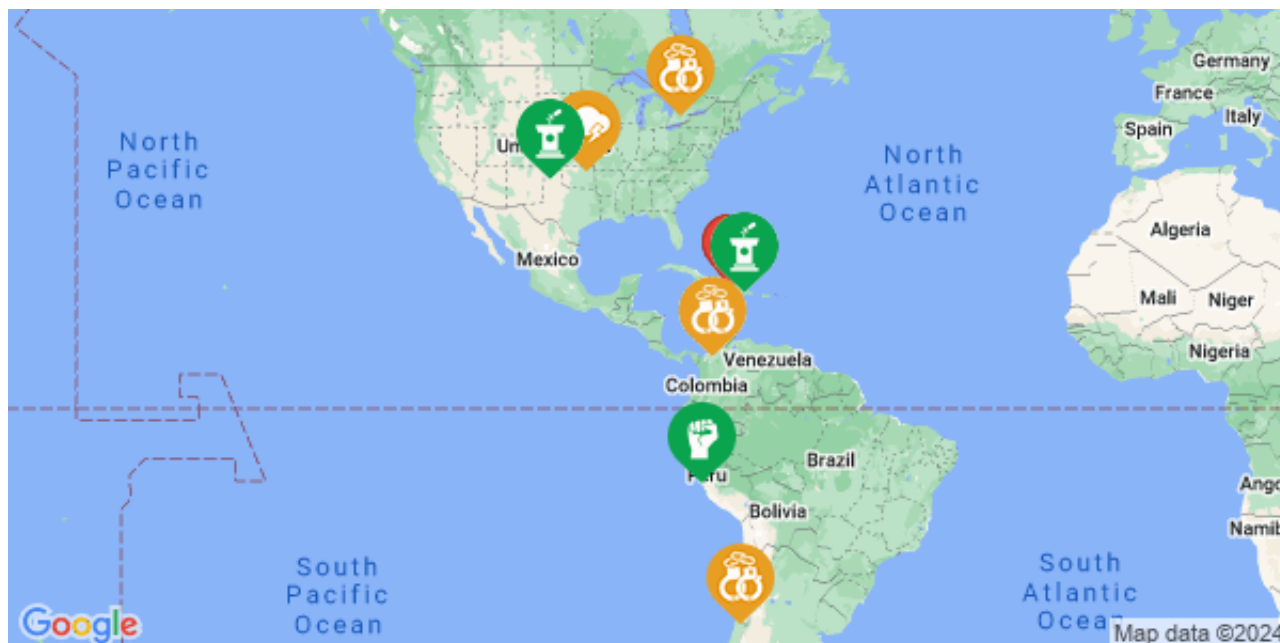




Daily



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MAX - Americas Region Daily Summary - May 20, 2024

Highlights of the Day

- **Dominican Republic:** Center-left President Luis Abinader wins reelection on May 20; reflects popular support for Abinader's economic policies
- **Haiti:** Multiple armed bandits killed amid police operations in parts of PauP on May 17, 19; retaliatory attacks likely to ensue
- **Peru:** Unionized health workers slated to hold indefinite nationwide strike on May 21; allot for disruptions
- **USA:** Texas District Judge blocks federal rule to close "gun show loophole" on May 19; reflects judicial checks on federal gun policies

Actionable Items

Peru: Unionized health workers slated to hold indefinite nationwide strike on May 21; allot for disruptions

Current Situation: According to the Federacion CUT (FED-CUT) union, several healthcare workers' unions are slated to hold an indefinite nationwide strike on May 21. The strike is being held to demand the implementation of agreements, improved provision of medications and supplies for healthcare and the implementation of the second section of the salary scale from January 2024. Protestors are also demanding efficient management practices without corruption, privatization, or outsourcing in the healthcare sector.

Assessments & Forecast: Based on the mobilization capacity of all the unions involved and the heightened tensions among the union workers, it is likely that the strike will likely be widely adhered to, causing significant disruptions to routine public health services nationwide for the duration of the strike. This is likely to impact non-emergency procedures and appointments. Emergency services are unlikely to be disrupted. Although no associated protest has been announced as of writing, localized picketing and protests outside hospitals in large urban centers, including Lima, cannot be ruled out. Precedent suggests that potential associated demonstrations will transpire peacefully without incidents of unrest.

Recommendations: Those residing or operating in Peru on May 21 are advised to allot for disruptions and non-emergency public healthcare services due to the slated nationwide strike by healthcare workers.

USA: NWS issues critical fire, flooding warnings in NM, OK, power outages continue in TX on May 20; remain cognizant of authorities' updates

Current Situation: The National Weather Service (NWS) has issued critical fire weather warnings in parts of southeastern Arizona, central, southern, and southwestern New Mexico, and western Texas on May 20. Specific details and further updates regarding the critical fire weather warnings can be found [here](#). Furthermore, the NWS has issued flash flood warnings in central Oklahoma, including East Central Canadian County and Southwestern Oklahoma County for which updates can be found [here](#). Additionally, in Texas, power outages continue to affect users in Harris County, including Houston and the Greater Houston area as of this writing, information on which can be found [here](#).

Recommendations: Those operating or residing in the aforementioned areas of the USA on May 20 and over the coming days are advised to remain cognizant of authorities' updates regarding weather-related risks. Allot for electrical power disruptions in Harris County, TX.

Notable Events

Canada: Criminals rob store, hurt three at mall in Kitchener, ON, on May 18; reflects threat of armed robberies in cities near Toronto

Current Situation: Three armed criminals reportedly robbed a jewelry store at a shopping mall in Kitchener, ON, stealing merchandise and injuring two employees and a customer on May 18. They then sprayed a noxious substance and fled the scene, prompting an evacuation of the mall.

Assessments & Forecast: This development reflects the recurrent trend of armed and targeted 'smash-and-grab' robberies targeting commercial businesses in cities immediately outside Toronto, further buttressed by multiple armed robberies at the same shopping center in Kitchener on April 5 and January 8, in which two employees were injured. Likewise, robberies were recorded at two malls in Mississauga on May 9. Furthermore, given that such crimes occur during working hours and the use of noxious substances or pepper spray, as also reported during the January 8 incident, this incident underscores the threat to bystanders in the vicinity of such incidents and the brazenness of the criminals. With armed robberies targeting businesses in recent months outside Toronto metropolitan region, authorities are expected to bolster security measures, such as enhancing CCTV coverage and increasing patrols in the vicinity of commercial centers.

Chile: Burglary reported at TV show host's house in Vitacura, Santiago on May 19; shows risk of residential burglaries in city's upscale areas

Current Situation: On May 19, a residential burglary was reported at the house of a well-known TV show host and entertainer in the Vitacura neighborhood of Santiago. The burglars cut off the electricity to gain entry to the property and stole items and cash worth CLP 5,000. The victim and her family were not at home at the time of the burglary.

Assessments & Forecast: While commercial robberies remain more prevalent than burglaries in Santiago, the incident nonetheless reflects the sporadic risk of residential burglaries, both premeditated and opportunistic in nature, targeting private residences in upscale neighborhoods. Previous similar incidents include the robbery at a popular Paralympic swimmer's residence, worth a million CLP, in Maipu, Santiago on May 15 and another robbery at an older couple's residence worth a million CLP in Nunoa, Santiago on February 14. Based on past trends, the risk of such crimes is higher in the relatively high-end neighborhoods of Santiago like Nunoa, Barrio Italia, and Suarez Mujica. Further, the precedent of similar residential burglaries suggests that the possibility of such robberies turning fatal remains limited, even with the victims being at home.

Colombia: Police arrest Norveis Contreras Ramos, financial leader of AGC in Cordoba, Antioquia on May 18; deals significant blow for group

Current Situation: Authorities arrested Norveis Contreras Ramos, alias 'David', a key financial figure in the Clan del Golfo (AGC) criminal organization, on May 18 in Planeta Rica, Cordoba. Contreras is known for drug trafficking, extortion, and illegal mining activities in Antioquia, with profits exceeding 1.3 million USD. He is considered the largest trafficker of cocaine produced in Colombia.

Assessment & Forecast: The capture of Contreras and previous arrests of AGC's notable figures, such as El Paisa in Bajo Cauca on April 14, is part of broader efforts by authorities to dismantle AGC's leadership in its strongholds. Given Contreras' key financial role in the organization, his arrest deals a significant blow to the AGC and will likely destabilize criminal operations in Antioquia due to the internal power vacuum and until a new leader emerges. While the lack of leadership may weaken the group's activities in the short-term, it is unlikely to prevent the group from carrying out illicit activities in the long run. In the immediate term, the arrest may trigger retaliatory actions or attempts by rival groups to capitalize on AGC's weakened state.

Dominican Republic: Center-left President Luis Abinader wins reelection on May 20; reflects popular support for Abinader's economic policies

Current Situation: On May 19, incumbent president Luis Abinader of the center-left Partido Revolucionario Moderno (PRM) won the presidential elections with 58.94 percent of the votes and 43 percent of the polls counted. Leonel Fernandez of the left-wing Fuerza del Pueblo (FP) party stood second with 27.29 percent of the votes.

Assessments & Forecast: Considering that Abinader maintained a nearly 70 percent approval rating during his 2020-2024 administration, his reelection was largely expected with minimal opposition. Moreover, the reelection also represents a vote of confidence in his management of the economy, which saw a 2.4 percent growth in 2023, further establishing the Dominican Republic as one of Latin America's best-performing economies. This trend is expected to persist, with the World Bank projecting a 5 percent GDP increase by the end of 2024. Abinader will likely continue strengthening the country's macroeconomics by implementing anti-corruption measures and attracting foreign investments while also strengthening the border with Haiti as part of nativist and anti-migration policies. In the medium-to-long term, his second term's greatest challenges will be keeping his promises of reducing inequality and nationwide crime.

Haiti: Multiple armed bandits killed amid police operations in parts of PauP on May 17, 19; retaliatory attacks likely to ensue

Current Situation: On May 19, multiple armed bandits were killed amid crossfires with the Police Nationale d’Haiti (PNH) officials in Gressier, Port-au-Prince (PauP). On May 17, a popular Kraze Barye gang member was killed amid crossfires in Tabarre 42, PauP.

Assessments & Forecast: The developments highlight increased efforts by law enforcement to crack down on gang members in PauP through bolstered patrols, arrests, and seizures. This is further supported by May 12 reports on the PNH collaborating with other security units arresting Gran Ravine gang members, responsible for intermittently taking over police stations between February 28-April 29, in PauP’s areas like Portail Leogane, Martissant, Fontamara, and Village de Dieu. Targeted operations against Kraze Barye gang in PauP’s neighborhoods like Delmas, Puits Blain, Vivy Mitchell, and Route de Freres will likely continue, leading to further confrontations in public places. While levels of gang violence have relatively reduced in PauP between mid April-early May, based on the public frustration over the ongoing standstill of presidential appointments, the possibility of gangs conducting retaliatory attacks to denounce the political impasse cannot be ruled out in the coming weeks.

USA: Texas District Judge blocks federal rule to close “gun show loophole” on May 19; reflects judicial checks on federal gun policies

Current Situation: On May 19, the Amarillo District Judge, Matthew Kacsmayk, temporarily blocked the Biden administration rule that would require gun sellers to obtain license and conduct background checks on customers while selling firearms at gun shows, other venues, and online. The ruling applies to Texas and members of plaintiff gun rights groups including Gun Owners of America, which has 2 million members, until June 2.

Assessments & Forecast: The lawsuit aligns with gun rights organizations and Republican-led states’ efforts to counter the perceived overreach by the federal government in restricting gun ownership and exchange. The ruling reflects federal courts’ judicial review of executive action on gun control by Biden, in particular by judges, such as Kacsmayk, appointed by former President Donald Trump. This is further evidenced by the New Orleans-based Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals blocking the Biden administration’s regulation of ghost guns on November 9, 2023. The validity of executive orders on gun control will also be contingent on the next elected President, with Trump promising to roll back all Biden administration’s gun control policies in the May 18 National Rifle

Association.

Other Developments

- Per May 18 reports, **Cuba** postponed Meteoro 2024, an annual exercise to mobilize the population in preparation for hurricane season to May 31-June 1 due to ongoing blackouts.
- In Chiapas, **Mexico**, more than 500 candidates have resigned from the upcoming June elections due to different factors, with 13 saying they feared for their lives due to the insecurity in the state, per May 19 reports.
- Per May 18 reports, an investigation by **Nicaraguan** nonprofit organization, the Observatorio Pro Transparencia y Anticorrupcion (OPTA), found that assets of NGOs and foreign businesses among other entities seized by the government since 2007, amount to a total of 250 million USD.

Notable Dates

4 JUL	Puerto Rico (USA) Holiday: Independence Day
4 JUL	USA Holiday: Independence Day
5 JUL	Venezuela Holiday: Independence Day
7 JUL	Haiti Holiday: Death anniversary of former President Moise
9 JUL	USA Politics: North Atlantic Treaty Alliance 75th Anniversary
9 JUL	Argentina Holiday: Independence Day