

TUESDAY, MARCH 21, 2023

LEGEND Travel Bulletin

AMERICAS

AFRICA & THE
MIDDLE EAST

ASIA & THE PACIFIC

EUROPE

Worldwide

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) COVID-19 UPDATE

Globally, nearly 10.5 million new cases and over 90 000 deaths were reported in the last 28 days (9 January to 5 February 2023), a decrease of 89% and 8%, respectively, compared to the previous 28 days. As of 5 February 2023, over 754 million confirmed cases and over 6.8 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

MARCH 21

- Afghanistan: Nauruz
- Australia: Harmony Day
- Azerbaijan: Nowruz/Spring Holiday
- Georgia, Iraq, Uzbekistan: Nowruz
- Iran: Norooz (Persian New Year)
- Japan: Spring Equinox
- Kyrgyzstan: National Holiday "Nooruz"
- Kazakhstan: Nauryz
- Lebanon, Syria: Mother's Day
- Mexico: Benito Juárez's Birthday Memorial
- Namibia: Independence Day
- Nepal: Godhe Yatra
- Tajikistan: Navruz Celebration
- Turkmenistan: Nowruz Bayram (Spring Festival)
- South Africa: Human Rights Day

MARCH 22

- Albania: Nevruz Day
- Azerbaijan: Nowruz/Spring Holiday
- Indonesia: Bali's Day of Silence and Hindu New Year
- India: Chaitra Sukhladi
- India: Ugadi
- India: Gudi Padwa
- Iraq, Uzbekistan: Nowruz Holiday
- Iran: Norooz Holiday
- Kazakhstan: Nauryz Holiday
- Mauritius: Ougadi
- Puerto Rico: Emancipation Day
- Tajikistan: Navruz Celebration

MARCH 23

- Ramadan Start
- Angola: Southern Africa Liberation Day
- Azerbaijan: Nowruz/Spring Holiday
- Bolivia: Day of the Sea
- Indonesia: Joint Holiday for Bali's Day of Silence and Hindu New Year (Nyepi)
- Iraq: Nowruz Holiday
- Iran: Norooz Holiday
- Kazakhstan: Nauryz Holiday
- Malaysia: Birthday of the Sultan of Johor
- Pakistan: Pakistan Day
- Tajikistan: Navruz Celebration

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.

RISK RATING INCREASED DUE TO TROPICAL CYCLONES: ANGUILLA, BRITISH VIRGIN ISLANDS, CAYMAN ISLAND, & TURKS AND CAICOS

We have increased the risk rating for Anguilla (UK), British Virgin Islands (UK), Cayman Islands (UK) and Turks and Caicos Islands from INSIGNIFICANT to LOW risk. The primary reason for this change is to reflect the persistent risks associated with tropical cyclones, as well as a moderate rise in violent crime associated with increased gang activity. Travelers on the islands should ensure they are prepared to relocate or stand fast securely in the event of a tropical cyclone and monitor weather conditions during hurricane season through official channels and International SOS alerts. Travelers should practice basic security precautions to manage the indirect risks associated with violent criminal activity.

FLORIDA

Travelers should exercise caution following the issue of a State of Emergency and an overnight curfew declared for the South Beach area of Miami Beach. The curfew will be in effect from 23:59 PM on March 19 to 6:00 AM on March 20. Two fatal shooting incidents in the area, on March 17 and 19, prompted the measures. Both incidents remain under investigation. Authorities have indicated that a nightly curfew is also anticipated from March 23 to 27. Travelers should expect a heightened security force presence in the area and follow all official directives.

ARGENTINA

Travelers should anticipate disruption during protests by groups comprising the Piquetera Unit labor movement in Buenos Aires on March 21. The events are reportedly being held over budgetary issues affecting social-assistance programs. Demonstrators are expected to gather in front of the Ministry of Social Development and other government buildings. Roadblocks are also likely near Puente Pueyrredon, Puente la Noria and the Pan-American highway in and around the capital. The protests are liable to garner significant attendance and disrupt traffic in their vicinities.

Travelers should anticipate disruption during a scheduled protest in Buenos Aires on March 21, and plan journeys accordingly. Participants will gather at 12:00 PM at the Obelisco before marching towards the Attorney General's Office. The event is being held by various healthcare workers' unions over policies affecting nurses at public hospitals. While the demonstration should pass off peacefully, it is likely to disrupt traffic along its route.

BRAZIL

Travelers should continue to plan journeys accounting for intermittent disruption throughout March amid an ongoing severe rainy season. The National Institute of Meteorology (INMET) maintains orange warnings (middle on a three-tier scale, meaning 'danger') for heavy rain and strong winds in Acre, Amapa, Amazonas, Maranhao, Mato Grosso, Mato Grosso do Sul, Minas Gerais, Para, Parana, Rio de Janeiro, Rondonia and Sao Paulo states. Flooding and landslides have also been reported in multiple locations since the beginning of the rainy season which is forecast to last until March. Travelers should reconfirm the status of routes before setting out and exercise enhanced caution.

CHILE

Travelers should plan journeys accounting for disruption in several areas in the central regions due to ongoing wildfires amid the summer season (through March). The National Office of Emergency of the Interior Ministry (ONEMI) has issued a red alert (highest on a four-tier scale) for parts of Araucania, Biobio, del Maule, Nuble and Santiago Metropolitan regions. Emergency personnel are working to extinguish the fires. A curfew from 12:01 AM to 5:00 AM remains in effect in Araucania and Tome commune. Travelers should reconfirm the status of routes before setting out and follow all official directives.

Travelers should expect a heightened security presence at the border with Bolivia and Peru over the coming months. The Chilean government has reinforced border security with increased military presence in Antofagasta, Arica, Parinacota and Tarapaca. The move is intended to discourage illegal border crossings from Bolivia and Peru. The decree that allows the use of the armed forces along the borders will be upheld for 90 days and can be extended with the support of the congress. Travelers should plan journeys accounting for associated travel disruption at the border and follow official directives.

Travelers should continue to expect heightened security in Araucania and Biobio regions following the extension of an ongoing state of emergency until at least March 27. The measure allows military personnel to guard roads and

highways, while expanding the scope for civilian protection. The state of emergency linked to a protracted conflict between authorities and the indigenous Mapuche community. Armed Mapuche groups periodically target workforce and facilities in the forestry and agriculture sectors. The increased security force presence under the state of emergency has reportedly caused violence in rural areas to decrease by 42% in both regions. Nonetheless, further security incidents are likely throughout March.

COSTA RICA

Travelers should anticipate localized disruption during a scheduled demonstration by police officers San Jose on March 21, and plan journeys accordingly. Participants will gather at 10:00 AM outside the National Specialized Centre for Tourism. The event has been organized by the ANEP union to protest against salary caps for police officers under the Public Employment Framework Law. While the demonstration is likely to pass off peacefully, it may disrupt traffic in its vicinity.

ECUADOR

Travelers should continue to exercise caution and anticipate disruption throughout March after a magnitude 6.8 earthquake struck at 12:12 PM on March 18. According to the US Geological Survey, the tremor originated approximately six miles (10km) Northwest of Balao, at a depth of around 41 miles (66km). Structural damage was subsequently reported in Cuenca, Guayaquil, Isla Jambeli, Machala, and Lican. At least 14 people were killed and more than 300 injured in related incidents. On March 19, the government issued a state of emergency for Azuay following multiple landslides in the province.

Travelers should exercise caution and anticipate weather-related disruption during the remainder of the rainy season, which lasts until April. Flooding and landslides may occur, potentially disrupting travel at short notice. Travelers should reconfirm the status of routes before setting out and plan journeys accordingly.

EL SALVADOR

Travelers should continue to expect heightened security and follow all official directives after authorities extended an ongoing state of emergency until at least April 16. The state of emergency was first declared in March 2022 following an increase in gang-related violence and has since been extended 12 times. It restricts gatherings and permits arrests without a warrant, longer detention periods prior to a court hearing and the monitoring of communications. Around 66,000 suspected gang members have been arrested thus far. Related security operations and confrontations can pose incidental risks to bystanders.

MEXICO

On March 11, in the Altozano area of Morelia, an unidentified armed group used Molotov cocktails to set fire to three nightclubs. Prior to this, on March 10, gunfire was reported in Uruapan during a confrontation between army soldiers and an armed group, three of whom died and eight were arrested. Similarly, in Huacana, five members of a criminal group were arrested. On the same day, in the municipality of the Aguillila, roadblocks were erected by armed individuals. These incidents highlight the high travel risks in Michoacan and the need for related precautions throughout March.

Travelers should exercise caution and anticipate heightened security in Northwestern states throughout March following the recent detentions of suspected members of the Sinaloa Cartel. On March 11, Bernardino 'N' – an alleged affiliate of Sinaloa Cartel's senior member Aureliano 'El Guano' Guzman Loera – was captured by the security forces in a neighborhood in Culiacan (Sinaloa state). Prior to this, on February 24, a security operation targeting 'El Guano' took place near Tamazula. These operations follow the capture of several other key figures of the Sinaloa Cartel's leadership in recent weeks.

Travelers should continue to defer non-essential travel to Guanajuato throughout March. A shooting at a bar in Apaseo el Grande on March 11 killed ten people and injured five others. According to local media, 12 unidentified gunmen opened fire on patrons and workers inside the venue before fleeing the scene. The shooting was reportedly carried out by the Santa Rosa de Lima Cartel (CSRL) in retaliation for recent attacks by the Cartel Jalisco Nueva Generacion (CJNG). The incident reflects the significant risks posed by violent crime in Guanajuato and the need to avoid non-essential journeys to high-risk areas of the state.

Travelers should exercise caution in Tamaulipas throughout March. Four US citizens on March 3 were abducted near the downtown area of Matamoros. The incident occurred shortly after the victims crossed the US-Mexico border. Unidentified gunmen opened fire on the victims' vehicle before forcibly taking them away in another vehicle. The incident underscores the travel risks in Tamaulipas state and the need for precautions when undertaking overland travel in high-risk areas.

PERU

Travelers should anticipate sporadic disruption linked to further protests demanding expedited elections and the resignation of President Dina Boluarte throughout March. The government has lifted a state of emergency in Lima following a sustained decrease in protest activity. Roadblocks and violent demonstrations have also declined significantly in Puno region, where normal travel can resume. Scattered roadblocks are liable to be erected on an intermittent basis in southern regions such as Puno, Cusco and Apurimac. Travelers should plan journeys bypassing any demonstrations as a precaution due to the latent potential for unrest.

URUGUAY

Travelers should anticipate disruption and follow official directives linked to the risk of wildfires during the remainder of the summer season (through March). The National Institute of Meteorology (INUMET) has issued red warnings (highest on a four-tier scale), denoting a very high risk of wildfires, for most of Uruguay. At least 40 wildfires have been reported during the current summer season. Most have occurred in Montevideo's metropolitan area, as well as in Canelones, Cerro Largo, Colonia, Durazno, Flores, Florida, Lavalleja, Maldonado and Rio Negro departments. Disruption has also been reported on several federal highways. Travelers should reconfirm the status of routes before setting out and exercise enhanced caution.

Africa & the Middle East

FLOOD-RELATED DISRUPTION IN MALAWI, MOZAMBIQUE, SOUTH AFRICA & UGANDA

Travelers should anticipate flood-related disruption in Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, and Uganda during the ongoing rainy season in the region, which typically ends in April, and plan journeys accordingly. Infrastructural damage has been reported in major urban centers, and bouts of heavy rainfall will persist over the coming months. Low-lying areas near riverbeds and urban areas with poor drainage, particularly informal settlements, are likely to experience flash flooding. Road obstruction and closures, as well as electricity and telecommunication outages, are likely during heavy downpours. Flight delays and cancellations are also possible.

ONGOING TENSIONS IN ISRAEL AND THE WEST BANK

Travelers should continue to exercise increased caution in Israel and the West Bank throughout March. Tensions are particularly high amid a cycle of Palestinian militant attacks and Israeli security raids. Tensions are particularly high amid a cycle of Palestinian militant attacks and Israeli security raids. On March 19, Israeli and Palestinian Authority officials together with representatives from Egypt, Jordan, and the US will meet in Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt. They will discuss the heightened tensions ahead of the holy month of Ramadan (March 22-April 21). Travelers should anticipate related protests in urban centers in the West Bank. Travelers should expect further violence in the coming days, and avoid all demonstrations as a precaution.

RAMADAN BEGINS MARCH 22-23

Travelers should anticipate heightened security and disruption in Muslim-majority countries during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, which is expected to begin on March 22 or 23 (the date may vary across countries). The holy month will be observed in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Maldives, as well as in the countries with sizeable Muslim populations, such as Fiji, India, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Travel usually increases towards the end of Ramadan, along with criminal activity in crowded areas. Respect cultural sensitivities and anticipate heightened security measures around major government buildings, religious sites, and transport hubs.

BURKINA FASO

Travelers should exercise caution in Nord region, Centre-Est region and Centre-Nord region through March 22 and abide by a nightly curfew imposed by the regional authorities. The curfew is in force nightly between 11:00 PM-5:00 AM until March 31. The curfew from 12:01 AM to 4:00 AM in Est region has been extended until May 21. The

curfews are intended to facilitate security force operations. Expect a heightened security force presence and abide by all official directives.

ETHIOPIA

Travelers should continue to defer travel to Tigray. The implementation of the November 2022 cessation of hostilities agreement (CoHA) between the federal government and the Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) is ongoing in Tigray state. However, the process has gone slower than planned, and there continue to be potential spoilers to the agreement. There remains an underlying risk of a breakdown in the CoHA and a resumption in fighting. As such, we maintain our advice to defer travel to Tigray and closely monitor related developments.

ISRAEL

Travelers should anticipate and avoid further protests against the right-wing government throughout March. Demonstrators have been staging rallies to denounce proposed judicial reforms for eight consecutive weeks. Such events have entailed roadblocks on major highways in the country as well as at interchanges in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Most recently, on March 18, at least 500,000 people participated in rallies in more than 100 cities, with the largest occurring in Tel Aviv. There were reports of scuffles between demonstrators and the police as well as the use of stun grenades and water cannon by the latter. Further protests are liable to entail blockades of major roadways, key intersections, and transport hubs. Any associated disturbances would pose incidental risks to bystanders. Travelers should avoid these areas of protest. Scuffles between participants and the police have occurred at previous demonstrations, with officers using stun grenades and water cannon to disperse crowds.

KENYA

Travelers should anticipate and avoid countrywide anti-government protests by the opposition Azimio la Umoja-One Kenya (AU-OK) coalition on March 21. AU-OK supporters have been attempting to gather in Nairobi's central business district (CBD) to march towards the State House. However, the security forces have used forcible dispersal measures, including tear gas. AU-OK supporters have also clashed with the security forces in Kisumu and Migori. A heightened security force presence has been reported in Nairobi and other major cities. Gatherings are likely to result in disruption and unrest.

NIGERIA

Travelers should closely monitor developments through March 25 following the March 18 gubernatorial and state assembly elections. Local sources reported widespread election-related unrest in several states on polling day, including in Kaduna, Kano, Lagos, Ogun and Rivers states. In Lagos state, elections at ten polling stations in the Victoria Garden City area were postponed until March 19 due to security concerns. While the situation has remained largely stable on March 19, the announcement of the results will most likely prompt further protests and localized unrest. Essential in-country travelers should reconfirm the feasibility of movement with local contacts and security providers prior to setting out. Travelers should avoid any election-related gatherings as a precaution.

MOROCCO

Travelers should anticipate disruption during a protest by taxi drivers in Rabat on March 21. Participants will gather from 10:00 AM at the Ministry of Interior to denounce poor driving conditions and high fuel prices, among other issues. The protest is likely to pass off peacefully but may cause localized disruption in its vicinity.

MOZAMBIQUE

Travelers should continue to exercise caution, anticipate disruption and follow all official directives through March 24 linked to weather system Freddy. On March 11, Freddy made landfall near Quelimane as a severe tropical cyclone. It weakened to a moderate tropical storm as it entered southern Malawi on March 13. The weather system has now dissipated but moderate rainfall continues. The most vulnerable places to floods and landslides are mountainous, low-lying and coastal locations. Infrastructure damage, power outages and short-notice travel disruption have been reported in areas on Freddy's trajectory.

SOUTH AFRICA

Travelers should continue to anticipate disruption and avoid all gatherings linked to an ongoing nationwide shutdown on March 21. The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) party has called for closing all businesses and schools. The shutdown has been urged to protest against the electricity load shedding and demand the resignation of President

Cyril Ramaphosa. The EFF has encouraged all local nationals to take part in the shutdown. Demonstrations in urban centers' central business districts (CBDs) will persist on March 21, causing localized disruption. Protesters will attempt to disrupt economic activity at commercial centers and establishments. They are liable to block major highways and roads to enforce the shutdown.

Travelers should avoid countrywide protests associated with an ongoing indefinite strike by the Nehawu union due to the risk of localized unrest. Nehawu members earlier on March 6 rallied outside the Chris Hani Baragwanath Academic Hospital in Johannesburg and the Department of Public Service and Administration in Pretoria. Related gatherings took place at public health facilities in other provinces. The strike, which began on March 6, is linked to a wage dispute and is proceeding despite a legal challenge by authorities. Travelers should liaise with local contacts for information on protests and allow additional time to complete journeys if travelling near such gatherings.

Travelers should anticipate disruption and avoid nationwide protests associated with an ongoing indefinite strike by the National Education, Health and Allied Workers' Union (NEHAWU) due to the risk of unrest throughout March. NEHAWU members have been striking over several demands, including wage disputes since the breakdown of negotiations with authorities in February. NEHAWU has vowed to continue striking until its demands are met. The strike may be accompanied by demonstrations and pickets near local government buildings and public health facilities. Liaise with local contacts to stay abreast of developments and allow additional time to complete journeys if travelling in the vicinity of related protests.

SUDAN

The governor of West Kordofan state declared a month-long State of Emergency, under the direction of the Sovereignty Council, until at least March 27. The State of Emergency has been implemented across the state to stop attacks and unrest leading to disruption of oil fields. Protestors in the Baleela area staged a protest and blocked roads on 27 February, the day the State of Emergency was implemented, in response to the declaration. They accused the government of attempting to crackdown on dissent in the state. Travelers should defer all travel to high risk locations.

Travelers should continue to monitor developments linked to ongoing negotiations on the transitional rule roadmap and avoid all pro- and anti-military protests as a precaution. Disagreements over the December 2022 transitional framework agreement signed by the military and Forces of Freedom and Change (FFC) coalition are driving unrest countrywide. Meanwhile, community-based resistance movements in Khartoum continue to call for protests. Fresh demonstrations are planned for March 19 and 21, though spontaneous protests may occur at other times. Travelers are strongly advised to avoid these areas. The security forces are liable to use tough measures, including tear gas and live ammunition, to disperse crowds.

TUNISIA

Travelers should expect normal services as a nationwide strike by transport workers scheduled for March 15 & 16 has been cancelled and rescheduled for May 10 & 11. The Tunisian General Labour Union (UGTT) had planned industrial action to protest against the government's perceived privatization agenda. Associated protests may still occur despite the cancellation of the strike. Travelers should anticipate localized disruption around any related protests and plan journeys accordingly.

Travelers should anticipate disruption during nationwide protests and strikes throughout March. The Tunisian General Labor Union (UGTT) has called for marches and regional rallies. The call for action follows the recent arrest of Anis Kaabi, a UGTT official. The union has accused President Kais Saeid of union rights violations, the non-application of signed agreements, and promises of public spending cuts in exchange for the International Monetary Fund's support. There is risk of clashes between protesters and police, posing incidental risks to bystanders.

Asia & the Pacific

AUSTRALIA

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.

The 2023 World Pride will take place in Sydney during March with more than 500,000 people expected to participate. People travelling to or within Australia to take part in the celebrations are recommended to take measures to protect themselves against illnesses including COVID-19, mpox (monkeypox), HIV and other sexually transmitted infections (STIs). Travelers are also recommended to ensure they are up-to-date with routine vaccinations including measles, mumps, rubella and hepatitis A and B.

BAHRAIN

Travelers should anticipate heightened security until March 15 around gatherings linked to a sensitive anniversary and avoid all related events due to the risk of unrest. Opposition groups have called for demonstrations across urban and rural centers, including Manama, to denounce the deployment of Gulf Cooperation Council forces to Bahrain on March 14 during the 2011 uprising. Although protests are likely to remain relatively small and confined to the predominantly Shia Muslim-majority neighborhoods outside central Manama, the security forces are liable to disperse unauthorized crowds. There is also a heightened risk of militancy around the anniversary period.

BANGLADESH

Operations at Dhaka Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (DAC) will be suspended daily between 2:00 AM and 7:00 AM local time from February 2 to April 3 due to renovation works. While the airlines have rescheduled flights to minimize the impact of the suspension, travelers should anticipate disruption and reconfirm their itineraries.

Travelers should anticipate disruption during nationwide protests by the Left Democratic Alliance (LDA), an alliance of eight leftist opposition parties, on March 22. The demonstrations are being organized over various issues, including the central government's immediate resignation and the parliament's dissolution. On March 18, the LDA held a related rally at the Paltan intersection in Dhaka. Although further details regarding the time and venues are yet to be announced, associated demonstrations will likely be held in major urban centers.

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 Center 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.

EGYPT

Travelers should continue to avoid rail travel throughout March. At least two people were killed and 16 others injured on March 7 when a train derailed near Qalyub, approximately 11 miles (18km) north of Cairo. The train was reportedly heading to Menouf. Investigations into the train's derailment are underway. The incident reiterates our advice to avoid all in-country rail travel.

INDIA

Travelers should plan journeys bypassing a protest by the All India Fair Price Shop Dealers' Federation at the parliament building in New Delhi on March 22. Participants have called for a gherao (picket) at the parliament over various grievances, including compensation for shop owners who died during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly 50,000 ration shop (fair price shop) owners and public distribution system vendors are expected to participate in the demonstration. Significant traffic disruption can be anticipated in the vicinity of the protest site, especially along Raisina Road and Sansad Marg.

Travelers should expect heightened security in Punjab through March 24 following ongoing search operations to arrest Amritpal Singh, the leader of the separatist 'Waris Punjab De' group. On March 18, Singh had evaded arrest near Nakodar. Internet services have been suspended across the state until 12:00 PM on March 21. Prohibitory orders (Section 144), banning unauthorized gatherings, have also been imposed until March 31 in Muktsar and Fazilka. Meanwhile, protests against Singh's arrest have been reported across the state, including in Mohali.

Travelers should anticipate disruption in Punjab during protests by opposition parties from March 17 to March 24. The Shiromani Akali Dal and Bahujan Samaj Party will hold statewide protests outside sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) offices against the state-ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) against their alleged misgovernance. Other possible flashpoints include AAP offices in the state and chief minister's residence in Sangrur. Authorities are likely to heighten security around such locations.

Travelers should anticipate disruption during a three-day strike by several auto-rickshaw unions in Karnataka state's capital Bengaluru from March 20 to 22. The strike is being held against authorities' decision to permit allegedly illegal bike taxis in the city. The auto-rickshaw unions are demanding a ban on such services. Associated protests are likely to focus on major transport hubs, such as bus stations and auto stands, the Bengaluru Regional Transport Office building and key government buildings. Localized disruption in the vicinity of the demonstrations can be anticipated.

Travelers should anticipate disruption during a protest campaign by Rajasthan's state opposition, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), in Rajasthan through March 23. The BJP is seeking to highlight the Indian National Congress-led state government's alleged failure in addressing issues, including unemployment and crimes against women. Gatherings will be held at all district headquarters, including in Jaipur, from March 15-30. Other potential flashpoints include BJP and Congress offices, key government buildings and major routes and intersections. Authorities are likely to use forcible dispersal measures in the event of any unruly gatherings, posing incidental risks to bystanders.

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 disruption in Jakarta on March 21 during a planned protest by the Labor Party. Participants from Greater Jakarta (locally known as Jabodetabek) will gather at 10:00 AM in front of Ministry of Manpower. They will protest against a government regulation allowing for a 25% reduction in industrial workers' wages. The demonstration is expected to be well attended, but is likely to pass off peacefully. A heightened security presence is expected around the gathering. Travelers should anticipate localized disruption in the vicinity.

Travelers should expect significant disruption to travel, telecommunication and commercial services on Bali island on March 22 and 23 during the Hindu festival of Nyepi (Day of Silence). The festival will be observed at 6:00 AM on March 22 for 24 hours. During this period, the provincial capital Denpasar's Ngurah Rai International Airport (DPS) will cease operations and likely permit only emergency landings. Major roads and ports will be closed and ferry services at Gilimanuk port will be suspended.

On March 11, alleged Armed Criminal Group (KKB) militants shot at a civilian aircraft at Nop Goliath Dekai Airport (DEX) at Dekai Town in Yahukimo Regency. The incident reportedly occurred while the plane was taking off at the airport. No casualties were reported. Security personnel have been deployed in the area and an investigation is

underway. This incident underscores the persistent separatist violence and subsequent risk posed to civilians in the province. Travelers should avoid non-essential journeys to this high-risk area due to sustained conflict.

Travelers anticipate intermittent disruption and maintain flexible itineraries during the ongoing Northwest monsoon season, which typically lasts until March. The Meteorology, Climatology, and Geophysical Agency (BMKG) has forecast the potential for heavy rain across several areas of the country until March 20. Flooding has also been reported in 18 neighborhoods in southern and eastern parts of Jakarta. Heavy rainfall can cause landslides, prompting short-notice and localized road closures and power outages. Adverse weather conditions can also affect airport operations, overland transport networks and essential infrastructure.

JAPAN

Travelers should plan journeys accounting for intermittent travel disruption during the ongoing winter season, which will last through March. Heavy snow, strong winds, and poor visibility can result in short-notice disruption to road, air, and rail (including the Shinkansen bullet train) travel, as well as seaport operations. Such conditions can also disrupt power and water supply in affected areas. Travelers should anticipate closures of and speed restrictions on major highways during periods of severe weather. At least 18 people have been killed in weather-related incidents since December 2022.

LEBANON

Travelers should anticipate disruption and localized protests throughout March linked to an indefinite nationwide bank strike. On March 14, members of the Association of Banks in Lebanon (ABL) resumed a nationwide strike following judicial disputes over informal money withdrawal restrictions, and amid an ongoing liquidity crisis. On the same day, the 'united lawyers association' (locally known as the Moutahidoun) called for an 'escalation' against bank owners and their houses. Protests and low-level violence are possible during the strike and may cause localized disruption, due to increased risk of clashes between protesters and the security forces.

MALAYSIA

Travelers should anticipate intermittent disruption and maintain flexible itineraries amid the ongoing northeast monsoon season, which typically lasts through March. Heavy rainfall resulting in flooding and landslides may prompt localized short-notice road closures. Adverse weather conditions can also affect operations at airports in major urban centers. Travelers should reconfirm the feasibility of journeys before setting out.

MYANMAR

Travelers should be aware that sustained fighting persists in conflict zones between the military, and the Ethnic Armed Organizations (EAOs) and People's Defense Force (PDF) groups. On February 21, four civilians were injured in Thandaungyi township by shelling during clashes between the military and the Karen National Liberation Army. Military operations have involved escalated tactics, including heavy artillery and airstrikes. Earlier, the military government on February 2 imposed martial law in an additional 37 townships across the country. Travelers should expect further hostilities over the coming months, highlighting the need to defer all travel to conflict zones.

PAKISTAN

Economic conditions will continue to deteriorate throughout March, with expected price increases for fuel, food and other essential items. Travelers should continue to anticipate fuel shortages and disruption to essential services, including electricity, water, internet services, and mobile connectivity, in urban centers over the coming months. The rupee, which devalued 15% in January, is likely to lose further value. Political instability will exacerbate the situation.

On February 25 & 26, two fatal bomb attacks occurred in Balochistan. The first incident, on February 25, targeted a police vehicle in Khuzdar city, killing two police officers and injuring two others. On the following day, four people were killed and at least ten others in an explosion at a market in Rakhni town. Although no group claimed responsibility for either incident, the attacks highlight a consistent pattern of increasing terrorism across the country. Enhanced security precautions are required for journeys to Pakistan's high travel risk areas throughout March.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Travelers should exercise heightened vigilance following the murder of a man in Tari on March 20. The man died after being attacked with a bush knife at a market in the town. Local sources indicate that the murder is related to ongoing tensions between warring tribes in Tari. Similar incidents of tribal violence often trigger retaliatory attacks.

While Tari Airport (TIZ) and businesses in the town remain operational, anticipate a heightened security force presence and further incidents of violence through March 24.

SOUTH KOREA

Travelers should anticipate disruption in Seoul every Saturday until April 1 during protest marches by civil society groups, and plan journeys accordingly. Protesters are demanding the resignation of President Yoon Suk-yeol. The marches will start near City Hall station, pass through Gwanghwamun and end outside the embassy of Japan. Organizers expect more than 50,000 participants to attend. Travelers should anticipate traffic disruption along the march route and follow official directives.

THAILAND

Plan journeys bypassing a protest by activists belonging to the pro-democracy United Front of Thammasat and Demonstration group in Bangkok on March 21. The demonstration will be held at the Kiakkai Intersection in the vicinity of the National Assembly (parliament) building at 4:00 PM. Ahead of the general election in May this year, the activists are protesting against the government's alleged negligent attitude towards the people. The gathering will likely be well attended, causing localized traffic disruption. The security forces are liable to use strong crowd-control measures, posing incidental risks to bystanders.

The Thailand government on March 1 approved the extension of the emergency decree in Yala, Pattani and Narathiwat from March 20 until June 19. This comes after the peace talks between the separatist National Revolutionary Front (BRN) and Thailand government authorities concluded in Kuala Lumpur on February 22. However, insurgent activity will likely continue through March 17. A military base in Si Sakhon district was attacked on March 2 by suspected insurgents. The incident highlights the persistent risk posed by the ongoing separatist insurgency. Travelers should avoid all non-essential travel to the southern provinces.

Europe

CONTINUED TENSIONS ALONG ARMENIA-AZERBAIJAN BORDER

Travel to Armenia and Azerbaijan's shared border regions and the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh should continue to be deferred throughout March. Bilateral tensions remain high over the Lachin Corridor, which connects Nagorno-Karabakh to Armenia via Azerbaijani territory. Azerbaijan accuses Armenia of extracting natural resources and using the corridor to send weapons to Nagorno-Karabakh. Armenia denies this. Since December 12, 2022, Azerbaijani activists and journalists have staged related protests along the Goris-Stepanakert Highway, which remains closed in both directions. Heightened tensions will persist despite ongoing peace negotiations between Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev.

EUROPEAN TRANSPORT SECTOR STRIKES

Travelers should anticipate protests and significant disruption across Europe throughout March during widespread transport sector strikes over socio-economic grievances. The work stoppages are liable to result in major travel delays and cancellations. Travelers should plan itineraries accordingly and allow additional time for journeys.

BRITISH PASSPORT OFFICER STRIKE

Travelers should prepare for delays and disruptions in passport service from April 3 to May 5. More than 1,000 members of the Public and Commercial Services (PCS) union across England, Scotland, and Wales plan to strike during this time.

ARMENIA

Travelers should continue to anticipate further disruptive protests in urban centers, including Yerevan, over roadblocks on the Goris-Stepanakert Highway. Since December 12, the latter have severely hindered land movement to the disputed territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, disrupting supply chains. Demonstrators have been gathering in central Yerevan to demand the highway be cleared. Some demonstrators are also calling for the government to resign over its perceived lack of action. Travelers should expect disruption and heightened security around related protests, which should be avoided as a precaution.

FRANCE

Travelers should plan routes bypassing rallies by the 'Yellow Vests' (Gilets Jaunes, GJ) movement in Paris through March 25 to minimize inconvenience. On March 21, demonstrators will gather at Avenue Franklin Delano Roosevelt at 10:00 AM. On March 25, a commemorative rally for deceased GJ activists will proceed at 11:00 AM at the Basilica of Sacre Coeur de Montmartre. Travelers should anticipate an increased police presence and traffic disruption in the vicinity of the events. The police may forcibly disperse such gatherings and any related unrest would pose incidental risks to bystanders.

Travelers should continue to avoid further protests throughout March over the government's decision to expedite a contentious pension reform bill, due to the credible risk of unrest. The enactment of Article 49.3 of the constitution, which bypasses a National Assembly (parliament) vote, is highly controversial. The opposition has filed no-confidence motion. Expect related rallies in urban centers through March 24, while unions have called for a nationwide mobilization on March 23.

Travelers should anticipate further protests and associated disruption over proposed pension reform and associated disruption in urban centers in Martinique, Guadeloupe, and French Guiana through March 23. Unions in Guadeloupe have called for demonstrations on March 20 beginning at 8:00 AM in Point-a-Pitre (Point-a-Pitre arrondissement). Additional gatherings in all three departments are likely through at least March 23, when French unions have called for a nationwide mobilization. While no protests have been announced in Martinique and French Guiana, demonstrations are likely. Precedent suggests related protests are liable to garner significant attendance and may include road blockades.

GREECE

Travelers should plan journeys bypassing a protest by political activists in Thessaloniki on March 21. Participants will meet outside the French consulate from 7:30 PM to display solidarity with the industrial action in France against pension reform. The All-Workers Militant Front trade union movement has planned this demonstration. The police may forcibly disperse the gathering and any related unrest would pose incidental risks to bystanders. Travelers should expect traffic disruption in the vicinity of the consulate and follow official directives.

Travelers should anticipate further protests throughout March following a fatal rail crash on February 28 near Tempí and plan journeys accordingly. On March 16, unrest occurred during a related demonstration in Athens' Syntagma Square. Some participants threw petrol bombs at police officers, who responded by firing tear gas and stun grenades. Meanwhile, a related strike on the day disrupted flights and public transport across the country. Travelers should plan itineraries accounting for disruption during related events and allow additional time for journeys.

LITHUANIA

Travelers should plan journeys bypassing a farmers' demonstration in the capital Vilnius on March 23. Participants plan to gather at 11:00 AM in front of the Parliament to denounce the decrease in raw milk prices and demand the implementation of an agricultural policy. The protest is expected to see the participation of over 2,500 people and will likely cause traffic disruption in the area.

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.

Caribbean

JAMAICA

Travelers should anticipate an increased security presence and follow all official directives in areas under a state of emergency until at least March 28. The state of emergency is in place in Clarendon and Saint James parishes. The measure is aimed at curbing violent crime, including gang-related violence, in the aforementioned areas. The government has authorized the armed forces to assist the police in maintaining order in these locations.

Travelers should take precautions in medium-risk areas throughout March. Three security guards were shot and injured by unidentified individuals in an armed robbery on March 19 in downtown Portmore while servicing an ATM. An earlier armed robbery of another armored car at Portmore Pines Plaza on February 27 left one person killed and two others injured. The violent nature of these incidents highlights the direct and incidental threat violent crime poses in Jamaica.

ST. LUCIA

Travelers can expect an increased security presence throughout March in Vieux Fort as part of authorities' measures to combat a spike in violence throughout March. From March 9-11, fatal armed clashes between gangs left more than five people dead and several others injured in the city. Reports on March 17 indicate that a Canadian national was stabbed in Gros Islet while on holiday. The victim was attacked by a group of five men on Dauphin Street who allegedly were trying to rob him. Despite the recent spike in crime, petty crime remains the primary security threat to visitors. Travelers should take basic security measures need to be adopted to mitigate crime risks in St Lucia.

Authorities have announced they would enact additional security measures, including 24-hour patrols and deploying forces associated with the Regional Security System. Despite the recent spike in homicides, petty crime remains the primary security threat to travelers.