and WinorDLL64 Backdoor, target South Korean entities
- Colombia:** Key industries targeted in Spanish speaking countries on March 1, 2023[24]

APPENDIX: Traffic Light Protocol for Information Dissemination

TLP: RED

HOW IT IS USED

Sources may use **TLP: RED** when information cannot be effectively acted upon by additional parties and could lead to impacts on a party's privacy, reputation, or operations if misused.

HOW IT IS SHARED

Recipients may NOT share **TLP: RED** with any parties outside of the specific exchange, meeting, or conversation in which it is originally disclosed.

TLP: AMBER

HOW IT IS USED

Sources may use **TLP: AMBER** when information requires support to be effectively acted upon but carries risks to privacy, reputation, or operations if shared outside of the organizations involved.

HOW IT IS SHARED

Recipients may ONLY share **TLP: AMBER** information with members of their own organization and its clients, but only on a need-to-know basis to protect their organization and its clients and prevent further harm.

Note that
TLP: AMBER+STRICT restricts sharing to the organization only.

TLP: GREEN

HOW IT IS USED

Sources may use **TLP: GREEN** when information is useful for the awareness of all participating organizations, as well as with peers within the broader community or sector.

HOW IT IS SHARED

Recipients may share **TLP: GREEN** information with peers and partner organizations within their sector or community but not via publicly accessible channels.

TLP: CLEAR

HOW IT IS USED

Sources may use **TLP: CLEAR** when information carries minimal or no risk of misuse in accordance with applicable rules and procedures for public release.

HOW IT IS SHARED

Recipients may share **TLP: CLEAR** information without restriction, subject to copyright controls.

FOOTNOTES

[23] <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-64760226>

[24] <https://thehackernews.com/2023/02/apt-c-36-strikes-again-blind-eagle.html>

