

Geo-World: Conflict & Social Unrest May Update

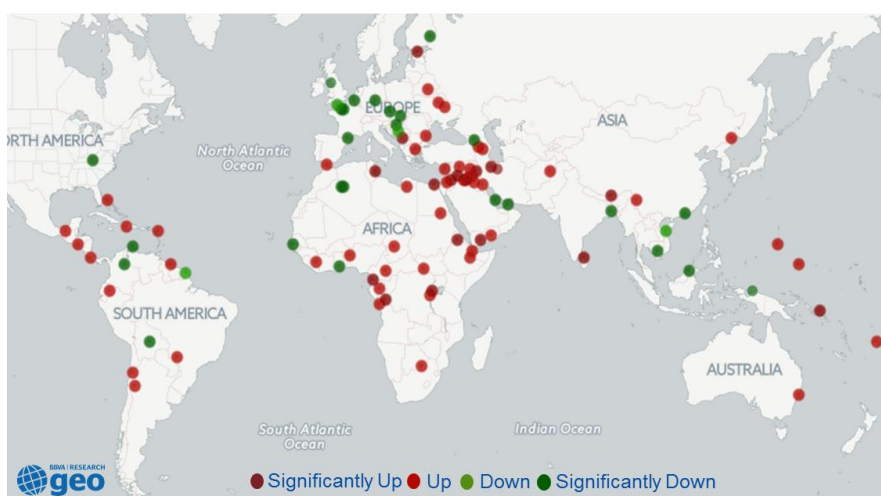
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ISIS achieved crucial victories in Palmyra and Ramadi during May, giving a more direct line of advance to Damascus and Baghdad. The broadening of attacks on Ukrainian frontline positions in Donbas continued, suggesting a new phase of offensive operations before new negotiations. Instability continued in Yemen, while it remained at stable levels in East Asia and Europe.

Geopolitical conflicts around the world increased slightly in May...

BBVA Research World Conflict Heatmap (May, monthly changes)

(Number of conflicts / Total events)



Source: www.gdelt.org & BBVA Research

Ukraine-Russia situation continued showing the fragilities of the Minsk agreement

Separatist attacks continued on the front line

ISIS expanded its territory with the seizure of Ramadi and Palmyra

The conflict escalated again and ISIS gained important positions in Iraq and Syria

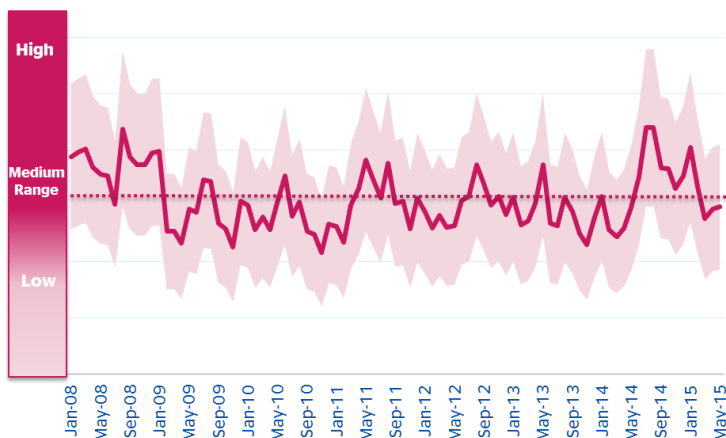
Yemen's proxy war is still alive

The fighting continued and seems likely to drag on

The BBVA Research world conflict intensity index¹ increased during May on a monthly basis for the second consecutive month, although at a slower pace than in April. The main reason for the rise was the ISIS advance in Syria and Iraq after gaining control of Palmyra (Syria) and Ramadi (Iraq), important strategic points to reach Damascus and Baghdad which were its most significant victories since the International Coalition began targeting its operations last September. It also achieved some additional gains on the border crossings between Iraq and Syria. ISIS also conducted some important attacks in Saudi Arabia and Yemen during the month, increasing its efforts to destabilise neighbour countries by exploiting sectarian differences.

BBVA Research World Conflict Intensity Index 2008-15

(Number of conflicts in the world / Total events in the world)



Source: www.gdelt.org & BBVA Research

In Afghanistan, in addition to the recent increase of ISIS activity, the Taliban has carried out the some important attacks in Kabul, which suggested a major wave of violence in the capital, increasing instability.

The Ukraine-Russia crisis is still at the fore. Russian-backed separatists remain mobilised along the front line and continued to launch indirect fire strikes on Ukrainian positions in the north of Donetsk.

The ongoing fighting in Yemen continued at high intensity. The Saudi-led coalition eased back on the airstrikes in the middle of May, given a five-day truce, but coalition airstrikes then resumed, weakening the area and generating risks of further disorder.

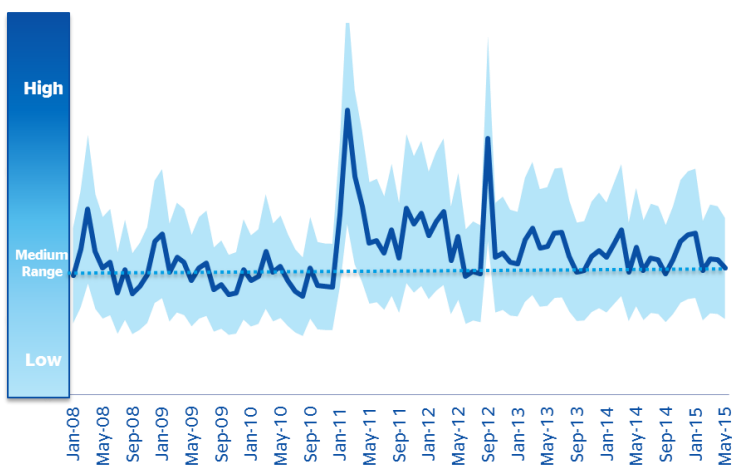
¹Details about methodology can be found in the following link: [Methodology, tracking protests and conflicts](#).

Geo-World Monthly Update

May 2015

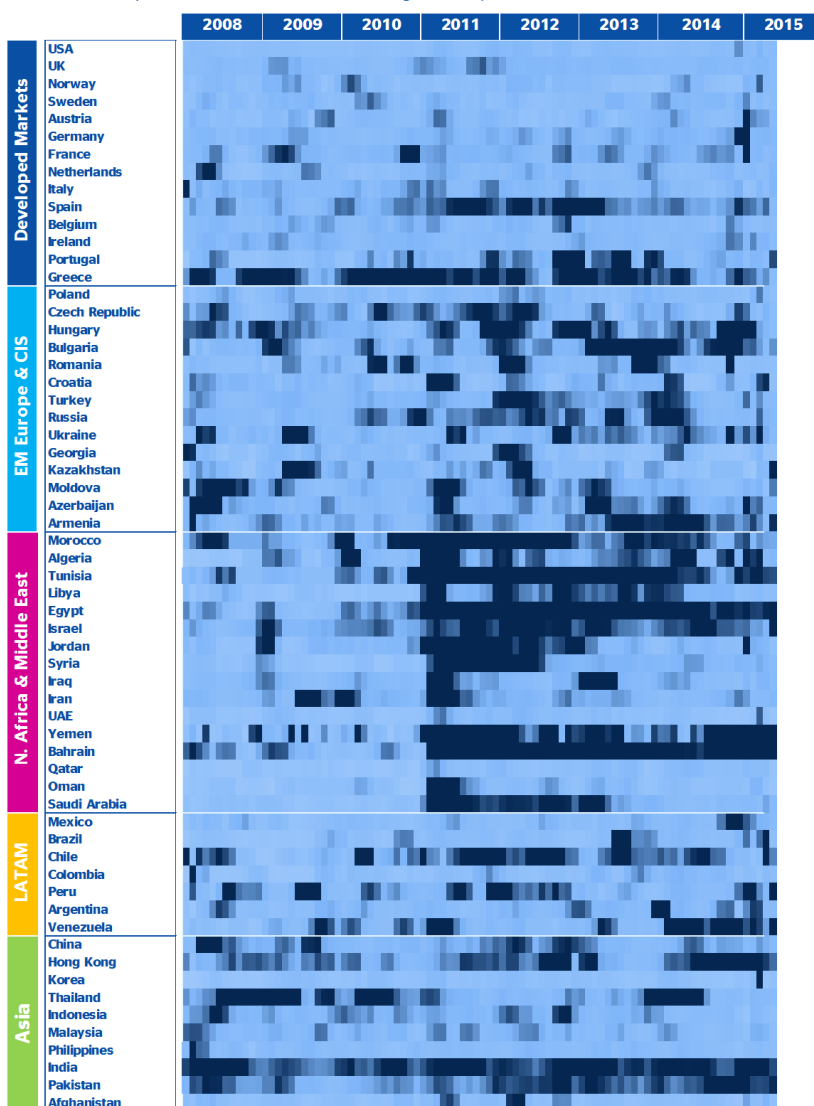
Geostrategic Analysis

BBVA Research World Protest Intensity Index 2008-15
(Number of protests in the world / Total events in the world)



Source: www.gdelt.org & BBVA Research

BBVA Research World Protest Intensity Map Jan 2011 - May 2015
(Number of protests / Total events. Dark Blue: High Intensity)



Source: www.gdelt.org & BBVA Research

...while social unrest decreased

Protests around the world slightly decreased in May, crossing the historical medium level (as shown by our BBVA Research world protest intensity index²).

According to our BBVA Research world protest intensity map below, the main hot spots were the following:

-In regional terms, social unrest remained eased in Western and Emerging Europe and in East Asia. However, instability is still at critical levels in some countries in the Middle East and North Africa, triggering turmoil in those areas. Social pressures also relaxed in some Latin American countries, while they emerged in others.

- In Western Europe, social tensions remained calm, with only a mild increase in Portugal related to the proximity of general elections to be held this year. Social pressures relaxed in Greece after some months of convulsion.

-In Emerging Europe and CIS countries, the social instability observed in Ukraine and Russia continued to ease during May, as well as in Turkey. Protest intensity has only intensified in Azerbaijan, on the eve of the European Games and because of the poor state of human rights, and in Armenia.

-In North Africa and the Middle East, social unrest continued at worrisome levels. Instability in Egypt and Tunisia remained high and emerged in Israel, while the instability observed in Algeria continued to relax. Some Gulf countries, such as Bahrain and Yemen, are still at extreme levels of unrest.

- In Latin America, the situation in Argentina relaxed, while it worsened in Peru given the mounting opposition to upcoming mining projects and in Venezuela because of the anti-government protests and in Chile due to violent student protests demanding education reforms.

- Pressures continued to be stable in Asia with some focused hot spots. Social unrest started to ease in Hong Kong after a year of high tensions. Instability in India and Pakistan continued at worrisome levels.

In sum, social unrest in the Middle East and North Africa continued to give rise to concern, given the recent significant victories of ISIS in both Syria and Iraq, a sectorial crisis in Yemen which seems to be long lasting and the escalation of tensions in North Africa and

Afghanistan. Social pressures eased in some Latin American countries, while they emerged in others. Western Europe and Asia remained stable.

²Details about methodology can be found in the following link: [Methodology, tracking protests and conflicts](#).

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