

September 16, 2024

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Top Stories

Catastrophic Flooding Across Central Europe Prompts Evacuations, Travel Disruptions

The worst flooding several European countries have experienced in decades is garnering [international media](#) headlines. One person is dead, and seven others are missing in Bruntal (Czechia), as parts of the country have received five times their monthly rainfall average in a matter of five days. A [state of emergency](#) in Southwest Poland has been declared, and [4,600 soldiers](#) have been deployed to support. Thousands remain evacuated while reservoirs are stressed and at maximum capacity. At least four people have been killed in Poland, along with two elderly residents in Northeast Austria. A dozen villages are submerged in eastern Romania, where an additional six deaths have been reported. Ships along the Danube River are also at a [standstill](#) due to temporary restrictions.

Early tomorrow, additional heavy rain of up to 50mm (two inches) is possible across flood-ravaged areas of Austria, Southwest Czechia, and extreme Southeast Germany. Dry conditions are forecast to be late Tuesday through the end of the week. Locally significant river flooding may continue over the next few days. Meanwhile, the threat of significant flooding may rise across parts of north-central Italy. Residents and travelers in cities in and around Bologna, San Marino, Ravenna, and Ancona should be mindful of the dangers of excessive rainfall and flash flooding, some potentially significant and life-threatening, especially between late Tuesday and Thursday. Based on forecast model guidance, the large-scale storm system responsible for widespread flooding across Central Europe in recent days may generate a persistent rain band and several hundred millimeters of rain over parts of the area.

Threats of Political Violence Related to U.S. Presidential Campaign Persist

The threat of political violence again looms over the United States presidential election. Around two months after a man grazed former President Donald Trump during an assassination attempt at a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, the FBI is [investigating](#) what appears to be another attempt on Trump's life. On Sunday, the Secret Service [opened fire](#) on a man with an AK-style rifle who was in the bushes near one of Trump's golf courses in West Palm Beach. The man fled, but authorities later detained Ryan Wesley Routh and identified him as the key suspect in the case. No one was injured during the incident. The apparent assassination attempt has triggered calls from President Joe Biden and members of Congress to provide the Secret Service with greater resources.

The FBI is also [investigating](#) threats of violence that have engulfed the Ohio town of Springfield amid local tensions over immigration and [false claims](#) that Haitian immigrants are eating residents' pets, accusations recently amplified by Trump and his running mate, Ohio Senator JD Vance. The city recorded numerous bomb threats and other threats of violence over the past week, forcing [school closures](#), [hospital lockdowns](#), and the evacuation of several buildings, including [city hall and several county offices](#). Two local higher education institutions, [Wittenberg University](#), and [Clark State College](#), switched to remote learning and canceled on-campus events and activities after receiving threats of violence. Springfield Mayor Rob Rue [called](#) the threats a "hateful response to immigration in our town." Despite several figures calling for an end to the threats, including Ohio's Republican Governor Mike DeWine, further activity is possible. The city will likely remain in the spotlight over the coming days, as Trump ally Vivek Ramaswamy [announced](#) he plans to travel to Springfield on Thursday, and Trump's campaign [said](#) he would also visit "soon."

U.N. General Assembly High-Level Meetings to Kick Off Next Week in New York City

New York City will see heightened security and major traffic disruptions as hundreds of heads of state, delegates, and government representatives convene in Manhattan for the [United Nations General Assembly \(UNGA\) 79th Session](#), which takes place between September 10 and 30 at the United Nations Headquarters in Manhattan. While the UNGA opened last week, much of the disruption related to the event will be concentrated around [High-Level Week](#) and the [General Debate](#), occurring between September 22 and 30. This year's UNGA comes amid significant geopolitical turmoil stemming from the conflict in Gaza and ongoing wars in Ukraine and Sudan.

As in previous years, several activist groups are expected to hold demonstrations before and during the General Assembly, some of which will likely draw hundreds of participants. Demonstrations are expected to be predominantly peaceful, although there is a heightened possibility of significant disruption and potential clashes with police on September 26, when pro-Palestine groups plan to protest throughout Midtown against Israel Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Diaspora groups are also planning to hold actions against their respective heads of

state, and climate activist groups intend to hold gatherings during [Climate Week](#), which coincides with the assembly.

For further information on this year's UNGA, please refer to our [Situation Report](#), which offers in-depth coverage of the event.

Climate and Natural Hazards

- **Carolinas Tropical Storm Threat:** [Tropical storm warnings](#) are in effect ahead of a potential landfalling named storm later today into tomorrow along the U.S. East Coast, specifically North and South Carolina. The primary concerns are coastal flooding and inland excessive rain amounts of up to six inches. Sporadic power outages are possible.
- **Typhoon Directly Hits Shanghai, China:** Through Tuesday, locations near rivers in Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, and Henan will remain on [alert](#) due to the threat of heavy rain and flooding from the remnants of Typhoon Bebinca. Winds up to 94mph (151km/h) were measured in Shanghai. The typhoon was the strongest to directly hit Shanghai in more than 70 years [\(video\)](#). Ahead of the storm, 414,000 residents were evacuated, and 800 ships returned to port. More than 60,000 rescue workers were on standby. Flights in Shanghai have since [resumed](#).
- **Philippines Faces Excessive Rainfall Risk:** While the Joint Typhoon Warning Center has yet to initiate advisories, Philippines weather officials are tracking a newly declared [depression](#). Much of the country is at an enhanced risk of excessive rainfall and flooding through mid to late week. The potential for gradual strengthening of the tropical cyclone is possible once the system re-emerges over the open waters of the South China Sea by mid-week.
- **West Pacific Remains Active:** The [Joint Typhoon Warning Center](#) has issued a tropical cyclone formation alert near the Northern Mariana Islands. This system is likely to become a named tropical storm before reaching southern Okinawa, Japan, by Wednesday.
- **North-Central India Monsoon Rains Continue:** A large monsoonal disturbance near Jharkhand and Odisha will steadily advance towards the northwest, across Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, and Delhi through mid to late week. The [India Meteorological Department](#) may increase warning levels as forecast confidence increases.

Worldwide

- **Mexico Formally Enacts Controversial Judicial Reform:** On the eve of Mexico's Independence Day, a controversial reform [mandating](#) the popular election of nearly all judges took effect. The legislation, a key priority of outgoing President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, sparked nationwide demonstrations and a long-running strike by judicial workers. Opponents of the law have vowed to continue protests as officials begin its implementation. Approximately half of the roughly 7,000 positions subject to the new rule will go before voters in 2025, including those of Supreme Court justices. The reform has

sparked concerns over possible corruption, while several international partners, including the U.S. and Canada, are worried that the law will undermine existing trade agreements. For more information, see [AlertMedia's Situation Report](#).

- **Violence Persists Amid Cartel Power Struggle in Mexico's Sinaloa State:** The Mexican state of Sinaloa continues to be wracked by violence as rival factions of the Sinaloa cartel [battle for control](#) of the powerful organization. In its [latest crime update](#), the state government reported Sunday that 11 more people had died amid the ongoing infighting, bringing the week's total death count to [over 30](#). The violence has prompted the closure of schools and businesses in the capital, Culiacan, and the state's governor canceled public celebrations commemorating Mexican Independence Day. In addition, there are reports of [food shortages](#) in some locations as the situation has made restocking more difficult. As the power struggle continues, the government has deployed extra resources to quell violence; however, fighting is likely to continue, and there are [concerns](#) about it spreading to other areas under the cartel's influence.
- **Long-Range Missiles, Deep Territory Strikes in Ukraine War:** The White House is [reportedly](#) finalizing a plan to ease some restrictions on where Ukraine can strike within Russia. Ukraine views the ability to use long-range missiles behind enemy lines as a game-changer that would allow it to target air bases, supply depots, and communication centers hundreds of miles over the border. Speaking in St. Petersburg, Russian President Vladimir Putin sent a [clear warning](#) to the West. If you allow Ukraine to use your long-range missiles to strike Russian territory, we will view it as the "direct participation" of NATO countries in the war in Ukraine. The head of NATO's military committee brushed aside Putin's warning, saying that [Ukraine has the solid legal and military right to strike deep inside Russia](#) to gain a combat advantage. On the front, [Russia has launched a significant counteroffensive](#) to push Ukrainian forces out of Kursk, the southern border region that was partially occupied by Ukraine last month.
- **North Korea Fires Missiles in First Launch in Two Months:** Several short-range ballistic missiles lifted off from Pyongyang Thursday and traveled about 360 km (225 mi) before [falling into the sea](#). South Korea and Japan condemned the launch, the first of its kind in over two months. In a speech marking his government's foundation anniversary, North Korean leader Kim John Un vowed to redouble efforts to make his nuclear forces fully ready for combat with the United States and its allies.
- **Israel-Hamas War Update:** A missile fired by Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels landed in an open area in central Israel and triggered air raid sirens at its international airport. There were [no reports of casualties or major damage](#); the airport authority said it resumed normal operations shortly after that. Nearly all the Houthi drones and missiles

fired from Yemen toward Israel are intercepted over the Red Sea. Separately, an operation to tow an oil tanker stranded in the Red Sea after a Houthi militant attack has begun. The mission includes [towing the 900-ft vessel to safety](#) and transferring some one million barrels of crude oil. According to [Defense Minister Yoav Gallant](#), the Israeli forces are near to fulfilling their mission in Gaza, and the focus will turn to the north and Hezbollah. Israeli leaders said they would prefer to resolve the conflict through an agreement that would push Iran-backed Hezbollah away from the border; Hezbollah said it will continue to fight so long as the war in Gaza is ongoing.

Cyber and Regulatory

- **Data Center Operators Can Expect Greater Government Support in U.K.:** The United Kingdom has [classified](#) U.K. data centers as Critical National Infrastructure (CNI). The announcement, published last week, calls for the establishment of a team tasked with monitoring and responding to threats against data centers. Recent cyber incidents, like the [CrowdStrike outage](#), have highlighted the need for greater protection for IT services. The Critical National Infrastructure includes energy, transport, healthcare, and communications sectors vital for national security and public well-being. The change in designation is not [expected](#) to come with new regulations. Instead, the government hopes to encourage further market investment. The U.K. has the most data centers in Western Europe.
- **Facebook Removes Emergency Posts Amid Wildfire Outbreaks:** Facebook is under fire for [removing](#) emergency-related posts during western U.S. wildfires. Critical updates from fire safety coordinators, volunteer responders, and official agencies like Cal Fire and the U.S. Forest Service were flagged as spam for allegedly seeking engagement in a misleading way. The issue has intensified during a severe wildfire season, leaving communities without vital information and sparking concerns over public safety and reliance on social media during emergencies.
- **Australia to Pursue Age Verification to Keep Children Off Social Media:** Australia aims to [introduce](#) a social media ban for teens by the end of the year, but drafting enforceable legislation poses challenges. Privacy, compliance by companies, minors' online rights, and verification are major concerns. Australia's government has yet to [specify](#) an age for the ban, which proponents hope will improve minors' mental and physical health, though it is likely to be between 14 and 16 years of age. The outcome of an [ongoing legal battle](#) between Australia and X (formerly Twitter) will help clarify the government's capacity to regulate online safety. Similar efforts in the U.K. face privacy and data protection hurdles under their age assurance laws.

- **Google's GenAI Facing Scrutiny Over Privacy Compliance in Europe:** Ireland's Data Protection Commission, acting as the EU's lead regulator due to Google's European headquarters in Dublin, has [launched](#) an inquiry into whether the AI system complies with the bloc's GDPR rules. The Irish Data Protection Commission is [investigating](#) how Google developed its PaLM2 AI model and whether the personal data of EU citizens was used in training the model in compliance with GDPR. GenAI models require large data sets for training purposes, and the EU requires that companies comply with the GDPR data privacy law. The investigation focuses on whether Google adequately assessed the high-risk impact of PaLM2's data processing. This inquiry is part of broader efforts across the EU to regulate AI systems and their handling of personal data.
- **Cybersecurity Issues Persist From Data Breaches in 2023:** The Wisconsin Physicians Service Insurance Corporation (WPS) recently [disclosed](#) that just under one million Medicare users had personally identifiable information leaked from the 2023 MOVEit hack. The cyberattacks on MOVEit, a file transfer tool, were the [biggest incident of data theft](#) last year. In response, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services is [recommending](#) that impacted individuals enroll in complimentary credit monitoring. Another data breach disclosed in 2023 is also making headlines. The genetics testing company 23andMe will [pay](#) \$30 million to settle a lawsuit with almost seven million users whose data was compromised in 2023.

Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- **Boeing Strike Threatens Debt Downgrade, Impacts on Aviation Industry:** Last Friday, around 33,000 unionized machinists at Boeing [initiated](#) a work stoppage over pay disputes. Production of the company's jetliners [ceased](#), threatening delays in aircraft deliveries. The action exacerbates the company's cash flow issues and efforts to restore its reputation after several incidents involving its planes. Boeing shares [hit](#) a nearly two-year low, and debt-rating firms warned that they would downgrade Boeing debt into "junk status" if the work stoppage protracted. The strike also impacts suppliers as the company has reportedly halted ordering from outside firms. This week, union leaders and the company will resume talks alongside a federal mediator.
- **Texas Officials Sound Alarm on Water Shortage While Mexico Grapples With Depleting Reserves :** Texas' Agricultural Commissioner [warns](#) that the state is running out of water, particularly in the Rio Grande Valley. Production of key crops like tomatoes is down 80%, and officials suggest solutions like capturing stormwater and recycling treated water to combat the shortage. Down south, Mexico is also [struggling](#) with its shortage, impeding the country's ability to send the U.S. the water it owes and threatening Mexico's compliance with the water-sharing agreements stipulated in the [1944 water treaty](#). U.S.

farmers are [urging](#) Congress to pass a modernized farm bill that addresses these concerns, citing impacts on local economies and major crops like citrus and grain.

- **U.S. East Coast Strike Looms, Imports Surge:** The International Longshoremen's Association union (ILA), representing 45,000 workers and handling half of America's ocean trade, began a series of meetings last week to review wage demands and [prepare for a potential strike](#) on October 1. ILA said its members would strike if they could not form a new contract with the United States Maritime Alliance (USMX) by September 30. According to container carrier Maersk, "Even a one-week shutdown could take four to six weeks to recover from, with significant backlogs and delays compounding with each passing day." Fearing potential strikes and other shipping disruptions, retailers are pushing forward holiday promotions and [rushing seasonal goods](#). Walmart and Target held early back-to-school sales against Amazon's Prime Day, while the late timing of Thanksgiving this year shortens the Christmas shopping season and boosts the likelihood of early promotions.
- **Draghi Draws Up Plan for Europe's Economy, Major Automakers to Potentially Shutter Plants:** Former president of the European Central Bank Mario Draghi [released](#) a report outlining a strategy for the European Union (EU) to bridge the economic gap with other major economic powerhouses, namely the U.S. and China. The strategy focuses on "joint action" and boosting investment by €800 billion, particularly in technology, telecoms, defense, and infrastructure. In another development, Europe's auto market is struggling to keep up with the electric transition, with major carmakers like Volkswagen reporting underutilization of its plants. This underutilization has prompted concerns about potential closures, while some other companies contend with the [threat](#) of strikes and protests amid potential job cuts.
- **China's Economy Slumps, Beijing Eases Restrictions on Foreign Investment, Raises Retirement Age:** Economic data from August [shows](#) a lag in China's industrial output, as well as in retail and property sales, leading experts to scale back their economic growth forecasts for the country and reinforcing calls for stronger stimulus measures to support the economy. Last week, Beijing [removed](#) restrictions on foreign investment in the manufacturing and healthcare sectors in hopes of shoring up more outside investment to revive its economy. The government also [moved](#) to raise the country's retirement age by three to five years, depending on gender and type of work, to address strains on pension funds.

Health

- **FDA Recalls Eggs Due to Salmonella Concerns:** The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) sent out a [recall notice](#) for eggs labeled as being from Milo's Poultry Farms or branded as Tony's Fresh Market after they were linked to at least 65 cases of salmonella in nine states.

The recall applies to all varieties and sizes of eggs distributed by Milo's Poultry Farms in Wisconsin, Michigan, and Illinois. Wisconsin has [recorded](#) the highest number of sick people, with 42. Symptoms include diarrhea, fever, and abdominal cramps and typically occur 12 to 72 hours after consuming contaminated food.

- **South Korean Healthcare System Prepares for Chuseok as Strike Drags On:** Officials in South Korea have [declared](#) a special emergency medical response period for the next two weeks as they work to ensure the availability of healthcare services during the three-day Chuseok holiday period, which begins September 16. South Korea's healthcare system has been under strain since February, when thousands of junior doctors walked off the job to protest changes to medical school admissions. The Health Ministry had previously [announced](#) that it was deploying military doctors to assist in some emergency rooms and was [providing](#) funding for hospitals to hire 400 more doctors and nurses.
- **Doctors in India's West Bengal Remain on Strike:** Junior doctors in West Bengal have [refused](#) to call off a strike that began several weeks ago to protest the rape and murder of a trainee doctor at RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in Kolkata. India's Supreme Court had ordered the doctors to return to their posts by Tuesday, September 17. Still, they are demanding that the government first do more to ensure the safety of medical workers and deliver justice for the woman who was killed. Senior doctors in the state have [warned](#) the West Bengal government against taking action against those protesting, saying it would trigger a "breakdown" of the state's healthcare system. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has [claimed](#) that at least 29 patients have died due to lack of care since the strike began.
- **Italian Healthcare Workers Call for Greater Security Following Assaults:** Healthcare workers in Italy are [calling](#) on the government to deploy the military to protect public hospitals after a string of assaults. Doctors and nurses in Foggia said that they had to barricade themselves in a room to fend off angry friends and relatives of a woman who died during surgery. More than 16,000 assaults on healthcare workers were recorded last year, according to data from the health ministry. Hospital doctors' unions held a [protest](#) earlier today in Foggia denouncing the attacks.
- **Other Stories the Global Intelligence Team Is Monitoring:** A [new report](#) by the World Health Organization (WHO) shows that cholera deaths have spiked 71% since 2022, with the total number of reported cases increasing by 13%. Primary drivers include conflict and climate change. Public health authorities are also closely [monitoring](#) the Indian state of Kerala, where a second person has died this year from Nipah, a WHO priority pathogen. On the other side of the globe, U.S. health officials are attempting to determine if someone who lived with an individual who contracted H5N1 and became ill on the same day represents possible [human-to-human transmission](#) of bird flu. Finally, the Los

Angeles County Department of Public Health sent out an [alert](#) to providers after they confirmed a locally acquired case of dengue, the third in the state since 2023.

Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- **Activists Plan Demonstrations for Next “Climate Strike” Day:** Climate activist group Fridays for Future will hold its next global “climate strike” with widespread demonstrations planned. In Germany, dozens of actions have been organized, including [one](#) in front of the Chancellery in Berlin at noon. In Manhattan, where the U.N. General Assembly will be taking place throughout the week, demonstrators will gather at Foley Square at 2 pm. And in London, activists led by Extinction Rebellion intend to converge on Shell’s headquarters at 8 am before marching to Parliament.
- **Political Unrest Persists in France, Widespread Demonstrations Expected Saturday:** Tens of thousands are likely to join [demonstrations](#) across France on Saturday as unrest over President Emmanuel Macron’s decision to appoint Michel Barnier as prime minister continues to simmer. Related [rallies](#) on September 7 drew over 100,000 people, including 26,000 in Paris alone (organizers put those numbers higher, at 300,000 and 160,000, respectively), and this weekend’s gatherings have drawn support from the country’s main student union, climate activists, and more.
- **Demonstrators Block Major Roads in Bolivia to Protest Government:** Demonstrators led by civic organizations and unions have [seized](#) highways to and from the Bolivian capital, La Paz, and indicated they will remain on them [indefinitely](#) as they demand the resignation of President Luis Arce. The gatherings are the latest major action against the government as it grapples with [significant economic issues](#), including [fuel shortages](#). Tomorrow, further protest activity will kick off as former President Evo Morales supporters begin a [multi-day march](#) from Caracollo to La Paz. Ahead of the activity, the local U.S. Embassy warned that there is a potential for violent clashes at blockade points and advised citizens in the country to secure an “adequate supply of food, water, and fuel for several days or more.”
- **Pro-Palestine Activists Rally Around Key Upcoming Dates:** While pro-Palestine demonstrations will continue through this week, activists are beginning to organize demonstrations to mark one year of conflict. The primary day of action in this regard is expected to be Saturday, October 5, and multiple prominent groups, including the Palestinian Youth Movement, are rallying around the date. Before then, U.S.-based groups called for a major protest on Thursday, September 26, at multiple points across Manhattan to coincide with a visit by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Additional demonstrations are likely during his [multi-day New York trip](#).

- **Other Activity the Global Intelligence Team Is Watching:** Italy will face a 24-hour public transit strike on Friday. Impacts are expected in major cities nationwide, including [Rome](#), [Milan](#), and [elsewhere](#). In other transport strike news, easyJet workers in France began an [indefinite nationwide](#) strike today over the company's plans to close its hub at Toulouse-Montaudou airport. On the protest front, notable actions in the coming days include a demonstration on Friday against Nigel Farage's Reform U.K. party conference in Birmingham, England, and a [major demonstration](#) against immigration in Dublin on Thursday. Later this month, on September 28, Venezuela's opposition is [expected](#) to host another round of protests as election-related unrest simmers.

Upcoming Events

- September 7-17: Ganesh Chaturthi (India, Bangladesh)
- September 10-30: United Nations General Assembly (New York City, NY)
- September 15-October 15: Fiestas Patrias, Hispanic Heritage Month (Global)
- September 16: Independence Day (Papua New Guinea)
- September 16: Independence Day (Mexico)
- September 16-18: Chuseok (South Korea)
- September 17: Mid-Autumn Festival (China, Taiwan)
- September 20: First Round of Legislative Elections (Czechia)
- September 21: Sri Lanka (Presidential Election)
- September 27: Second Round of Legislative Elections (Czechia)
- September 29: Legislative Elections (Austria)
- September 30: East Coast Dockworkers' Labor Contract Expires (United States)
- October 1: Pchum Ben (Cambodia)
- October 1: Vice Presidential Debate (New York City, NY)
- October 1: Defender of Ukraine Day (Ukraine)
- October 1: Mexico Presidential Inauguration (Mexico City, Mexico)
- October 6: Presidential Election (Tunisia)
- October 6-11: ASEAN Summit (Laos)
- October 7: One-Year Anniversary of Israel-Hamas Conflict (Global)
- October 9: General Election (Mozambique)
- October 11-12: Yom Kippur (Global)
- October 13: First Round of Parliamentary Elections (Lithuania)
- October 13: Durga Puja (India, Bangladesh)