



| Report |

Monthly Geopolitical Report October 2024

September 27, 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 7:45 AM (EDT) on September 27, 2024**; per cyber hygiene best practices, caution is advised when clicking on any third-party links.¹

Key Findings

- Russia will likely deploy a range of hybrid war tactics to discourage Western states from allowing Ukraine to use longer-range weapons against Russia. This will include threats to use nuclear weapons, changes in military strategy, cyber influence operations, sabotage, and arming U.S. adversaries like the Houthis in Yemen.
- The military successes Israel is experiencing as it approaches the October 7 anniversary of Hamas' attack against it contrast with the military and intelligence failures of a year earlier.
- French left-wing protests have subsided but are likely to resume when the new government starts pursuing conservative policy positions.
- Smaller European states are holding elections in October 2024, where support for Russia and reducing immigration are leading opposition demands.
- The EU released its long-awaited competition report, which will dictate how most EU funds will be spent in the coming years while giving threat actors a list of targets.

Middle East

Hezbollah-Israel Risk All-out War Ahead of October 7 Anniversary

Ahead of the October 7 anniversary of the Hamas attack on Israel, which was widely seen as a military and intelligence failure, Israel is conducting a much more successful military assault against Hezbollah. On September 17, 2024, pagers held by Hezbollah members across Lebanon suddenly detonated, killing at least 14 people and wounding over 2,700 more. The next day,

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.



additional portable communication devices (most notably walkie-talkies) exploded, killing more than 40 and wounding several hundred.² These incidents were immediately blamed on Israeli intelligence services, who were reportedly able to insert explosives into the devices at some point in their supply chain, and marked the beginning of a serious Israeli-led escalation of the conflict. The following week, Israel launched several hundred airstrikes against Hezbollah positions, killing over 550 Hezbollah fighters and civilians, according to local sources.³ This included several major commanders, such as Ibrahim Kobeisi and Ibrahim Aqil.⁴ In response, Hezbollah has launched hundreds of rockets into Israel. While most of these projectiles have targeted the north of the country, on September 25, 2024, the group fired a ballistic missile toward Mossad headquarters north of Tel Aviv. Although the rocket was successfully intercepted, it marked the first attack of its kind since the beginning of the conflict in October 2023.⁵ Amid this escalation, Israel has deployed two combat divisions to the northern border and is planning to remobilize an additional two.^{6,7}

Meanwhile, combat continues in the Gaza Strip. On September 18, 2024, the Israeli military announced the deaths of four troops in the Tel Sultan neighborhood of Rafah. This toll included the first female soldier to be killed since the beginning of the offensive into the enclave.⁸ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is also reportedly considering ordering a siege against northern Gaza, where Israeli officials believe 5,000 Hamas fighters have sought refuge.⁹

- **Looking Forward:** Regardless of the marked increase in airstrikes and troop deployments, Israel still likely does not have enough mobilized troops or ammunition stockpiles to launch a major ground offensive against Hezbollah in the coming days.^{10,11} Even after the device attacks and more than a week of intense strikes, the militant group remains in control of an

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[hXXps://www.axios\[.\]com/2024/09/18/israel-detonates-hezbollah-walkie-talkies-second-wave-after-pager-attack](https://www.axios.com/2024/09/18/israel-detonates-hezbollah-walkie-talkies-second-wave-after-pager-attack)

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[hXXps://www.nbcnews\[.\]com/news/world/israel-hezbollah-lebanon-war-airstrikes-rocket-attacks-convoy-gaza-idf-rcna172386](https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/israel-hezbollah-lebanon-war-airstrikes-rocket-attacks-convoy-gaza-idf-rcna172386)

⁴ [hXXps://www.ynetnews\[.\]com/article/sjnvergr](https://www.ynetnews.com/article/sjnvergr)

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[hXXps://www.naharnet\[.\]com/stories/en/308226-hezbollah-fires-ballistic-missile-targeting-mossad-hq-near-tel-aviv](https://www.naharnet.com/stories/en/308226-hezbollah-fires-ballistic-missile-targeting-mossad-hq-near-tel-aviv)

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[hXXps://www.economist\[.\]com/middle-east-and-africa/2024/09/22/israel-and-hizbullah-creep-closer-to-all-out-war](https://www.economist.com/middle-east-and-africa/2024/09/22/israel-and-hizbullah-creep-closer-to-all-out-war)

⁷ [hXXps://www.jpost\[.\]com/breaking-news/article-821690](https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-821690)

⁸ [hXXps://www.timesofisrael\[.\]com/4-idf-troops-killed-several-hurt-during-fighting-in-southern-gazas-rafah/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/4-idf-troops-killed-several-hurt-during-fighting-in-southern-gazas-rafah/)

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[hXXps://www.reuters\[.\]com/world/middle-east/netanyahu-examining-siege-plan-hamas-north-gaza-israeli-media-report-2024-09-22/](https://www.reuters.com/world/middle-east/netanyahu-examining-siege-plan-hamas-north-gaza-israeli-media-report-2024-09-22/)

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[hXXps://www.timesofisrael\[.\]com/while-still-in-gaza-israel-has-no-good-options-in-lebanon-but-it-may-invade-anyway/](https://www.timesofisrael.com/while-still-in-gaza-israel-has-no-good-options-in-lebanon-but-it-may-invade-anyway/)

¹¹ [hXXps://www.jpost\[.\]com/israel-news/defense-news/article-810469](https://www.jpost.com/israel-news/defense-news/article-810469)



extensive tunnel network and possesses tens of thousands of medium and long-range rockets. It also has 30,000 to 50,000 infantry soldiers¹² whose ranks could be further bolstered by Iran-backed Iraqi special groups and Popular Mobilization Forces, who have pledged to support Hezbollah against an Israeli invasion.¹⁴ A major operation against Hamas in the northern Gaza Strip would also hamper Israel's ability to muster resources for such a campaign.

- **Wider War:** Despite these challenges, Israel's leadership appears determined to widen the scope of the war against Hezbollah. This means that it is possible, though unlikely, that Israel will undertake a limited ground assault surrounding the border in the coming weeks and months. This potential outcome has alarmed the international community enough that France and the United States are leading the push for an immediate 21-day ceasefire. However, it is unclear if either side will be willing to halt the fighting.¹⁵

| Europe

Russian Tactics in Ukraine Will Focus on Deterring Long-Range Missiles

Ukrainian tactics against Russia will likely focus on placing further pressure on its international backers to allow Ukraine to strike further into Russia. Russia, in turn, will likely look for ways to convince NATO not to permit Ukrainian forces to strike deeper within the country.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is visiting strategic U.S. election battleground states and meeting with elected officials, hoping to encourage them to permit Ukraine to strike deeper into Russia.¹⁶ Ukraine's ongoing incursion into the Kursk region of Russia and its recent attack on a major weapons depot outside of Moscow were likely partially designed to show the effectiveness of Ukraine's military and encourage the West to lift restrictions.¹⁷

- **Hybrid Measures:** Russia, on the other hand, will utilize a range of hybrid measures to discourage support for Ukraine. This could include threats to use nuclear weapons,

¹² <https://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep24667.5>

¹³ <https://www.cfr.org/background/what-hezbollah>

¹⁴

<https://www.pbs.org/newshour/world/iran-backed-groups-offer-thousands-of-fighters-to-help-hezbollah-against-israel>

¹⁵

https://www.timesofisrael.com/liveblog_entry/pm-told-mediators-he-backed-21-day-israel-hezbollah-ceasefire-before-it-was-announced-diplomat-tells-toi/

¹⁶

<https://www.cityandstatepa.com/politics/2024/09/top-house-republican-opens-probe-ukrainian-president-volodymyr-zelenskyy-visit-scranton-army-ammunition-plant/399825/?oref=cspa-homepage-river>

¹⁷ <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c30lp1qq6pzo>



changes in military strategy, cyber-influence operations, sabotage, and arming U.S. adversaries like the Houthis in Yemen. During a key meeting between Zelenski and U.S. and UK officials, Russia targeted a grain ship in Romanian territorial waters in the Black Sea, prompting an increase in grain prices.¹⁸ The attack—the first in months—was likely designed to weaken Western resolve to back Ukraine; Europe, in particular, likely ties attacks on food and energy shipments to its heightened cost of living since the war began. Expect similar attacks on food supplies if long-range weapons are permitted.

- **Elections Influencing:** Europe hosts a number of key elections in October in which ties to Russia and the war's impact on the cost of living and immigration are key political issues. Russia is likely to utilize a range of hybrid measures to influence these elections. In Moldova, which borders Ukraine, election officials are concerned with sabotage and physical attacks, while Russia is likely backing parties in Austria, Bulgaria, and Georgia (where reducing support for Ukraine is a key policy position of leading parties). Similar parties recently performed well in multiple local elections in Germany in September 2024.

France: Opposition Awaiting Flashpoint Before Likely Social Unrest

Two months after holding legislative elections, France formed a new government under conservative Prime Minister Michel Barnier. Barnier's appointment has prompted anger primarily from left-wing parties who feel betrayed by President Emmanuel Macron. The new government is a mix of ministers from Macron's party, other centrist groups, and members of Les Republicains, a right-wing party that finished fourth in the elections. Voters for the left-wing Nouveau Front Populaire (NFP), which finished first but without a majority, expected to have a bigger say in choosing the PM¹⁹.

- **Protests Forthcoming:** The formation of the government without major disruptions suggests a temporary reduction in protest action in France and weeks of protests leading up to the election and Olympics in July 2024. However, this deep sense of betrayal remains potent among the left wing and could be reanimated when and if the government begins pursuing a right-wing policy. Expect further periods of social unrest and protests before 2025.

Austria: Protests Ahead of Elections on September 29, 2024

On September 29, 2024, Austria will hold national elections to determine the makeup of the next government. The anti-immigration Freedom Party (FPÖ) is polling to win the most votes but would still need to form a coalition to form a government. The ruling conservative Austrian People's Party

¹⁸[hXXps://www.navalnews\[.\]com/naval-news/2024/09/civilian-grain-ship-hit-by-russian-kh-22-missile-in-black-sea/](https://www.navalnews.com/naval-news/2024/09/civilian-grain-ship-hit-by-russian-kh-22-missile-in-black-sea/)

¹⁹[hXXps://www.aljazeera\[.\]com/news/2024/9/7/turn-to-the-right-what-macrons-choice-of-barnier-as-pm-means-for-france](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/7/turn-to-the-right-what-macrons-choice-of-barnier-as-pm-means-for-france)



(OVP) and center-left Social Democrats (SPO) are polling in second and third place, respectively.²⁰ OVP could form a coalition with its existing coalition partners, the liberal NEOS or the Greens, instead of one with FPO, where it may have to be the junior partner. Expect coalition building to take several months.

- **Protests:** Expect protests against FPO policies, which include forced re-immigration, in the lead-up to the election.
- **Russia Ties:** Austria has been heavily criticized for not reducing its dependence on Russian gas since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.²¹ Most parties, apart from FPO, have plans to drastically reduce Russian gas imports. Like sister right-wing parties across Europe, FPO members have called for reducing support for Ukraine, blaming it for Austria's high cost of living.

Georgia: Protests over Ruling Party's Growing Ties to Russia

On October 26, 2024, Georgia will hold elections to determine the makeup of the 150-member parliament.²² The ruling Georgian Dream Party is polling to win a fourth consecutive term. Despite coming to office promising closer ties with the European Union (EU), Georgian Dream has made several overtures to Russia ahead of the election.

On September 17, 2024, Georgian lawmakers approved the law on "Family Values and Protection of Minors," which curbs the rights of the LGBTQ+ community and prohibits cultural events such as pride marches. The law is styled off a similar law in Russia and is the latest example of the close ties between Georgian Dream and Russia.²³

- **Looking Forward:** In May 2024, Georgian Dream pushed through another law that mirrors one in Russia restricting foreign media;²⁴ in September, Georgia apologized for its role in the 2008 war with Russia over the semi-autonomous region of Southern Ossetia, which Georgia considers part of its territory.²⁵ While a majority of Georgians prefer closer ties with

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[hXXps://www.bmeia\[.\]gv\[.\]at/en/travel-stay/living-abroad/elections-and-direct-democracy/parliamentary-elections-2024](https://www.bmeia.gov.at/en/travel-stay/living-abroad/elections-and-direct-democracy/parliamentary-elections-2024)

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[hXXps://www.politico\[.\]eu/article/austria-looks-at-early-exit-from-russian-gas-deal-as-reliance-on-moscow-deepens/](https://www.politico.eu/article/austria-looks-at-early-exit-from-russian-gas-deal-as-reliance-on-moscow-deepens/)

²² [hXXps://www.gmfus\[.\]org/news/georgias-2024-parliamentary-election-pre-election-risk-assessment](https://www.gmfus.org/news/georgias-2024-parliamentary-election-pre-election-risk-assessment)

²³ [hXXps://europeanconservative\[.\]com/articles/news/georgias-law-protecting-family-values-infuriates-brussels/](https://europeanconservative.com/articles/news/georgias-law-protecting-family-values-infuriates-brussels/)

²⁴ [hXXps://apnews\[.\]com/article/georgia-media-law-0b626b2cfe22761c03e6ccea1b2a59d1a](https://apnews.com/article/georgia-media-law-0b626b2cfe22761c03e6ccea1b2a59d1a)

²⁵ [hXXps://eurasianet\[.\]org/georgian-political-boss-insults-large-portion-of-electorate-with-apology-offer](https://eurasianet.org/georgian-political-boss-insults-large-portion-of-electorate-with-apology-offer)



the EU,²⁶ Georgian Dream remains the most popular party and will likely pursue closer ties with Russia if it wins re-election.

- **Social Unrest:** The last year has seen several periods of mass protests against Georgian Dream policies; such demonstrations are likely in the run-up to and the aftermath of the elections. Before the protests of the last year, Georgia experienced years of destabilizing protests and short-lived governments. A similar period of instability is likely in the short term. Georgia's closer ties with Russia have already weakened its bond with the United States.

Moldova: Presidential Elections and Referendum on Joining the EU on October 20, 2024

On October 20, 2024, Moldova will hold presidential elections and a referendum vote on joining the EU. Incumbent President Maia Sandu is likely to win the elections, but with 10 other candidates participating, she is unlikely to win a majority.²⁷ Voters are also likely to support EU membership. Since Russia's war in Ukraine and with Sandu at the helm, Moldova has been a vocal supporter of Ukraine.

- **Russian interference:** Of all the October European elections, Moldova's is likely the most important for Russia. The main opposition candidate, Renato Usatii, is backed by Moldova's pro-Russian opposition, and Moldova has two separatist regions, Transnistria and Gagauzia, that also support Russia.²⁸ Russia has been credibly accused of interfering in the election, and Moldova has close energy and economic ties with Russia, which have been threatened since the war in Ukraine. Expect continued Russian-backed efforts to interfere in Moldovan society before and after the elections, especially as Moldova has parliamentary elections in 2025 and pursues EU membership going forward.²⁹

²⁶

[hXXps://www.politico\[.\]eu/article/georgia-not-ready-eu-membership-georgian-dream-irakli-garibashvili-russian-law-agent-bill-protest-tbilisi/](https://www.politico.eu/article/georgia-not-ready-eu-membership-georgian-dream-irakli-garibashvili-russian-law-agent-bill-protest-tbilisi/)

²⁷

[hXXps://www.gmfus\[.\]org/news/republic-moldova-2024-presidential-election-and-eu-referendum-pre-election-risk-assessment](https://www.gmfus.org/news/republic-moldova-2024-presidential-election-and-eu-referendum-pre-election-risk-assessment)

²⁸[hXXps://www.crisisgroup\[.\]org/europe-central-asia/eastern-europe/moldova/b97-moldova-divided-easing-tensions-russia-meddles](https://www.crisisgroup.org/europe-central-asia/eastern-europe/moldova/b97-moldova-divided-easing-tensions-russia-meddles)

²⁹[hXXps://www.ispionlin\[.\]it/en/publication/three-crucial-elections-on-moldovas-european-path-176411](https://www.ispionlin[.]it/en/publication/three-crucial-elections-on-moldovas-european-path-176411)



EU Competitiveness Report Calls for EUR 800 Billion in Spending Every Year

On September 9, 2024, former Italian Prime Minister and European Central Bank head Mario Draghi released a report on the overall competitiveness of EU industries and the wider economy.³⁰ A lack of competitiveness among EU industries sector-wide was blamed for the sluggish EU growth rates and higher inflation compared to its Western peers. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, who asked Draghi to write the report, will decide which aspects of the report to pursue, and then the EU Parliament will need to pass measures to accomplish the recommendations.

- **Spending:** Draghi's report called for an annual EUR 800 billion in investments into EU industries via bonds.³¹ This would go towards investing in EU technology and defense companies, which are widely believed to be inferior to U.S. and Chinese ones. It would also include spending on clean technology and critical minerals. The lack of EU mineral production makes developing advanced technologies that require those minerals difficult. Also, EU companies suffered higher inflation—partially because of their reliance on energy imports, which became significantly more expensive after Russia's war in Ukraine raised the cost of natural gas. Draghi proposes EUR 500 billion to decarbonize energy-intensive industries like chemical production and EUR 100 billion in annual spending on clean transportation networks.³²
- **Economic Wide Project:** While only certain sectors were mentioned, the report is designed to influence the whole EU economy, and there will likely be additional direct and indirect funding across the economy. For example, supply chains will be impacted because there will be an emphasis on sourcing within the EU. Also, sectors like agriculture will likely see additional funding to decarbonize its supply chains, which includes transporting goods and ways to bring the costs of EU agricultural production down to levels seen elsewhere.
- **Weaknesses:** The report telegraphs economic sectors of importance for the EU, giving financially and geopolitically motivated threat actors valuable targets. Threat actors eager to thwart the development of EU technology companies could engage in cyber espionage to steal its ideas, while financially motivated threat actors could increase targeting of critical industries, knowing they are more likely to cause massive disruptions that could facilitate the payment of a ransom.

³⁰

[hXXps://commission.europa\[.\]eu/topics/strengthening-european-competitiveness/eu-competitiveness-looking-ahead_en](https://commission.europa.eu/topics/strengthening-european-competitiveness/eu-competitiveness-looking-ahead_en)

³¹ [hXXps://commission.europa\[.\]eu/document/download/97e481fd-2dc3-412d-be4c-f152a8232961_en](https://commission.europa[.]eu/document/download/97e481fd-2dc3-412d-be4c-f152a8232961_en)

³² *Ibid.*



| Latin America

Venezuela: Maduro Looking to Eliminate Opposition Before 2025 Inauguration

In mid-September 2024, Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia fled to Spain, evading an arrest warrant for declaring himself the rightful winner of the late July presidential elections.³³ The government of President Nicolas Maduro likely welcomed his departure, as it deprived the opposition of a key rallying point. However, Gonzalez has been surprisingly vocal since arriving in Spain, and in late September, he was successful in getting both Spain and the wider EU Parliament to recognize him as the rightful president-elect of Venezuela.³⁴ While most of the international community recognizes Gonzalez as the winner of the elections, the EU initially rejected recognizing him while the U.S. is continuing to only call him the winner of the elections and not the President-elect of Venezuela. After the previous Venezuelan elections in 2018, the United States and the EU both recognized an alternative government led by Juan Guaido instead of Maduro.³⁵ However, their support for Guaido ultimately empowered Maduro, and they have largely decided against utilizing the same techniques this time.

- **Looking Forward:** It is unclear how vociferous EU support for a Gonzalez government will be. Gonzalez's support is largely borrowed from Maria Corina Machado, a more popular opposition figure who remains in Venezuela. Both Gonzalez and Machado will likely escalate the protest activity in the lead-up to the January inauguration of Maduro as president in hopes that protests and international pressure will see Maduro's allies in the military and judiciary abandon him, paving the way for a power transition.
- However, this is very unlikely, as Venezuelan protests since the election have diminished following a crackdown on security forces.³⁶ Furthermore, the United States has so far declined to lend more support to a possible Gonzalez government ahead of its own elections—likely because doing so would worsen the cost-of-living and migration crises in the United States. Going forward, expect a more radical and isolated Maduro government to persevere.

³³ [hXXps://es-us.noticias.yahoo.com/senado-espa%C3%B1ol-pide-reconocer-gonz%C3%A1lez-165022065.html](https://es-us.noticias.yahoo.com/senado-espa%C3%B1ol-pide-reconocer-gonz%C3%A1lez-165022065.html)

³⁴

[hXXps://www.infobae.com/espana/2024/09/19/el-parlamento-europeo-reconoce-a-edmundo-gonzalez-como-presidente-de-venezuela-con-el-apoyo-de-la-extrema-derecha/](https://www.infobae.com/espana/2024/09/19/el-parlamento-europeo-reconoce-a-edmundo-gonzalez-como-presidente-de-venezuela-con-el-apoyo-de-la-extrema-derecha/)

³⁵

[hXXps://www.telemundo51.com/noticias/venezuela/juan-guaido-muestra-firme-apoyo-a-edmundo-gonzalez-urrutia-asilado-en-espana/2576190/](https://www.telemundo51.com/noticias/venezuela/juan-guaido-muestra-firme-apoyo-a-edmundo-gonzalez-urrutia-asilado-en-espana/2576190/)

³⁶ [hXXps://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/venezuela-maduro/](https://www.gisreportsonline.com/r/venezuela-maduro/)



Mexico: Protests Likely Around Presidential Inauguration on October 1, 2024

October 1, 2024, will be a national holiday marking the transfer of power from President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador (AMLO) to his preferred successor, President-elect Claudia Sheinbaum. Ahead of the inauguration, there have been mass protests across Mexico City and at courthouses nationwide after AMLO successfully pushed judicial reforms through Congress. 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 Sheinbaum, greater power; eliminate important checks and balances within the Mexican government; and allow criminal interests to influence judges.³⁷

- **Looking Forward:** Going forward, elections for judges are likely to be marked by high rates of null or void votes, with voters unlikely to follow the politics of campaigning judges. This will likely result in elected judges being members of the ruling party or the party that wins the most recent election.
- **Economic relations:** More significantly, the reforms have drawn international criticism; the Mexican government has paused its relationships with the U.S. and Canadian embassies after criticism from their ambassadors.³⁸ An estimated USD 35 billion in foreign investment has also been paused over the reforms, which will likely continue to impact bilateral relations with the United States under Sheinbaum.³⁹

| Asia

Sri Lanka: New President Dissolves Parliament with New Elections on November 14, 2024

On September 24, 2024, recently elected President Anura Kumara Dissanayake dissolved parliament, paving the way for new elections on November 14, 2024—a year ahead of schedule.⁴⁰ During his dissolution speech, President Dissanayake called to renegotiate an International

³⁷ [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)

³⁸

[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/)

³⁹

[hXXps://pulsenewsmexico\[.\]com/2024/09/10/billions-in-foreign-investment-paused-over-mexicos-judicial-reform/](https://pulsenewsmexico.com/2024/09/10/billions-in-foreign-investment-paused-over-mexicos-judicial-reform/)

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[hXXps://www.wionews\[.\]com/south-asia/sri-lankan-president-calls-for-immediate-fresh-talks-with-imf-for-29bn-bailout-761992](https://www.wionews.com/south-asia/sri-lankan-president-calls-for-immediate-fresh-talks-with-imf-for-29bn-bailout-761992)



Monetary Fund (IMF) loan that was rushed through after mass protests in 2022 forced then-President Gotabaya Rajapaksa from the country.⁴¹ The protests were largely economic, as Sri Lanka's debt levels and weakened currency made it unable to import necessities like fuel and food. The IMF loan drastically reduced sky-high inflation and allowed Sri Lanka to resume imports but has come with unpopular austerity measures that have left the majority of the population in poverty.

- **Elections:** Dissanayake's National People's Power coalition has only three seats in Parliament,⁴² making it unlikely he could pass anti-corruption reforms and renegotiate the IMF loan currently. Efforts to renegotiate the loan are unpopular with foreign investors, who benefit from a divided Parliament that is likely to thwart Dissanayake's reforms. In the presidential elections held on September 21, Dissanayake won less than 50 percent of the vote—meaning that Parliamentary elections are unlikely to provide him with the majority needed to pass reforms unopposed in Parliament.
- **Regional Instability:** Sri Lanka's 2022 instability has been followed by mass protests in Pakistan in 2023, a coup in Bangladesh in August 2024, and an ongoing civil war in Myanmar. The issues underpinning the unrest across South Asia remain and impact the important manufacturing and technology industries across the region—including India, the sole stable country in the region.

Japan: Outside Replace Japan's Prime Minister Kishida on September 27, 2024

On September 27, 2024, Japan held elections for the leader of its ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). A month before the election, Prime Minister Fumio Kishida said he would not be running, and the winner of the election will replace Kishida and run as the LDP candidate in the 2025 elections. On October 1, Kishida and his cabinet ministers will resign. After a parliamentary endorsement, the new leader will then form a new cabinet.⁴³

A record nine candidates ran. Shigeru Ishiba, a former defense minister, ultimately won the inter-party vote.⁴⁴ Ishiba is considered a moderate outsider who even once defected from the LDP to join the opposition.

- **Looking Forward:** Under Kishida, Japan has abandoned decades of military appeasement, and its military budget has surged in recent years; Japan has also more

⁴¹ [hXXps://www.bbc\[.\]com/news/articles/cqxr03x4dvzo](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cqxr03x4dvzo)

⁴²

[hXXps://www.wionews\[.\]com/south-asia/sri-lankan-president-calls-for-immediate-fresh-talks-with-imf-for-29bn-bailout-761992](https://www.wionews.com/south-asia/sri-lankan-president-calls-for-immediate-fresh-talks-with-imf-for-29bn-bailout-761992)

⁴³ [hXXps://apnews\[.\]com/article/japan-party-ldp-kishida-leader-candidates-857cd2cafaff161c4845c0269733b098](https://apnews.com/article/japan-party-ldp-kishida-leader-candidates-857cd2cafaff161c4845c0269733b098)

⁴⁴ [hXXps://time\[.\]com/7024631/ldp-election-japan-politics-first-female-prime-minister/](https://time.com/7024631/ldp-election-japan-politics-first-female-prime-minister/)



forcibly confronted China and supported neighboring states like Taiwan and the Philippines, which have territorial disputes with China. This has likely dented Kishida's popularity, but a change in policy is unlikely going forward. However, it did likely influence the party's pick for its next leader. Ishiba's reputation as an outsider who is not a party loyalist likely factored into the decision to choose him, distancing him from some of the LDP's controversies under Kishida.

| Africa

Mozambique General Elections on October 9, 2024

On October 8, 2024, Mozambique will hold presidential, parliamentary, and provincial elections. The ruling Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO) party of outgoing President Filipe Nyusi is highly likely to win the most seats, resulting in the Presidency of Daniel Chapo.⁴⁵

- **Regionwide Political Apathy:** Like its southern neighbors in South Africa, Angola, and Zimbabwe, Mozambique has been ruled by only one party since independence. Like those countries, the majority of the voting-age population was not alive during the fight for independence, and popular support for these parties has waned in recent years. Recent elections in the region have seen ruling parties win by their smallest margins ever.
- **Election Rigging:** FRELIMO has been credibly accused of electoral fraud in most recent elections, including the October 2023 local elections that FRELIMO was forced to re-do in certain districts.⁴⁶ FRELIMO very likely lost those elections, despite official tallies indicating a large majority. Since the mass protest of 2023, there has been little change in FRELIMO's control of the electoral or judicial system, and a FRELIMO victory is very likely. The main opposition party, Resistência Nacional de Moçambique (RENAMO), has barely campaigned, and campaigning from the upstart Venâncio Mondlane of the Podemos party has been predictably hampered by judicial authorities who initially prohibited his participation.⁴⁷ This could lead to more large protest movements, likely by Mondlane supporters.

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[hXXps://www.voanews\[.\]com/a/campaigns-underway-in-mozambique-to-choose-next-president-/7757526.html](https://www.voanews.com/a/campaigns-underway-in-mozambique-to-choose-next-president-/7757526.html)

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[hXXps://www.africanews\[.\]com/2023/10/18/mozambique-opposition-denounces-fraud-in-local-election-amid-unrest/](https://www.africanews.com/2023/10/18/mozambique-opposition-denounces-fraud-in-local-election-amid-unrest/)

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[hXXps://clubofmozambique\[.\]com/news/mozambique-elections-venancio-mondlane-returns-to-maputo-266873/](https://clubofmozambique.com/news/mozambique-elections-venancio-mondlane-returns-to-maputo-266873/)



Tunisia Elections Set to Begin on October 6, 2024

Tunisia's national elections will begin on October 6, 2024, whereby incumbent President Kais Saied will run against politician and pan-Arabist Zouhair Magzhaoui and businessman Ayachi Zammel. On September 18, presidential candidate Ayach Zammel was sentenced to 20 months in prison but announced that he would continue to run, despite the ruling.⁴⁸ President Saied is seeking a second term, but his campaign has been marred by allegations of corruption and election tampering. Despite the criticisms, President Saied is widely expected to secure another term.⁴⁹

- **Election Criticisms:** Several demonstrations occurred in recent weeks, with protesters demanding that Tunisia hold free and fair elections after the government effectively banned 14 presidential hopefuls from competing in the election. Officials barred the candidates due to not receiving the required amount of signatures to participate.⁵⁰ One of the two presidential candidates who were approved to run against President Saied was also sentenced to 20 months on charges related to allegedly using fraudulent signatures to obtain his candidacy.⁵¹ The move comes after hundreds of activists, journalists, government critics, and politicians have been arrested under President Saied's administration. Government critics stated that the wave of arrests in recent years violated the integrity of the election in favor of the ruling government, but officials claimed that the arrests were necessary to maintain national security.⁵² Moreover, Tunisia frequently experiences water and electricity shortages, as well as high inflation and unemployment rates.
- **Democratic Backsliding:** Critics alleged that President Saied has made sweeping government changes since July 2021 to expand his role in the government, effectively weakening Tunisia's democracy and dismantling major opposition groups. The policy changes included suspending Parliament, shutting down the country's highest court, imposing a new constitution, and passing legislation targeting government critics.

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[hXXps://www.africanews\[.\]com/2024/09/19/a-tunisian-presidential-candidate-sentenced-to-20-months-vows-to-campaign-from-prison/](https://www.africanews.com/2024/09/19/a-tunisian-presidential-candidate-sentenced-to-20-months-vows-to-campaign-from-prison/)

⁴⁹ [hXXps://carnegieendowment\[.\]org/emissary/2024/09/tunisia-presidential-election-saied-candidates-jailed](https://carnegieendowment.org/emissary/2024/09/tunisia-presidential-election-saied-candidates-jailed)

⁵⁰ IBID.

⁵¹

[hXXps://www.reuters\[.\]com/world/africa/tunisian-court-sentences-presidential-candidate-zammel-20-months-prison-2024-09-18/](https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/tunisian-court-sentences-presidential-candidate-zammel-20-months-prison-2024-09-18/)

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[hXXps://www.aljazeera\[.\]com/news/2024/9/14/tunisia-arrests-dozens-of-opposition-members-in-pre-election-crackdown](https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/9/14/tunisia-arrests-dozens-of-opposition-members-in-pre-election-crackdown)



Saied said the policy changes were aimed at protecting national security.⁵³ However, the actions have resulted in a resurgence of discontent among voters.

- **Forward Looking:** Protests may continue in Tunisia as the national elections approach. The activist organization Tunisian Network for Rights and Freedoms has organized multiple disruptive actions over the last few weeks and will likely continue to organize more activities following the September 24 arrest of one of its prominent members. Most recently, demonstrations occurred on September 13 and September 22 in Tunis to demand fair elections and to oppose the government.⁵⁴ Protests over recent developments are likely to materialize, especially in the capital Tunis. Further actions may result in disruptions to localized transportation and business operations and have the potential to turn violent.⁵⁵

Nigeria Protests resume on October 1, 2024

Nigerians will once again take to the streets in major protests against President Bola Tinubu's economic reforms, which are widely blamed for increases in the cost of living. Average citizens have watched prices for essentials—especially food and transportation—skyrocket over the past year, and protest action has become a monthly occurrence. Starting on October 1, a series of actions called "Fearless in October" will once again call for government action to fix these problems.⁵⁶

- **Economic Context:** When Bola Tinubu was inaugurated in May 2023, he immediately instituted two major economic reforms: letting the Naira float freely and removing fuel subsidies. These were supposed to enable greater growth in the Nigerian economy, as the unnatural Naira peg was preventing foreign investment, and the fuel subsidies were a major drag on government finances. However, the short-term effects were catastrophic. The free-floating Naira lost about 70 percent of its value (relative to U.S. dollars), causing rampant inflation.⁵⁷ Meanwhile, petrol prices surged from 250 Naira in April 2023⁵⁸ to 950 Naira today.⁵⁹ Salaries have not kept pace with these developments, resulting in huge numbers of Nigerians sliding backward economically.

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[hXXps://carnegieendowment\[.\]org/posts/2022/07/one-year-later-tunisia-president-has-reversed-nearly-a-decade-of-democratic-gains](https://carnegieendowment.org/posts/2022/07/one-year-later-tunisia-president-has-reversed-nearly-a-decade-of-democratic-gains)

⁵⁴ [hXXps://www.dw\[.\]com/en/tunisia-young-peoples-anger-mounts-ahead-of-election/a-70281756](https://www.dw.com/en/tunisia-young-peoples-anger-mounts-ahead-of-election/a-70281756)

⁵⁵ [hXXps://www.middleeastmonitor\[.\]com/20240923-protests-in-tunisia-against-rigged-presidential-election/](https://www.middleeastmonitor.com/20240923-protests-in-tunisia-against-rigged-presidential-election/)

⁵⁶ [hXXps://www.tori\[.\]ng/news/282606/organisers-of-fearless-in-october-protest-release.html](https://www.tori.ng/news/282606/organisers-of-fearless-in-october-protest-release.html)

⁵⁷ [hXXps://www.xe\[.\]com/currencycharts/?from=USD&to=NGN&view=2Y](https://www.xe.com/currencycharts/?from=USD&to=NGN&view=2Y)

⁵⁸ [hXXps://nigerianstat\[.\]gov\[.\]ng/elibrary/read/1241323](https://nigerianstat.gov.ng/elibrary/read/1241323)

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[hXXps://www.reuters\[.\]com/business/energy/nigerias-nnpc-raises-petrol-prices-again-dangote-fuel-hits-market-2024-09-16/](https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/nigerias-nnpc-raises-petrol-prices-again-dangote-fuel-hits-market-2024-09-16/)



- **Protest Suppression:** The Nigerian government has a long history of violently repressing protests. A major series of protests against police brutality (called #EndSARS) in 2020 resulted in at least 51 demonstrators losing their lives.⁶⁰ More recently, the #EndBadGovernance protests against Tinubu in August were shut down when police opened fire on unarmed demonstrators across the country, killing 22.⁶¹

⁶⁰ [hXXps://www.bbc\[.\]com/news/world-africa-54666368](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-54666368)

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[hXXps://apnews\[.\]com/article/nigeria-protest-hardship-tinubu-human-rights-529420005ca1f9d19dd8b4b1dddfb4e7](https://apnews.com/article/nigeria-protest-hardship-tinubu-human-rights-529420005ca1f9d19dd8b4b1dddfb4e7)



| 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.



| 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%

