



October 7, 2024

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Top Stories

Milton Intensifying at Extreme Rate, Catastrophic Storm Surge Likely in Florida

[Hurricane Milton](#) is poised to impact much of Florida starting Tuesday night, with evacuation orders already in effect along the state's west coast. [Manatee](#), [Pasco](#), [Pinellas](#), and [Sarasota](#) counties have begun evacuating residents in vulnerable areas, particularly those in mobile homes and flood-prone zones. Several more evacuation announcements are likely over the next 24 hours. A [state of emergency](#) has been declared for 51 counties, and the largest evacuations since Hurricane Irma (2017) are underway, focusing on storm surge zones. Over 4,000 National Guardsmen have been activated to assist, and backup fuel and emergency EV recharging stations are prepared for those evacuating. Warnings and watches are in place for coastal areas of the Yucatan Peninsula and Florida, as the storm is expected to bring a life-threatening storm surge of up to 12 feet in Tampa Bay.

Due to favorable sea surface temperatures and atmospheric conditions, Milton may peak as a high-end Category 4 or 5 before landfall. The storm's landfall, expected sometime Wednesday, will bring hurricane-force winds extending 30-40 miles from the center, while tropical storm winds may reach over 175 miles. Some weakening is expected in the hours before the center hits the coast, but a catastrophic storm surge will already have been established. Florida's west coast faces widespread severe storm surge flooding, localized major hurricane-force winds, and widespread power outages. Inland and central Florida will see heavy rainfall, flash flooding, and prolonged power outages, with impacts extending well beyond the storm's center. Residents in affected areas should continue preparing for significant, long-duration disruptions and life-threatening conditions.

For the latest information on Hurricane Milton and its expected impacts, see our [Situation Report](#).

Fighting Continues in Lebanon, Gaza on Anniversary of Hamas' Attack

On the anniversary of Hamas' surprise attack, thousands gathered across the world to hold vigils and remember those lost as the Israeli military continued operations in Gaza and Lebanon. Israel's air campaign and ground invasion into southern Lebanon has so far [killed](#) at least 2,083 people and displaced 1.2 million, according to Lebanese authorities. Hezbollah has continued to launch rockets into Israel, hitting the cities of [Haifa](#) and Tiberias this morning, [causing](#) at least seven injuries. As the aerial bombardment of

Lebanon continues and commercial aviation options have dwindled, the United States has [organized](#) flights to allow U.S. citizens and their relatives to depart the country. Other nations have started evacuating their citizens, including [Australia](#), Germany, South Korea, and [more](#). Airstrikes in the Beirut area are complicating evacuation efforts, with one attack earlier today [landing](#) near the Beirut-Rafic Hariri International Airport. Meanwhile, to the south, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) issued evacuation warnings for much of northern Gaza, possibly signaling the beginning of another major offensive. The AlertMedia team has written a [Situation Report](#) summarizing the past year of fighting in the Middle East and the wider impacts of the ongoing conflict.

Attacks Apparently Targeting Jewish Community Take Place in Europe, Israel

Last week, Israeli embassies in both Denmark and Sweden were the possible target of attacks, while in Tel Aviv, Hamas claimed responsibility for [an attack](#) that killed seven. With the major Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur beginning October 11, authorities are on heightened alert for further incidents targeting the Jewish community.

In Copenhagen, authorities [arrested](#) three Swedish nationals in connection with two pre-dawn explosions, likely caused by hand grenades, that took place near the Israeli Embassy. Danish authorities had recently put out a [warning](#) of an intensified terrorist threat against Jewish and Israeli sites, and the U.S. Embassy has [advised](#) constituents to use caution when near them as well. Similarly, on Tuesday, police in Stockholm [said](#) that shots had been fired at the Israeli Embassy in Sweden. It comes after [similar incidents](#) earlier this year. Similar to Denmark, the U.S. Embassy in Sweden [issued](#) an alert advising heightened awareness.

The same day, in Tel Aviv, two men [entered](#) a rail car and opened fire on passengers, eventually [killing](#) seven people and injuring 16. Hamas said that its armed wing, the Izzedine al-Qassam Brigades, was responsible for the attacks. It's the second major terror event in Tel Aviv that the group has taken credit for, following a suicide bombing in August that [injured](#) one person. At the time, Hamas [warned](#) that "martyrdom operations within the occupied territories will resume prominently as long as the occupation's massacres ... persist." While not claimed by Hamas, another terror attack took place yesterday at a bus station in [Be'er Sheva](#) that killed one and injured nine.

Climate and Natural Hazards

- **Remnants of Hurricane Kirk to Impact Europe:** Wednesday and Thursday, the post-tropical remnants of Kirk, once a major hurricane in the North Atlantic, will rapidly advance northeastward across northern Portugal, northern France, and Benelux. The exact path and weather severity are still in question, but there is the potential for excessive rainfall and widespread gusty winds, some locally severe. Rain totals between 50-100mm (two to four inches) could generate scattered flash flooding. More aggressive forecast data signals a possibility of wind gusts over 95km/h (60mph), which could yield scattered power outages and transportation and business disruptions. Ahead of the main storm system, locally strong thunderstorms will likely impact Southeast France and northern Italy on Tuesday.
- **Northeast India, Bangladesh Monsoon Flooding:** Peak monsoon rain incidents typically occur between June and September, but the last week has remained active. At least 15 people have been killed by flooding and landslides in Northeast India's [Meghalaya State](#). At least eight fatalities are reported across the border in the [Sherpur District](#) of northern Bangladesh. While less extreme rainfall is forecast, the potential for scattered heavy downpours will threaten the Himalayas through the end of the week.

Worldwide

- **Chilpancingo Mayor Found Dead Shortly After Taking Office:** [Alejandro Arcos](#), the mayor of Chilpancingo, Mexico, was killed less than a week after taking office, marking the latest in a series of political killings nationwide. His death highlights ongoing insecurity in Guerrero, a state that continues to struggle with cartel-related violence. Arcos' death follows the recent killing of another city official, [reflecting](#) the risks faced by local politicians in Mexico, who frequently find themselves the victims of violence amid the country's multi-billion-dollar drug trade. At least 24 politicians were murdered during recent national elections.
- **Russia Captures Vuhledar After Two Years of Ukrainian Resistance:** As of last Wednesday, Russian forces have [captured](#) the strategic city of Vuhledar in the Donetsk Oblast, following nearly two years of battles. Given its strategic location between the eastern and southern battlefields, the high ground of Vuhledar provides effective fire control in the area. It will allow the city to operate as a supply hub for the continuation of Russia's recent tactical gains in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region. As of now, Russian forces control roughly 80% of Donbas, including 98.5% of Luhansk and 60% of Donetsk.
- **South Africa's Murder Rate Reaches Two-Decade High Amid Recent Crime Waves:** A mass shooting in South Africa that killed 18 people in Lusikisiki town in Eastern Cape has [renewed](#)

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attention on the high levels of violent crime that South Africa has experienced in recent years. Violent crime has cost the country almost \$40 billion, or at least 10% percent of its yearly GDP, exacerbating current economic woes fueled by [economic stagnation and underemployment](#). South Africa's murder rate in 2022 was nearly 7.5 times higher than the United States, prompting some civilians to [hire private security](#).

- **South American Countries Declare States of Emergencies, Including in Capital Cities:** On September 27, the Peruvian government [declared](#) a 60-day state of emergency (SOE) in 14 districts, including in Lima, due to high levels of extortion. The declaration follows a day of demonstrations that saw clashes with police and acts of vandalism by transportation workers denouncing extortion by armed groups. During the SOE, some movement restrictions are in place as armed forces, including the Peruvian military, conduct operations in the affected areas. The country's business associations [lament](#) that no commercial activity, "regardless of size or sector, is safe from extortion." In neighboring Ecuador, an ongoing "internal armed conflict" continues. President Noboa [issued](#) a 60-day SOE in Quito and six other provinces to combat organized crime groups.
- **Seattle Police Department Will Stop Responding to Alarm Calls Without Supporting Evidence:** Low department staffing and the lack of corroborating crime has [prompted](#) the Seattle Police Department to announce a major change to its response policy. As of October 1, police will no longer respond to alarm company calls without supporting evidence such as video, audio, panic alarms, or eyewitness evidence. In 2023, only 4% of the 13,000 residential and burglary crimes were attributed to criminal activity. This shift has [worried residents and businesses](#). Estimates indicate only 2% of Washington Alarm Customers have upgraded alarm requirements, and associated upgrade costs range from \$5,000 for a home to \$100,000 for a warehouse.

Cyber and Regulatory

- **North Korean Cyber Espionage Campaign Accessed Defense Contractor's Network:** ATP37, a North Korean hacking group suspected of having ties to the Lazarus Group, [breached](#) German defense contractor Diehl Defense's computer systems and accessed sensitive information related to missile development. The breach took place during a month-long cyber espionage campaign and targeted advanced technologies the company provides to the European Union and NATO. The group used spear - phishing tactics, offering fake job opportunities with U.S. defense contractors and malicious PDF files to infect Diehl Defense's network and remain hidden throughout the campaign. Germany's Federal Office for Information Security has launched an investigation.
- **Cyberattack on Texas Health System Highlights Ongoing Cybersecurity Risks in Healthcare:** UMC Health System, a healthcare provider in West Texas, had to redirect some patients to other

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facilities after a ransomware attack caused an IT outage late last month. As of last Friday, UMC's phone systems were [operating normally](#), and fewer incoming patients were being diverted. A recent report by cybersecurity company Claroty [found](#) that over a quarter of organizations have experienced financial losses of \$1 million or more due to cyberattacks. The healthcare sector is highly susceptible to cybercriminal activity. More than 75% of healthcare organizations reported ransom payments exceeding \$500,000, according to the report.

- **Outages Impact Customers Across Services:** The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is investigating the cause of widespread outages that impacted Verizon last week. Verizon [customers](#) were left with no service and unable to make calls, aside from dialing emergency numbers, for nearly 12 hours before services began to return to normal. On Wednesday, mobile and online [Bank of America](#) customers were unable to see their account balances due to "technical issues." The company released a statement later in the day to say the issue had been resolved without providing details.
- **European Commission Proposes Year-Long Delay to EUDR Implementation:** The European Commission has [proposed](#) to delay the implementation of the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR) to December 30, 2025. The EUDR prevents foreign exporters from accessing the EU single market if their products were made in areas deforested or degraded after 2020. The extension is expected to pass approval from the European Parliament and member states following strong opposition from global partners concerned about their levels of preparedness. The Commission states the delay will provide the extra time needed to "secure a smooth implementation from the start."
- **Cyberattacks Target MoneyGram and AFP:** Investigators are working to identify the actors behind a cyberattack that took money transfer platform MoneyGram's [systems](#) offline on September 20. Initial reports indicate perpetrators targeted the service's helpdesk with a social engineering attack, but the intrusion was detected before any damage could be done. MoneyGram confirmed the breach and notified customers that transfer services were back online on September 25. Similarly, the French National Agency for IT Systems Security (ANSSI) is working with international news provider Agence France-Presse (AFP) after a cyberattack partially impacted client services on October 4. The media outlet has [warned](#) customers to update user credentials to its file transfer servers as they may have been compromised during the attack.

Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- **Tentative Agreement Reached, Dockworkers' Strike Suspended:** The International Longshoremen's Association (ILA) and the United States Maritime Alliance (USMX) have [reached](#) a tentative deal on wages and agreed to extend the existing contract through January 15, 2025,

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while negotiations on other issues continue. The deal ends a strike that began on October 1 at every major U.S. East and Gulf Coast port. While the strike was relatively short-lived, shipping analytics firms estimate that it will take at least three to four weeks to work through the backlog of ships and return the ports to normal operations. There also remains the [potential](#) for further industrial action. One of the remaining sticking points is around automation, which the ILA is adamantly opposed to. Once a full deal is reached, it will also need to be voted on and ratified by the union's rank-and-file. Should they reject it, they could find themselves back on the picket line.

- **Helene Shuts Down Mine Vital to Tech Industry:** Tropical Storm Helene badly damaged the town of Spruce Pine, North Carolina, one of the only places in the world that [produces](#) the high-purity quartz used to make numerous tech products, including medical devices, cell phones, and the chips that power artificial intelligence. The Quartz Corp and Sibelco, which mine the quartz, have temporarily paused operations while they assess and repair damage and ensure the safety of their staff. Sibelco says their mines [experienced](#) only “minor damage” and hope to resume deliveries soon. The Quartz Corp has [said](#) that it is too early to say when they will resume operations since it is dependent on the rebuilding of local infrastructure.
- **Many Helene-Damaged Roads to Remain Closed Well Into 2025:** Transportation and logistics across the southern Appalachians, most notably western North Carolina, will be disrupted for much of 2025. Parts of I-40 along the North Carolina-Tennessee state line were [destroyed](#), and the projected timeline for reopening is [October 2025](#). As of late last week, approximately [400 roads](#) within the state were shut down. Authorities advise that there are shortages of water, food, gas, power, and communications in the area and that travelers are unable to reach Tennessee from North Carolina via I-40 or I-26.
- **Houthis Target Another Oil Tanker in Red Sea:** For the first time since September 2, Houthi rebels in Yemen [attacked](#) commercial vessels attempting to transit the Red Sea. Last Tuesday, they launched an explosive-laden drone at the Panama-flagged oil tanker Cordelia Moon before firing missiles at the Liberian-flagged bulk carrier Minoan Courage. The recent attacks suggest that continued strikes by the [U.S. and British militaries](#), as well as [Israel](#), have done little to deter the militant group and Iran ally. Earlier today, alarms [sounded](#) in central Israel after a surface-to-surface missile was launched from Yemen. The Houthis [claim](#) to have targeted 193 ships linked to Israel, the U.S., and the U.K. since Israel's operation in Gaza began.
- **Rising Tensions Over South China Sea Straining Undersea Cable System:** The intensifying contest between China and several other countries in the South China Sea is [jeopardizing](#) the subsea cable system that is vital to telecommunications in the region. Crews have reported increasing difficulty in getting approval to traverse much of the waterway without permission from China, and repairs and new cable projects have experienced numerous delays as a result. One

vessel said they had been confronted by a Chinese Coast Guard vessel. American firms are financing additional cable projects that avoid the South China Sea.

Health

- **Rwandan Authorities Work to Contain Outbreak of Marburg Virus:** Since declaring an outbreak on September 27, authorities in Rwanda have [begun](#) vaccine trials while working to contain the spread of the Marburg virus by issuing quarantines, [limiting](#) gatherings, restricting hospital visits, and urging people to work from home. At least 12 deaths and 46 cases have been [confirmed](#). Abroad, two people were pulled off a train in Germany after officials learned that they had traveled to Rwanda and been exposed to patients with the virus. Authorities around the globe have [issued](#) travel advisories for Rwanda, including the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), which advised travelers to the country to “practice enhanced precautions.” The World Health Organization has [assessed](#) that the risk of this outbreak is “very high at the national level, high at the regional level, and low at the global level.” Marburg is a virus similar to Ebola and can cause a hemorrhagic fever that is fatal for up to 88% of patients.
- **Egg Recall Upgraded to Highest Level, Major Grocery Chains Recall Salad Products:** Last week, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) [upgraded](#) a previous egg recall to a Class I, the highest level of the administration’s recall degree for products that are likely to “cause serious adverse health consequences or death.” The recall, originally issued on September 6 over concerns about salmonella, applies to certain products from Milo’s Poultry Farms, M&E Family Farms, and Tony’s Fresh Market. At least 65 people from nine states were infected with salmonella from the affected products, 24 of which required hospitalization. In a separate development, two major grocery chains—[Kroger](#) and [Hannaford](#)—recalled various salad products over possible listeria contamination.
- **Whooping Cough Reaches Ten-Year High Amid Dip in Vaccination Rates:** U.S. health officials are grappling with an [outbreak](#) of Bordetella pertussis, or whooping cough. This highly contagious bacterial infection causes an intense and chronic cough. Since mid-September, at least two deaths and 15,661 cases have been confirmed. Some states, such as [Pennsylvania](#), are observing as much as a ten-fold increase in cases since last year. These figures are likely to increase as challenges to containment mount. The U.S. is seeing a significant [dip](#) in vaccination rates for kindergarteners and a loosening of vaccine requirement exemptions in some states. Additionally, the vaccines currently in use for pertussis, while safer than those used in previous decades, are also less effective.

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- **U.S. Provides \$72 Million for Bird Flu Vaccine Development as Virus Sweeps Through Farms Globally:** Health officials across the globe are [reporting](#) outbreaks of the H5N1 avian influenza virus, also known as bird flu. Last week, two farmworkers in California [tested positive](#) for bird flu. In Europe, [Hungary](#) and Italy reported their first outbreaks in months, while the virus wiped out 76 birds at a farm in [Germany](#). In Vietnam, dozens of tigers in zoos [perished](#) after contracting the virus. Amid these outbreaks, federal health authorities in the U.S. [announced](#) a \$72 million funding package for pharmaceutical companies to manufacture a vaccine against bird flu. While there are no official recommendations for people in the U.S. to be vaccinated against the virus, the development is to ensure that the vaccines would be "immediately available if needed."
- **Mpox Spreads to Ghana as Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Rolls Out Vaccinations:** Vaccination against mpox has [begun](#) in the DRC after authorities declared an outbreak nearly two months ago. Priority is being given to "at-risk" adults, while vaccines for children are expected to be available in the coming days. Around 30,000 suspected cases and 859 deaths have been recorded in the country this year, accounting for more than 80% of cases and 99% of deaths in Africa. Mpox's international spread is drawing concern as authorities in Ghana [confirmed](#) the country's first case of mpox this year, [making](#) it the 16th country in Africa affected by the outbreak.

Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- **Demonstrations Over Conflict in Middle East Expected to Continue as Israel Invades Lebanon:** Tens of thousands of people [attended](#) pro-Palestine rallies around the world this weekend, with October 7 marking the first anniversary of Hamas' attack on Israel that sparked the ongoing war in Gaza. More actions are planned for this evening across the western hemisphere. In New York, Within Our Lifetime is instructing supporters to boycott work and school and gather at several points in Manhattan, including Grand Central Terminal, Times Square, and Columbus Circle later this afternoon. Demonstration activity can be expected to continue in the coming weeks, with another surge of actions scheduled for this weekend. On Friday, a pro-Palestine demonstration and vigil is planned in Melbourne at 6:30 pm at Fed Square. On Saturday, notable demonstrations in Europe will take place in Lisbon, Copenhagen, and at the Shannon Airport in Ireland.
- **Nationwide Strike Planned in Ghana Over Mining Practices:** Several labor unions in Ghana are calling for an indefinite [nationwide strike](#) against small-scale gold mining practices, known locally as galamsey, beginning on Thursday, October 10. Labor groups organized several days of protests against galamsey last week, with several hundred demonstrators [marching](#) in Accra. Galamsey opponents are demanding that the government better [regulate](#) the small-scale mining industry,

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as large-scale mining companies must already follow environmental regulations. If Thursday's strike goes ahead, a wide range of services in both the public and private sectors could be [impacted](#), including education, healthcare, transportation, and public services.

- **Nationwide March2Parliament Returns in Uganda:** Activists in Uganda are planning nationwide demonstrations on Wednesday, October 9, over a range of issues, including corruption, police brutality, and electoral reforms. Previous iterations of the March2Parliament protest campaign have [resulted](#) in government condemnation and a strong police response. In August, police [arrested](#) more than 40 people during a banned youth-led demonstration in Kampala. Wednesday's day of action comes amid recent [sanctions](#) by the U.S. against four Ugandan police officers accused of human rights violations. Uganda celebrates its Independence Day on October 9.
- **Opposing Demonstrations in Central London in Late October to Draw Large Crowds:** On Saturday, October 26, far-right activist Tommy Robinson is planning to lead a protest in central London. In response, several labor and civil society groups, including Stand Up to Racism, are organizing an opposing demonstration on the same date, with location details of both gatherings expected in the coming weeks. Robinson held a [similar event](#) in July that attracted thousands of supporters, a significant police presence, and counterdemonstrators. The late October demonstration comes after widespread rioting following the [Southport knife attack](#), and weeks of counterdemonstrations organized by Stand Up to Racism and its local chapters.
- **Other Activity the Global Intelligence Team Is Watching:** Disruptions to flights in Italy are possible this Friday due to [strikes](#) by airport and air navigation workers. ENAV air traffic control staff will strike for four hours at Palermo Airport (PMO) on October 11, with airline sector workers also [planning to strike](#) at Bari (BRI), Brindisi (BDS), Pisa (PSA), Milan Malpensa (MXP), and Milan Linate (LIN) airports. Major transportation unions in Argentina are [preparing for a nationwide strike](#) next Thursday, October 17, in support of labor rights and [against](#) policies imposed by the administration of President Javier Milei. Further information about the strike is expected to be finalized this Tuesday, with media reports [suggesting](#) that union organizers may move the strike to a different date.

Upcoming Events

- October 3-12: Navratri (Global)
- October 7: One-Year Anniversary of Israel-Hamas Conflict (Global)
- October 9: General Election (Mozambique)
- October 9-11: G7 Health Ministers' Meeting (Ancona, Italy)
- October 11-12: Yom Kippur (Global)
- October 12: Day of Indigenous Resistance (Chile)

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- October 13: First Round of Parliamentary Elections (Lithuania)
- October 13: Durga Puja (India, Bangladesh)
- October 16: EU-Gulf Cooperation Council Summit (Brussels, Belgium)
- October 20: Presidential Election, Referendum on EU Membership (Moldova)
- October 21-26: IMF and World Bank Annual Meetings (Washington DC)
- October 21 - November 1: United Nations Biodiversity Conference (Cali Colombia)