HEADLINES FROM THIS WEEK

• **Tensions Rise in Syria** – International rhetoric on planned actions in Syria have heated up this week after a suspected chemical attack by the Syrian government on the city of Duma on 07 April; at least 40 fatalities were reported as a result of the attack. The US (and its allies) have vowed to respond to the chemical attack as it did in 2017. Russia, Syria’s closest ally, has warned that any US attack on Syria could lead to open conflict between the two countries. Airlines are avoiding Syrian airspace due to the fears of a missile strike by the US.

• **UN Mission Clashes in Bangui** – The UN peacekeeping mission to the Central African Republic were involved in a series of clashes in the capital Bangui this week. UN forces were conducting operations in PK5, a Muslim area of the predominantly Christian city, when clashes occurred. One Rwandan UN soldier was killed, and eight others were wounded. Nine people in PK5 were killed. This led to hundreds of protesters outside the UN headquarters in the city, where they also laid the bodies of those killed.

• **Nawaz Sharif Given Lifetime Political Ban** – Former Prime Minister of Pakistan, Nawaz Sharif, has been disqualified from holding public office in the country for life. Sharif was dismissed from office last year over corruption allegations. He had hoped to make a political comeback in time for the general elections in July.

• **Police Officers Killed in Antioquia, Colombia** – Eight police officers were killed after an explosives attack in the village of El Tomate, San Pedro de Uraba, Antioquia Department. No group has claimed responsibility, but the most likely culprits are the Gulf Clan, a criminal drug gang who are active in the region. The group act as a paramilitary force in many places and appear to have benefited from the security vacuum left behind from the disbanding of the FARC rebel group.

• **Tropical Cyclone Keni Hits Fiji** – Fiji has been struck by a second tropical cyclone in just over a week. Kaduva has borne the brunt of most of the damage, with winds wiping out homes, uprooting trees, and capsizing boats. At the height of the storm, more than 6,000 people sheltered into evacuation centres. No fatalities were reported. Keni is now heading south but is unlikely to make landfall on New Zealand.

• **Security Situations in Germany** – Security forces thwarted an attempted attack at the Berlin half-marathon on 08 April 2018. Six people were detained over plans to attack runners with knives after German authorities were given a tip-off from a foreign intelligence service. The arrests came just a day after what transpired to be a non-terror vehicle ramming attack in Münster which killed two people and injured at least 20 more.
Yom Ha'atzmaut – Israel will celebrate its Independence Day or Yom Ha'atzmaut on 19 April. Travellers can expect travel disruption in Israel and in other locations with significant Jewish populations. Palestinian activists have vowed to protest the day. Violent clashes have been ongoing on the Gaza-Israel border since 30 March 2018. Reports suggest that there have been at least 34 Palestinian deaths and 3,000 injuries during this period.

Referendum in Guatemala – On 15 April, Guatemalans will be given the opportunity to vote in a referendum on whether the government should request the International Court of Justice finally resolve the territorial dispute between itself and Belize. It is possible that this vote could lead to some disruption in Guatemala, but unrest is unlikely to be aimed at the government. There is also potential for clashes on the Guatemala-Belize border.

Handover of Power in Cuba – For the first time since before 1959, the Caribbean island of Cuba is set to be led by a non-Castro as Raul Castro stands down as president on 19 April. While his successor is not assured, it is expected to be the 57-year-old Vice-President Miguel Diaz-Canel. It is as yet unclear how the change of leadership will impact Cuba's economic policies or the future of Havana-Washington relations.

Arab League Summit in Riyadh – The 2018 Arab League Summit is due to be held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on 15 April. The Summit was delayed from March after it clashed with the Egyptian presidential elections. The issue of Palestine is set to be high on the agenda, while ongoing relations with Qatar are not. Travellers in the Saudi capital can expect high levels of security as regional leaders head to the city.

Funeral Service for Winnie Mandela – Winnie Mandela, the ex-wife of Nelson Mandela, is due to be buried on 14 April at Fourways Memorial Park in Craigavon, Johannesburg. There are planned road closures in place for the funeral procession of the former civil rights leader from 1230 until 1430. Reports suggest that there may be protests en route by residents unhappy with a stalled development plan.

Isra and Mi'raj 2018 – Known as the Prophet's Ascension, this Islamic festival is celebrated in a series of Muslim-majority countries between 13 and 15 April. The event is likely to cause travel and business disruptions in these locations, including the closure of government offices.

Anniversary of the Eldorado dos Carajas Massacre – 17 April marks the anniversary of the Eldorado dos Carajas Massacre. On this day in 1996, 19 farmers were killed by military police in Pará state, after they invaded a private ranch. The anniversary often leads to violent protests; large gatherings around this date should be avoided.
Weekly Risk Roundup

SIGNIFICANT DATES AND EVENTS

- 14 April – United Kingdom – Grand National Horse Racing at Aintree
- 14 April – Israel – Anti-corruption rally in Tel Aviv
- 14-16 April – Pakistan – Nurses to strike in Peshawar
- 14 April – Germany – Far-right rally planned in Cologne
- 14 April – Italy – Formula E event in Rome
- 14 April – Honduras – Pan America Day
- 15 April – Slovakia – Protests in Humenne and Bratislava
- 15 April – North Korea – Celebration of Kim Il Sung’s birthday
- 15 April – Montenegro – Presidential elections
- 15 April – Uruguay – Montevideo marathon
- 16 April – United Kingdom – Commonwealth Head of State meeting in London
- 16 April – Puerto Rico – Jose de Diego’s birthday
- 16 April – United States – Boston Marathon
- 16 April – Moldova – Memorial/Parents’ Day
- 16-17 April – Portugal – Train staff to strike
- 17 April – American Samoa – Flag Day
- 17 April – Syria – Evacuation Day (Syrian national day)
- 17 April – Pakistan – Tribal leaders to rally in Islamabad
- 17 April – Venezuela – Healthcare workers to strike
- 17 April – Belarus – Radonista (Commemoration Day)
- 17 April – Gabon – Women’s Day
- 17 April – Iraq – Food and Agriculture Day
- 18 April – Zimbabwe – Independence Day
- 19 April – Nepal – Bisket Jartra Festival (New Year)
- 19 April – Venezuela – Independence Declaration Day
- 20 April – United Kingdom – Docklands Light Railway staff to strike
- 21 April – United States – Neo-Nazi group to rally in Newnan, Georgia
- 21 April – Brazil – Tiradentes Day
- 22 April – Paraguay – Presidential, legislative, and local elections
- 23 April – United Kingdom – St George’s Day (England)