



| Report |

Monthly Geopolitical Report September 2024

August 30, 2024

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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 5:45 PM (EDT) on August 29, 2024**; per cyber hygiene best practices, caution is advised when clicking on any third-party links.¹

Key Findings

- Although possible, a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas in the next several weeks is unlikely, which means international shipping and oil prices will remain volatile.
- Social unrest linked to France's government formation is very likely in September 2024.
- Germany's ruling political parties are likely to be defeated by a wide margin in a series of September state elections. Despite immigration being the primary campaign issue, Germany's sluggish economy is the bigger long-term threat to the country.
- Ukraine's unprecedented incursion into Russia will likely heavily influence its wartime strategy. Russian retaliation encompassing a range of hybrid measures is likely in the coming weeks.

¹ Report Purpose: The purpose of this report is to provide weekly updates on significant geopolitical occurrences and logistics developments, as well as potential impacts to the global supply chain.



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| Europe

Russia-Ukraine War Strategies Become Clearer

On August 6, Ukrainian forces launched an incursion into Kursk Oblast, Russia.² This operation marked the first time that official Ukrainian forces were deployed to Russian territory. Ukraine had previously backed small-scale incursions into Russian border regions, however, these attacks used volunteer pro-Ukrainian formations. In the three weeks since launching the Kursk offensive, Ukraine has captured about 500 square miles of territory, including over 100 settlements.³

The Kursk operation serves as an important signal that Ukraine maintains the ability to dynamically alter the state of the battlefield and has dealt a political blow to the Kremlin. The incursion marks the first time since World War II that a military has invaded and held Russian territory. Many Russians and military bloggers have criticized the military for failing to properly defend Russia's borders. However, the operation in and of itself is unlikely to end the conflict or bring Russia to the negotiating table. To prosecute the new offensive, Ukraine redeployed troops and equipment from critical areas of the front (such as Donetsk) to Kursk, which may increase the vulnerability of these areas.

- **Ukrainian Strategy:** The importance of Kursk reflects Ukraine's overall strategy for the future of the war. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has hinted that Kursk is one step in a new multiphase strategy to win the war and overcome the relative stalemate of the past two years. Zelensky said he plans to present Ukraine's new strategy to the United States this fall and hopes Ukraine's Western partners will assist with his plans. While details about what this plan entails remain unclear, airstrikes deep within Russian territory will likely be a key aspect. Politico recently reported Ukraine is preparing a list of targets within Russia that it would like to strike with U.S. long-range weapons.⁴
- **Russian Strategy:** Meanwhile, Russian troops in Donetsk Oblast are making steady progress on the Pokrovsk and Toretsk axes.⁵ Throughout August, Russian forces have

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² [hXXps://meduza\[.\]io/feature/2024/08/08/tretiy-den-nastupleniya-vsu-v-kurskoy-oblasti-ukrainskie-voennye-zakrepyayutsya-na-pozitsiyah-vokrug-goroda-sudzha-glavnoe](https://meduza.io/feature/2024/08/08/tretiy-den-nastupleniya-vsu-v-kurskoy-oblasti-ukrainskie-voennye-zakrepyayutsya-na-pozitsiyah-vokrug-goroda-sudzha-glavnoe)

³ [hXXps://www.washingtonpost\[.\]com/world/2024/08/27/ukraine-russia-zelensky-syrsky-kursk/](https://www.washingtonpost[.]com/world/2024/08/27/ukraine-russia-zelensky-syrsky-kursk/)

⁴ [hXXps://www.politico\[.\]com/news/2024/08/26/ukraine-biden-targets-russia-restrictions-00176377](https://www.politico[.]com/news/2024/08/26/ukraine-biden-targets-russia-restrictions-00176377)

⁵ [hXXps://deepstatemap\[.\]live/en#8/48.2630841/37.1887207](https://deepstatemap[.]live/en#8/48.2630841/37.1887207)



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made consistent, moderate gains towards Pokrovsk and are currently located about 10 kilometers away from the city. In mid-August, Pokrovsk officials issued mandatory evacuation orders for all families living with children and urged other citizens to leave the area as well.⁶ Russia can be expected to heavily target Pokrovsk over the coming weeks, and the capture of the city may be imminent. Pokrovsk is situated along key roads and railways and is a major logistics hub for the Ukrainian military. Ukraine uses Pokrovsk to supply troops across much of the Donetsk frontlines.⁷ If Russia is able to sever Ukraine's ground lines of communication in Pokrovsk, that would likely cut off supplies to some areas of the front and force Ukraine to identify alternate supply routes.

Bulgaria Heading to Further Elections in October 2024

On August 27, 2024, President Roumen Radev approved a caretaker cabinet that includes Dimitar Glavchev as caretaker Prime Minister for the second time. The proposed cabinet largely mirrors the incumbent one, with a notable change being the exclusion of the controversial Kalin Stoyanov as caretaker Interior Minister. Atanas Ilkov, another controversial figure and the current national police chief, has been nominated in his place. This nomination has sparked criticism given Ilkov's involvement in a failed 2014 police operation in Lyaskovets, which led to a police officer's death. These appointments set the stage for the upcoming early parliamentary election on October 27, 2024, officially decreed by President Radev.

- **Looking Forward:** This will be Bulgaria's seventh election in just over three years, reflecting the country's ongoing political instability; the frequent election cycles have also hindered the country's ability to adopt the euro currency and freedom-of-movement efforts afforded to European Union (EU) members. An eighth general election looks more likely than not, with none of the major political parties popular enough to govern alone and no viable coalitions emerging.

Violence and Anti-immigration Rhetoric Threaten German Elections

On September 1, 2024, the eastern states of Thuringia and Saxony will hold elections to determine the make-up of Parliament. The anti-immigration Alternative for Germany (AfD) is polling to finish first in Thuringia and make up one of the top two parties in Saxony; however,

⁶ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cr40wwzd4gyo>

⁷ <https://x.com/Tatarigami-UA/status/1828490940450746723>



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AfD is unlikely to lead Parliament, as other parties have refused to form a governing coalition with them. In this case, AfD could thwart the functioning of the government as an opposition party with as much as 30 percent support.⁸ While AfD is unlikely to lead any state parliament, these elections serve as a bellwether for future elections—particularly in Brandenburg, where the capital Berlin is located, on September 24 and the German national elections in late 2025.⁹

If AfD performs as expected in the Eastern elections, there will likely be increased focus on its primary campaign issues of limiting immigration and reducing aid to Ukraine. AfD campaign events have also been scenes of violence in recent months; several AfD members were attacked during campaigns for EU elections in May and June. Germany experienced a high-profile terror attack in the lead-up to the elections: a Syrian immigrant killed three people in an attack that was later claimed by the Islamic State (IS).¹⁰ It is unclear if the event will increase support for AfD.

Anti-immigration parties like the AfD are performing well across Europe, which has led to a spate of EU-backed initiatives in Africa. Spain announced key economic agreements with Mauritania that will provide economic aid in exchange for better control of outward migration to Europe. Denmark has also recently opened new embassies in the region, while France, Germany, and Italy have similar arrangements to Spain's. Anti-immigration parties have performed well in recent EU elections, and incumbent politicians are hoping that limiting migration can reverse those parties' political popularity.

- **2025 Elections:** Germany has announced the next general elections will be held in September 2025, and the September 2024 state elections are important bellwethers.
- **Sabotage:** In the lead-up to the EU elections in June, Germany witnessed a surge in attacks on politicians, some of which were attributed to Russian sabotage against supporters of Ukraine. There were also attacks on AfD candidates for their anti-immigrant positions.¹¹

⁸ [hXXps://www.rfi.fr/en/international-news/20240828-far-right-poised-for-gains-at-key-german-regional-polls](https://www.rfi.fr/en/international-news/20240828-far-right-poised-for-gains-at-key-german-regional-polls)

⁹

[hXXps://newsletter-tracking.dw.com/view/?at_dw_language=en&at_number=20240730&r=57371042945297280&id=3049480&pm_in=7](https://newsletter-tracking.dw.com/view/?at_dw_language=en&at_number=20240730&r=57371042945297280&id=3049480&pm_in=7)

¹⁰

[hXXps://www.spiegel.de/panorama/justiz/messerattacke-von-solingen-polizei-nimmt-mutmasslichen-attentaet-er-von-solingen-fest-a-491fcaef-3f0b-4319-86a0-7de47b407b89](https://www.spiegel.de/panorama/justiz/messerattacke-von-solingen-polizei-nimmt-mutmasslichen-attentaet-er-von-solingen-fest-a-491fcaef-3f0b-4319-86a0-7de47b407b89)

¹¹ [hXXps://www.dw.com/en/germany-far-right-afd-candidate-attacked-in-mannheim/a-69271485](https://www.dw.com/en/germany-far-right-afd-candidate-attacked-in-mannheim/a-69271485)



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- **Terrorism:** In the last year, German authorities have issued several warnings about the threat of lone actors inspired by groups like the IS or al-Qaeda and the Israel-Hamas war targeting large groups.¹² Security forces in eastern Germany will likely be on high alert for terrorist attacks especially at AfD-related campaign events.

Social Unrest Likely Linked to French Elections

French government formation is very likely to lead to social unrest, as President Emmanuel Macron is not allowing the election-winning coalition to form a government. This threatens to prompt major protests from supporters of the winning political coalition, Nouveau Front Populaire (NFP), which could result in substantial unrest across the country.¹³

The NFP won the majority of seats in France's recent elections, acceded to Macron's request for an "Olympic Truce," and waited to name its prime minister candidate until after the Games. However, the NFP proposed Lucie Castets as its choice, which Macron has refused to formally accept. Macron's grounds are that his centrist Ensemble coalition will reject any government that plans to implement the NFP platform, which mainly consists of lowering the retirement age and increasing benefit payments.¹⁴

This is unprecedented in France—typically the party that wins elections has the mandate to govern and draft legislation implementing its campaign trail policies. The opposition Rassemblement National (RN) is also likely planning to reject any government proposed by either Macron or the NFP; therefore, a government without Macron's approval would immediately fail.

- **Going Forward:** Macron is accused of attempting to exercise policy control over the new government that did win the July parliamentary elections. This is almost certain to prove unpopular with NFP voters, who are likely to protest en masse. The RN may separately protest in an attempt to win over disaffected NFP voters. As a result, rather than France's political situation solidifying after the recent elections, it appears that the situation will become more complicated.
- **Protest:** France has seen several rounds of violent protests in recent years linked to immigration, farmer subsidies, and raising the retirement age. Supporters of the NFP

¹² ZeroFox Intelligence Brief – Holiday Season Terror Threat Raises Global Alarm, December 8, 2023

¹³ <https://www.france24.com/en/europe/20240827-france-prime-minister-talks-government-drag-macron>

¹⁴

https://www.lemonde.fr/en/politics/article/2024/07/31/macron-looks-to-use-olympic-political-truce-to-hone-his-plan-for-a-new-prime-minister_6705879_5.html



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and RA were among the protest leaders; they are experienced and capable of protesting over the long term, which could lead to economic and social unrest.

| Middle East

Hezbollah and Israel Avoid All-Out War

During early morning hours local time on August 25, 2024, Israeli jets struck approximately 40 Hezbollah rocket and missile sites in Lebanon, in what officials described as a preemptive attack. Shortly thereafter, Hezbollah launched more than 200 rockets and drones at Israel in two waves. Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah stated that the operation was in retaliation for the July 2024 Israeli air strike that killed senior Hezbollah official Fuad Shukr, and the group “retain[s] the right to respond another time.”¹⁵

Despite the unprecedented scale of the attack, Israeli missile defenses were able to intercept most of the projectiles, and those that penetrated the system did not cause any casualties or significant damage to either military or civilian infrastructure. Since the attack, the fighting between Hezbollah and Israel has returned to the type of lower-level tit-for-tat strikes that have been seen since October 7, 2023.

In the Gaza Strip, Israeli forces remain concentrated in the Philadelphi Corridor in the southern area of the enclave and in the Netzarim Corridor, which bisects Gaza. From these strongholds, Israeli troops continue to launch sporadic offensives into populated areas, such as in and around Khan Yunis.¹⁶ Meanwhile, deadly airstrikes occur regularly across the territory; the confirmed death toll recently rose by about 40,000, according to Palestinian sources.¹⁷

As of writing, a further round of ceasefire talks are ongoing in Doha.¹⁸ However, hopes for a breakthrough dimmed in recent weeks. Some sources have blamed this on Israeli Prime

¹⁵

[hXXps://www.timesofisrael\[.\]com/nasrallah-falsely-claims-hezbollah-attack-was-success-reserves-right-to-strike-again/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/nasrallah-falsely-claims-hezbollah-attack-was-success-reserves-right-to-strike-again/)

¹⁶

[hXXps://apnews\[.\]com/article/gaza-hamas-war-displacement-palestinians-israel-f4833f8faf3cdb683e2ddd964767b438](https://apnews[.]com/article/gaza-hamas-war-displacement-palestinians-israel-f4833f8faf3cdb683e2ddd964767b438)

¹⁷ [hXXps://www.cnn\[.\]com/2024/08/15/middleeast/gaza-death-toll-40000-israel-war-intl/index.html](https://www.cnn[.]com/2024/08/15/middleeast/gaza-death-toll-40000-israel-war-intl/index.html)

¹⁸ [hXXps://www.jns\[.\]org/israeli-delegation-heading-to-doha-to-continue-hostage-talks/](https://www.jns[.]org/israeli-delegation-heading-to-doha-to-continue-hostage-talks/)



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Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has reportedly added demands and shown little flexibility for concessions.¹⁹²⁰

- **Looking Forward:** Despite Nasrallah's threats, Hezbollah's leadership has been consistently opposed to escalating the conflict with Israel into an all-out war. Therefore, it is unlikely that the group will undertake another attack similar in scale to that of August 25, 2024. However, despite promises to do so, Iran has yet to respond to the killing of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran on July 31, 2024. There were several reports indicating that Iran would hold off on its reprisal if a ceasefire agreement was reached between Israel and Hamas.²¹
- **Retaliation:** The shape of Iran's response is uncertain given the success Israel had in fending off both Iran's previous drone and missile attack in April 2024 and Hezbollah's recent launches. Therefore, the Islamic Republic may pursue more asymmetric means to reestablish deterrence and ward off further Israeli operations on Iranian soil. This could potentially take the form of sponsoring terror attacks inside Israel, similar to the failed suicide bombing in Tel Aviv on August 11, 2024. Iran could also seek to target softer Israeli assets abroad or oil and gas infrastructure in the Mediterranean. Regardless, like Hezbollah, Iran is highly likely to calibrate its retaliation to avoid a significant Israeli response that could lead to war between the two countries.
- **Ceasefire:** Going forward, the success of the ceasefire negotiations face several hurdles. One major obstacle is that it is likely that Netanyahu still views the end of the war in the Gaza Strip as an existential threat to his government and is therefore wary of agreeing to an extensive truce for his political preservation. Moreover, the killing of Haniyeh also paved the way for more militant anti-ceasefire elements of Hamas to take control of the group's political wing, which has a leading role in negotiations.²²²³ These factors—along with more practical concerns over Israeli troop presence along

¹⁹ [hXXps://www.ynet\[.\]co\[.\]il/news/article/yokra14053690](https://www.ynet.co.il/news/article/yokra14053690)

²⁰

[hXXps://www.reuters\[.\]com/world/middle-east/netanyahu-dispute-with-israeli-negotiators-over-ceasefire-conditions-source-says-2024-08-24/](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/netanyahu-dispute-with-israeli-negotiators-over-ceasefire-conditions-source-says-2024-08-24/)

²¹

[hXXps://www.reuters\[.\]com/world/middle-east/only-gaza-ceasefire-can-delay-irans-israel-response-sources-say-2024-08-13/](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/only-gaza-ceasefire-can-delay-irans-israel-response-sources-say-2024-08-13/)

²²

[hXXps://www.voanews\[.\]com/a/tough-talking-haniyeh-was-seen-as-the-more-moderate-face-of-hamas/7723880.html](https://www.voanews.com/a/tough-talking-haniyeh-was-seen-as-the-more-moderate-face-of-hamas/7723880.html)

²³ [hXXps://www.rferl\[.\]org/a/haniyeh-hamas-gaza-israel/33059019.html](https://www.rferl.org/a/haniyeh-hamas-gaza-israel/33059019.html)



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Gaza's border with Egypt—mean that, although it is possible that an agreement could be reached in the next several weeks, that outcome is unlikely.

| Latin America

Mexico: Controversial Judicial Reform Provokes Condemnation

In August 2024, the Constitutional Points Committee of Mexico's lower house of Congress approved Mexican president Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador's (AMLO) controversial judicial reform proposal. The 500 recently-elected Mexican deputies will vote on the constitutional bill following the start of the Mexican Congressional Session on September 1, 2024.²⁴ The judicial reform will alter Mexico's constitution to allow Mexican citizens to directly elect Supreme Court justices and other judges. As described by AMLO, the proposal is aimed at reducing corruption; however, critics claim it will grant AMLO's successor, President-elect Claudia Sheinbaum, greater power; eliminate important checks and balances within the Mexican government; and allow criminal interests to influence judges.²⁵ As a result of their criticism of the proposed reform, the Mexican government has paused its relationships with the U.S. and Canadian embassies in the country.²⁶ Following the announcement of the proposal, critics of the bill across the country have protested and threatened to hold further demonstrations.²⁷ Judicial workers in multiple states have protested and gone on strike, and the judiciary is threatening a further nation-wide strike if the proposal is carried forward.²⁸

- **Looking Forward:** The proposed bill will need a two-thirds majority vote to pass. President-elect Claudia Sheinbaum has stated her support for the bill; her and AMLO's party, National Regeneration Movement (MORENA), and its coalition allies hold a super-majority in the lower house but fall short in the Senate. They will need to gain support from opposition senators in order to approve the constitutional reform proposals. Further protests and strikes by Mexico's judiciary workers are to be expected as the bill moves through Congress in September 2024.

²⁴ [hXXps://mexiconewsdaily\[.\]com/news/mexico-judicial-reform-proposal/](https://mexiconewsdaily.com/news/mexico-judicial-reform-proposal/)

²⁵ [hXXps://www.miamiherald\[.\]com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/andres-oppenheimer/article291550830.html](https://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/news-columns-blogs/andres-oppenheimer/article291550830.html)

²⁶

[hXXps://www.reuters\[.\]com/world/americas/mexico-pause-relationship-with-us-embassy-after-judicial-reform-comments-2024-08-27/](https://www.reuters.com/world/americas/mexico-pause-relationship-with-us-embassy-after-judicial-reform-comments-2024-08-27/)

²⁷

[hXXps://www.elspectador\[.\]com/economia/habra-protesta-de-camioneros-este-viernes-30-de-agosto-por-que-motivo/](https://www.elspectador.com/economia/habra-protesta-de-camioneros-este-viernes-30-de-agosto-por-que-motivo/)

²⁸ [hXXps://www.24-horas\[.\]mx/2024/08/16/ocho-secciones-del-stpjf-apoyaran-paro-en-el-poder-judicial/](https://www.24-horas.mx/2024/08/16/ocho-secciones-del-stpjf-apoyaran-paro-en-el-poder-judicial/)



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- **Migration and Market Instability:** Following the news and pause of diplomatic relations, the Mexican peso was down 1.65 percent as of August 27, 2024. According to statements by the Canadian ambassador Graeme Clark, investors are worried about the effects the instability and Mexico's strained relations the United States and Canada will have on the three countries' free trade partnership.²⁹ In the event of withdrawal of foreign investors, further financial instability is possible in Mexico, which could in turn generate greater migration.

Venezuela: Maduro Consolidates Power as Protests Continue

In August 2024, there were four major protest movements challenging the results of the July 28 presidential elections that granted President Nicolas Maduro a third term in office. Despite the protests and reports that the United States has offered Maduro and his allies amnesty in exchange for giving up power, Maduro has moved forward with forming his next cabinet. Electoral and judicial authorities in Venezuela have also corroborated the results of the elections, removing the possibility of re-run elections or Maduro stepping down peacefully.³⁰

- **Looking Forward:** Further protests and pressure on Maduro are likely in the next month, but Maduro will likely respond with an even harsher crackdown on the opposition (thousands have already been arrested).
- **Migration and Oil Prices:** Venezuela's migration crisis is likely to worsen as the international community places more sanctions on the government, increasing its international isolation. However, a significant power shift is unlikely. Western governments are unlikely to impose the sort of pressure they did after the last elections, which included recognizing and paying for an alternative government. That pressure only increased Maduro's hold on power. Major international pressure could come after the U.S. elections in November. For now, the United States is likely to refrain from imposing additional sanctions on Venezuela that could worsen outward migration or cause a spike in oil prices.

²⁹ [hXXps://www.barrons.com/news/judicial-reforms-strain-mexican-us-ties-spook-investors-ddl20291](https://www.barrons.com/news/judicial-reforms-strain-mexican-us-ties-spook-investors-ddl20291)

³⁰

[hXXps://www.infobae.com/venezuela/2024/08/27/maria-corina-machado-aseguro-que-con-la-coordinacion-entre-fuerzas-internas-y-externas-se-lograra-el-cambio-en-venezuela/](https://www.infobae.com/venezuela/2024/08/27/maria-corina-machado-aseguro-que-con-la-coordinacion-entre-fuerzas-internas-y-externas-se-lograra-el-cambio-en-venezuela/)



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| Asia

Sri Lanka Presidential Election on September 21

On September 21, Sri Lanka will hold its first presidential election since an economic collapse in 2022 triggered nationwide protests and the resignation of then-leader Gotabaya Rajapaksa. Incumbent Ranil Wickremesinghe, Rajapaksa's parliament-appointed successor, will be running against 38 different challengers to keep office. Chief among the candidates are Sajith Premadasa, leader of the country's parliamentary opposition, and Anura Kumara Dissanayake, who leads a coalition that bills itself as the continuation of the 2022 protests.³¹ More recently, Namal Rajapaksa, nephew of the former president, announced his own bid.

Up until the summer of 2024, polls put Dissanayake in the lead followed by Premadasa, with Wickremesinghe trailing significantly.³² More recent polls have shown Wickremesinghe gaining ground on the two challengers, with Dissanayake and Premadasa neck-and-neck.³³ No polls have been conducted since Rajapaksa entered the race, and it is unclear how his candidacy will impact proceedings. Sri Lanka's ranked-choice voting system means that if no candidate wins more than 50 percent of the vote in the first round, voters' second- and potentially third-favorite candidates will be considered in selecting a winner.

- **Security Challenges:** Securing the election will strain Sri Lanka's police force, which faces a 30,000-officer shortage amid an ongoing crackdown on narcotics smuggling.³⁴ In response to the shortage, on August 27 President Wickremesinghe ordered the military to provide security in numerous districts including the capital, Colombo.³⁵
- **Economic Challenges:** Whoever wins the election will be under pressure to introduce reforms alleviating financial hardships for poorer Sri Lankans. The country is recovering from its worst economic crisis since it gained its independence in 1948. President Wickremesinghe implemented harsh austerity measures in coordination

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[hXXps://www.firstpost.com/world/sri-lanka-election-dissanayake-pro-2022-protest-leader-banks-on-working-class-13808705.html](https://www.firstpost.com/world/sri-lanka-election-dissanayake-pro-2022-protest-leader-banks-on-working-class-13808705.html)

³² [hXXps://ihp.lk/sites/default/files/press-release/IHPPressRelease20240329.pdf](https://ihp.lk/sites/default/files/press-release/IHPPressRelease20240329.pdf)

³³ [hXXps://ihp.lk/sites/default/files/press-release/IHPPressRelease20240704.pdf](https://ihp.lk/sites/default/files/press-release/IHPPressRelease20240704.pdf)

³⁴

[hXXps://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking-news/Sri-Lanka-braces-for-Presidential-election-amid-severe-Police-shortage/108-289958](https://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking-news/Sri-Lanka-braces-for-Presidential-election-amid-severe-Police-shortage/108-289958)

³⁵ [hXXps://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking-news/President-calls-Armed-forces-to-maintain-public-order/108-290441](https://www.dailymirror.lk/breaking-news/President-calls-Armed-forces-to-maintain-public-order/108-290441)



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with the International Monetary Fund that brought down inflation and stabilized the economy but also disproportionately raised the cost of living for middle- and working-class residents.³⁶ It is unclear if alleviating this problem would be healthy for economic recovery as a whole.

- **Between India and China:** The election winner could influence Sri Lanka's place in the ongoing competition in South Asia between India and China. Historically a close partner of India, Sri Lanka has more recently engaged with both powers to attract funding and spur economic growth. President Wickremesinghe is perceived as favoring India while still maintaining friendly relations with China. A victory by him or Premadasa would likely signal a continuation of current policies. On the other hand, Dissanayake has favored China in previous statements and could begin a shift away from India if elected.³⁷
- **Wider Regional Instability:** Instability in this election could impact the wider South-Asian region, where only India appears stable at the moment. Bangladesh recently suffered a military coup; Pakistan is on the verge of economic default while its most popular politician, Imran Khan, remains in prison; and rebels are making advances in Myanmar. A successful election process in Sri Lanka could help pave the way for peace in places like Bangladesh, which also need to organize elections after a period of widespread unrest.

Japan: Prime Minister Fumio Kishida to Resign in September 2024

Japanese Prime Minister (PM) Fumio Kishida announced he would not run in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party's (LDP) leadership election in September 2024. The move is effectively a resignation, with the winner of the internal party vote replacing Kishida as PM for the remainder of his term due to expire on October 31, 2025.³⁸

- **Looking:** PM Kishida's popularity has been dented due to scandals and sluggish economic growth. Kishida has prioritized increasing defense ties with the United States

³⁶

[hXXps://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/mi/research-analysis/sri-lanka-secures-imf-funding-austerity-measures-likely-to-wor.html](https://www.spglobal.com/marketintelligence/en/mi/research-analysis/sri-lanka-secures-imf-funding-austerity-measures-likely-to-wor.html)

³⁷

[hXXps://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3274831/china-or-india-sri-lankas-presidential-election-becomes-battleground-influence](https://www.scmp.com/week-asia/politics/article/3274831/china-or-india-sri-lankas-presidential-election-becomes-battleground-influence)

³⁸

[hXXps://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/kishida-s-abrupt-resignation-japan-leaves-decade-abe-s-influence-behind](https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/kishida-s-abrupt-resignation-japan-leaves-decade-abe-s-influence-behind)



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and resuscitating Japan's sluggish birth rate.³⁹ However, both issues have deeply indebted the country. Kishida is hoping his resignation will distance the LPD party from his lack of popularity in time for the next election. Major policy changes are improbable, with Japan making major investments in defense that are very unlikely to be reversed.

Indians Protest Against Sexual Violence

Throughout August, protests and strikes took place in many parts of India denouncing sexual violence against women. While much of this activity died down by the end of the month, activists continue to demonstrate in Kolkata, West Bengal, where a trainee doctor's alleged rape and murder on August 9 sparked the larger nationwide movement.⁴⁰ Some protesters in Kolkata have recently begun calling for the resignation of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Bannerjee, which has led to limited street clashes between supporters of the ruling All-India Trinamool Congress party and those of the state opposition led by the Bharatiya Janata Party. Larger protests have also seen clashes between demonstrators and police, who have used tear gas and water cannons to disperse crowds.

- **Looking Forward:** In the short term, protests in and around Kolkata will likely continue, during which clashes with police and rival groups cannot be ruled out. Intermittent protests in other major cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru are possible and will likely attract a high turnout when they do occur. While West Bengal Chief Minister Bannerjee is unlikely to resign under the current level of pressure, her resignation is possible if calls for her to vacate escalate significantly. Under Indian law, a chief minister's resignation would either lead to the state government appointing a replacement or the dissolution of the state legislature followed by a special election.

| Africa

Algeria Elections Set for September 7

Algeria is set to host its national elections on September 7, 2024. Incumbent President Abdelmadjid Tebboune is seeking a second term, and two presidential hopefuls were cleared

³⁹ [hXXps://asia.nikkei\[.\]com/Politics/Japan-s-Kishida-set-to-depart-with-defense-climate-funding-in-question](https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/Japan-s-Kishida-set-to-depart-with-defense-climate-funding-in-question)

⁴⁰ [hXXps://www.cbsnews\[.\]com/news/india-rape-case-doctor-strike-murder-of-trainee-kolkata-hospital-protests/](https://www.cbsnews[.]com/news/india-rape-case-doctor-strike-murder-of-trainee-kolkata-hospital-protests/)



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to run against Tebboune: Abdelalaali Hassani and Youcef Aouchiche.⁴¹ Hassani represents the Movement of Society for Peace (MSP) Party, a moderate Islamist party, while Aouchiche heads the Socialist Forces Front party, a moderate left-leaning party. A second round is possible if no candidate gets a majority.

- **Election Criticisms:** The election campaign has been marred by allegations of election rigging and a lack of transparency and fairness by critics.⁴² A major point of contention in the election process has been the difficulty in obtaining the required signatures to be considered as a presidential candidate; the policy effectively barred 13 hopeful candidates from entering the race. In early August 2024, three potential presidential candidates were also charged with election fraud while dozens of others, including government critics and politicians, were arrested ahead of the September 7 election. Critics of the government stated that the wave of arrests violated the integrity of the election in favor of incumbent President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, but Tebboune's administration claimed that the arrests were necessary to maintain national security.⁴³
- **Democratic Backsliding:** This is the first election since weeks of mass protests postponed the 2019 elections and forced then-President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to resign.⁴⁴ Thousands of supporters of the pro-democracy Hirak movement demanded Bouteflika's resignation in a series of weekly demonstrations. The protests continued for several months after Abdelmadjid Tebboune was declared President. The unrest resulted in mass arrests and a crackdown on protesters, and hundreds of activists that participated in the movement remain imprisoned.⁴⁵ Algeria's troubled history—coupled with high unemployment, political controversy, and difficult economic conditions—contribute to a potentially difficult election period.
- **Regional Instability:** Neighboring Tunisia is holding elections a month later, and opposition groups have made accusations of democratic backsliding in the

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[hXXps://www.rfi\[.\]fr/en/africa/20240826-algerian-election-campaign-begins-with-social-pledges-and-claims-of-unfair-play](https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20240826-algerian-election-campaign-begins-with-social-pledges-and-claims-of-unfair-play)

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ [hXXps://news\[.\]az/news/-how-could-the-september-elections-change-algeria-s-future](https://news[.]az/news/-how-could-the-september-elections-change-algeria-s-future)

⁴⁴

[hXXps://www.theguardian\[.\]com/world/2019/dec/13/algeria-braced-for-protests-as-former-pm-wins-presidential-election](https://www.theguardian[.]com/world/2019/dec/13/algeria-braced-for-protests-as-former-pm-wins-presidential-election)

⁴⁵

[hXXps://english.alarabiya\[.\]net/News/north-africa/2024/08/14/legacy-of-algeria-s-short-lived-pro-democracy-protests-lives-on](https://english.alarabiya[.]net/News/north-africa/2024/08/14/legacy-of-algeria-s-short-lived-pro-democracy-protests-lives-on)



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upcoming October elections.⁴⁶ Meanwhile, at the end of August, Libya closed all its oil fields over a dispute between rival militias that both claim to rule the country.⁴⁷ The Arab Spring of 2011 highlighted the region's vulnerability to widespread political change, particularly during periods of tension. Major political developments in Algeria have the potential to affect the political climate of other countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

- **Forward Looking:** The risk for lone-wolf attacks and social unrest remain high as the Sept. 7 election date nears. For instance, authorities detained dozens of individuals attempting to smuggle weapons into Algeria from France weeks before the election.⁴⁸ Additionally, elements of the Hirak movement may resurface in the upcoming elections, which may result in violent clashes between protesters and security personnel.⁴⁹

Mpox Spreads Globally

An outbreak of a different and more virulent strain of Mpox has been declared a global health emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO). The strain that circulated in 2022 was clade II; the form currently prompting concern is from clade I, which is estimated to cause more severe disease and higher mortality than clade II.⁵⁰ This form is primarily circulating in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), where an ongoing civil war has forced refugee dispersal across the region. In a region already struggling with war and poor baseline health, the WHO anticipates that Mpox could spread explosively.

- **Spread:** Most of the cases outside of the DRC have been reported in neighboring states, including Rwanda and Kenya. However, cases have also been reported in South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand.⁵¹ While the virus is less transmissible than COVID-19, Asian countries have already started restrictions and public health measures. Travel restrictions can also lead to reputational issues; China's reputation

⁴⁶ [hXXps://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/7/3/tunisia-saied-sets-presidential-election-date-for-october-6](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/7/3/tunisia-saied-sets-presidential-election-date-for-october-6)

⁴⁷ [hXXps://www.reuters.com/business/energy/oil-steady-players-take-stock-middle-east-supply-concerns-2024-08-30/](https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/oil-steady-players-take-stock-middle-east-supply-concerns-2024-08-30/)

⁴⁸

[hXXps://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20240826-algerian-election-campaign-begins-with-social-pledges-and-claims-of-unfair-play](https://www.rfi.fr/en/africa/20240826-algerian-election-campaign-begins-with-social-pledges-and-claims-of-unfair-play)

⁴⁹

[hXXps://english.alarabiya.net/News/north-africa/2024/08/14/legacy-of-algeria-s-short-lived-pro-democracy-protests-lives-on](https://english.alarabiya.net/News/north-africa/2024/08/14/legacy-of-algeria-s-short-lived-pro-democracy-protests-lives-on)

⁵⁰ [hXXps://www.niaid.nih.gov/diseases-conditions/mpox](https://www.niaid.nih.gov/diseases-conditions/mpox)

⁵¹ [hXXps://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/8/22/mapped-which-countries-have-reported-mpox-cases-so-far](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/8/22/mapped-which-countries-have-reported-mpox-cases-so-far)



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was damaged in places like Mexico over the travel restrictions it imposed during the H1N1 outbreak in 2009. China's reputation also suffered damaged over its role in the spread of COVID-19.

- **Vaccines:** Key to combating the virus is getting expensive vaccines into hotspot regions, primarily eastern DRC, which began arriving in late August.⁵²

⁵² <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cd734115e5eo>



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| Appendix A: Traffic Light Protocol for Information Dissemination

	Red	Amber
WHEN SHOULD IT BE 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.	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 MAY IT BE SHARED?	Recipients may NOT share TLP:RED with any parties outside of the specific exchange, meeting, or conversation in which it is originally disclosed.	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.
	Green	Clear
WHEN SHOULD IT BE 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.	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 MAY IT BE SHARED?	Recipients may share TLP:GREEN information with peers and partner organizations within their sector or community but not via publicly accessible channels.	Recipients may share TLP:CLEAR information without restriction, subject to copyright controls.



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Appendix B: ZeroFox Intelligence Probability Scale

All ZeroFox intelligence products leverage probabilistic assessment language in analytic judgments. Qualitative statements used in these judgments refer to associated probability ranges, which state the likelihood of occurrence of an event or development. Ranges are used to avoid a false impression of accuracy. This scale is a standard that aligns with how readers should interpret such terms.

Almost No Chance	Very Unlikely	Unlikely	Roughly Even Chance	Likely	Very Likely	Almost Certain
1-5%	5-20%	20-45%	45-55%	55-80%	80-95%	95-99%

