

August 5, 2024

Headlining This Week's Brief

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Top Stories

Hurricane Debby Makes Landfall, but Flood Risk Is Just Beginning

At 7 am (EDT), Hurricane Debby officially made [landfall](#) near Steinhatchee, Florida, with maximum sustained winds near 80mph. The Category 1 storm is pushing six to 10 feet of storm surge into the rural Big Bend region, resulting in extensive flooding in [Suwannee](#) and surrounding areas.

While localized hurricane impacts are affecting a rural portion of the state, much of central and northern Florida is being affected by tropical storm conditions. As of midday, nearly 300,000 customers were without power. Following 24 hours of flooding, multiple counties and municipalities along the Florida Peninsula West Coast – including [Charlotte County](#), [Ft Myers Beach](#), and [Sarasota](#) declared a local state of emergency. Dozens of flights in and out of [Orlando International \(MCO\)](#) and [Tampa International \(TPA\)](#) have been disrupted. Through Monday evening, tropical storm-force wind gusts and scattered flash flooding will continue over central and Northeast Florida, potentially resulting in further disruption in the Jacksonville metro.

Southeast Georgia and the coastal plain of South Carolina will experience historic heavy rainfall Monday evening through Saturday morning, leading to catastrophic flooding. Central and Northeast North Carolina is also at risk of significant flooding. Consecutive days of Level 3 to Level 4 (four-tier scale) excessive rainfall risk have been outlined for [Monday](#), [Tuesday](#), [Wednesday](#), and [Thursday](#). Widespread rain totals between 10-20 inches, locally 30 inches, are possible.

For additional information on Hurricane Debby and its impacts, please see our [Situation Report](#).

Middle East on Edge as Region Awaits Iran's Response to Recent Assassinations

U.S. [President Joe Biden](#) will meet with his national security team to discuss concerns over an expected Iranian strike on Israel. The anticipated attack, a response to the assassinations of Hamas political chief Ismail Haniyeh in Tehran and senior Hezbollah commander Fouad Shukur in Beirut, could [occur](#) as soon as today. However, the exact timing and nature of Iran's response remains uncertain. [Iranian](#) authorities issued a notice on Monday advising aircraft in the country's west, northwest, and center to change routes. They [warned](#) of potential disruptions to GPS over the country, a potential precursor to military action. G7 foreign ministers are [urging](#) all parties involved to de-escalate, even as the U.S. [deploys](#) additional military assets to the region out of concerns that a "multi-front war" could [break out](#) between Iran and its proxies and Israel. Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant [said](#) that military forces were preparing for "all possibilities, including a quick transition to offense." As concerns of a wider war grow, several countries, including the [U.S.](#), [U.K.](#), [Italy](#), [France](#), and [Türkiye](#), have urged their citizens to leave Lebanon as airlines cancel flights to the region.

Misinformation Fuels Widespread Rioting After Three Children Killed in Southport Stabbing

British security officials are working to tamp down on violent protests after dozens of cities, most of which were in England, saw vandalism, arson, and clashes between rival groups of demonstrators and police over the weekend. Large demonstrations have taken place across the U.K. following last Monday's fatal [stabbing attack in Southport](#). However, the motivation for the unrest appears to stem from misinformation on social media about the suspect and underlying social tensions around immigration and refugees. The misinformation has [fueled](#) widespread unrest. On Sunday, crowds of protesters [attacked](#) two hotels housing asylum seekers in Rotherham and Tamworth. Police [arrested](#) at least 150 demonstrators over the weekend. In response to the unrest, U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer promised to deploy additional police personnel, [offered](#) emergency security "to mosques at risk of violence," and met with an emergency response committee earlier today.

Additional demonstrations are planned for later this week. Activist group Stand Up to Racism has called for numerous "anti-far-right" protests on Wednesday, with plans for further nationwide demonstrations on Saturday. Additional gatherings may occur with little to no notice. [Counterdemonstrations](#) are expected to continue in response to the anti-immigration gatherings, with confrontations likely between opposing groups. Common protest sites include outside government buildings, landmarks, and sites earmarked or currently used to accommodate refugees and asylum seekers. Media reports suggest the recent unrest is the most widespread

rioting in the U.K. since 2011; Prime Minister Starmer [served](#) as the Director of Public Prosecutions during the [2011 London riots](#), where he prioritized quick sentencing for people detained for rioting and looting.

Bangladesh Army Forms Interim Government After PM Hasina Flees Amid Deadly Protests

[Bangladesh Prime Minister](#) Sheikh Hasina resigned and departed the country as demonstrators [stormed](#) the prime minister's residence. [The country's army chief](#) announced that he would form an interim government. At the same time, the student leaders who have spearheaded the movement [presented](#) a framework for national governance and [met](#) with President Mohammad Shahabuddin. They will also reportedly [meet](#) with the army chief as the country enters extreme political uncertainty.

In the wake of Hasina's resignation and violent protests that [killed](#) nearly 100 people over the weekend, there have been [reports](#) of widespread vandalism and arson in Dhaka and elsewhere, often [targeting](#) locations associated with the Awami League and its members. Dhaka's Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport (DAC) [paused](#) operations until midnight after demonstrators occupied the main airport road. India has suspended all train services with Bangladesh and [placed](#) the Indian Border Security Force on high alert for the next 48 hours. India has also [advised](#) nationals against travel to Bangladesh and [heightened](#) security around the Bangladesh High Commission in Delhi. The U.S. Embassy in Bangladesh also issued a security alert, advising constituents "should shelter in a safe place, and strongly consider returning to the United States when safe to do so."

Climate and Natural Hazards

- **Mid-Atlantic & Northeast Late Week Heavy Rain Threat:** Thursday into Friday, the partial remnant of Hurricane Debby has the potential to spread farther up the East Coast, resulting in widespread heavy showers and widely scattered flooding in low-lying areas. Flood watches could be prompted by mid-week.
- **Tropical Threat Beyond Debby:** A tropical wave (disturbance) is generating showers and thunderstorms over the [eastern Caribbean Sea and Windward Islands](#). Slow development is possible as it moves into the western Caribbean Sea on Thursday and Friday. Interests within Nicaragua, Honduras, the Yucatan Peninsula, and surrounding areas should monitor the progress of this feature.
- **Pakistan Flooding:** In the past 24 hours, heavy rainfall in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan, resulted in at least [12 deaths and 21 injuries](#). The overall situation includes two recent glacial lake floods in Chitral, which damaged 145 houses and displaced over 500 people.

Since the start of the monsoon season, at least 108 people have died, 216 have been injured, and 490 houses have been damaged, primarily in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province.

- **Afghanistan Flooding:** Flash flooding has killed at least 10 people in Zabul province, according to [national media](#).

Worldwide

- **Venezuela Rocked by Protests Following Fraudulent Election:** A week since President Maduro of the United Socialist Party of Venezuela (PSUV) declared victory in an election widely considered to be [fraudulent](#), 22 people have [died](#), and over 2,000 have been [arrested](#) amid violent protests that have rocked the country. The protests call for the recognition of the win of the opposition party and an end to the nearly two-decade rule of the PSUV that has resulted in [economic ruin](#). Large-scale demonstrations were also reported [abroad](#), supported by the [eight million](#) people of the Venezuelan diaspora. Last Monday, Maduro [severed](#) diplomatic ties with seven Latin American countries and demanded the immediate departure of their diplomatic staff over their alleged “interventionist actions.” Last Friday, in a long-awaited move, the Supreme Court of Venezuela [ordered](#) that the government-allied National Electoral Council (CNE) submit by Monday the detailed vote counts to prove Maduro’s victory. Oil operations appear to have been [largely unaffected](#) by the demonstrations, with normal operations observed last Thursday.
- **Convenience Store Chain Oxxo Closes Stores in Mexican Border Town Citing Gang Crime:** Femsa temporarily closed all 191 of its stores in the northern border city of Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas, due to “gang problems” that pose safety concerns for its employees. The company said it has dealt with cartel demands that its stations buy fuel from certain distributors, but a line was crossed when gang members abducted two store employees. In a statement, Femsa said it was making progress in talks with authorities that might provide safety guarantees for its employees and allow the chain to reopen its stores. However, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador later displayed the recommendations authorities had made to Femsa, which largely placed responsibility on the company, asking it to hire in-store security guards and place cameras. Femsa’s woes are part of a trend showing the [cartels’ ability to impact larger companies](#) nationwide.
- **Peace Negotiations for Sudan War Dropped After Drone Strike:** After [more than a year of fighting](#), Sudan’s army was set to attend negotiations with the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). But talks are off, according to General Abdel Fattah al-Burhan, after a drone strike targeting a military graduation at Gibeit army base killed five people. There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the attack, and the RSF denied involvement.

Both sides have accused the other of war crimes, including deliberately targeting civilians, shelling residential areas, and blocking humanitarian aid. The International Organization for Migration said in June that nearly 10 million people in Sudan have been displaced from fighting and that half the population faces hunger as a result.

- **Al-Shabab Attack at Beach Hotel in Mogadishu Underscores Threats in Somalia:** Somali police reported that 32 people were killed and 63 injured in an attack on the Pearl Beach Hotel in Mogadishu. The extremist group al-Shabab claimed responsibility for the assault, which involved gunmen storming the hotel and detonating explosives. The attack lasted hours, with security forces eventually ending the siege and rescuing many hostages. This incident underscores the persistent threat posed by al-Shabab in Somalia despite ongoing efforts by government forces to combat the group. The attack has drawn condemnation from local and international communities, calling for increased security measures. Somali authorities are continuing their investigation into the incident.

Cyber and Regulatory

- **Maritime Cyberattacks on the Rise:** At least 64 cyber incidents targeting the shipping industry occurred in 2023, up from just three a decade earlier, according to [researchers](#) in the Netherlands. The number of attacks, which are primarily coming out of China, Iran, North Korea, and Russia, has been on the rise in stride with geopolitical tensions and confrontations. Experts say the industry remains vulnerable going forward, as IT spending remains relatively low. In an April [annual report](#), the U.S. Coast Guard said, “very basic cyber deficiencies persist.” It encouraged entities to engage in foundational security practices like regularly patching and updating software, limiting network access, and implementing multi-factor authentication.
- **Major U.S. Blood Bank Operations Returning After Ransomware Attack:** OneBlood, a non-profit that provides blood and blood products to hospitals across Georgia, Florida, and the Carolinas, [said](#) its systems were coming back online today after a ransomware attack last week disrupted its operations. The [attack](#) led the company to tell hospitals it works with to activate blood shortage protocols and prompted [surgery reschedules](#) at Tallahassee Memorial HealthCare, a major regional hospital. While operations are recovering, the event highlights the [persistent cyber threat](#) to the health industry.
- **FBI, CISA Issue PSA Over DDoS Attacks Impacting Election Infrastructure:** Last week, the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) issued an [advisory](#) regarding Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks on election infrastructure in the coming months, stating that while they could hinder immediate access to election information, they would not “impact the security or integrity of election processes.” Officials said such attacks could impact voter look-up tools or

unofficial election night reporting, and in the past, cyber actors had used such incidents to claim that they compromised the integrity of voting systems falsely; however, the agencies have seen no reporting to suggest DDoS attacks have ever prevented voters from casting a ballot, compromised the integrity of any ballots, or disrupted the ability to tabulate votes or transmit election results.

- **Europe’s AI Act Enters Into Force:** The European Union’s Artificial Intelligence Act [came into effect](#) at the beginning of August, making it the world’s first comprehensive AI regulation regime. Compliance for entities across the bloc will be [staggered](#) up to 2026, with the first deadline, related to prohibitions on technologies that the EU categorizes as “unacceptable risk,” coming up in six months. It should be noted that most AI systems today are filed under “minimal risk” and do not face obligations under the Act. The bloc will assess fines for companies that do not comply with the rules. More on the legislation can be found [here](#).
- **Other Stories We’re Watching:** On the regulatory front, Malaysia is set to [require](#) social media platforms with over eight million users to acquire a license to operate in the country amid a [rise](#) in cybercrime. Meanwhile, Australia is [preparing](#) to implement new climate disclosure rules, and many countries across the globe are [reportedly](#) easing visa rules to fill job openings. In the cyber world, the U.S. Government Accountability Office [issued a report](#) last week warning of the need to urgently address cyber risks to water systems in the country, which are said to be at increasing risk. More details on a data breach at pharmaceutical giant Cencora are [coming to light](#), as is a separate incident at HealthEquity, where a hack has reportedly impacted 4.3 million.

Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- **Quad Countries to Boost Security of Undersea Cables:** Australia, India, Japan, and the United States [agreed](#) to bolster maritime safety in the Indo-Pacific amid heightened tensions in the South China Sea. The four countries – known as the Quad – met last week and [announced](#) measures to improve undersea cable network resilience, among other issues. As detailed in this [Reuters special investigative report](#), protecting submarine cables from malicious and non-malicious threats is increasingly important for global communication and digital economies. A joint statement by the Quad avoided calling out China as the impetus for the security initiatives; however, the statement did refer to “coercive and intimidating maneuvers in the South China Sea” as one of the motivating factors for improving regional defenses.
- **Yemeni Houthis Carry Out First Gulf of Aden Attack in Two Weeks:** The Houthi military [fired](#) ballistic missiles at a Liberia-flagged container ship on Saturday 125 nautical miles away from the port of Aden. However, no damage or injuries were reported. The

attack is the Houthi's first since Israel's retaliatory airstrike that [targeted](#) Hodeidah port on July 20. The U.N. envoy to Yemen [warned](#) that recent regional escalations are increasing the threat against international shipping, representing "a new and dangerous level" of violence. Due to the ongoing shipping lane disruptions, shipping group Maersk [raised](#) its financial forecasts, adjusting for increased freight rates due to longer routes avoiding the Red Sea. In its revised outlook, Maersk noted a "lack of clarity of supply and demand in Q4" amid "higher than normal volatility."

- **Fears Over Slowing U.S. Economy Prompts Global Financial Selloff:** The global stock market has had a rough start to the week, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average [dropping](#) over 1000 points and volatility spiking to its highest levels since the COVID-19 pandemic. Japan's Nikkei 225 [plunged](#) 12%, its worst single-day drop since 1987, triggering losses across South Korea, Europe, and the United States. Tech stocks were hit hard, with Nvidia, Meta, and Apple each losing over 9%, and Apple's drop was further impacted by Berkshire Hathaway reducing its stake. A report published last Friday that U.S. employers slowed their hiring in July triggered concerns over a slowing U.S. economy. The Federal Reserve's delayed rate cuts are also contributing to investor anxiety. Several online trading platforms, including [Charles Schwab](#) and [Fidelity](#), reported client log-in issues amid the stock selloff.
- **WTO Takes Step to Enshrine Tariff-Free Global Internet:** A majority of World Trade Organization members participating in e-commerce discussions [released](#) a proposed agreement in late July that seeks to ban tariffs on cross-border digital transactions permanently. Several countries, including the United States, Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia, Taiwan, and Türkiye, have yet to sign the agreement, pending domestic considerations. The WTO [extended](#) a moratorium on electronic transaction tariffs earlier this year. However, the WTO's initiative on e-commerce, supported by over 90 member countries, would make such extensions obsolete and deter countries from acting unilaterally on customs duties.
- **Looming Strike Threatens South Korean Shipping Yards:** Shipbuilder unions at South Korea's major shipyards [announced](#) they would strike on August 28 over salaries and benefits. Union members with HD Hyundai Heavy Industries (HHI), HD Hyundai Mipo, and HD Hyundai Samho [voted](#) to approve strikes. Industry officials [warn](#) that a strike would lead to delays in production and increase the chances that clients would switch to [competitors](#), such as China and Japan. Korean shipbuilders [accounted](#) for 40% of global shipbuilding orders in July.

Health

- **Boar's Head Expands Recall Due to Possible Listeria Contamination:** After an [initial recall](#) of over 200,000 pounds of liverwurst and other deli meat products due to a possible outbreak of *Listeria monocytogenes*, Boar's Head has [expanded](#) the number of items under recall to include seven million pounds of ready-to-eat meat and poultry products. In addition to being distributed to locations throughout the U.S., the recalled products were also exported to the Cayman Islands, Dominican Republic, Mexico, and Panama. On the USDA mark of inspection on the product labels, the products sent to retailers include establishment number "EST. 12612" or "P-12612." They have sell-by dates from July 29, 2024, to October 17, 2024. A full product list is available [here](#) and on the Boar's Head [website](#). The current food poisoning outbreak that triggered the recall has [killed](#) two people and hospitalized nearly three dozen over 13 states.
- **Legionnaire's Outbreaks Reported in Australia, Canada:** At least two people have died, and 75 have been hospitalized in Melbourne, Australia, during an [outbreak](#) of legionnaire's disease. Officials have still not determined the source of the outbreak. However, they have narrowed it down to water cooling towers on industrial buildings in the suburbs of Laverton North and Derrimut. Health authorities are hopeful that the spread of the disease is slowing. On the other side of the globe, officials in London, Canada are [investigating](#) an outbreak of legionnaires that has killed one and hospitalized 22 people so far.
- **Several African Nations Seeing Spikes in Mpox Cases:** At least 10 African nations are seeing spikes in mpox cases, according to [data](#) from the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. While the vast majority of cases (96%) continue to be in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), this past week saw [officials](#) in both Nigeria and the Central African Republic declare outbreaks. Since the beginning of the year, several other countries have reported cases, including Burundi (8 cases; 0 deaths), Cameroon (35; 2), Congo (146; 1), Ghana (4; 0), Liberia (5; 0), Rwanda (2; 0), and South Africa (22; 3). Health authorities continue to be concerned by the rapid spread in the DRC of a new, more transmissible, and deadly lineage of mpox known as "clade 1b."
- **U.S. FDA Warns of High Lead Levels in More Cinnamon Products:** The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is [recommending](#) that firms voluntarily recall and consumers throw out several ground cinnamon products found to have high lead levels. The agency noted that the lead levels found in these products were elevated and may be unsafe. However, they were still lower than those found in WanaBana cinnamon apple puree and applesauce products recalled in 2023.

- **COVID Cases Growing in U.S., Elsewhere:** COVID-19 cases continue to grow across the U.S., with data from [wastewater](#) showing high levels of the virus nationally. According to the latest information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the [situation](#) is especially pronounced in the South and West, with several states, including Oregon, Washington, California, Texas, and Florida [reporting](#) very high levels of virus activity. The high number of cases isn't confined to the U.S. Several athletes at the [Paris Olympics](#) have tested positive, forcing them to withdraw from their events. An updated COVID-19 vaccine is [expected](#) to be released later this year.

Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- **Deadly Protests Around Cost of Living in Nigeria:** At least seven people are dead, and more than 700 have been arrested since nationwide protests began last week over the cost of living in Nigeria. Protesters blame recent economic reforms for skyrocketing prices. Nigerian President Bola Tinubu issued a televised address defending the reforms and blaming looters for hijacking the protests. The president said an end to unrest would create room for dialogue, but he did not promise to reverse his policies. Protesters were seen waving Russian flags and calling on President Vladimir Putin for help; protesters are also reportedly changing their profile photos on WhatsApp to the Russian flag. Elements within Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger have welcomed Russian help in dealing with security issues following several coups in West Africa in recent years. Twenty-four-hour curfews remain in place in Borno, Jigawa, Kano, and Yobe after authorities there accused protesters of violence. Police have denied using excessive force during demonstrations. Calls to action circulating online indicate the demonstrations could last until at least Saturday, August 10.
- **Serbia to See Protests Against Lithium Mining Project:** Demonstrations against the [Rio Tinto lithium mining project](#) are scheduled across Serbia through Saturday. Social, civic, and community groups are calling for demonstrations to denounce the project's alleged [impact](#) on nearby communities and the environment. The primary demonstration will take place on Saturday in Belgrade at Terazije Square at 7 pm. Additional actions will take place throughout the week in cities like Niš and Kragujevac. Demonstration organizers have given the Serbian government a deadline of August 10 to ban the mine project. Thousands of people also [demonstrated](#) against it on July 29.
- **Anti-Government Protests to Continue in Kenya This Week:** Social, civic, and activist groups plan to continue protesting this week to demand President William Ruto step down. Calls are circulating online for people to demonstrate nationwide on Tuesday and Thursday. Demonstrators plan to "occupy" the Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority (EPRA) offices on Tuesday. On Thursday, organizers are planning to hold demonstrations

nationwide, with major actions to take place in Nairobi, including near the Central Business District (CBD) at 9 am and the State House at 3 pm.

- **Argentina, Colombia to See Large-Scale Protest Actions:** This week, Colombia will see nationwide marches in support of President Gustavo Petro. The country's main labor unions are [organizing](#) nationwide actions to commemorate the president's second year and to defend his [controversial social and labor reforms](#). The actions, the details of which are yet to be finalized, are expected to take place on Wednesday. Additionally, the State Workers Association (ATE) in Argentina is [calling](#) for nationwide actions on Wednesday against economic reforms by President Javier Milei's government. Recent anti-government [demonstrations](#) in Argentina brought in tens of thousands of demonstrators and resulted in clashes and arrests.
- **Pro-Palestine Demonstrations Continue Strong, Universities Brace for Further Actions:** As the beginning of the school year nears, universities are bracing for further pro-Palestinian protests and encampments on their campuses. Around 3,200 people were [arrested](#) amid a wave of on-campus protests in support of Palestine in the spring. Some pro-Palestine student groups have reportedly spent the summer [planning](#) for how to continue their activism in the coming school year. Over the weekend, large-scale demonstrations took place across the globe to mark 300 days since the start of the conflict between Israel and Hamas.

Upcoming Events

- July 26-September 8: Paris Olympic and Paralympic Games (France)
- August 5: Civic Holiday (Canada)
- August 5: Emancipation Day (The Bahamas, Dominica, Grenada, St Kitts and Nevis, Montserrat)
- August 5: Victory Day (Croatia)
- August 9: National Day (Singapore)
- August 10: Independence Day (Ecuador)
- August 12-18: Tour de France Femmes (France)
- August 13: Defence Forces Day (Zimbabwe)
- August 15: Independence Day (India)
- August 15: Assumption of Mary (Global)
- August 17: Independence Day/Inauguration of New Capital (Indonesia)
- August 19-22: Democratic Party National Convention (Chicago, IL)
- August 26-September 8: U.S. Open Tennis Tournament (New York City, NY)
- August 26: Janmashtami (India)
- August 31: Independence Day (Malaysia)

Weekly Intelligence Briefing

August 5, 2024



- September 1: Parliamentary Elections (Azerbaijan)
- September 2: Independence Day (Vietnam)
- September 2: Labor Day (United States)
- September 7: Presidential Election (Algeria)
- September 10: Legislative Elections (Jordan)
- September 10: Opening of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) (New York City, NY)