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Top Stories

Thousands Evacuate Following Wildfires in Oregon, California

Wildfires in Central Oregon and Northern California forced thousands of residents to evacuate over the weekend as firefighters battled fast-growing blazes fueled by hot, dry conditions and exacerbated by a <u>heat wave</u> across the western U.S. this past weekend.

The <u>Flat Fire</u> near Sisters, Oregon (<u>map</u>), has grown to nearly 22,000 acres with 0% containment. Crews are battling difficult conditions under Red Flag Warnings and a Heat Advisory, with high temperatures and dry fuels driving intense fire behavior. Structural protection crews are defending homes directly threatened by the flames. Evacuations remain in place under the direction of the Deschutes and Jefferson County Sheriff's Offices. Damage assessments are ongoing, but at least four homes have been destroyed, with <u>827 near the fire perimeter</u>. Nearly <u>4,000 homes</u> are under evacuation alerts. Meanwhile, the <u>Pickett Fire</u> in Napa County, California, has burned 6,803 acres and is 11% contained at the time of this publication. Evacuation orders remain in effect for several zones. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District has issued an advisory for unhealthy smoke impacts across Napa, Sonoma, and Solano counties.

Through at least Tuesday, isolated <u>dry thunderstorms</u> could spark new fires, especially near the Oregon– Washington Cascades and interior northern California. <u>Red Flag Warnings</u> remain in effect. Warmer-than- average temperatures will persist across the interior Pacific Northwest through much of the week, keeping fire danger elevated.

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Trump Administration Ramps Up Visa Scrutiny for Applicants, Current Residents; Pauses Visas for Commercial Truck Drivers

The United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has <u>updated</u> its guidance for reviewing applications from individuals seeking to live or work in the country. Applicants will now be evaluated for involvement in "anti-American," antisemitic, or terrorist activity, and may also be subject to social media screenings. The change has <u>raised</u> concern and confusion among immigration lawyers and civil society groups over the lack of clarity or precedent around what constitutes "anti-Americanism." While USCIS did not define the term, it <u>pointed</u> to federal law that bars the naturalization of individuals who support totalitarian regimes or communism.

Separately, the Trump administration <u>announced</u> it is reviewing more than 55 million active visas for possible deportable violations. Potential "indicators of ineligibility" include visa overstays, criminal activity, support for terrorist organizations, or other activities considered threats to public safety. The administration also <u>temporarily paused</u> the issuance of work visas to foreign truck drivers. The move could have significant consequences for U.S. logistics, especially as the supply chain navigates an ongoing commercial trucker <u>shortage</u> that has been exacerbated by other administration <u>policies</u>. Authorities are reportedly <u>concerned</u> that low English language proficiency

Russia and Ukraine Trade Massive Drone Strikes, Disrupting Civilian Industry and Energy Supply Chains

Last Thursday, Russia <u>launched</u> 574 drones and 40 missiles into Ukraine in one of its largest attacks this year, killing at least one person and injuring 15 others. Notably, the attack <u>hit</u> an American electronics factory, Flex, in western Ukraine, injuring several workers, according to a <u>statement</u> from the company. In a statement to CNN, a Flex spokesperson <u>emphasized</u> that the company "does not produce, supply, or support any military equipment." Meanwhile, Ukraine carried out a <u>major drone attack</u> on Russia over the weekend, hitting the Ust-Luga fuel terminal and damaging the Kursk nuclear power plant, though radiation levels remain normal. The strikes are part of a Ukrainian campaign <u>targeting</u> Russia's energy sector, resulting in gasoline shortages and high prices in Russia. The campaign has impacted others in Europe – oil exports to Hungary and Slovakia were recently <u>disrupted</u> after a Ukrainian attack on Russia's Druzhba pipeline.

As the two countries trade drone strikes, negotiations have stalled since last week's diplomatic flurry. U.S. President Donald Trump <u>extended a deadline</u> for Russia to take steps towards a peace deal by another two weeks, and despite hinting at a bilateral Ukraine-Russia meeting, there are <u>limited signs</u> that such a

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meeting will happen in the near future. The Vice-President of the European Commission denounced proposed Ukrainian land concessions as part of the recent peace negotiations, calling them a "trap" orchestrated by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Of the many hurdles in the peace negotiations, the future of Ukraine's eastern **Donbas** region is expected to remain a major point of contention.

Climate and Natural Hazards

- Southeast Asia Hit by Strong Typhoon: Typhoon Kajiki struck Vietnam's north-central coast as a Category Two hurricane equivalent on Monday, bringing torrential rain, widespread wind damage, and major air travel disruptions. Preliminary damage accounts include power outages, flooding, and reports of at least one death. Over 30,000 people were evacuated ahead of the storm, and over 100,000 soldiers and paramilitary personnel are engaged in rescue and relief efforts. Looking ahead, the storms' remnants will pose major flood and landslide hazards over central interior Vietnam, Laos, and northern Thailand through mid-week. Medium-range forecast models also signal the potential for a second, weaker tropical disturbance to threaten Vietnam between August 29 and September 1. If this threat materializes, it will compound the threat of flooding and landslides.
- Atlantic Tropics Relatively Quiet for Now: In the wake of Erin, Tropical Storm Fernan is quietly recurving out to sea while a weak disturbance in the Caribbean Sea falls apart. There are no significant indications of development over the next five days. In the extended range, the tail-end of a stalling cold front could produce disorganized shower and thunderstorm activity worth monitoring near the Georgia and Carolina coasts between September 1-3.
- Pattern Shift in Western Europe: Recent weeks brought extreme heat and drought-driven wildfires across Portugal, Spain, and parts of France, contributing to one of Europe's worst wildfire seasons in decades. A jet stream shift will bring a temporary cooldown from Wednesday to Friday, with another push of cooler air possible Sunday into Monday. This shift may not be enough to fully end a recent fire outbreak, but it may alleviate strains on containment. Southern France, Switzerland, and northern Italy face a sharper contrast; heavy rain between Wednesday and Friday could ease fire risks but also trigger flash floods and landslides, with some models suggesting over 100 mm (4 in) of rain in spots.
- Taste of Autumn for Central and Eastern U.S.: Through Friday, the eastern two-thirds of the U.S. will experience its first sustained stretch of cooler weather as meteorological fall approaches on September 1. Behind a sweeping cold front, afternoon highs will generally run 5-10°F below average, with some areas dipping 10-20°F below normal. Widespread highs in the 60s and 70s

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are expected across the northern Plains, Great Lakes, and New England, with 70s reaching as far south as the southern Appalachians.

Worldwide

- China's Appetite for Gold Supports Illegal Mining Around the World: The Chinese government's <u>push</u> to broaden the use of the yuan as an international currency and desire to reduce reliance on the U.S. dollar are driving the country's <u>growing support</u> for illegal gold mining operations across the developing world. While Chinese mining interests play a more direct role in some cases (such as in Indonesia) than others (<u>Ghana</u>), the impact has been widely detrimental. This is especially true of the environmental consequences, with pollution reported in <u>Bolivia</u>, <u>Ghana</u>, and almost anywhere gold is mined illegally at scale, in some cases driving <u>demonstrations</u>. China's <u>appetite</u> for gold is also contributing to a <u>broader surge</u> in gold prices, which is accused of inspiring growing interest in illegal mining at the artisanal level, impacting everything from <u>investment</u> strategy to the manufacture of certain <u>electronics</u>.
- Violence, Scrutiny Targeting Muslims in India Worsens Following April 2025 Terror Attack: Human rights groups are accusing India of orchestrating an "increasingly arbitrary campaign of fear against Muslims" that has worsened since an April 2025 terror attack that Indian officials have attributed to Pakistani extremists. An intensified immigration status verification campaign has reportedly targeted for deportation millions of undocumented Bangladeshi immigrants who officials believe reside in India. However, the campaign is also impacting communities of Indian nationals, many of whom are scrutinized for speaking Bengali—the official language of India's West Bengal state—or other perceived signs of "foreignness". Hate crimes targeting Muslims also surged across India following the April 2025 attack, adding another dimension to the challenges India's Muslim communities face under the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party.
- Haiti's Persistent Security, Corruption Challenges Likely to Undermine November Vote: With Haiti preparing to hold its first general election since 2016 on November 15, 2025, concerns surrounding the country's historically weak governance, persistent security challenges, and accusations of corruption appear likely to force further delays, potentially into 2026 or beyond. The inauguration of Laurent Saint- Cyr as president during the transitional phase ahead of the vote angered the country's powerful gang leaders due to Saint-Cyr's openness to further international security interventions. Meanwhile, Fritz Alphonse Jean, the leader of the country's transitional council, claims that the council's recent support of a controversial port deal was expressed under duress, raising questions about pervasive ongoing corruption. These challenges suggest the country will not be equipped to hold free and fair elections in November as planned.

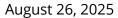
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- Congo Peace Talks Fail as Rampant Human Rights Abuses, Violence Continue: The latest efforts to establish a lasting peace between the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Rwanda-backed militant group M23 appear to have failed, raising concerns about the potential for further violence and destabilization in the region, an important source of various metals and other minerals. More than 300 people were killed in the area by M23 between July 9 and 21 alone, with observers warning that Rwanda's continued support of and control over the M23 will likely continue fueling the conflict. As M23 intensifies its assault, a separate rebel group, the Allied Democratic Forces, has launched attacks in North Kivu, highlighting the complex nature of the situation in DRC and the need for further multi-party engagement.
- Trump Administration Planning Deployment of National Guard to Chicago, Other Cities:
 The Trump administration has been working on plans to deploy thousands of National Guard members to Chicago as soon as September. The possible deployment comes after the mobilization of troops to Washington, D.C., earlier this month to combat what the administration has said is high crime and homelessness, although authorities have also been making immigration-related arrests. National Guard members have also been authorized to carry service weapons while patrolling in the capital; whether this is part of the planned deployment to Chicago remains unclear. In addition to Chicago, the president has flagged potential deployments to Baltimore and New York City.

Cyber and Regulatory

- Al-Driven Threats Reshaping Corporate Security: Cybercriminals are using Al-generated deepfakes to impersonate corporate executives with increasing frequency, underpinning a broader rise in targeted attacks. Several high-profile incidents have prompted major corporations to expand their security budgets. In 2024 alone, the U.S. saw more than 105,000 deepfake-related attacks—roughly one every five minutes—though experts believe the true figure is higher. One study found Al agents are now considered the leading cybersecurity threat, with only 21% of security leaders reporting full visibility into Al tool use and more than 50% estimating that up to half of their Al agents are unmanaged. Reported increases in cyberattacks may reflect better detection and reporting, yet Al's rapid development amplifies perceived risks, with future trajectories shaped by advances in detection or new regulatory frameworks.
- **FBI, Researchers Warn of Increased Cyber Threats From State-Backed Adversaries:** The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) is **warning** that Russian government-backed hackers are targeting U.S. critical infrastructure after detecting breaches on thousands of networking devices used by various entities across the country. At the same time, a new **report** highlights the





- growing cyber threat from another <u>nation-state adversary</u>— Iran. Once considered a less sophisticated threat actor, Iranian groups have bolstered their capabilities and are now increasingly focused on sectors such as healthcare, finance, telecoms, and government, using data theft and destructive malware to advance espionage and destabilization campaigns.
- Details Emerging on Recent Data Breach of U.S. Federal Court Systems: Details are emerging about a sweeping cyberattack on the federal judiciary's electronic filing systems that occurred in early July. Authorities fear that the attack potentially exposed sensitive information, including the identities of confidential informants and arrests, and search warrants. The breach was linked to Russian hackers, and officials are concerned that Latin American drug cartels may have gained access to information regarding witnesses involved in cases against them. Federal courts nationwide remain hampered, with many reverting to paper filings as investigators assess the scope of the damage. Security flaws dating back years appear to have enabled the intrusion, raising questions about longstanding vulnerabilities.
- Thailand Pilots Crypto-to-Baht Conversion Program to Boost Tourism: Thailand is <u>piloting</u> a new digital asset conversion program, which will allow foreign visitors to convert cryptocurrencies into Thai baht for local spending. TouristDigiPay, an 18-month trial program launching in the fourth quarter of 2025, operates through licensed digital asset platforms and emoney service providers. Tourists convert cryptocurrency into baht, which is then transferred to an e-wallet. Tourists can then use this e-wallet for payment, with merchants receiving only local currency. Spending through the program is capped at 500,000 baht per month. The program aims to boost tourism amid a recent decline in travel to the country, especially from Chinese visitors, who have stayed away over safety concerns after a Chinese actor was <u>kidnapped</u> near the Thailand-Myanmar border to work in a scam compound.
- Roblox Facing Growing Scrutiny Over Child Safety: Roblox is facing increasing scrutiny over child safety, including lawsuits and public criticism over allegations that the company has not adequately safeguarded children from sexual exploitation. Louisiana's attorney general filed a child protection lawsuit against Roblox last week, alleging it failed to implement adequate safeguards, such as age verification, to prevent predators from contacting and grooming children on the platform. Roblox— which has more than 100 million active users, many of whom are under the age of 18—has faced growing criticism that predators exploit the platform. Roblox recently announced new safety features and plans to launch an AI system to detect sexually exploitive language or early signs of child endangerment.

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Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- Major Exporters Freeze Postal Service to United States: By August 26, Austria, Denmark, France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, and Sweden in Europe, as well as India, will freeze postal service to the United States for packages valued at over €85 (~U.S.\$100). The move follows a U.S. decision to end the de minimis tax exemption for certain imports valued at under U.S.\$800, which the Trump administration considers to be abused by foreign exporters. The lack of clarity on the terms of the policy is forcing European postmasters to pause service to avoid parcel delays, unpaid taxes, and other potential consequences for European parties. The freeze is expected to remain in place until further details on new U.S. import polices emerge, and is expected to have an especially heavy impact on small businesses that export low-value goods to the U.S.
- U.S. Tariff on Steel and Aluminum Expanded to Cover Over 400 Further Products: As of
 Monday, August 18, the 50% tariff imposed by the Trump administration on certain steel and
 aluminum imports has been expanded to cover more than 400 additional types of goods,
 including auto parts, furniture, household appliances, and various other components and
 finished products. While the decision was reportedly taken to close off "avenues for
 circumvention" of the tariffs, the expanded list will mean that most imports "remotely related to
 steel or aluminum" will face the tariff, creating steep cost increases for both commercial interests
 (such as manufacturers reliant on steel or aluminum inputs) and consumers, who will shoulder
 the brunt of the burden.
- Smelting Accident Highlights Potential Consequences of Workplace Safety Deregulation: Amid parallel pushes for the deregulation of the workplace and an increase in U.S. manufacturing activity, a fatal industrial accident at a U.S. Steel plant in Clairton, Pennsylvania, is shining a spotlight on the potential consequences of insufficient maintenance and other workplace safety failures. U.S. Steel has been accused of neglecting its maintenance responsibilities at Clairton, a problem that could become more common without protections covering employees performing dangerous tasks. The Trump administration's plans to limit the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) power to punish employers for "inherently risky professional activities" associated with their industry—though currently appearing limited to the entertainment industry—could eventually open the door for employers in other sectors to "throw safety to the wind," according to a former OSHA chief.
- Vietnam Launches Massive Infrastructure Investment Campaign: Vietnamese authorities will invest more than 10% of the country's 2024 GDP into a slate of <u>250 projects</u> addressing housing and infrastructure needs, including public transport and research facilities. The massive push

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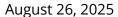


seeks to "stimulate the economy and shift from a reliance on exports," and is meant to set the country on the path to achieve GDP growth of 8% this year (up from just over 7% in 2024). The Vietnamese economy's export orientation has historically left growth and development reliant on external conditions and foreign direct investment, contributing to volatility that is likely to worsen with the United States imposing a 20% tariff on imports from the country.

• Move to Raise Palm Oil Content in Biodiesel Likely to Impact Indonesian Fuel and Cooking Oil Costs, Global Supply: The Indonesian government's continued push to raise the palm oil content in biodiesel from 40% to 50% could help the country reduce its reliance on imported fuels, but will likely increase costs for local consumers, and could reduce exports from the world's largest producer. The increase in domestic consumption could ultimately drive up prices for the world's most widely-consumed cooking oil, while also making biodiesel more costly for local consumers as well, with rising palm oil costs compounding those price increases. More lucrative opportunities in the sector could also inspire the expansion of illegal plantations, which often result in deforestation.

Health

- ECDC Warns of "New Normal" as Mosquito-Borne Illnesses Proliferate: Officials in Europe say that the continent could be entering into a "new normal" featuring "longer, more widespread, and more intense transmission" of mosquito-borne diseases after observing record-breaking numbers of chikungunya and West Nile virus this year. The warning comes after the World Health Organization issued an alert in July on the risks of a major chikungunya epidemic if preventative measures weren't taken. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) notes that the mosquito that can spread chikungunya, Aedes albopictus, is now established in 16 countries and 369 regions, triple the number from a decade ago. Scientists have attributed the rise to increasing temperatures and changing rainfall patterns.
- Texas Declares End to Measles Outbreak as Cases Spread Elsewhere: The Texas Department of State Health Services declared an official end to the measles outbreak in West Texas that touched off one of the worst years for measles in recent U.S. history. Despite the end of the West Texas outbreak, several other states continue to report cases, including Colorado, Montana, and New Jersey, where officials have issued warnings that people with measles have frequented busy transit hubs. As the virus continues to spread in the United States, it's taken an even greater toll on the Mexican state of Chihuahua, which has reported 14 deaths and 3,932 confirmed cases, along with an additional 5,479 suspected cases. Outside of North America, Israel, where





vaccination rates in some communities are also low, has reported over 500 cases and at least two deaths.

- Medical Groups Break With CDC on Vaccine Guidance: A growing <u>number of organizations</u> are breaking with the U.S. government's official COVID-19 vaccine policy, raising questions around insurance coverage and <u>legal liability</u> for healthcare practitioners. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) <u>recommended</u> that children between 6 months and 23 months receive the vaccine, <u>differing</u> from guidance put out by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Similarly, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) issued a <u>statement</u> expressing continued support for COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy. The conflicting guidance may <u>complicate insurance coverage</u> for those who want updated booster shots but do not belong to a "high-risk group." Meanwhile, COVID-19 continues its <u>steady upward trend</u>, with models suggesting that cases are "likely growing" or "growing" in all U.S. states.
- Officials Identify First Human Case of Screwworm in U.S.: Maryland <u>identified</u> the first U.S. case of New World screwworm in a person who had recently been in Guatemala. Screwworms—parasitic flies that lay eggs in wounds on warm-blooded animals—are a particular threat to the livestock industry, since the wounds can kill their host if left untreated. The U.S., which had already halted beef imports from Mexico, <u>announced</u> plans to build a new sterile fly facility in Edinburg, TX, to fight screwworm; however, it likely won't be operational for at least two years. Another facility in Mexico may open next year. The CDC and U.S. Department of Agriculture are facing criticism for a lack of transparency and urgency to halt the spread.
- Other Stories the Global Intelligence Team Is Monitoring: The World Health Organization (WHO) is reporting an outbreak of vaccine-derived poliovirus type 1 in Israel. It is currently circulating in under- vaccinated communities, posing a risk for further spread. In New York City's Harlem neighborhood, Legionnaires' disease continues to spread, with 112 confirmed cases and six deaths recorded so far. Officials expect that rising temperatures will make cases of Legionnaires' more plentiful and expand the range of Legionella bacteria. Officials in California reported a case of plague, likely contracted via a flea bite while camping in the South Lake Tahoe area. And in Colombia, a health crisis stemming from delays in government payments to insurers is accelerating, overwhelming emergency rooms and forcing some to close.

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Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- Nationwide Anti-Trump Protests Set for Labor Day: On Monday, September 1, the group 50501 will hold demonstrations against President Donald Trump's policies under the banner "Workers Over Billionaires" across the U.S. Organizers have claimed that over 800 actions are planned. While exact turnout is difficult to gauge, it's likely that large metros will see participation in the thousands, with turnout likely to be amplified following the controversial federalization of the Washington, DC Metropolitan Police Department and the deployment of the National Guard. In the capital, the group Free DC is planning a march from Dupont Circle on Thursday, August 28, although no actions are planned for Labor Day. While past days of action have been primarily nonviolent, some have featured arrests, counterdemonstrations, clashes, and car rammings.
- Jakarta Workers to Stage Massive HOSTUM Demonstration: On Thursday, August 28, thousands of workers across Indonesia, led by the KSPI and Labor Party, will protest under the banner "HOSTUM" (Eliminate Outsourcing, Reject Low Wages). In Greater Jakarta, 10,000 workers from Jabodetabek, Karawang, and Banten will rally at the House of Representatives and State Palace. They are demanding a 2026 minimum wage hike of 8.5% to 10.5%, an end to layoffs, labor tax reforms (including a Rp7,500,000 non-taxable income threshold), new employment and anti-corruption laws, and changes to the electoral system ahead of the 2029 presidential elections. Similar demonstrations on August 25 resulted in significant clashes and transport disruptions in central Jakarta.
- Demonstrations Over Immigration in Australia, United Kingdom: Australia's largest cities will see demonstrations against immigration this coming Sunday, with viral social media posts promoting gatherings under the slogan "March for Australia." Activist groups have been quick to organize counterdemonstrations against the marches, with opposing actions planned in Melbourne, Perth, and Sydney. The "March for Australia" posts, which encourage people to "take our country back" and "defend our culture," echo the rhetoric of ongoing demonstrations against immigration in the United Kingdom. The AlertMedia team tracked forty such actions in the U.K. over August 22-24, with a similar number of demonstrations and counterdemonstrations expected this coming weekend.
- Serbian Student Demonstrations Poised to Extend Disruptions Into New School Year: Next Monday, September 1, will mark 10 months since the collapse of a train station canopy in Novi Sad, Serbia, touched off a nationwide protest movement. It also marks the start of the school year for elementary and high school students, the latter of which have been involved in the blockades

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that have disrupted classes since late last year. While specifics about next Monday's action plans remain vague, widespread demonstration activity is expected, with tactics likely to include road blockades and rallies near schools, government buildings, and public spaces. Before then, students in Belgrade are organizing a demonstration at the **Peta Beogradska Gimnazija** (Fifth Belgrade High School) this Wednesday evening. Next Monday's expected demonstrations come as **clashes** between police and demonstrators have increased.

• France Faces Threat of a Shutdown on September 10 Over Government Budget: France is bracing for a general strike and nationwide demonstrations after the summer holiday as a coalition of unions, political parties, and civil society organizations plans to protest government austerity measures. Strikes on September 10 will impact a range of sectors, including transportation, healthcare, and energy, with more details expected to be announced after an inter-union meeting next Monday. Some organizers for September 10 have drawn comparisons to the Yellow Vest movement that saw significant disruptions from road blockades, with several former Yellow Vest members circulating calls to action.

Upcoming Events

- August 25: U.S.-ROK Summit (United States)
- August 25: Day of Songun (North Korea)
- August 26: Latin America Climate Summit (São Paulo, Brazil)
- August 29: Constitutional Court Ruling for Removal of Paetongtarn Shinawatra (Thailand)
- August 29: U.S. Suspends De Minimis Exemption (Global)
- August 30: Victory Day (Türkiye)
- August 31: National Day (Malaysia)
- September 1: Labor Day (United States)
- September 1: Nationwide Demonstrations
 Against Trump Administration (United States)
- September 1: General Elections (Guyana)
- September 2: Independence Day (Vietnam)
- September 3: General Elections (Jamaica)
- September 4-5: Mawlid (Global) Dates may vary

- September 8: Parliamentary Elections (Norway)
- September 9: Opening of UN General Assembly (New York City, NY)
- September 10: Nationwide Demonstrations (France)
- September 14: Legislative Elections (Macau)
- September 15-20: Parliamentary Elections (Syria)
- September 16: General Elections (Malawi)
- September 17: U.S. Federal Reserve Announces Next Interest Rate Decision (Global)
- September 22-30: UN General Assembly High