

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 2023

LEGEND Travel Bulletin

AMERICAS

AFRICA & THE
MIDDLE EAST

ASIA & THE PACIFIC

EUROPE

Worldwide

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) COVID-19 UPDATE

Globally, the number of new weekly cases remained stable (-3%) during the week of November 28 to December 4, 2022, as compared to the previous week with just under 3 million new cases reported. The number of new weekly deaths decreased by 17% as compared to the previous week with about 7800 fatalities reported. As of December 4, over 641 million confirmed cases and 6.6 million deaths have been reported globally.

WORLDWIDE TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

For the most up-to-date information on current entry restrictions, please visit IATA's "Government Measures Related to Coronavirus (COVID-19)" website by clicking [here](#).

MONKEYPOX

A sustained decrease in new monkeypox ("mpox") cases has been reported globally. The Americas region remains the only one where the risk is assessed as high. Cases of mpox have been confirmed in over 100 countries, with some deaths have been reported. Mpox is a viral disease not usually present in these countries. Over 90% of cases reported since early October have been from the Americas. Transmission can occur through close contact with an infected person. Travelers are advised to prevent infection by following good hygiene measures.

NOTEWORTHY EVENTS

JAN 4

- Azerbaijan: New Year's Holiday
- Congo (DRC): Martyrs of Independence Day
- Kyrgyzstan: Public Holiday
- Myanmar: Independence Day
- Russia: New Year Holiday
- Sao Tome and Principe: Day of King Amador

JAN 5

- Armenia: Christmas Eve
- Kyrgyzstan: Public Holiday
- Russia: New Year Holiday
- United Kingdom: Twelfth Night

JAN 6

- Andorra, Austria, Australia, Belgium, Bolivia, Canada, Switzerland, Colombia, Cuba, Cyprus, Germany, Dominican Republic, Estonia, Spain, Finland, Greenland, Greece, Croatia, Italy, Liechtenstein, Poland, Puerto Rico, Sweden, Slovakia, San Marino, United Kingdom, United States, Vatican City (Holy See): Epiphany
- Armenia, Lebanon: Christmas Day
- Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia: Orthodox Christmas Eve
- Honduras, Peru, Uruguay, Venezuela: The Three Wise Men Day
- Iraq: Army Day
- Iceland: Twelfth Night
- Kyrgyzstan: Public Holiday
- Sri Lanka: Duruthu Full Moon Poya Day
- Serbia: First Day of Baptism
- Russia: New Year Holiday
- US Virgin Islands: Three Kings Day

JAN 7

- Armenia: Christmas Remembrance Day
- Australia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Belarus, Canada, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Georgia, Croatia, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia, Russia, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States, Kosovo: Orthodox Christmas Day
- Egypt: Coptic Christmas Day
- Ghana: Constitution Day
- Cambodia: Victory over Genocide Day
- Liberia: Pioneers Day
- Sudan: Coptic Christmas
- Taiwan: Special Working Day

Americas

UNITED STATES

CDC ENDS NEGATIVE TEST REQUIREMENT TO ENTER US

As of 12:01 AM eastern time on June 12, 2022, the CDC will no longer require air passengers traveling from a foreign country to the United States to show a negative COVID-19 viral test or documentation of recovery from COVID-19 before they board their flight.

NEGATIVE COVID-19 TEST RESULT REQUIRED FOR TRAVELERS ON FLIGHTS ORIGINATING FROM CHINA, HONG KONG & MACAU

Effective January 5 at 12:01 Eastern Time, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will require a negative COVID-19 test result, taken within two days of departure, or proof of recovery from the virus within the last 90 days, for all travelers, age two years and older, to the United States on flights originating from the People's Republic of China, including Hong Kong and Macau.

CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL & PREVENTION (CDC) TRAVEL GUIDANCE FOR US CITIZENS

US citizens who are fully vaccinated with an FDA-authorized vaccine or a vaccine authorized for emergency use by the World Health Organization can travel safely within the United States and may travel internationally with close attention paid to the conditions at their destination before traveling. Fully vaccinated travelers are less likely to get and spread COVID-19; however, even fully vaccinated can potentially get and/or spread some COVID-19 variants. There are several safe and effective vaccines that prevent people from getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19. The Food & Drug Administration has evaluated that the following vaccines against COVID-19 have met the necessary criteria for safety and efficacy in the United States: Pfizer/g, Moderna, and Johnson & Johnson. The World Health Organization advises people to take whatever vaccine is made available to you first, even if you have already had COVID-19. The COVID-19 vaccines are safe for most people 18 years and older, including those with pre-existing conditions of any kind, including auto-immune disorders. These conditions include hypertension, diabetes, asthma, pulmonary, liver and kidney disease, as well as chronic infections that are stable and controlled.

MASK MANDATE ON CERTAIN AIRLINES LIFTED

On April 18, a federal judge in Florida ruled against the Biden Administrations' mandatory mask mandate for travelers on public transportation, including airplanes. As a result, Alaska Airlines (AS), American Airlines (AA), Delta Air Lines (DL), Southwest Airlines (WN) and United Airlines (UA) have now made masks optional for travelers on their aircraft. Travelers should exercise patience when traveling over the coming days, as enforcement of this change in policy may be inconsistent in the short term. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) announced it will also no longer enforce its Security Directives and Emergency Amendment requiring mask use on public transportation and in transportation hubs.

CDC SHORTENS QUARANTINE PERIOD

Given what is currently known about COVID-19 and the Omicron variant, the CDC is shortening the recommended time for isolation from 10 days for people with COVID-19 to 5 days, if asymptomatic, followed by 5 days of wearing a mask when around others. The change is motivated by science demonstrating that the majority of SARS-CoV-2 transmission occurs early in the course of illness, generally in the 1-2 days prior to onset of symptoms and the 2-3 days after. Therefore, people who test positive should isolate for 5 days and, if asymptomatic at that time, they may leave isolation if they can continue to mask for 5 days to minimize the risk of infecting others.

UPDATED INFORMATION ON DOMESTIC TRAVEL FOR FULLY VACCINATED TRAVELERS

The US Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) has updated its recommendations for domestic travel. The CDC continues to recommend delaying travel until travelers are fully vaccinated. Travelers who are fully vaccinated with an FDA-authorized vaccine can travel safely within the United States and do not need to get tested before or after travel unless their destination requires it, nor do they need to self-quarantine. Fully vaccinated travelers should still follow the CDC's recommendations for traveling safely, including wearing a mask over the nose and mouth, staying 6 feet from others, avoiding crowds, and washing hands often or using hand sanitizer. This guidance applies to travel within the United States and its territories.

CALIFORNIA

Travelers should continue to anticipate disruption and exercise caution through at least January 6 in parts of Sacramento County, CA linked to flash flooding. Since December 31, 2022, heavy rain and rivers overflow has caused the flooding. The flooding continues to affect sections of State Route 104 and multiple local roads. Highway 99 fully reopened on January 3. Significant property damage, power outages and road closures have been reported across several areas. Heavy rain and further flooding is forecast for January 4, which will likely exacerbate the situation and hamper ongoing recovery efforts. Travelers should reconfirm routes before setting out and exercise enhanced caution.

INDIANA

On January 4, normal movement can resume in the vicinity of Castleton Square mall in Indianapolis, IN following a police operation. One person was killed, and another injured during a shooting at the mall just before 8:00 PM local time on January 3. Police have announced the area has been secured and there is no ongoing security threat.

WINTER STORM HUDSON

Travelers should exercise caution and anticipate disruption linked to ongoing severe weather. The National Weather Service (NWS) has issued warnings for heavy snow, blizzards, strong winds and storms for several regions at least until January 8, due to the passage of Winter Storm Hudson. Poor weather conditions in affected areas may disrupt air and road travel, as well as electricity and other services. Travelers should follow all directives issued by local officials.

ARGENTINA

Travelers should anticipate disruption on January 4 in Buenos Aires province during environmental demonstrations and plan journeys accordingly. Participants will gather in coastal towns and cities, including Buenos Aires, in protest at oil extraction in the Argentine Sea. The gatherings should pass off peacefully but may result in local disruption.

BOLIVIA

Travelers should anticipate disruption in La Paz due to ongoing heavy rainfall and flooding. Multiple rivers in the city have swelled because of a recent heavy storm, increasing the risk of flooding in nearby areas. Avalanches have been reported in some places, and emergency services have reported a significant number of assistance calls related to rain and flood damage. The National Meteorology and Hydrology Service (SENAMHI) forecasts rain to continue in La Paz at least through January 5.

Through at least January 6, travelers should continue to exercise caution and avoid all protests in Santa Cruz department following the arrest of the department's governor Luis Fernando Camacho on December 28. On December 28, demonstrators took over Viru Viru (VVI) International and El Trompillo (SRZ) airports, where residual disruption persisted on December 29. Protesters overnight on December 28-29 set various government buildings alight in the city center, clashing with security forces. Further such demonstrations are likely over the coming days, as Camacho remains detained in La Paz. These carry considerable risk of unrest.

BRAZIL

Travelers should continue to plan journeys accounting for weather-related disruption through at least January 6. The National Institute of Meteorology (INMET) has issued orange warnings (middle on a three-tier scale, meaning 'danger') for heavy rain, intense winds and hail in parts of Amazonas, Goias, Mato Grosso do Sul, Minas Gerais, Parana, Rio de Janeiro, Roraima, Santa Catarina and Sao Paulo states. According to the National Civil Defense, flash flooding and landslides can be expected in parts of the north and southeastern regions through January 6. Travelers should reconfirm the status of routes before setting out and exercise enhanced caution.

CHILE

Travelers should continue to anticipate disruption and follow official directives through at least January 6 linked to ongoing wildfires in central Chile amid a summer heatwave. The National Office of Emergency of the Interior Ministry (ONEMI) has issued red alerts (highest on a three-tier scale) for parts of Araucania, Biobio and Santiago metropolitan regions. A yellow alert (middle) is also in place for parts of Los Rios region. Travelers should exercise caution near the fires and avoid affected areas, where possible.

Travelers should continue to expect heightened security in Araucania and Biobio regions following the extension of an ongoing state of emergency (SoE) until at least January 11. The measure allows troops to guard roads and highways, while expanding the scope for civilian protection. It is linked to a protracted conflict between authorities and the

indigenous Mapuche community. Armed Mapuche groups periodically target workers and facilities in the forestry and agriculture sectors. Further security incidents are likely in the coming weeks, though increased security force presence under the SoE has reportedly led to a 46% decrease in rural violence in the two regions.

COLOMBIA

Travelers should exercise caution and plan journeys accounting for intermittent disruption amid an ongoing particularly severe rainy season. Authorities in Bogota declared a State of Emergency on November 14 due to recent heavy rainfall and flooding. A landslide in nearby La Calera killed two people, with another was reported missing. Severe weather and heavy rainfall have resulted in flooding and landslides in at least ten departments. The severe weather conditions are likely to persist until March 2023. Travelers should ensure that overland journeys are carried out with proper precautions and risk mitigation measures accounting for severe weather.

EL SALVADOR

Travelers should continue to expect heightened security and follow all official directives after authorities extended an ongoing state of emergency (SoE) until at least January 18. The SoE was first declared in March following an increase in gang-related violence and has since been extended nine times. It restricts gatherings and permits arrests without a warrant, longer detention periods prior to a court hearing and the monitoring of communications. Approximately 100,000 suspected gang members have been arrested thus far. Related security operations and confrontations can pose incidental risks to bystanders.

JAMAICA

Through at least January 11, travelers should continue to anticipate heightened security and follow all official directives in areas under an ongoing State of Emergency (SoE). These include Clarendon, Hanover, St Ann, St Catherine, St James, and Westmoreland parishes, as well as parts of Kingston and St Andrew parishes. The measure is aimed at curbing violent crime, including gang-related violence, in these areas. The government has authorized armed forces to assist police in maintaining order in these locations.

MEXICO

Travelers should exercise caution in Ciudad Juarez through at least January 6 after seven people were killed on January 2 during a clash between armed criminals and police officers near the US border. On January 1, ten security guards and seven inmates were killed in a riot at a state prison in Ciudad Juarez. A group of heavily armed criminals assaulted the prison and freed 30 inmates, including the presumed leader of their gang. Security in Ciudad Juarez has been reinforced due to the credible risk of further bouts of violence.

PERU

Travelers should monitor developments and avoid protests through at least January 6 calling for the closure of Congress and the resignation of President Dina Boluarte. Renewed demonstrations can be expected, including a planned indefinite strike beginning January 4. These are likely to entail marches in major southern cities as well as roadblocks along main thoroughfares. A nationwide state of emergency remains in effect through January 15, and the government has deployed military forces to southern regions in anticipation of the protests. Security forces may use forceful measures, including tear gas and potentially live ammunition, to disperse demonstrators. Any such disturbances would pose incidental risks to bystanders.

Travelers should anticipate heightened security until at least January 14 following the declaration of a nationwide state of emergency (SoE) amid an increase in protests. On December 14, President Dina Boluarte's government announced measures that impact constitutional rights, such as the right to liberty, the inviolability of the home and freedom of movement and assembly, among others. The SoE entails the deployment of additional security force personnel, with the support of the armed forces. While the government is still considering a curfew, this has not yet been confirmed. Travelers should monitor developments and follow official directives.

Africa & the Middle East

ISRAEL, PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES

Through January, travelers should continue to exercise increased caution in Israel and the West Bank. Tensions are particularly high amid a cycle of Palestinian militant attacks and Israeli security raids. On December 29, a bomb attack targeted the Jalama checkpoint near Jenin. Authorities confirmed that no one was injured. The incident followed earlier raids by Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) troops across the West Bank.

WEATHER RELATED DISRUPTION THROUGH JAN 8

Travelers in Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates should anticipate weather-related disruption over the coming days. The region has seen heavy rainfall resulting in flooding, road closures and material damage since December 24, 2022. The UAE and Saudi Arabia have issued warnings for heavy rainfall until January 7 and January 8, respectively. Kuwait expects moderate to heavy rain until at least January 8. Residual disruption may affect transportation services and prompt the closure of non-essential businesses. Central highways in low-lying areas are more likely to experience waterlogging.

ANGOLA

Travelers should anticipate disruption at airports on January 4 during an indefinite countrywide strike by aviation workers. Members of the National Independent Union of Aeronautical and Airport Workers will strike to demand better working conditions and salary increases. Participating workers may stage protests near airports and government buildings, including the Ministry of Transport. The industrial action is expected to affect communications, navigation, surveillance and aeronautical information services; however, the strike should not impact military, search and rescue and humanitarian flights, flights carrying heads of state and government officials or flights conducting medical evacuations.

BENIN

At least two people were reportedly killed on January 1 after a roadside bomb detonated in Karimama. The incident reflects the trend of spill-over militant violence from the Sahel region. Most attacks continue to occur within 18 miles of the border with Burkina Faso, though the latest incident notably occurred further east, near the border with Niger. Travelers should take appropriate security procedures when undertaking essential travel to this area through at least January 6.

CONGO (DRC)

Travelers should continue to evacuate business travelers from Goma. On December 23, the March 23 (M23) rebel movement withdrew from the town of Kibumba, located around 12 miles north of Goma; however, several areas remain under M23 control, and sporadic fighting between the M23 and the Congolese army (FARDC) has continued in recent weeks. Goma International Airport (GOM) remains operational. Travelers should continue to defer all travel to North Kivu, including Goma, until further notice.

EGYPT

At least four people, including three police officers, were killed on December 30, 2022 in Ismailia during a gunfight between suspected militants and security forces. Twelve police officers were also injured during the clashes. Local media reports indicate that militants approached a security checkpoint in two vehicles and opened fire. Sinai Province (SP), the local affiliate of the extremist Islamic State (IS) group, claimed responsibility for the attack. The development highlights the persistent risk of militancy zones bordering North Sinai governorate. Travelers should exercise caution and minimize time spent around potential extremist targets through at least January 6.

Travelers should anticipate heightened security around Coptic Christian religious sites ahead of and during the Coptic Christmas celebrations on January 7. Similar measures have been taken in recent years due to Coptic churches being potential targets for militant attacks, especially during the holiday period. Security is likely to be increased in several governorates ahead of Coptic Christmas. Travelers should minimize time spent around such sites during this period as a precaution.

ETHIOPIA

On December 26, a high-level federal government delegation travelled to Mekelle to discuss the implementation of the permanent cessation of hostilities (CoH) agreement signed on November 2 in Pretoria. The visit followed a meeting on December 22 between the federal government and the rebel Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) in Nairobi to review the CoH. Travelers should continue to monitor related developments throughout January, as several factors could undermine the agreement and increase the likelihood of renewed fighting.

Travelers in Oromia state should monitor developments and exercise caution following an attack in Adama on December 27. According to local media, at least one person was killed, and seven others injured, when a grenade exploded at a bar in the Dedecha Arara area. Authorities have detained 11 suspects; however, no group has claimed responsibility for the attack. The incident comes amid ongoing hostilities between federal and regional security forces against the Oromo Liberation Army (OLA) in Oromia. Travel in the state, especially in rural areas, requires enhanced precautions and good journey management.

IRAQ

Travelers should anticipate disruption and heightened security in Basra between January 6 and January 19 during the 2023 Gulf Cup. The football matches are likely to be well attended, increasing demand for all available transportation and accommodation options. Disruption to normal business and logistical operations should also be anticipated. Additionally, due to the volatile security environment across the governorate, heightened security measures will likely include the deployment of additional security force personnel, increased checkpoints, patrols and spot-checks.

ISRAEL

Anti-government protests can be anticipated in urban centers throughout January following the inauguration of Israel's 37th government on December 29. The anti-government civil society movement 'Standing Together' will gather at Habima square at 7:00 PM local time on January 7 and march throughout Tel Aviv. Further protests may take place in urban centers in the coming weeks as the government outlines its legislative agenda. Related protests may block roads, causing traffic disruption, and may form at short notice.

Through January, anti-government protests should be anticipated in urban centers following the inauguration of Israel's 37th government on December 29. On the same day, demonstrations took place in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv denouncing the composition and policies of the incoming government. Further protests are liable to take place in urban centers in the coming weeks as the government outlines its legislative agenda. Related protests are liable to block roads, causing traffic disruption, and may form at short notice.

LEBANON

Travelers should plan routes bypassing a gathering at 5:00 PM local time on January 4 at the Statue of the Immigrant in Beirut. Participants are demanding justice for victims of the August 4, 2020 port explosion. While the protest is likely to pass off peacefully, heightened security and associated travel disruption should be anticipated.

LIBERIA

Travelers should anticipate disruption to flights through at least January 13 amid fuel shortages. A jet fuel supplier has announced that the next fuel shipment to the country is delayed until January 13. This may lead to delays and cancellations. Travelers should reconfirm flight schedules before setting out.

MADAGASCAR

Travelers should plan journeys accounting for weather-related disruption during the ongoing rainy season, which typically lasts until April. Meteo Madagascar has forecast above-normal rainfall for the western, northwestern and southern regions until February. Flooding and landslides are possible, particularly in mountainous, low-lying and coastal areas. The National Office for Risk and Disaster Management has reported that 10,000 people in Antananarivo are at risk of landslides this season. Short-notice disruption to travel and essential services is likely in the affected areas.

MOROCCO

Travelers should anticipate disruption and reconfirm flights between December 23 – January 7 during a planned nationwide strike by air traffic controllers. The 15-day strike will begin on December 23 and is being held over salary-related grievances and working conditions. Reportedly only minimum service will be provided. The industrial action

will not affect military, medical, or humanitarian flights, but is likely to cause delays and cancellations to commercial flights nationwide.

MOZAMBIQUE

The Islamist extremist al-Sunnah group continues to operate in Cabo Delgado province. On December 30, 2022, the group attacked Namande village. At least two people were killed, and four others injured. The incident highlights the persistent threat posed by Islamist militancy and our advice to defer all journeys through at least January 6.

NIGERIA

At least 30 people were killed in clashes on December 30-31, 2022 after members of the extremist Islamic State's West Africa Province (ISWAP) group attacked a convoy of Boko Haram militants near Abadam. The incident highlights ISWAP activity in Borno and the potential for conflict with the Islamist Boko Haram group, which in recent years has maintained a stronghold in the state. All journeys there should be avoided through at least January 6.

SENEGAL

Travelers should plan journeys bypassing nationwide rallies on January 6 by supporters of the opposition Yewwi Askan Wi ('Liberate the People') alliance due to the risk of unrest. In Dakar, protest flashpoints include Place de la Nation. Security forces may forcibly disperse any unruly protesters, posing incidental risks to bystanders.

SOMALIA

Since December 27, at least three people have been reportedly killed, and several others injured, during ongoing violent protests in Las Anod, in the self-declared independent state of Somaliland. The protests began following the murder of a local opposition politician by unknown gunmen. Security forces reportedly used heavy handed tactics to disperse protesters, including live ammunition. A temporary curfew has also been placed by authorities to deter further protests. Travelers should defer all travel due to the extreme travel risks associated with region. Travelers operating in the region should monitor developments, anticipate, and avoid all further protests as a precaution.

SOUTH AFRICA

On December 30, 2022, local media reported developments linked to the recent kidnapping of two foreign nationals in the Mowbray area of Cape Town. The body of one of the victims was recovered on December 26, while the other captive was rescued two days later in Cape Town's Khayelitsha township. Reports indicate the second victim sustained injuries during captivity, while three men were arrested during the rescue operation. These developments highlight the high risk posed by crime in South Africa and the need to adopt sensible precautions throughout January.

SOUTH SUDAN

At least two people have been killed, and several houses burned in separate attacks on December 30 2022 in Uror county. The attacks have been linked to armed youth from the Greater Pibor Administrative Area (GPAA). Reports suggest the violence is linked to ongoing tit-for-tat confrontations since December 24, between ethnic Nuer youths from Jonglei and GPAA-based Murle youths over cattle-rustling and control of scarce resources. The developments reflect the need to avoid all travel to areas outside Juba and the better-protected Palouge oil fields through at least January 6.

TOGO

Travelers should exercise caution and anticipate heightened security in Savanes region throughout January due to the growing threat of cross-border incursions. On January 2, unknown gunmen attacked a military patrol near Tiwoli, reportedly killing at least 3 soldiers and injuring one other. While no group has claimed responsibility for the attack, local reports have attributed it to the al-Qaida-affiliated Group for the Support of Islam and Muslims. Security reinforcements have been sent to the area in response.

UGANDA

Movement restrictions and curfew in Mubende and Kassanda districts have been lifted. Ebola cases have been confirmed in Mubende, Kyegegwa, Kassanda, Kagadi, Bunyangabu, Kampala, Masaka, Wakiso, and Jinja Districts. Ebola is spread by contact with the blood or other bodily fluids (including vomit and diarrhea) of infected or dead people. Healthcare workers, household members, and people participating in traditional funeral practices (touching the body) are at high risk. Travelers should prevent infection by paying strict attention to hygiene and avoiding contact with blood and body fluids; do not participate in traditional funerals or go to health facilities where Ebola patients are being treated. Travelers should defer non-essential travel to affected districts.

ZIMBABWE

Travelers should anticipate and avoid protests in urban centers related to the ongoing trial of popular opposition lawyer Jacob Sikhala as a precaution. Activists have called for nationwide solidarity protests calling for his release. Sikhala was arrested for allegedly inciting public violence on June 14, 2022 and is currently undergoing trial at Harare's Magistrates' Court. The dates and locations of specific demonstrations have not been announced; however, people should anticipate heightened security and low-level protests in the court's vicinity during Sikhala's trial on January 4, which begins at 11:15 AM local time.

Asia & the Pacific

AFGHANISTAN

On January 1, an explosion occurred on Airport Road at the entrance to the military airfield near Kabul Airport (KBL) in Police District (PD) 10. According to the Taliban authorities, at least 14 people were killed, and 18 injured. The extremist Islamic State (IS-K) group has reportedly claimed responsibility for the attack. An increase in fatal militant attacks, including on December 23, 2022 in a mosque in the Kota-e-Sangi area in PD 5, highlights the need to defer all travel to Kabul through at least January 6.

AUSTRALIA

Travelers should plan journeys through at least January 6 accounting for disruption caused by heavy rainfall from ex-Tropical Cyclone Ellie. On January 4, the weather system weakened and was located to the east of Broome, moving west. The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) has forecast up to 7.8 inches of rainfall and winds up to 43 mph. Flood warnings issued by the BoM are currently in effect for western areas of Kimberley district. Short-notice transportation disruption, flooding and infrastructure outages are possible in affected locations.

Until at least April 2023, travelers should plan journeys accounting for disruption during the ongoing bushfire season and follow all official directives. Despite months of above-average rainfall, the Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council (AFAC) forecast that the majority of Australia remains at normal or above-normal fire potential. Fires have previously resulted in road disruption, power outages, short-notice evacuations, and airport closures. Travelers should maintain flexible itineraries and be prepared to defer or change travel plans at short notice.

Travelers should anticipate intermittent disruption and maintain flexible itineraries during the upcoming monsoon season, which will last until at least April 2023. Heavy rainfall resulting in flooding may prompt short-notice and local road closures, particularly along the northern coast and parts of the Northern Territory (NT) and Western Australia state (WA). Such conditions may also prompt flight cancellations, disruption to telecommunications and power outages in affected areas.

BANGLADESH

Travelers should anticipate disruption through at least January 6 around events commemorating the 75th founding anniversary of the Bangladesh Chhatra League (BCL), the student wing of the ruling Awami League. The group has announced nationwide gatherings and events through 2023. A rally is scheduled on January 6 in Dhaka at 2:30 PM local time, with specific details not announced. Local traffic disruption and heightened security measures are likely around related events, including short-notice road diversions. There is a latent risk of unrest involving clashes between rival groups.

Travelers should anticipate intermittent disruption and maintain flexible itineraries during the ongoing winter season, which will last until February 2023. Fog and associated poor visibility can cause significant, short-notice flight delays and cancellations during this period, including at Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (DAC) and Chittagong's Shah Amanat International Airport (CGP). Such conditions may also affect ferry and rail services, and road travel.

CHINA

An increasing number of countries are requiring negative COVID-19 test for travelers from China. An increase in COVID-19 cases may be occurring in the country, with the World Health Organization stating it is "very concerned over the evolving situation in China, with increasing reports of severe disease." There are reports of temporary shortages of some medications and an increase in absenteeism due to respiratory illness. Travelers contemplating travel to China are strongly advised to call the Assistance Centre to discuss the implications and challenges caused by the ongoing COVID-19 situation, and reconfirm any health and quarantine requirements within China, and to enter destinations after leaving China.

Effective January 5 at 12:01 Eastern Time, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will require a negative COVID-19 test result, taken within two days of departure, or proof of recovery from the virus within the last 90 days, for all travelers, age two years and older, to the United States on flights originating from the People's Republic of China, including Hong Kong and Macau.

EAST TIMOR

Until January 7, travelers should exercise caution and anticipate disruption during youth protests outside the National Parliament in Dili. The Maubere National Alliance group has called for weekly demonstrations against government policies they allege have exacerbated economic inequality, among other grievances. As demands have not been met, the protests are likely to continue. While previous protests on December 10 passed off peacefully, clashes between protestors and security forces are possible, posing incidental risk to bystanders.

FIJI

Travelers should continue to plan journeys accounting for disruption through at least January 6 amid ongoing adverse weather. The Fiji Meteorological Service (FMS) has issued heavy rain warnings for parts of Viti Levu, Vatulele, Mamanuca and Yasawa islands, including greater Nadi, as well as Kadavu Island. Several roads have been closed because of flooding, particularly in western parts of Viti Levu, including Ba, Tavua and Rakiraki. At least one person has reportedly died as a result of flooding. While floods and associated disruption are likely to be more extensive in rural areas, urban centers, including Nadi, may also be affected.

INDIA

Travelers should expect heightened security and disruption during an ongoing bandh (shutdown strike) in Poonch district through at least January 6. The strike has been called by several right-wing groups to condemn recent militant attacks in Rajouri district. Related protests at prominent locations are likely to be well-attended. Local businesses and transportation operators have called for work stoppages; however, emergency services are unlikely to be affected. Similar strikes and protests were held in Poonch, Doda, Kishtwar, Rajouri and Jammu districts on January 3.

Through January 2023, travelers should continue to anticipate disruption during a nationwide protest march by the national opposition Indian National Congress (INC) that has been ongoing since September 7. The march has been passing through Kerala state since September 10 and is expected to enter Karnataka state on September 30. It is due to terminate in Srinagar in early 2023. Participants denounce the national ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s perceived mismanagement of issues related to increasing inflation and unemployment. Increased traffic congestion and security can be expected along the march route. Travelers should allow additional travel time and plan journeys bypassing the march to minimize inconvenience.

Travelers should anticipate travel disruption and maintain flexible itineraries during the ongoing winter season, which will last until February 2023. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast cold wave and dense fog conditions across north-western states beginning December 31. Subsequent poor visibility can cause significant, short-notice disruption to flights, rail services and road travel. Additionally, heavy smog, typically caused by pollution, can result in poor visibility and flight disruption, particularly in the morning hours.

Until March 23, 2023, travelers should monitor developments in Assam, Nagaland, and Arunachal Pradesh following the extension of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA). The controversial anti-insurgency legislation grants special powers to security forces in 'disturbed areas' which are at comparatively high risk due to insurgency. Protests against the legislation may take place in urban centers. Additionally, AFSPA has been withdrawn from West Karbi Anglong district.

INDONESIA

Travelers should anticipate intermittent disruption and maintain flexible itineraries during the ongoing northwest monsoon season, which typically lasts until March. Such conditions can cause flooding and landslides, prompting short-notice and local road closures and power outages. Adverse weather conditions can also affect airport operations, overland transportation networks and essential infrastructure.

JAPAN

Travelers should plan journeys accounting for intermittent disruption during the ongoing winter season, which will last until March 2023. Heavy snow, strong winds and poor visibility can result in short-notice disruption to flights and rail services as well as to port operations along the Sea of Japan. Road travel is also likely to be affected by severe weather conditions.

KAZAKHSTAN

Travelers should plan journeys across Kazakhstan, including in Astana, accounting for disruption due to adverse weather conditions. Heavy snowfall has led to transport disruption nationwide, including flight delays and cancellations at Astana's Nursultan Nazarbayev International Airport (TSE). Multiple roads across the country have also been closed. Authorities have issued a storm warning in multiple provinces until 9:00 PM local time on January 5 and advised residents to minimize road movement. Travelers should anticipate further flight and road disruption as the adverse weather conditions are expected to persist in the coming days.

MALDIVES

Travelers should anticipate and avoid further protests through at least January 6 linked to the December 25, 2022 imprisonment of former President Abdulla Yameen. He has been convicted of money laundering and bribery. The verdict has prompted demonstrations by the Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM), during which several participants were arrested. Yameen was slated to be the PPM-led opposition coalition's Presidential candidate during the 2023 elections. He has been situated at Maafushi jail in Medhu Uthuru province since the verdict.

MALAYSIA

Travelers should anticipate intermittent disruption and maintain flexible itineraries amid the ongoing northeast monsoon season, which lasts until March. On December 16, at least 12 people were killed, and 20 remain missing following a landslide at a campsite in Batang Kali. The casualties are expected to increase. Heavy rainfall resulting in flooding and landslides may also prompt local short-notice road closures, particularly along the east coast of the Malay Peninsula and parts of Sabah and Sarawak states. Adverse weather conditions can affect operations at airports in major urban centers.

MYANMAR

Through at least January 4, travelers should exercise caution in urban centers, especially around key dates such as New Year's Day (January 1, 2023) and Independence Day (January 4, 2023). Several diplomatic missions have issued advisories warning of militant attacks around Independence Day. Public spaces frequented by foreign nationals and business travelers are potential targets. These include hotels, restaurants, recreational venues, and shopping centers in Naypyitaw and Yangon.

Sustained fighting persists in conflict zones, with the military continuing to use escalated tactics, including airstrikes and artillery fire, to support operations. Recent clashes with the People's Defense Forces (PDFs) have resulted in multiple security personnel casualties in Bago, Magway, Sagaing and Tanintharyi regions. This highlights the persistent fighting between Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs), PDF groups and the military, that will continue throughout January. All travel to conflict-affected areas should be deferred.

NEW ZEALAND

Travelers should plan journeys in Wellington accounting for transportation disruption due to ongoing staff shortages. Around 40 train services and 200 bus services have been temporarily suspended. Transportation timetables will operate at reduced capacity at least until the end of January 2023. Disruption is expected to ease during the holiday period (December 23-January 4) when fewer trains are scheduled.

PAKISTAN

Travelers should anticipate disruption to electricity services in urban centers throughout January amid newly implemented energy-conservation measures. The rising price of imported fuel has strained Pakistan's capacity to cover its energy demands in highly populated areas of the country. On January 3, the government announced that it will close markets and malls by 8:30 PM local time and restaurants and wedding venues by 10:00 PM local time in major urban centers. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif stated that government departments will reduce their electricity consumption by 30%. The measures coincide with countrywide anti-inflation rallies organized by the opposition Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party. Associated unrest is possible.

PHILIPPINES

The government began implementing the new eTravel system for all inbound travelers on December 2. The new system contains the electronic version of the Arrival Card required by the Bureau of Quarantine on entry. The paper Arrival Card has been discontinued on December 5. Under the new scheme, inbound travelers are required to register on the eTravel portal within 72 hours prior to arrival. The registration on the platform is free. Other arrival protocols such as mask wearing, social distancing and vaccination requirements remain in place.

Travelers should follow all official directives following the signing of Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) Registration Act (Republic Act 11934) into law on October 10. The new measure requires all new and existing users to register their SIM cards with public telecommunications entities (PTE) using valid identification documents. The law came into effect on October 28 and registration will begin on December 27. Foreign nationals and business travelers should verify all documents required for procuring SIM cards ahead of travel.

Travelers should expect heightened security and significant disruption in Manila from January 6 to January 9 due to events related to the Feast of the Black Nazarene. More than 5 million devotees are expected to attend the celebrations. The annual procession remains suspended but a 'Walk of Faith' will take place on January 8. It will start at 2:00 AM local time from the Quirino Grandstand in Luneta Park to the Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene. Traffic restrictions are in place in Quipao district but disruption will cascade to neighboring areas.

Travelers should plan journeys accounting for ongoing weather-related disruption during the northeast monsoon, which typically lasts until March. A low-pressure area (LPA) is expected to bring moderate to heavy rainfall until at least January 6 in Caraga, Central and Eastern Visayas regions. Flooding and landslides are possible, particularly in mountainous, low-lying and coastal areas. Short-notice disruption to travel and essential services is likely in the affected areas. Heavy rainfall due to the shear line of an LPA in late December 2022 caused floods across the country. A state of calamity has been declared in 22 cities and municipalities.

THAILAND

Incidents of arson and gunfire were reported across several districts in Pattani province on December 31. Unidentified assailants opened fire at an army base in Po Phumae while a police checkpoint was set on fire in Ban La-nga. No casualties were reported during the incidents. Travelers should expect further rebel activity as peace talks are likely to be held between authorities and representatives of the National Revolutionary Front (BRN) group in January. Travelers should avoid all non-essential travel to the southern provinces through at least January 6.

Travelers should anticipate disruption in Thalang district due to a planned power outage from 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM local time on January 6 for maintenance works. The Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA) has announced that the affected areas will include Soi Khok Tanot 1, Villa Laguna Phuket and Soi Layan 9, among others. Intermittent disruption to essential services, including telecommunications and water supply, as well as road travel, is possible during the outage.

UZBEKISTAN

Authorities have reported several fatalities in children linked to the use of a syrup medication called "Doc-1 Max." Investigations have detected the toxic substance ethylene glycol in the syrup. "Doc-1 Max" tablets and syrup have been withdrawn from sale. Check all medications to see if they are the ones identified as potentially contaminated; do not use or purchase them.

Europe

FRANCE

Travelers should anticipate disruption in Paris on January 5 during a demonstration led by doctors and plan journeys accordingly. Participants will gather at 1:00 PM local time at Place du Pantheon before marching to the Health Ministry to demand an increase in consultation fees. The demonstration coincides with an ongoing strike by doctors until January 8. Although the protest should pass off peacefully, travelers should expect traffic disruption along the march route.

Travelers should plan journeys bypassing demonstrations across Paris on January 7 organized by the 'Yellow Vests' (Gilets Jaunes, GJ) movement. Protesters aim to denounce the rising cost of living amongst other issues, including pension reform. No specific protest locations or times have been announced thus far. Flashpoints include Avenue des Champs-Elysees, Place du Trocadero, Place de la Bourse, Place de l'Hotel de Ville, Grande Arche de la Defense and the National Assembly building. Travelers should anticipate traffic disruption in the vicinity of any related protest. Police may forcibly disperse such protests and any related unrest would pose incidental risks to bystanders.

GEORGIA

Travelers should anticipate and avoid further protests in urban centers, including Tbilisi, by the opposition United National Movement (UNM) party. This follows a deterioration in the health of UNM founder and former President Mikheil Saakashvili. The party claims he is a victim of political persecution. Supporters will gather at 6:00 PM local time on January 4 near Tbilisi's Bridge of Peace. Demonstrations are also possible on January 9 coinciding with Saakashvili's next court date. Travelers should anticipate disruption and heightened security around related demonstrations, which may result in local unrest.

KOSOVO

Travelers scheduled to travel between Kosovo and Serbia should plan journeys accounting for disruption due to the closure of the Bernjak and Jarinje border crossings until further notice. The Merdare Crossing has now reopened. It was closed on December 28 following protests on the Serbian side linked to the arrest in Kosovo on December 10 of an ethnic Serb formerly employed within police force. On December 28, Kosovan judges announced that the individual would be released from prison and placed under house arrest. Despite this, tensions will remain high in the coming weeks as relations remain strained between the two countries, with underlying grievances unaddressed.

PORTUGAL

Travelers should anticipate rail travel disruption through January 6 during a nationwide strike by train drivers. The industrial action, over pay and working conditions, is likely to affect inter- and intra-city rail services, including in Lisbon. State rail operator Comboios de Portugal (CP) has said that the work stoppage will have a 'special impact' on its services. Striking workers may also stage related protests outside major train stations in urban centers. Although such gatherings should pass off peacefully, they may cause local disruption.

RUSSIA

The US Department of State advises US citizens to defer travel to Russia due to the invasion of Ukraine by Russian military forces, the potential for harassment against US citizens by Russian government security officials, the singling out of US citizens in Russia by Russian government security officials including for detention, the arbitrary enforcement of local law, limited flights into and out of Russia, the Embassy's limited ability to assist US citizens in Russia, COVID-19-related restrictions, and terrorism. US citizens residing or traveling in Russia should depart immediately and exercise increased caution due to wrongful detentions. US credit and debit cards no longer work in Russia, and options to electronically transfer funds from the United States are extremely limited as a result of sanctions imposed on Russian banks. There are reports of cash shortages within Russia.

SPAIN

Through early January, travelers should anticipate nationwide air travel disruption and reconfirm flight schedules due to strikes by airlines' workers and pilots. Cabin crew employed by Vueling, Ryanair, and Air Nostrum have called for strike over wage increase and labor rights. Ryanair flights will be affected through January 5. Vueling employees will strike on December 30 and January 1, 2, 6, 8 and January 9. The work stoppage affecting Air Nostrum is planned for January 2-3.

UKRAINE

Through January, further Russian drone and missile strikes should be expected over the coming weeks amid heavy fighting in Donetsk and Luhansk provinces. At least 69 Russian missile and 23 drones were launched towards infrastructure sites across the country on December 29, including in Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Lviv. Further drone attacks on Kyiv were reported early on December 30, though authorities said all drones were intercepted by air defenses. Russia continues to target critical infrastructure, causing electricity shortages. Reportedly, nearly 6 million people are without electricity. Further attacks will continue to occur without warning.

UNITED KINGDOM

Travelers should continue to anticipate disruption during strikes over pay and working conditions by various labor unions, including in the transportation, education and healthcare sectors. Notably, industrial action will continue to affect rail services until at least January 7. Participating workers may stage related protests in urban centers, causing local disruption.

VATICAN CITY

Travelers should anticipate disruption throughout January following the death of former Pope Benedict XVI. His body will lay in state at St Peter's Basilica until the funeral, which will take place at 9:30 AM local time on January 5 in St Peter's Square. Related public gatherings are likely to be peaceful but well attended. Some business hours may be affected by related events or security measures. Travelers should reconfirm the status of routes before heading out.