



April 7, 2025

Headlining This Week's Brief

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Top Stories

Over 20 Dead in U.S. Following Tornadoes and Historic Rainfall, River Flooding Persists

At least [20 people are dead](#) following a week of significant weather over the central United States. The death toll stands at 10 in Tennessee, three in Missouri, two in Kentucky, and one each in Indiana, Arkansas and Mississippi. Out of the [10 weather-related fatalities](#) in Tennessee, nine were caused by tornadoes and damaging winds across McNairy, Fayette, Obion, and Hardeman counties, while one was attributed to flooding in Carroll County. Three people in Missouri died due to storm-related incidents: a fire chief assisting a stranded motorist, a teenage firefighter killed in a crash while responding to a water rescue, and a man who exited a vehicle swept away by floodwaters. A powerful tornado near Lake City, Arkansas and widespread flooding across the rest of the state caused major destruction, power outages, and the death of a 5-year-old child in Little Rock.

Kentucky is among the states hit hardest by the ongoing flooding, with [Frankfort](#) experiencing some of the most severe impacts. In response to rising waters, Mayor Wilkerson enacted a citywide curfew that was in effect Sunday night through 6 am today. In Carroll County, a [mandatory evacuation](#) was ordered in some areas Sunday due to a planned water release from Dix Dam along the Kentucky River. More than 500 road closures have been reported across the state, and at least two lives have been lost. [Governor Andy Beshear](#) has stressed the gravity of the situation, ordering the closure of all state offices in Frankfort on Monday and calling on the public to conserve water due to supply limitations. With rivers yet to crest and conditions expected to worsen, officials continue to urge caution, cooperation, and community resilience.

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The Lower Ohio and Mississippi Valleys are still dealing with widespread and unusually [severe river flooding](#). Moderate flooding continues in some areas, and standing water is expected to [linger through midweek](#), hampering recovery efforts in the hardest-hit communities.

The central and eastern United States are expected to experience a brief reprieve from severe weather over the coming week as a trough in the jet stream ushers in cooler, more stable air; however, medium-range forecast models suggest a resurgence of severe weather between April 13 and 18.

South Korean President's Impeachment Upheld, Demonstrations Likely to Continue

On Friday, South Korea's Constitutional Court unanimously [voted](#) to remove President Yoon Suk Yeol from office for briefly imposing martial law on December 3, 2024. Since that date, South Korea has seen [social and political divisions deepen](#) amid near-daily demonstrations over Yoon's case. Despite fears of widespread violence and unrest and the presence of hundreds of thousands of demonstrators, the verdict was [received](#) peacefully. Subway services at Anguk Station, near the epicenter of the demonstrations, [resumed](#) after being suspended for the announcement; however, barriers remain in [place](#) around the Constitutional Court, impacting local businesses.

Demonstration activity is expected to continue, especially in Seoul, although it is likely to reduce in intensity from the highs seen during the impeachment process. The cabinet is expected to designate [June 3](#) as election day, and campaigning will begin in earnest over the coming weeks. Some of the main organizers behind both pro and anti-impeachment demonstrations have already begun [calling](#) for more demonstrations. Further complicating matters is Yoon's [criminal trial](#) for insurrection, which will formally begin on April 14 at the Seoul Central District Court. The process will likely result in further demonstrations, with the Candlelight Action already calling for Yoon to be re-arrested and for his party, the People Power Party, to be disbanded. The loss of presidential immunity means that Yoon may also face additional charges.

Trade Tensions Rise as U.S. Announces Wide-Ranging Tariffs

U.S. President Donald Trump's recently announced tariffs are having a significant impact on the global economy and mark the biggest change to global trade in decades. The U.S. announced a 10% tariff on all nations that went into effect on April 5, with rates as high as 50% on specific countries set to go into effect on April 9. More than 100 countries fall under the new tariffs, though the baseline rate does not [apply](#) to Canada and Mexico. Based on information released by the White House, the tariff rates were

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calculated to eliminate the U.S. goods trade deficit with each country and have prompted responses ranging from conciliatory to retaliatory.

In addition to the reciprocal tariffs, The Trump administration implemented an immediate 25% tariff on foreign-made automobiles, [resulting](#) in at least one temporary shutdown of an auto plant in Canada. The U.S. auto industry has already seen [disruptions](#) due to steel and aluminum tariffs as well as import duties specific to Canada and Mexico; a tariff on foreign car parts is expected to take effect on May 3. In the White House's [announcement](#) last Wednesday, goods that are not subject to the tariffs include copper, pharmaceuticals, semiconductors, lumber, and energy, along with other certain minerals. Still, drugmakers are [concerned](#) that future tariffs could target medicines, with Trump [warning](#) pharmaceutical manufacturing companies to relocate to the U.S. Most generic drugs in the U.S. are [imported](#), and while it is unclear how companies could respond to potential tariffs, they could disrupt drug supplies and increase healthcare costs.

In addition to the tariffs, the White House will [eliminate](#) the de minimis exemption for China and Hong Kong starting May 2, which [allowed](#) imported goods valued below \$800 to ship directly to U.S. consumers without tariffs. In 2024, the U.S. received approximately 1.36 billion shipments using the de minimis provision.

Climate and Natural Hazards

- **Atlantic Hurricane Season Outlook:** Colorado State University's first [outlook](#) for the 2025 Atlantic hurricane season predicts 17 named storms, nine hurricanes, and four major hurricanes this coming season, putting it above the 30-year average. The forecast suggests a borderline hyperactive season, driven by unusually warm ocean temperatures and the absence of El Niño conditions in the Pacific.
- **Floods Kill Dozens in Democratic Republic of Congo:** Heavy rains in Kinshasa on April 4–6, caused [severe flooding](#) and erosion, resulting in at least 33 deaths, dozens of injuries, over 200 homes flooded, and major disruptions to water supply and traffic. The [Ministry of Interior](#) coordinated a crisis response with various national agencies, deploying evacuation plans, intervention teams, and temporary shelters at four reception sites to assist affected families. Authorities also engaged the military, police, and transport services to aid in evacuations and relief efforts. The government has assured the public of continued support and humanitarian assistance.

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- **Eastern Brazil Slammed by Heavy Rain:** On Friday, parts of Rio received over [324mm](#) (12.7in) of rain, with additional showers observed over the weekend. At least [500 residents are displaced](#) in the state of Rio de Janeiro. Federal authorities have acknowledged an emergency in Angra dos Reis and Petrópolis.
- **U.K., Ireland Experience Increase in Wildfires as Drought Worsens:** After a wet winter, a relatively stagnant weather pattern since the end of February has led to prolonged dry and warm conditions over the United Kingdom and Ireland. The dry weather has led to an increase in wildfire activity across Wales and England, while farmers have reported noticeable [impacts to crops](#). There have been [286 wildfires](#) reported in the U.K. in 2025 – 100 more than over the same period in 2022. The fire service received [more than 700 calls](#) April 3-5 due to wildfires. Dry and above-average temperatures will continue through the week.
- **Other Severe Weather Events:** For a daily look at significant weather events around the world, read AlertMedia's [Daily Severe Weather Report](#).

Worldwide

- **China Conducts Large-Scale Military Drills Around Taiwan:** China completed two days of large-scale military drills around Taiwan, [codenamed](#) "Strait Thunder-2025A", [simulating blockades and strikes](#) on key infrastructure. The exercise involved 76 aircraft, 23 naval vessels, and live-fire drills in the East China Sea. Taiwan condemned the drills, while the United States and its allies expressed [concern](#) over China's escalating military pressure and [called](#) the actions "destabilizing." Beijing claimed the drills were a [response](#) to Taiwanese President Lai Ching-te's "separatist" stance, while propaganda depicted him as
- a "parasite." The exercises have been regarded as a possible rehearsal for a potential invasion. The U.S. reaffirmed support for Taiwan, condemning China's coercive tactics and calling for stability in the Taiwan Strait.
- **Netanyahu Visits Washington Amid Escalating Conflict and U.S.-Israel Tensions:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is [visiting](#) Washington, DC, today to meet with U.S. President Donald Trump to discuss Gaza, Iran, and recently announced U.S. tariffs on Israeli imports. The visit also comes amid reports that the U.S. has transferred an additional missile defense system to Israel, reflecting [concerns](#) over Iran and its nuclear program. Meanwhile, Israel has intensified its ground offensive in Gaza, [expanding control](#) to over 50% of the territory and [launching](#) a new "Morag Corridor" near Rafah. Recent [Israeli strikes](#) have caused dozens of fatalities, including reported casualties from strikes that impacted hospitals and schools. In [Syria](#), Israeli airstrikes killed at least nine and damaged the Hama airbase.

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- **New Report Details Rising Extortion Threat From Mexican Cartels:** In a new [report](#), security firm Global Guardian describes how cartels in Mexico have expanded both the “scope and size” of the businesses targeted for extortion, and that American firms may soon be next. In particular, the report notes that threats are proliferating in Nuevo Leon, Guanajuato, and Mexico City, in some cases [integrating](#) themselves in distribution networks to facilitate smuggling operations. In response to the continued threat posed by the cartels, Mexico has [built](#) an elite civilian investigative and special operations force known as the National Operations Unit (UNO). The move marks a significant shift away from the former administration’s [“hugs, not bullets”](#) strategy.
- **Dominican Republic Tightens Border Controls and Thousands Protest in Haiti as Gang Violence Continues:** The Dominican Republic [announced](#) additional security measures along its border with Haiti as groups within the country call for the [mass deportations](#) of Haitians. Within Haiti, violence is worsening. Gangs now control an estimated 90% of Port-au-Prince and have expanded their attacks to include [previously safe areas](#). They are now [threatening](#) Petion-Ville and one of the [only available routes](#) out of the city. Only 40% of an intended 2,500 members of the Multinational Security Support mission have been [deployed](#), and those that have arrived have failed to halt the gangs’ advance. In the face of public protests, transitional President Fritz Alphonse Jean [promised action](#) but gave few details.
- **Violence Across Costa Rica Continues to Increase:** Costa Rica’s President Rodrigo Chaves’ administration is [studying](#) El Salvador’s crackdown on violence as crime rates across the country continue to rise, including in [tourist areas](#). According to the University of Costa Rica’s Center for Research and Political Studies, public sentiment towards the current administration has steadily declined, with nearly half of the population [citing](#) security as their top concern. Homicide rates in 2024, while down slightly from 2023, were still the second-highest ever recorded, according to [InSight Crime](#). The violence is largely attributed to an increase in drug trafficking and organized crime.

Cyber and Regulatory

- **Travelers, Visa Holders Report Increased Scrutiny and Tighter Regulations in U.S.:** Amid an “enhanced vetting” campaign by the Trump administration, travelers, visa holders, and naturalized citizens are reporting increased scrutiny at U.S. border checkpoints. Travelers report [facing](#) more stringent security checks, including personal items like luggage, cell phones, and laptops. Legal immigrants and tourists have been [detained](#) or turned away, prompting some countries, including [Canada](#) and [Germany](#), to update their travel advice for the U.S. Tech companies are also reportedly [warning](#) visa-holding employees to refrain from traveling out of the country, while

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immigration law firms are advising clients to expect possible sudden changes to visa rules and increased probes into applicants' social media activity and political views.

- **U.S. Establishes New Entity to Promote Investments, Take Over CHIPS Act Oversight:** Last week, U.S. President Donald Trump [signed](#) an executive order establishing a new "Investment Accelerator." Among the first items tasked to the new entity is the [implementation](#) of the [Chips and Science Act](#). The office will be charged with "negotiating much better Chips Act deals than the previous administration," although it is unclear what aspects might be renegotiated.
- **Kuala Lumpur Airport Ransomware Attack Raises Concern for Critical Infrastructure Vulnerability:** Recovery efforts and investigations continue into the [cyberattack](#) that hit Malaysia's Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) last month. The attack caused [significant disruptions](#) and [involved](#) a ransom of \$10 million, which Malaysian Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim reportedly rejected. The incident follows a string of similar events in the region and has raised concerns surrounding the vulnerability of airports and other transportation hubs. Cybersecurity experts have warned that sluggish regulations and weak focus on cybersecurity efforts may allow cyber criminals to outpace entities. This is especially true as the number of critical infrastructure operators targeted by ransomware incidents continues to rise.
- **Travelers Warned of Scams Ahead of U.K. Travel Authorization Requirements:** Last week, the United Kingdom [imposed](#) an entry requirement for an electronic entry permit for all European visitors traveling to or transiting through the U.K.'s borders. Effective April 2, the digital Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA), which aims to streamline border processes and improve security, is required for travelers from around 30 European countries, excluding Ireland. The Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA) has [warned](#) travelers of fake websites and scams taking advantage of the confusion surrounding the ETA for U.K. visitors, as well as the upcoming European Travel Information and Authorization System (ETIAS) for U.K. travelers to Europe, which is not required until 2026.
- **U.S. Copyright Office Releases Second Part of AI Report:** The U.S. Copyright Office has [released](#) the second part of its Report on Copyright and Artificial Intelligence detailing the level of human involvement needed for AI-generated work to be eligible for copyright protection. The report concludes that existing legislation can address copyright issues concerning AI-generated work. It [emphasizes](#) that while an author's expressive contributions are eligible for protection, a significant degree of human control is necessary for the resulting output to qualify for copyright protection due to current technology constraints. The report also highlights that international

copyright standards are still evolving, though there is broad agreement on the necessity for global copyright protection of AI-generated works.

Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- **Trading Partners Respond to U.S. Tariff Rollout:** The European Union and other American allies have condemned the U.S.'s recently announced tariffs. The EU has promised to protect the bloc's businesses, including Germany's car industry. The U.K. government is taking measures to alleviate pressure on its auto industry by [reducing](#) fines for noncompliance with electric vehicle sales targets. The U.K. has also [published](#) a list of potential U.S. products that could be targeted with retaliatory tariffs. Countries in Asia have some of the highest tariff rates. India, which will see a 26% rate compared to 46% for Vietnam and 49% for Cambodia, will [pursue](#) a bilateral deal with the U.S. instead of retaliatory tariffs. Its pharmaceutical exports are exempt from the tariffs. China will impose a 34% retaliatory tariff on U.S. goods beginning April 10.
- **CK Hutchison Ports Deal Delay Signals Shift in Hong Kong Business Environment:** The sale of CK Hutchison's ports to a consortium led by BlackRock has been [delayed](#) after Chinese authorities [announced](#) an antitrust investigation into the deal. CK Hutchison is one of the largest conglomerates in Hong Kong, and the planned deal would give control over more than 40 ports in 23 countries to a group of U.S. investors led by BlackRock. Analysts claim political interference by China, as the sale [includes](#) stakes in two Panama ports that have been the focus of attention by both China and the U.S. China's investigation into the sale signals that other Hong Kong businesses could see increased intervention from the mainland, further jeopardizing Hong Kong's status as an international business hub.
- **Lawsuit Over Texas' Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer Highlights Rising Water Access Challenges:** The Texas cities of Bryan and College Station, along with Texas A&M University, are [suing](#) a local regulator over concerns that a \$1 billion water pipeline project for the city of Georgetown would drain their water supply. The city of Georgetown contracted with California-based Upwell Water to develop a pipeline that would import up to 89 gallons a day from the Carrizo-Wilcox Aquifer, a major aquifer that is located 80 miles east of the city. The Upwell pipeline for Georgetown is one of many water import projects planned in the state, with the lawsuit underscoring water supply challenges amid rapid population growth and a changing climate. The judge's ruling on whether the case can go ahead is expected in May.

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- **Mass Bee Deaths in U.S. Raise Concerns About Agricultural Production:** Beekeepers are [warning](#) of significant impacts to U.S. crop pollination due to large-scale losses. The nonprofit Project Apis m. [reported](#) “catastrophic honeybee colony losses” in a recent survey after U.S. commercial operators reported an average loss of 62% from June 2024 to February 2025. Researchers have not determined the cause of the mass deaths, but contributing factors include a lack of nutrition, parasites, and pathogens. Approximately 35% of the world’s food crops [depend](#) on animal pollinators. In response to the lack of pollinators, bee thefts are reportedly [increasing](#) in areas that produce almonds, which rely heavily on bees to pollinate the almond trees.
- **Austria, Slovakia Impose Border Restrictions Over Hungary’s Foot-and-Mouth Outbreak:** An outbreak of foot-and-mouth disease has [prompted](#) Austria to close dozens of its border crossings with Hungary and Slovakia. Slovakia is taking similar measures, increasing checks at its borders with Hungary and Austria and closing several crossings with Hungary and Austria for one month. The outbreak, which began in Hungary, has been [discovered](#) in six locations in Slovakia. Hungary has [deployed](#) its military to assist in containment efforts in a northwestern area bordering Slovakia and Austria. Disinfection measures at border crossings, including at Slovakia’s shared border crossings with Poland and Czechia, are reportedly leading to significant delays.

Health

- **Impacts of Layoffs at HHS Coming Into Focus:** A [recent reduction in force effort](#) at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is leading to wide-ranging impacts. Regulators at the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) said that they are [struggling](#) to meet congressionally- mandated deadlines to review medical devices and other products, potentially [costing](#) the U.S. its “first approver” advantage. HHS spokespeople have said that FDA inspectors were not impacted by the cuts, but at least one official has said that they will need to [reduce](#) the number of “surveillance inspections” the agency conducts. Additional expected [impacts](#) include [delayed](#) vaccine approvals, cuts to labs [inspecting](#) outbreaks of STDs and hepatitis, and the [elimination](#) of positions that administer a key vaccine advisory panel.
- **China Introducing New Food Safety Regulations:** China’s National Health Commission and the State Administration for Market Regulation [rolled out](#) 50 new standards and nine amendments to its food safety standards. Among the changes are a ban on the use of terms like “no additives” or “zero additives” and a requirement for manufacturers to highlight the inclusion of allergens like

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gluten, peanuts, and shellfish. Food nutrition labels will also get a makeover, with the introduction of digital labeling requirements and the inclusion of sugar and saturated fat content.

- **Colombia's Healthcare System Under Strain:** Many Colombians are [facing difficulties](#) accessing medicines and healthcare amid an ongoing dispute between the Colombian government and health insurers. Industry groups say that companies are in debt due to delays and insufficient transfers of government funds, while Colombian President Gustavo Petro claims the companies are deliberately sabotaging his reform efforts, which have [stalled](#). The state of the healthcare system and Petro's frustrated attempts at overhauling the system have resulted in [several mass demonstrations](#).
- **Mpox Outbreak Accelerates, Spreads to Tanzania:** The growth of mpox cases in Africa has [accelerated](#) in 2025, with the case count for the continent already nearing 50% of what it was for all of last year. The epicenter of the outbreak remains the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), along with Uganda and Burundi, although fighting in eastern DRC makes it difficult to get a full picture of the situation. Cases are also spreading geographically. After reporting its [first two cases](#) of mpox in March, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) [updated](#) its current level 2 travel health notice for Clade I mpox in central and eastern Africa to include Tanzania.
- **New Fatalities Reported in Measles, Bird Flu Outbreaks:** An eight-year-old girl has [died](#) as part of the ongoing measles outbreak in Texas, bringing the number of confirmed fatalities to two. Over [600 cases](#) of measles have been confirmed so far—the [vast majority](#) in Texas—alongside 74 hospitalizations. Should the outbreak continue at its current pace, the U.S. may lose its "elimination" status. The fatality in Texas was preceded by news of another death linked to a fast-evolving public health challenge. Officials in India [confirmed](#) that a girl in Andhra Pradesh had died from the H5N1 avian flu virus. Experts [are cautioning](#) that recent layoffs at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services will likely impact the country's ability to track and respond to the spread of both diseases.

Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- **Argentina Unions Launch General Strike:** Argentina's largest labor federation, the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), has scheduled its third general [strike](#) against President Javier Milei's administration for Wednesday, April 9, through Thursday, April 10. The action will disrupt [essential services](#) like public transport, [air travel](#), education, healthcare, banking, and waste

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collection. In connection with the strike action, a [demonstration](#) for retirees will take place on Wednesday near the National Congress. The strike and demonstrations come in response to the government's economic austerity measures, which include cuts to public spending, a wage freeze, and a halt on public works projects.

- **Environmental Groups Prepare Actions Ahead of Earth Day:** A “Global Climate Strike,” organized by [Fridays For Future](#) (FFF), is set to take place on Friday, April 11. The event aims to raise awareness about climate change, with organizers demanding government action to keep the global temperature rise below 1.5°C, among other climate issues. The strike will include protests and rallies around the world, with multiple events planned for Canada, Italy, Germany, and other locations. The following week, on April 19, climate groups in New York City will join with migrant rights organizations and hold a march from Bryant Park at 12 noon.
- **Greece Unions Announce Nationwide Strike Accompanied by Demonstrations:** On Wednesday, Greece will experience a 24-hour [nationwide strike](#) called by the country's two largest union federations, GSEE and ADEY. The strike will significantly disrupt services across key industries, including air travel, with air traffic controllers stating they will only handle emergency and specific flights during the strike period. Demonstrations are planned across major cities, including outside the Finance Ministry in Athens at Syntagma Square at 10 am, at the Venizelos Statue in Thessaloniki at 10 am, and near Georgiou Square in Patras at 10:30 am. Further actions in urban areas across the country are likely.
- **AIMPLB Announces Nationwide Demonstrations Against Waqf Amendment Bill:** The All India Muslim Personal Board (AIMPLB) is [calling](#) for nationwide demonstrations against the [Waqf \(Amendment\) Bill](#). Protests [took place](#) across the country last weekend following the bill's passage, with demonstrations reported in Kolkata, Chennai, and Ahmedabad. The AIMPLB [plans](#) to employ various forms of peaceful protest, including symbolic arrests, roundtable discussions, and press conferences, to challenge the legislation in the Supreme Court and demand its repeal. Several other groups have called their own demonstrations related to the legislation, including in [Karnataka](#), [Tamil Nadu](#), and [Kerala](#).
- **Hands Off Initiative Draws Significant Turnout Across U.S., 50501 Movement Calls for Additional Demonstrations:** On Saturday, the “[Hands Off](#)” call to action generated a large nationwide mobilization against U.S. President Donald Trump's administration. Demonstrations took place at more than 1,200 locations across all 50 states and were supported by around 150 groups, including civil rights organizations, labor unions, veterans' associations, and election advocacy groups. One of those groups, known as the 50501 movement, has [called](#) for new

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nationwide demonstrations over Easter weekend on Saturday, April 19. Previous demonstrations have remained peaceful, primarily causing traffic disruptions, although there is a risk of counterdemonstrations.

- **Türkiye Demonstrations Ongoing, Opposition Calls for Early Elections:** Demonstrations are likely to continue in urban areas across Türkiye in the coming weeks related to the high-profile [arrest](#) of the Istanbul Mayor Ekrem İmamoğlu, a prominent opposition figure and the main political rival to President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Opposition-led demonstrations are set to continue every Wednesday in a different Istanbul district and each weekend in a different province. Türkiye's police have clamped down on protests, with authorities [detaining](#) thousands of people. In related news, the leader of Türkiye's main opposition party [released](#) a statement calling for elections to be held in November, citing the widespread unrest and ongoing demonstrations across the country.

Upcoming Events

- April 9: Constitution Day (Kosovo)
- April 12: General Election (Gabon)
- April 12: Hanuman Jayanti (India)
- April 12-20: Passover (Global)
- April 13: Presidential Election Run-Off (Ecuador)
- April 13: EU Tariffs on U.S. Goods to Take Effect (Global)
- April 17: Maundy Thursday (Global)
- April 18: Good Friday (Global)
- April 20: Easter (Global)
- April 28: Federal Election (Canada)
- April 28: General Election (Trinidad and Tobago)
- April 30: General Election (Cayman Islands)
- May 1: Labor Day/May Day (Global)
- May 3: Federal Election (Australia)
- May 4: Presidential Election (Romania)
- May 11: Parliamentary Elections (Albania)
- May 12: General Election (Philippines)
- May 15: Nakba Day (Israel, West Bank, and Gaza)