



## Daily



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## MAX - Americas Region Daily Summary - May 4, 2024

### Highlights of the Day

- **Americas:** CARICOM-IMPACS warns of Islamist terror threat to T20 World Cup, per May 3 reports; threat expected to remain low during event
- **Colombia:** 'March for Life' protests slated nationwide, including in Bogota, Medellin, on May 4; allot for disruptions
- **Cuba:** Spain-based bank closes, Russia-based bank opens in Cuba, per April 29 reports; reflects increasing financial engagement with Russia
- **USA:** Alleged anarchist post urges disruptive methods at pro-Palestinian campus protests, as of May 3; involvement of far-left groups growing

### Actionable Items

**Colombia:** 'March for Life' protests slated nationwide, including in Bogota, Medellin, on May 4; allot for disruptions

**Current Situation:** The Unidos por la Vida (March for Life) civil society group has called for rallies in multiple cities on May 4 to denounce the 2022 court ruling that decriminalized abortion until the 24th week of pregnancy. In **Bogota**, the march will start from Parque Nacional at 10:00 (local time) and proceed to Plaza de Bolivar. In **Cali**, the rally will be held at Parque de las Banderas at 10:00. In **Medellin**, the march will start from Estadio subway station at 14:30 and proceed to Parque de las Luces. Protests are also planned in Barranquilla, Bucaramanga, Cartagena, Manizales, Pereira, and Santa Marta.

**Assessments & Forecast:** Given the mobilization capabilities of the organizing group, the slated protests are expected to draw attendance in the mid-to-high thousands in Bogota, Cali, and Medellin each and in the mid-to-high hundreds in other cities. Based on the previous La Marcha Nacional por la Vida protests on May 10, 2023, the slated protests will likely transpire peacefully. Regardless, a security presence to monitor proceedings and disruptions to traffic can be anticipated near the protest locations.

**Recommendations:** Those operating or residing in the aforementioned cities in Colombia on May 4 are advised to allot for disruptions to travel near the pro-life marches during the slated timings.

#### **Mexico: Civil society groups call for protests in multiple cities nationwide, including in Mexico City, on May 5; allot for disruptions**

**Current Situation:** Multiple civil society groups have called for protest actions denouncing insecurity in multiple cities nationwide on May 5. In Chilpancingo de los Bravo, Guerrero, relatives of missing people are slated to march from Parque Margarita Maza de Juarez at 10:00 (local time) towards Zocalo. In Mexico City, judicial workers denouncing judicial reforms proposed by the federal government are slated to protest at the Angel de la Independencia from 10:00. Separately, a protest denouncing insecurity and violence in Mexico is slated to be held at the Monumento a la Revolucion from 14:00 onwards. In Tapachula, Chiapas, judiciary workers are slated to march from Parque Bicentenario at 09:00, towards Parque Miguel Hidalgo.

**Assessments & Forecast:** Based on precedent, upcoming demonstrations are expected to witness an attendance in the mid-to-high hundreds at each location, with a higher participation expected in the high-hundreds to low-thousands in Mexico City. While these are expected to transpire peacefully, a bolstered security presence can, nonetheless, be expected at protest sites and along march routes. Consequently, significant disruptions to vehicular and pedestrian traffic can be anticipated in the vicinity of protest sites.

**Recommendations:** Those operating or residing in the aforementioned cities in Mexico on May 5 are advised to allot for disruptions to travel owing to the slated demonstrations during the morning hours.

**Panama: General elections for President, National Assembly scheduled from 07:00-16:00 (local time) on May 5; allot for disruptions**

**Current Situation:** Voting to elect the President, Vice President, Parlamento Centroamericano deputies and Asamblea Nacional deputies will take place from 07:00-16:00 (local time) on May 5. The Policia Nacional will deploy 10,000 personnel at 3,037 voting centers nationwide. Authorities have imposed prohibitions on the sale and consumption of alcoholic beverages in public spaces from 12:00 on May 4 till 12:00 on May 6. Foreigners residing in hotels are exempted from this prohibition.

**Assessments & Forecast:** Given that the Supreme Court ruled frontrunner Jose Raul Mulino's Presidential candidature constitutional on May 3, the potential for unrest remains low. With general elections occurring amidst environmental concerns regarding the Panama Canal and corruption allegations against government officials, the possibility of symbolic peaceful protests by indigenous and civil society groups, particularly near Asamblea Nacional and Plaza 5 de Mayo in Panama City, remains. A heightened security can be expected outside all polling stations, key government buildings, especially in urban zones like Panama City, La Chorrera, Colon, Vista Alegre, Arraijan, Nueva Esperanza, and Las Grazas. Pre-emptive road closures and security cordons can be expected near government buildings and polling sites.

**Recommendation:** Those operating or residing in Panama on May 5 are advised to allot for possible disruptions to traffic near political gatherings as well as polling stations for the duration of the voting.

## Notable Events

**Americas: CARICOM-IMPACS warns of Islamist terror threat to T20 World Cup, per May 3 reports; threat expected to remain low during event**

**Current Situation:** Per May 3 reports, Caribbean Community's (CARICOM) Implementation Agency for Crime and Security (IMPACS) warned against a potential terror threat at T20 cricket World Cup. IMPACS reportedly cites an allegedly pro-Islamic State (IS) group Nashir Pakistan's online post warning "people indulging in amusement would ultimately face the day of reckoning". The tournament's fixtures are in Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, Guyana, Saint Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, and the USA, between June 1-29.

**Assessments & Forecast:** While the veracity of Nashir Pakistan's post remains unconfirmed, the warning aligns with the latent Islamist terror threat against major international events, especially in the West amid escalating tensions in Middle East. This

is reflected in IS propaganda posters calling for attacks targeting football stadiums in Europe hosting Champions League in April. That said, Islamist groups do not have a strong network in the Americas, thereby limiting the overall threat to the cricket event. The threat from lone-wolf sympathizers cannot be ruled out, particularly in the USA, where IS propaganda may increase capitalizing on the Moscow attack, as [indicated in the April 8 arrest](#).

#### **Colombia: Curfew announced after four explosive detonations near CAI in Calamar, Guaviare on May 1; reflects threat to police entities**

**Current Situation:** On May 1, unidentified suspects detonated four improvised explosive devices (IED) near the Centro de Atencion Inmediata (CAI) police station in Calamar municipality of Guaviare department. In response to the attack, authorities instituted a curfew in Calamar restricting mobility of citizens between 22:00-04:00 (local time) from May 2-7.

**Assessments & Forecast:** Considering that Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC) dissidents' Bloque Amazonas faction established banners threatening attacks on police and public in Calamar's Altos de Villa Alicia and Puente Balin sectors, per April 18 reports, members of said group were the likely perpetrators. The attack was likely in retaliation to ongoing security operations against Bloque Amazonas as the group attempts to maintain territorial control of Guaviare for drug-trafficking operations. To this end, threat of attacks to local CAIs, security patrols, and officials will continue to remain elevated over the medium term, with two explosive devices detonated near a CAI in San Jose de Guaviare municipality on April 26. Moreover, such incidents are anticipated to prompt authorities to implement curfews, as ordered between May 2-7, disrupting business operations and travel.

#### **Cuba: Spain-based bank closes, Russia-based bank opens in Cuba, per April 29 reports; reflects increasing financial engagement with Russia**

**Current Situation:** On April 29, Banco Central de Cuba (BCC), Cuba's central bank, revoked the license of Spain-based Banco Bilbao Vizcaya Argentaria SA (BBVA) following a request by BBVA to close its office in Havana. Meanwhile, BCC authorized the operation of Russia-based BCA NOVIKOMBANK SA in Cuba. NOVIKOMBANK's Cuba branch will reportedly facilitate currency and international transactions without engaging in direct financial operations.

**Assessments & Forecast:** The BBVA closure which follows April 26 reports of Banco de Credito y Comercio (BANDEC) stopping supply of cash to ATMs in Sancti Spiritus highlight the mounting cash shortages across Cuba amid high inflation and hoarding of banknotes.

On the other hand, NOVIKOMBANK's opening reflects increasing Cuba-Russia engagement, especially on monetary issues, with Russian President Vladimir Putin approving a debt restructuring plan on March 11, that postponed payment plans and modified interest rates for 277.2 million USD of debt to Cuba. Meanwhile, growing Havana-Moscow alignment, as evidenced by over 100 Russian companies having started operations in Cuba between March 2023-March 2024, underscores Russia's pivot to alternative markets likely owing to US-EU sanctions amid the Ukraine-Russia conflict.

**Ecuador: Asamblea Nacional unanimously approves airspace control bill on May 2; reflects sustained efforts to combat organized crime**

**Current Situation:** On May 2, the Asamblea Nacional unanimously approved the Ley de Control del Espacio Aereo (Law on Airspace Control), sending it to President Daniel Noboa for signing into effect. The law articulates mechanisms to regulate the use of force to neutralize suspicious manned or unmanned aircraft deemed as posing an imminent security risk within the country's airspace.

**Assessments & Forecast:** The development reflective of sustained efforts by the government to dismantle organized crime networks amid the ongoing internal armed conflict against criminal groups since January 8. To this end, the legislation reflects efforts in containing airborne trafficking operations through drug flights operated by transnational trafficking groups, including the Mexico-based Cartel de Jalisco Nueva Generacion, which reportedly operated from a clandestine airstrip near Playa El Pajonal, Manabi in 2021. Official data indicating the interception and neutralization of at least 47 aircraft operated by narco-traffickers in 2023 reiterates the issue. Further, the law is expected to increase legal capacity enabling authorities to conduct security operations targeting over 2,000 uncontrolled short airstrips and runways located in remote nationwide, per 2019 reports, supporting illicit transnational narco flights.

**USA: Alleged anarchist post urges disruptive methods at pro-Palestinian campus protests, as of May 3; involvement of far-left groups growing**

**Current Situation:** According to May 3 reports, an alleged anarchist website published a post outlining a risk matrix for pro-Palestinian protestors across university campuses, involving methods such as occupying buildings, arming themselves, and pressurizing the cops. The network refers to itself as a "rebel alliance".

**Assessments & Forecast:** The post and the alleged anarchist network's increasing online engagement suggest the growing involvement of radical left-wing groups in the ongoing pro-Palestinian protests on university campuses, both via online propaganda and on-ground mobilization. New York City officials noting 30 percent

and 60 percent of those arrested at Columbia University and City College of New York demonstrations, respectively, were “outside agitators”, per May 2 reports, lends credence to the same. This reportedly included the arrest of a long-time anarchist activist. To this end, the network reportedly propagating the use of plywood, metal sheeting, garbage cans, water barrels, among other raw materials, underscores higher risk of unrest escalating amid campus protests, with similar rudimentary yet disruptive tactics used during demonstrations at Columbia University on May 1 and at Portland State University on May 2.

## Other Developments

- In **Canada**, police arrested three Indian-origin individuals in Edmonton, AB on May 3. The suspects are charged with the June 2023 murder of Sikh separatist leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar in Surrey, BC.
- In **Colombia**, armed clashes between Estado Mayor Central- Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (EMC-FARC) dissidents and the army in Cauca’s Argelia and Toribio municipalities left two soldiers dead on May 3. Five suspects were arrested.
- In **Haiti**, operations resumed at the Terminal Varreux in Port-au-Prince on May 3. Operations were suspended since April 22 after armed gangs blocked access to the port.
- The North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) detected four Russian aircraft in the Alaska Air Defense Identification Zone on May 3. NORAD clarified that the Russian aircraft did not enter the **US** or **Canadian** airspace.

# Notable Dates

<b>12</b> JUL	Ecuador Travel: Women’s Copa America 2025
<b>14</b> JUL	Caribbean Holiday: Bastille Day
<b>15</b> JUL	USA Travel: MLB All-Stars Game
<b>16</b> JUL	American Samoa (USA) Holiday: Manu’a Cession Day
<b>18</b> JUL	Uruguay Holiday: Constitution Day
<b>19</b> JUL	Nicaragua Holiday: Sandinista Revolution Day