

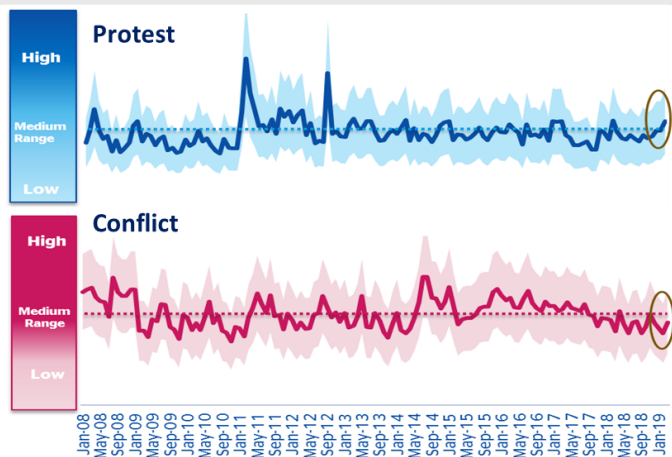
Geo-World: Conflict & Protest March

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 March 2019

U.S. led forces have captured the last pocket of ISIS in Syria. On the other hand, Washington’s unilateral decisions on long-lasting disputes in the region attracted objections even from its NATO allies and from many European countries. In Venezuela, Russian material involvement could trigger more regional risks. In Asia, U.S. pressure on North Korea continues. More negotiations could be needed to tackle the dispute. All in all, further uncertainties could be ahead in major power involvements in regional level. In Algeria, instability continued during the month and led the president Bouteflika to step down his mandate. Social unrest should ease off from now on.

Further uncertainties have been marked in major power involvement across globe

Figure 1 BBVA Research world media protest and conflict intensity indices (relative ratio over the total number of news)



Source: BBVA Research & www.gdelt.org

U.S. Golan Height decision supposed an inflexion point in the region.

International community declared their rejection to U.S. recognition of Israeli sovereignty over Golan.

Russia increased its support to Maduro.

Moscow has sent military units to Venezuela and said they would stay as long as necessary.

U.S. has put pressure on North Korea.

U.S. issued new sanction after Trump-Kim summit failed and shows more military strength against Chinese aspirations in South China Sea.

The BBVA Research World Conflict Intensity Index¹ increased during March. The main developments during the month were:

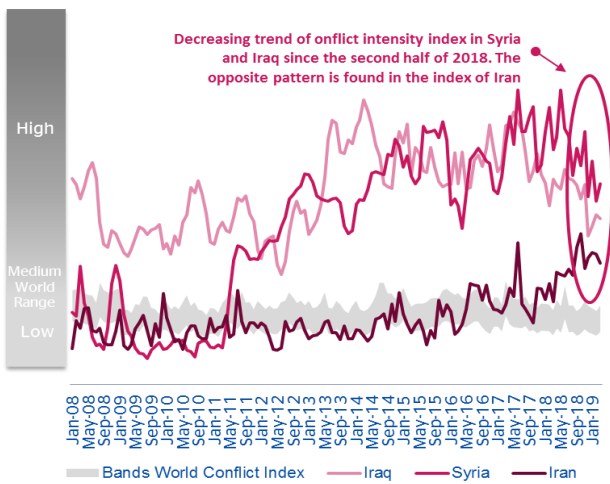
- Meanwhile, the United States halted F-35 related equipment delivery to Turkey amid Turkey’s purchase of Russian S-400 missiles. **U.S. President Trump signed an order declaring U.S. recognition of the Golan Heights as Israeli territory** (Israel captured Golan Heights from Syria in 1967). Iran, Syria, Russia and Turkey criticized U.S. decision. Britain and France also shared their objections. **On March 23, U.S. led forces captured the last pocket of ISIS in Syria. In Algeria, the wave of protests erupted last month demanding the removal of the president continued and they finally led to the President Bouteflika resignation on April 3. On the other hand, on March 29, the British House of Commons rejected a withdrawal agreement between the European Union and the U.K.** This is the third time the British Parliament ruled out withdrawal agreement.
- **Russia deployed 100 Russian army personnel and 35 tons of military equipment to Caracas, Venezuela.** Russian military units will stay in Venezuela as long as necessary, Russian Foreign Minister Spokesperson said. She also said the U.S. could use a near island for an intervention in Venezuela although U.S. officials did not make such a comment. **The U.S. is considering further sanctions against Maduro administration to limit the ability of Visa, Mastercard and other financial institutions to process transactions inside the country including SWIFT access to government financial institutions.** Meanwhile, the

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

Red Cross has reached an agreement with Maduro government and the opposition to allow humanitarian assistance into the country.

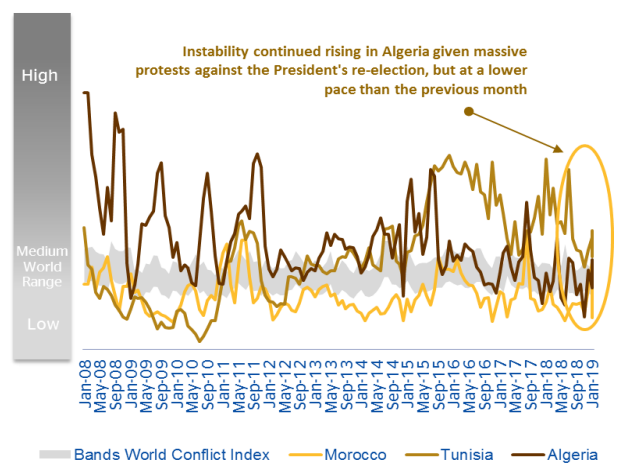
- **In Asia the geopolitical developments had ups and downs. South Korean President Moon Jae-in and U.S. President Trump will meet in Washington on April 11 to discuss North Korea dispute.** North Korea is considering suspending nuclear talks with the U.S., North Korean Vice Foreign Minister told. On March 21, Washington imposed its first sanction to North Korea after the negotiations between President Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has failed. **U.S. Army has sent two naval vessels to Taiwan Strait** to show its growing interest in checking Chinese ambition in the region. A group of lawmakers in the United States inked in a bill to improve relations with Taiwan including support for training exercises, arms sales and trade talks. **Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev announced his resignation** on March 19 who is leading the country since 1991.

Figure 2 BBVA Research Middle East Conflict Intensity Index 2008- March19 (Number of conflicts / Total events)



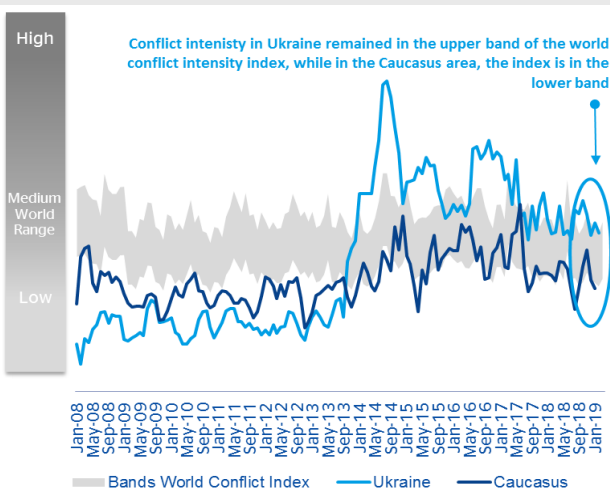
Source: www.dgelt.org & BBVA Research

Figure 3 BBVA Research North Africa Conflict Intensity Index 2008- March19 (Number of conflicts / Total events)



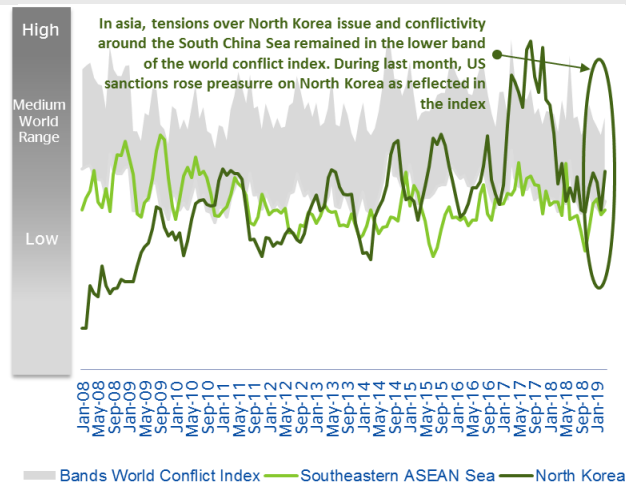
Source: www.dgelt.org & BBVA Research

Figure 4 BBVA Research Eastern Europe Conflict Intensity Index 2008-March19 (Number of conflicts / Total events)



Source: www.dgelt.org & BBVA Research

Figure 5 BBVA Research Asia Conflict Intensity Index 2008- March 19 (Number of conflicts / Total events)

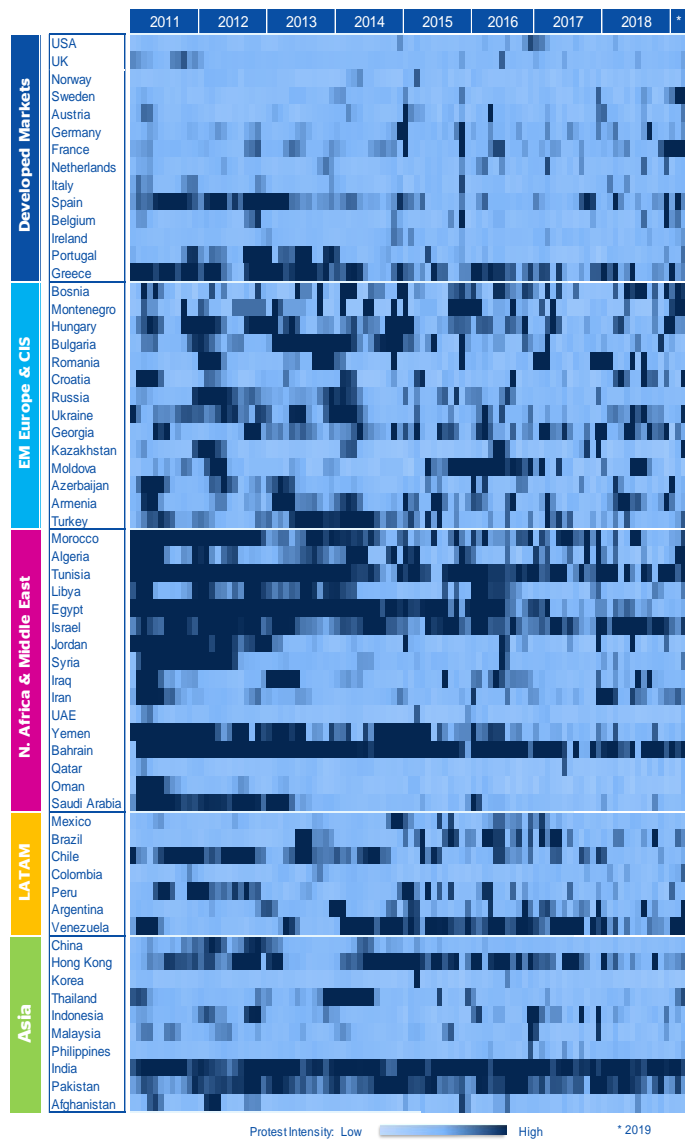


Source: www.dgelt.org & BBVA Research

Social unrest also increased during the month

The World Protest Index increased in March (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 – March 2019 (Number of protests / Total events)



Source: www.dgelt.org & BBVA Research

- In regional terms, the main focus of instability continued in the Middle East as well as in some Eastern European countries. Social noise increased in Western Europe. In Latin America and Asia, some hot spots remained:
- In Europe, “yellow vests” continued. The government is expected by April to announce the first measures to emerge from the “Great National Debate”. In Spain, political elections rose social noise. In Portugal, some demonstrations for better working conditions took place. In Germany there were protests against the internet EU copyright reform.
- In Emerging Europe, In Montenegro thousands marched to demand the resignation of President Djukanovic over allegations of abuse of office and cronyism. In Croatia protests claim tougher measures against domestic violence.
- In North Africa and the Middle East, in Algeria, after weeks of massive protests, President Bouteflika stepped down on April 3. Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu personally faces the security response to rocket fire from Gaza.
- In Latin America, in Venezuela, Guaido calls for new mass protests because of continuing blackouts and worsening poverty. In Argentina, the consecutive rising inflation puts Macri in a more delicate situation face to the upcoming presidential election.
- In Asia, tensions between India and Pakistan remain at their highest point in decades due to the Kashmir conflict. Elections results in Thailand are creating a huge stir over alleged voting irregularities and continued delays.

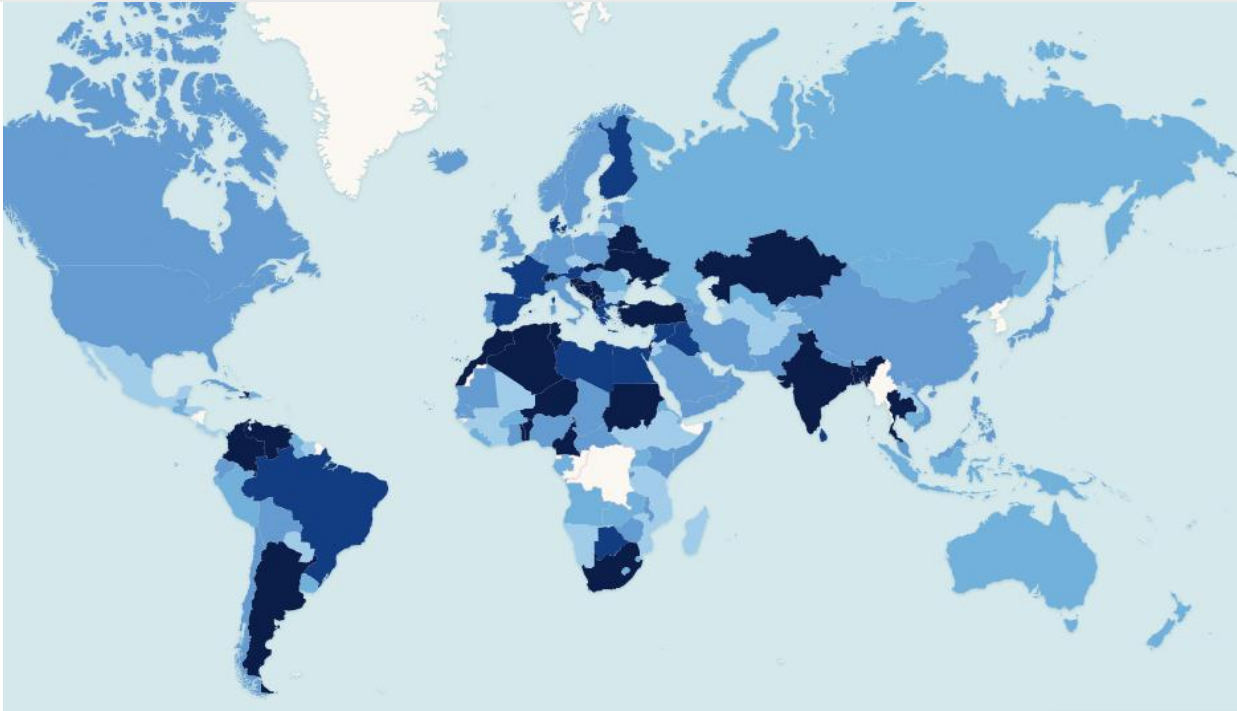
Summary

Turkey’s local elections finalized but uncertainties continue. U.S. policymaking in the Middle East contributed to further disputes between major powers. The last pocket of ISIS in Syria has been captured and U.S. declared victory. North Korean dispute is still valid and fragile situation continues. More negotiations would be needed to tackle the differences. Russian material involvement in Venezuela could trigger further uncertainties and risks.

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

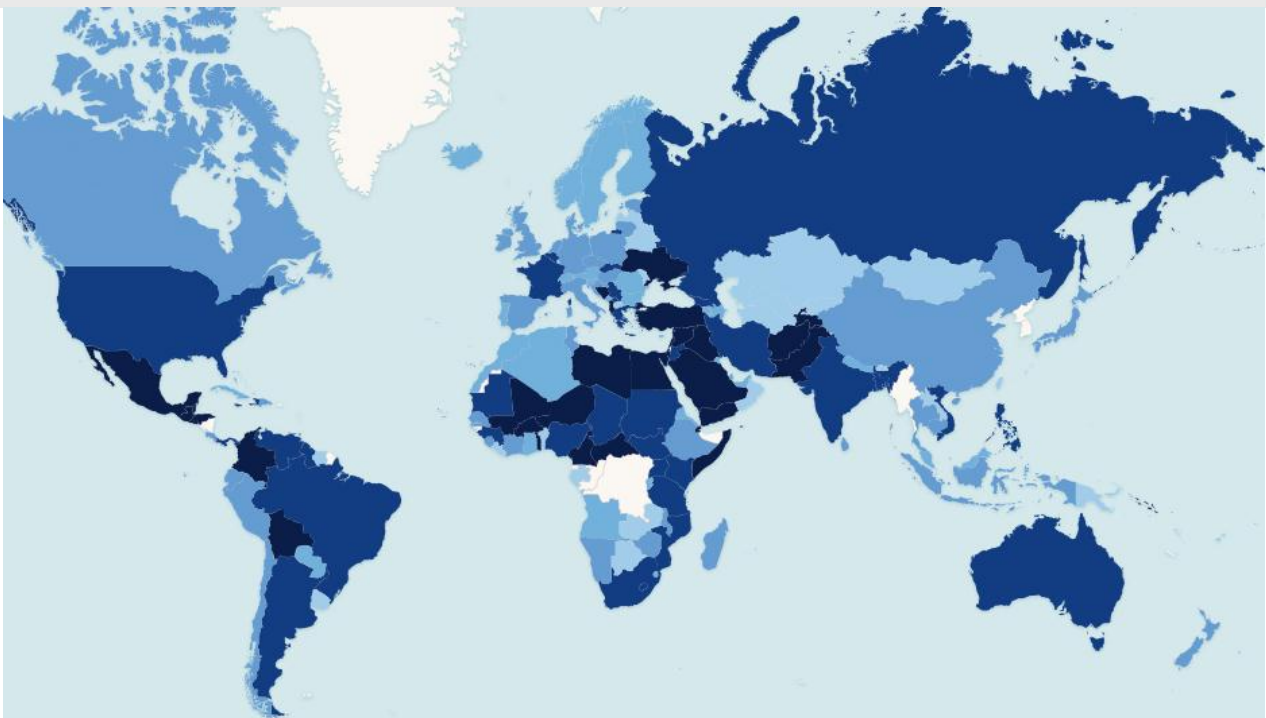
ANNEX

Figure 7 BBVA Research World Protest Map March 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 March 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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