



Daily



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MAX - Americas Region Daily Summary - July 16, 2024

Highlights of the Day

- **Colombia:** SM-FARC fatally shoots two soldiers in Narino on July 14; unlikely to escalate akin to EMC-FARC offensive in southwest
- **Haiti:** Five killed amid attempt to seize police station in Artibonite on July 12; violence to rise as gangs flee PauP amid high security
- **Peru:** Health workers' unions announce 48-hour strike nationwide, associated protests in Lima between July 17-18; allot for disruptions
- **USA:** Motive of assassination attempt on Trump remains unclear, misinformation proliferates, as of July 15; threat of political violence rises

Actionable Items

Colombia: Processions commemorating Virgen del Carmen, associated road closures slated in Medellin on July 16; allot for disruptions

Current Situation: Multiple processions commemorating Virgen del Carmen have been slated in Medellin for July 16. The processions have been organized from Terminal del Sur to Terminal del Norte, starting at the intersection of Carrera 65 and Calle 8B, from 09:30-12:00 (local time). Another procession is slated to begin at the intersection of Calle 72 and Avenida 64C, along Carrera 65 to Calle 89, from 05:30-07:00. Additionally, there will be a procession from Catedral Metropolitana to Parroquia del Senor de la Misericordia in Manrique, starting at 17:00. Meanwhile, authorities have announced that multiple roads will be closed to vehicular traffic along the route of each procession, for an approximate duration of two hours.

Recommendations: Those residing or operating in Medellin on July 16 are advised to allot for disruptions to vehicular traffic due to the planned road closures along the aforementioned routes of the Virgen del Carmen processions from the morning hours onwards.

Peru: Health workers' unions announce 48-hour strike nationwide, associated protests in Lima between July 17-18; allot for disruptions

Current Situation: The Federacion Medica de Peruana (FMP), alongside other health workers' unions have announced a 48-hour strike nationwide and associated protests in Lima on July 17-18. On July 17, protestors will gather at the Insituto Nacional Materno Perinatal in Barrios Altos at 07:00 (local time) and march towards Ministerio de Salud del Peru (Ministry of Health) at 10:00. On July 18, protestors will gather at the Defensoria del Pueblo del Peru (Ombudsman's Headquarters) at 10:00. The labor action is being held to demand increased budget for the health sector and addressal of drug shortages in health centers across Peru.

Assessments & Forecast: Given the unions' mobilization capabilities, the strike is expected to be widely adhered to, consequently causing disruptions to routine public medical and healthcare services nationwide on July 17-18. Based on previous protests by FMP and social media estimates, the protests will likely witness a turnout in the mid-to-high hundreds in Lima. While the associated protests are anticipated to transpire peacefully, given precedent, a bolstered security presence can be expected near the protest locations to monitor proceedings, disrupting travel during the protest timings.

Recommendations: Those operating or residing in Peru on July 17-18 are advised to allot for public healthcare services and travel due to the slated labor action. Allot for disruptions to travel near protest locations in Lima due to the associated protest during the slated timings.

USA: Excessive heat, inclement weather prompt alerts on July 16, storms cause disruptions in Chicago, IL; remain abreast of weather updates

Current Situation: The National Weather Service (NWS) has issued flash flood warnings for parts of Oregon, Idaho, and Illinois as of July 16, until further notice. Excessive heat warnings have been issued for parts of Arkansas, Tennessee, and Mississippi, at least until the night hours (local time) on July 16. Meanwhile, excessive heat warnings have been extended for states along the east coast including Delaware, North Carolina, South Carolina, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Washington DC for July 16. Meanwhile, over 322,000 customers have been impacted by power outages in Illinois following a line of storms that produced tornadoes on July 15. Credible reports indicate that a shelter-in-place was issued at the O'Hare International Airport (ORD) in the night hours of July 15 due to the storms. As of early morning hours on July 16, two major fires are ongoing in Montana: the 'Deadman' fire which has spread to over 15,000 acres, and the 'Horse Gulch' fire, spread to over 12,700 acres. Separately, over 142,000 customers continue to be impacted by power outages in Texas following Hurricane Beryl's passage.

Recommendations: Those operating or residing in the aforementioned areas in the USA on July 16 are advised to remain cognizant of authorities' updates regarding weather-related risks.

Notable Events

Argentina: Government starts selling dollars to reduce inflation, boost ARS on July 15; to raise concerns over long-term economic outlook

Current Situation: On July 15, the government began its intervention in the parallel currency market by selling dollars for pesos after Economy Minister Luis Caputo announced the inflation-reduction measure on July 13. Subsequently, ARS rose by 6.01 percent to 1,415 per USD and the gap between the black market "blue" exchange rate and the official rate narrowed to 53 percent from 60 percent in the previous week.

Assessments & Forecast: The measure reflects the government's efforts to prioritize inflation deacceleration, likely at the cost of accumulating USD reserves. These efforts follow the release of inflation data from June, when monthly inflation increased slightly to 4.6 percent for the first time since falling from 25.5 percent in December to 4.2 percent in May. Costs for housing and utilities increased by 14.3 percent in June. The fact that Argentina's benchmark stock index 'Merval' fell by more than 12 percent and government bonds fell by 3 percent on July 15 suggests that these measures are likely to raise concerns about Argentina's long-term economic outlook, given that USD reserves are needed to pay off the country's international debt.

Colombia: SM-FARC fatally shoots two soldiers in Narino on July 14; unlikely to escalate akin to EMC-FARC offensive in southwest

Current Situation: On July 14, over 100 armed individuals identified as Segunda Marquetalia-Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (SM-FARC) dissidents, reportedly opened gunfire at army personnel in Policarpa municipality, Narino, killing two soldiers.

Assessments & Forecast: The attack contravenes SM-FARC's proposal for a unilateral ceasefire during the first round of peace talks with the government on June 29. Given that the latter is yet to reciprocate with a presidential decree confirming a bilateral ceasefire, authorities are expected to continue military operations against the group, as confirmed by Defense Minister Ivan Velasquez on July 10. While the lack of a bilateral ceasefire provides more scope for SM-FARC to perpetrate similar attacks against the security apparatus, there is a limited potential for an escalation in attacks akin to the Estado Mayor Central-FARC's attacks against the law enforcement in southwest Colombia, given the significant weakening in SM-FARC's armed capabilities since 2022. Nonetheless, given that the peace talks remain inconclusive, the security landscape will likely remain volatile across SM-FARC's strongholds along the Colombian-Venezuela border, Narino, and Putumayo, at least until the government responds to the ceasefire proposal.

Haiti: Five killed amid attempt to seize police station in Artibonite on July 12; violence to rise as gangs flee PauP amid high security

Current Situation: On July 12, authorities, alongside Jean-Denis coalition self-defense group, thwarted an attempt by Gran Grif gang to take over a police station in Pont-Sonde, Saint-Marc, Artibonite after the gang opened fire at it. In the ensuing clashes, five individuals, including two gang members were killed.

Assessments & Forecast: The incident is reflective of the overall increase in gang-related violence, including homicides, kidnappings, extortion, and armed robberies, in Artibonite. This is supported by gang-related deaths rising by 70 percent in 2023, compared to 2022 coupled with UN reports suggesting further increase in 2024 so far. This is likely due to gangs such as Gran-Grief among others fleeing from Port-au-Prince following the increased police operations alongside the June 25 deployment of 400 Kenyan military forces tasked with securing hospitals, airports, ports, the presidential palace and the national highways, with an additional 200 troops deployed on July 16. Separately, the participation of the self-defense groups highlights the increasing vigilantism in rural areas where police presence is less in response to relentless gang

activity, elevating the threat of armed confrontations between gangs and civilians and subsequent fatalities.

USA: Trump's classified documents indictment dismissed over constitutional grounds on July 15; concerns over judicial bias to sustain

Current Situation: On July 15, a Florida Federal Judge, Aileen Cannon, dismissed all charges against former President Donald Trump in the case alleging he mishandled classified documents after leaving office in 2021. The Federal court ruled that the Justice Department's appointment of Senior Counsel Jack Smith, who prosecuted the case, was unconstitutional.

Assessments & Forecast: Given that the ruling was based on the argument that the appointment of Smith as special counsel violated the Appointments Clause, the ruling could lead to calls for legislative changes to clarify the appointment process for special counsels. Furthermore, the ruling is notable for the precedent it sets, potentially weakening the appointment and effectiveness of special counsels in future high-profile investigations. Moreover, the opposition will continue to raise concerns over judicial bias, given Judge Cannon's appointment to the federal bench by Trump in November 2020. Additionally, following the latest ruling, Trump could increasingly frame other ongoing legal cases against him as politically motivated. This, and the potential for the July 13 assassination attempt against Trump to increase public sympathy, could boost his political standing for the November 5 presidential election.

USA: Motive of assassination attempt on Trump remains unclear, misinformation proliferates, as of July 15; threat of political violence rises

Current Situation: The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is investigating the assassination attempt on Trump as a lone-actor-involved 'domestic terrorism' act, with the motive remaining unconfirmed. Small demonstrations in support of Trump were recorded in Palm Beach, FL and New York City, NY on July 13-14. Members of the Proud Boys stated they would increase their participation at future Trump rallies, including the Republican National Convention (RNC) in Milwaukee, WI between July 15-18.

Assessments & Forecast: Given heightened tensions, authorities are expected to maintain bolstered security measures near sensitive locations including government buildings, residences of politicians, and campaign rallies in the coming weeks. Sporadic decentralized protests by Trump supporters are likely, although they will be small and peaceful. Additionally, that the USSS has opted not to bolster security measures at the

RNC suggests that internal security assessments regarding potential threats remain unchanged despite the July 13 attack. While far-right groups are expected to increase their active participation at events going forward, wide-scale unrest by these groups in the lead up to the elections remains unlikely. Instead, the primary threat of political violence stems from lone actors.

Other Developments

- On July 15, **Bolivian** President Luis Arce announced the discovery of the Mayaya Centro-X1 IE well in La Paz, Bolivia. The well, confirmed to hold 1.7 TCF (trillion cubic feet) of natural gas reserves, marks a significant hydrocarbon discovery in the region.
- On July 15, the **Brazilian** government recalled its ambassador in Buenos Aires, for consultations amid escalating tensions between Brazilian President Lula da Silva and **Argentine** President Javier Milei. The recall follows Milei stating Brazil's former President, Jair Bolsonaro as "politically persecuted" on July 7.
- In **Colombia**, the Medellin ombudsman's office reported approximately 443 cases of human rights violations, including physical, psychological, and verbal violence against the LGBTQ+ community between January-June.
- On July 15, **Ecuador's** Federaciun Nacional de Transporte Publico de Pasajeros (FENACOTIP) transport union, announced the suspension of a nationwide strike initially slated for July 16-17 and withdrawal from dialogues with authorities.
- According to July 15 reports, over 71 individuals were arbitrarily detained in **Venezuela** during the first ten days of the presidential election campaign, including 48 linked to opposition candidate Edmundo Gonzalez Urrutia from Plataforma Unitaria Democratica (PUD)'s campaign.

Notable Dates

18 Uruguay Holiday: Constitution Day
JUL

19 Nicaragua Holiday: Sandinista Revolution Day
JUL

20 Colombia Day: Independence Day
JUL

23 Peru Holiday: Peruvian Air Force Day
JUL

24 Ecuador & Venezuela Holiday: Simon Bolivar Day
JUL

25 Costa Rica Holiday: Guanacaste Day
JUL
