

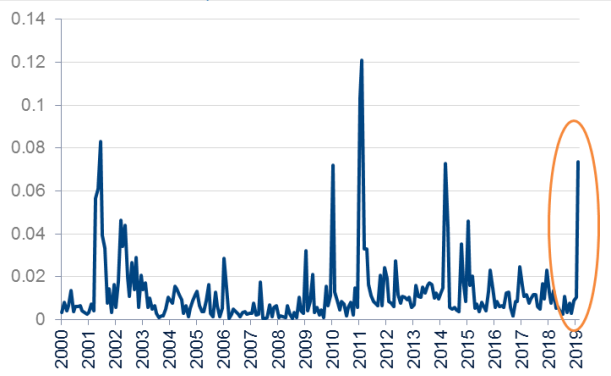
Geo-World: Conflict & Protest February

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Massive protests erupted in Algeria after President Buteflika announced that he will run for a fifth term on Algeria's Elections. Our social unrest tracker skyrocketed to levels not seen since the Arab Spring. The situation should be closely monitored as potential spillover effects in the neighbor countries could appear. A terrorist group based in Pakistan claimed responsibility over a suicide bomb in an Indian controlled region. India responded militarily in Pakistani territory. The situation escalated. Pakistan showed its willingness to de-escalate the risky situation. Meanwhile, the summit between President Trump and North Korean leader did not end with a solution. Nonetheless, the progress obtained so far could be preserved. Washington's Syria withdrawal plan is still uncertain as other powers have different security concerns.

Social unrest escalated in Algeria against the President's re-election

Figure 1 BBVA Research protest index of Algeria (news about protests/ Total events)



Source: BBVA Research & www.gdelt.org

Massive demonstrations erupted in Algeria due to President's plan to run for fifth term.

Tens of thousands of protesters are demanding that the 81-year-old leader withdraws from April elections.

Tension broke out between India and Pakistan.

After a terrorist attack, India retaliated in Pakistani territory. The situation is uncertain and worrisome.

North Korea talks yielded no result.

President Trump walked away from talks with the North Korean leader as no result was reached.

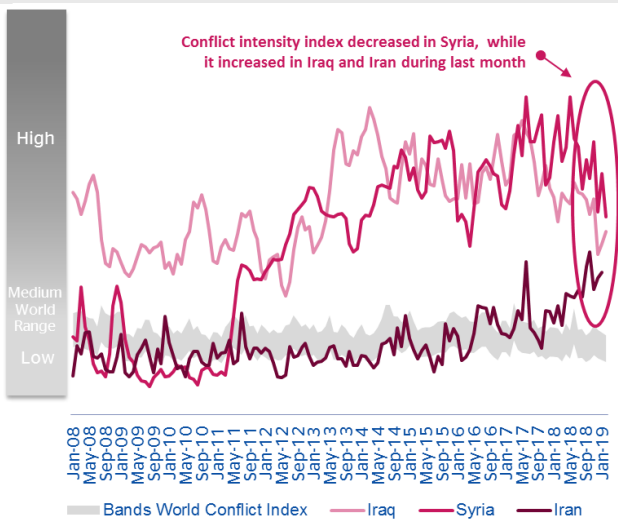
The BBVA Research World Conflict Intensity Index¹ decreased during February. The main developments during the month were:

- **On 14 February, 44 Indian troops were killed in a suicide bombing in Indian-administered Kashmir.** Kashmir is a disputed province administered in parts by Pakistan and India, where a "Line of Control" separates the two. The region is the main source of conflict between India and Pakistan. New Delhi blamed Islamabad for the attack as Pakistani-based terrorist group Jaish-e-Mohammed claimed the bombing. On 26 February, Indian warplanes hit a training camp of the terrorist group in Pakistani territory. Warplanes of the two countries were involved in an air skirmish. At least one Indian jet was shot down and Pakistan said it captured the pilot. World powers called for de-escalation, as the two countries possess nuclear weapons. Pakistani authorities said they would release the Indian pilot as a peace gesture. The situation is still tense. **Pakistani Prime Minister said he would ask Turkish President Erdogan to mediate between India and Pakistan.**
- **US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-Un met in Hanoi, Vietnam,** for a summit to solve disputes and address the denuclearization issue. **President Trump said** that Kim had requested that the sanctions be lifted but this would be inappropriate and he **"walked away"**. But, North Korean's Foreign minister said "what we proposed was not the removal of all sanctions but the partial removal." Hence, no resolution had been reached. Nonetheless, the US stressed that **North Korea would continue to suspend weapon tests** and low-level bilateral talks would continue. Meanwhile, **supporters of the self-declared interim Venezuelan president Guaido clashed with Venezuelan police at the Colombian border on 23 February,** as armed forces blocked border crossing to prevent aid shipments.

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

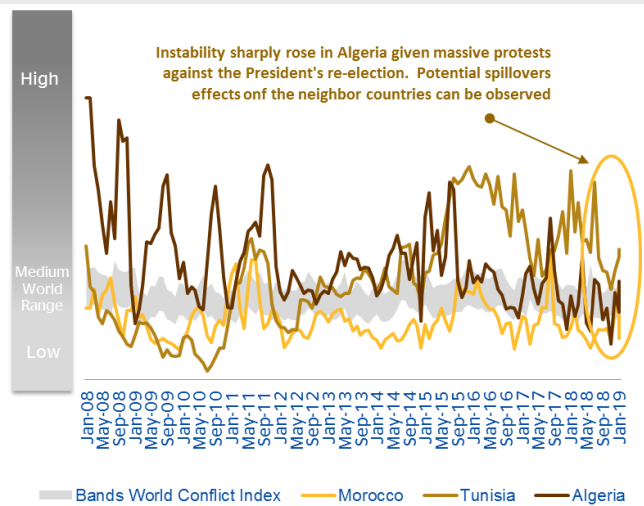
■ **US media agencies revealed the details of the US withdrawal plan from Syria.** The US would keep 400 troops in Syria; 200 would be stationed in northern Syria to observe a safe-zone, which would also be controlled by an international coalition. The other half would be deployed to southern Syria to monitor Iran. The Turkish President reiterated that if a safe-zone is to be established, it should be under Turkey's control. Differences between Ankara and Washington continue with regard to northern Syria. **Meanwhile, President Trump has signed a budget bill that also includes an article on Turkey's S-400 defence system purchase from Russia.** Congress has asked the US Department of Defence and the Department of State to prepare a report on the purchase no later than November 2019, including possible sanction planning. The delivery of the F-35 could not take place until November. Turkish officials said the purchase would happen in July and S-400 would be operational in October. Talks between the US and Turkey continue. **The UK House of Commons gave a green light to hold a vote on requesting additional time for the Brexit process.** German Chancellor Merkel said Berlin would back the UK if it needed an extension. The **Spanish Prime Minister announced an early election for April 28.**

Figure 2 BBVA Research Middle East Conflict Intensity Index 2008-18 (Number of conflicts / Total events)



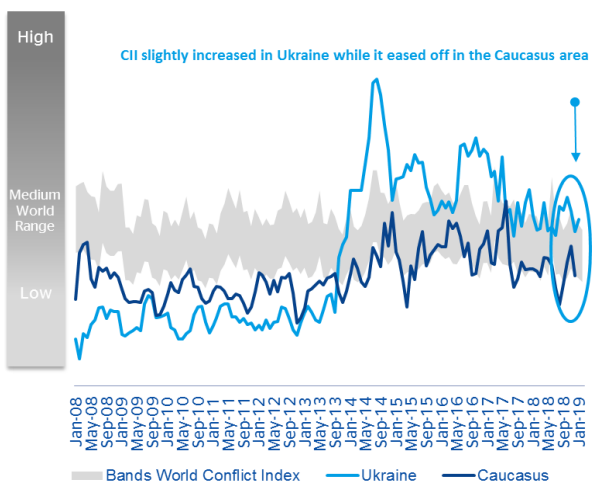
Source: www.dgelt.org & BBVA Research

Figure 3 BBVA Research North Africa Conflict Intensity Index 2008-18 (Number of conflicts / Total events)



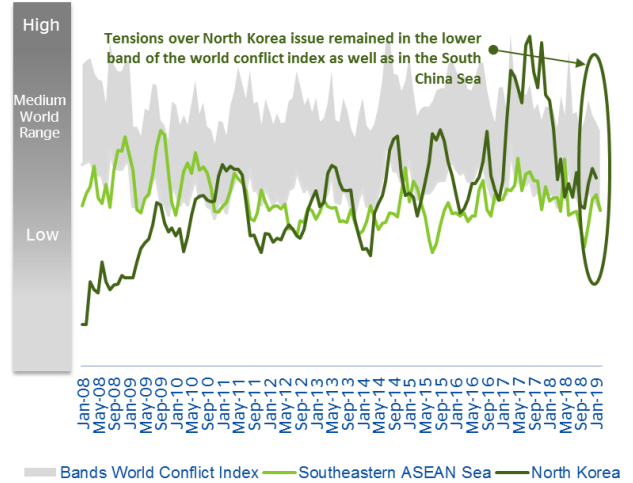
Source: www.dgelt.org & BBVA Research

Figure 4 BBVA Research Eastern Europe Conflict Intensity Index 2008-18 (Number of conflicts / Total events)



Source: www.dgelt.org & BBVA Research

Figure 5 BBVA Research Asia Conflict Intensity Index 2008-18 (Number of conflicts / Total events)

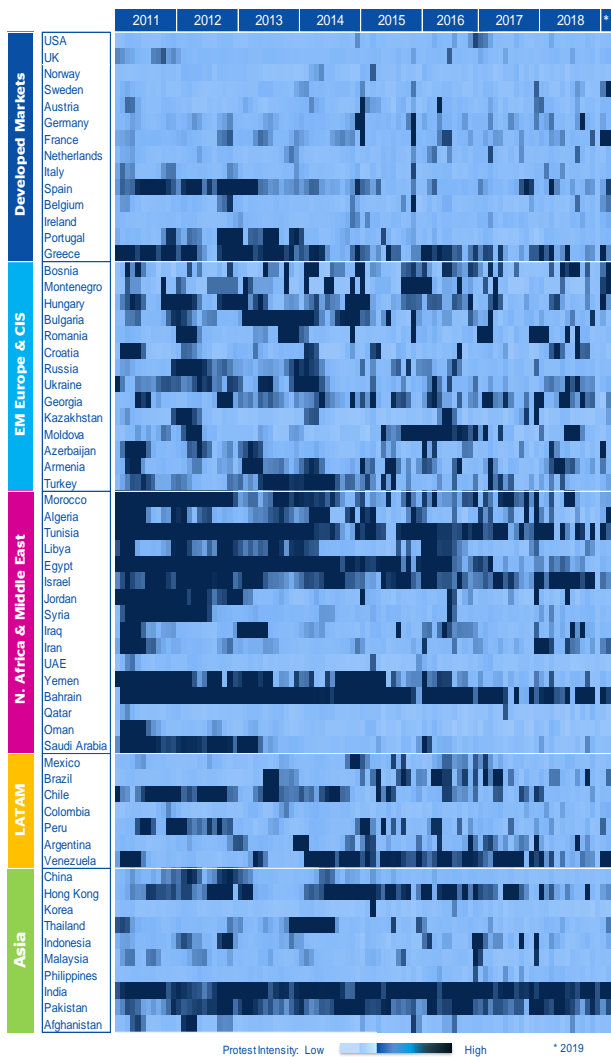


Source: www.dgelt.org & BBVA Research

Social unrest increased during the month, the same hotspots remained:

The World Protest Index increased in February (as shown by our BBVA Research World Protest Intensity Index²). According to the BBVA Research World Protest Intensity Map, the key facts were:

Figure 6 BBVA Research World Protest Intensity Map Jan 2011 – Feb 2019 (Number of protests / Total events)



Source: www.dgelt.org & BBVA Research

- In regional terms, social turmoil rose in North Africa, the main global hotspot together with the Middle East. Instability reduces in some Eastern European countries. Instability remained in some Latin American and Asian countries and, to a lesser extent, in some European ones:
- In Europe, “yellow vests” movement seems to loose adepts due to the emerging anti-Semitic incidents. Several moderate protesters could reconsider their participation. However, demonstrations continued. In **Sweden** the “Youth for Climate” movement has snowballed into a global movement, **Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland and Australia** were inspired to hold their own demonstrations.
- In Emerging Europe, citizens of the **Balkan countries** are requesting an administration change. The rising feeling of frustration towards weak institutions, endemic corruption and opaque governments and media is driving some protests against the region’s governments. Several anti-government protests took place in Montenegro.
- In North Africa and the Middle East, instability broke out in **Algeria**, after current president Bouteflika announced his plan for a fifth mandate. Demonstrators are calling for authorities to stop him, turning the movement into violent protests, which became the biggest protest in the Algerian capital since the Arab spring.
- In Latin America, unrest remained in **Venezuela**. In **Brazil**, a growing up “Black Lives Matter” movement began after the death of a black teenager.
- In Asia, the dispute over Kashmir is at the core of the rivalry between **India and Pakistan**.

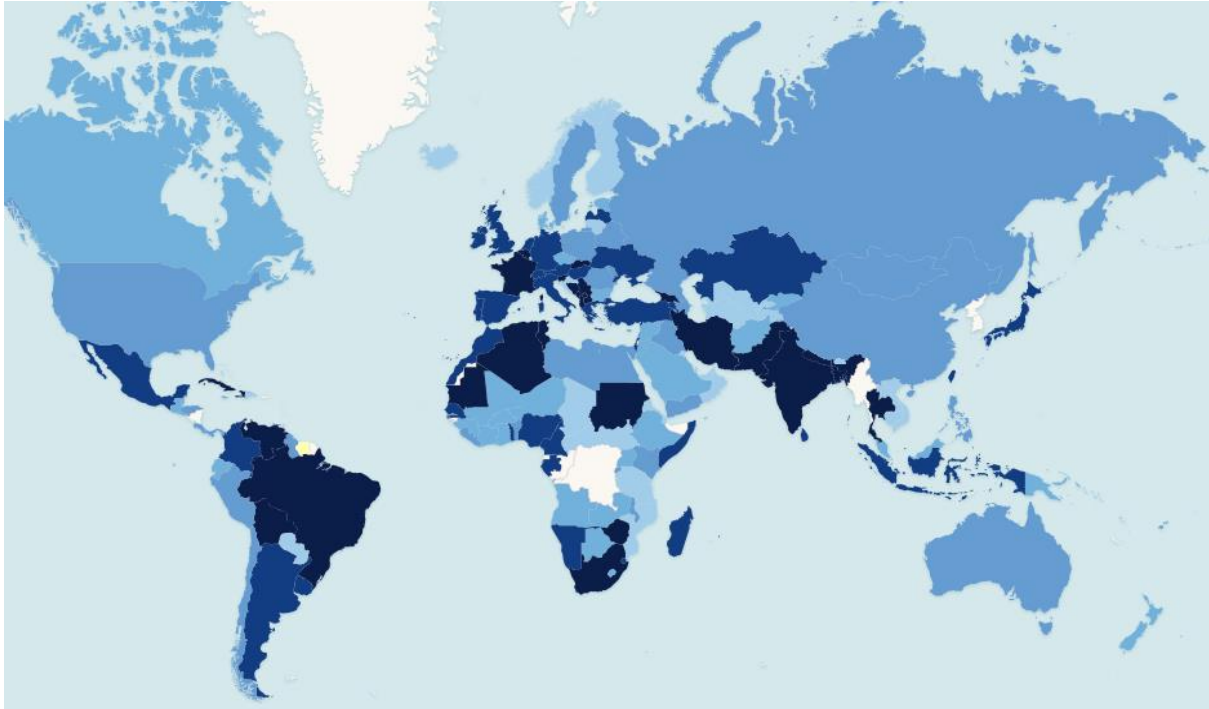
Summary

India and Pakistan clashed once again over the Kashmir region following a terrorist attack targeting Indian units. The situation could escalate to risky levels, as two countries possess nuclear arsenal. Since no country would benefit from this escalation, Pakistan showed its intent to ease the tension. If India follows, de-escalation could happen with the help of other regional powers. Although no result could be reached in North Korea talks, the willingness to continue negotiating is positive. Syria-related disputes are still imposing uncertainty on Turkey-US relations but talks are taking place to resolve the issue. Turmoil in Algeria should be closely monitored, given the potential spillover effects in the region.

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

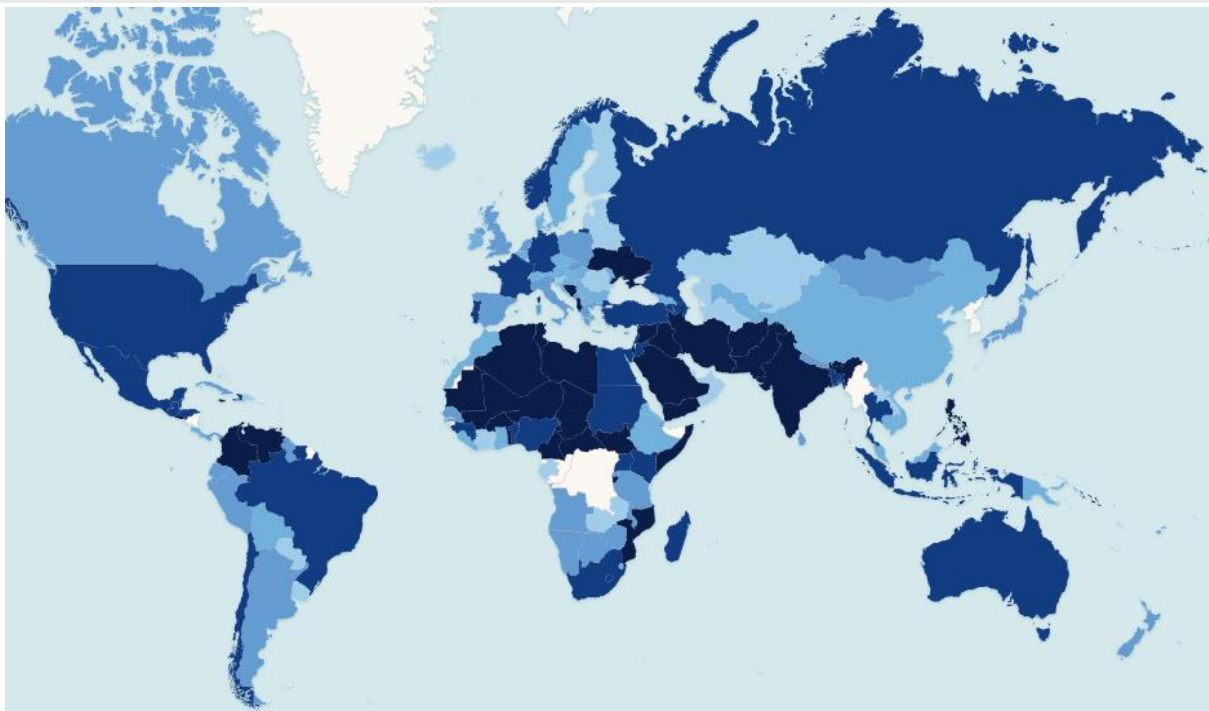
ANNEX

Figure 7 BBVA Research World Protest Map February 2019
(Number of protest events / Total events by country. Darker colors indicate higher values of the index)



Source: BBVA Research and www.gdelt.org

Figure 8 BBVA Research World Conflict Map February 2019
(Number of conflict events / Total events by country. Darker colors indicate higher values of the index)



Source: BBVA Research and www.gdelt.org

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