



November 24, 2025

## Headlining This Week's Brief

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### Top Stories

#### **Severe Thunderstorms Across the South-Central U.S. Today Could Spawn Some Tornadoes**

The **Storm Prediction Center** has highlighted the region from Central Texas through Mississippi as a Level 2 of 5 Risk for Severe Thunderstorms today, though a localized upgrade appears possible before storms peak in intensity. A broken line of strong thunderstorms oriented from the northeast to the southwest will move across the region from this afternoon through late tonight. As this line tracks eastwards, atmospheric conditions will be favorable for thunderstorms capable of producing damaging winds, hail, flash flooding, and a few tornadoes (some potentially strong) from Austin, Waco, and Houston, Texas, through Shreveport and Alexandria, Louisiana and Jackson, Mississippi. The National Weather Service may issue a Severe Thunderstorm and/or Tornado Watch during the period and will likely issue several Severe Thunderstorm and Tornado Warnings. Nocturnal severe thunderstorm events can be particularly dangerous as residents often have less lead time to take shelter. It will be extremely important for residents in the region to have a way to receive weather warnings, even while sleeping.

#### **What Comes Next After Pakistan Hands Army Chief More Power?**

Pakistan's **controversial 27th Amendment**, which would increase the power of the legislature and the military at the expense of the judiciary, has attracted significant **domestic** and **international** pushback. Coming at a critical time for a government under even greater pressure from **terror threats, domestic unrest, friction** with neighbors India and Afghanistan, and various other challenges, the move to grant

various new powers to **Field Marshal Asim Munir** could pave the way to more decisive action on security issues, at the expense of democratic backsliding. Despite the potential upsides of more robust security efforts, concerns are growing that Munir might **now command** “at least as much influence over the other branches of the military as was previously wielded in Pakistan by outright military dictators.”

Observers are now concerned that Asif’s “**hard-line**” approach, especially regarding neighbors India and **Afghanistan**, could see more targeted operations against groups operating out of Afghanistan like Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan expanding into broader conflicts, or kinetic responses to future flare-ups with Indian officials. However, at a time when opponents like former Prime Minister (and Munir’s former boss) Imran Khan **remain popular** and potentially lucrative trade opportunities with the U.S. **could hinge on peace** in the region, the Field Marshal is more likely to exercise restraint.

## **U.S., Ukraine Draft New Peace Proposal as Russia Accused of Further European Sabotage**

American and Ukrainian officials have **produced** a draft of a 19-point peace plan that leaves several of the most contentious issues—including territorial concessions by Ukraine and Kyiv’s potential future NATO membership—unresolved. While incomplete, the draft should at least alleviate some of the pressure on Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to agree to an earlier, **28-point plan** drafted by Russian and U.S. officials that U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio allegedly **referred** to as Moscow’s “wish list.” The new draft now heads to U.S. President Donald Trump and Zelenskyy for further discussions; however, even if it were to gain Trump’s imprimatur, which is not a given, it remains unlikely that both Russia and Ukraine will sign off anything that the other deems acceptable at this stage.

As Russia seeks to press its advantages in Ukraine, it appears to also be ramping up hybrid attacks and sabotage in Europe. Poland is **deploying** 10,000 troops to secure its infrastructure after an **explosion** damaged a rail line used to transport supplies to Ukraine. Warsaw has **pointed the finger** at Russia, although Moscow has denied any involvement. However, the incident in Poland fits a pattern of **escalating suspected Russian attacks** that analysts say are meant to influence public opinion and impose costs for supporting Ukraine. While most prevalent along NATO’s eastern flank, the pressure campaign has also extended to other areas, including the waters off the U.K. Over the weekend, the Royal Navy **intercepted** two Russian warships in English Channel after earlier accusing a **suspected Russian spy ship** off the coast of Scotland of firing lasers at RAF pilots.

## Climate and Natural Hazards

- **Northern U.S. may Observe Blizzard Conditions:** The National Weather Service has already issued **Winter Storm Watches** across North Dakota, Minnesota, northern Wisconsin, and northern Michigan ahead of a winter storm expected between Tuesday and Wednesday night. The storm system is expected to produce a swath of 6 to 12 inch snowfall amounts from central Minnesota (north of Minneapolis), through northern Wisconsin and northern Michigan. In addition, wind gusts up to 40 mph could lead to blizzard conditions at times. Heavy snow and low visibility will make travel conditions difficult to locally dangerous, especially in areas around Duluth, Minnesota, Ashland, Wisconsin, and Houghton, Michigan.
- **Tropical Cyclone Fina Makes Landfall in Western Australia:** Tropical Cyclone Fina (**satellite**) made **landfall** late Monday over northern Western Australia, near the Berkeley River Mouth. Since Fina remained strong over the warm waters of the Joseph Bonaparte Gulf, the system will pose a significant damaging wind threat and a high risk for flooding through Tuesday before weakening. Officials are urging residents in the path of the storm to shelter indoors. Those within the region may experience scattered to widespread power outages and difficult travel conditions as some major roads and highways could become impassable.
- **Renewed Flood Threat Across Southern Europe:** An active weather pattern across southern Europe this week will drive an elevated flood threat across multiple countries, including France, Italy, Greece, and many Balkan nations. The risk for substantial flooding between Slovenia and Albania is particularly high considering the heavy rain the region just faced last week. Greece will be the main area to watch during the end of the week as another storm system develops over the area.
- **New Orleans Ranked Last in Climate Preparedness:** A global study of over 400 cities has found that New Orleans is the least prepared for future climate and environmental changes. The study, conducted by First Street, a group that researches risk associated with climate change, **compared** economic resilience measures with climate-related threats. Major indicators that brought New Orleans to the bottom of the rankings include its dwindling population, high insurance costs, and overall flood, heat, and hurricane risk.
- **Hurricane Melissa Achieves Wind Record:** NOAA Hurricane Hunter airplanes drop weather measuring instruments dropsondes into hurricanes in order to collect real-time atmospheric data. As Melissa was approaching Jamaica last month, a dropsonde recorded a wind gust of 252 mph, the **highest ever measured in a hurricane**. The previous record was 248 mph by Typhoon Megi in the Western Pacific in 2010.

## Worldwide

- **China-Japan Spat Could Grow Into Territorial Conflict:** Following **comments** by Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi suggesting that Japan could intervene in the event of a conflict between China and Taiwan, relations between the two countries have cooled significantly, impacting **foreign policy, business, and cultural exchanges**. The **row** has raised concerns of a “**drawn-out crisis**” that expands to encompass more longstanding issues, such as the Senkaku (Diaoyu) Islands dispute, which could in turn create longer-lasting, more impactful consequences for bilateral relations. China’s move to **patrol the island chain**, coupled with Takaichi early announced **focus on defense**, increases the likelihood of a military miscalculation or open conflict in East Asia.
- **U.S. Peace Plan for Israel and Gaza Gains UN Backing, but Challenges Remain:** The United Nations Security Council **approved** the Trump administration’s 20-point “Peace to Prosperity” Israel-Gaza **ceasefire plan**, allowing “an international stabilization force to provide security in Gaza,” authorizing the deployment of a “**temporary international force**,” and providing a potential pathway to a future Palestinian state. The vote is an important step toward a more durable peace between Israel and Hamas, although it comes amid a series of recent **strikes in Lebanon**. While Israel **reportedly** does not plan to escalate further, further **violations** of the ceasefires with both Hamas and Hezbollah could threaten the prospects of the overall peace plan. It also **remains unlikely** that the Israeli government would accept the possibility of a Palestinian state as is laid out in point 19 of **the plan**.
- **U.S. Could Designate Muslim Brotherhood as Terror Organization:** The Muslim Brotherhood, a multinational Islamist political movement that is banned in several Arab countries, could face an increase in pressure if U.S. President Donald Trump goes forward with **purported threats** to designate the group a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). The move, following **earlier efforts** along similar lines in Congress, could enable the U.S. government to devote significant resources toward combating the group’s presence and influence. The organization retains significant support in many countries, even **where it is outlawed**, suggesting that bans and efforts to dissolve the group will force it underground, raising the likelihood of **radicalization** or more-direct anti-state action. Despite the potential for more direct U.S. involvement, the group’s decentralized nature at the international level and **fracturing of affiliates** at the national level will make it more difficult to combat in the event of an FTO designation.
- **U.S.-Mexico Tensions Rise Over Cartel Threat:** U.S. President Donald Trump’s **support** for strikes in Mexico to curb drug trafficking prompted an immediate response from Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum, who **firmly** ruled out any possibility of U.S. military intervention.

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Her comments come as Mexico faces intensifying cartel violence, with Sheinbaum confirming that the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG) was responsible for **recent** armed attacks against the Mexican Army personnel at highway checkpoints in Michoacán. These assaults appear linked to federal operations under the newly launched “Michoacán Plan,” which seeks to contain and isolate the criminal group. Simultaneously, broader insecurity **persists** across the country, and the youth-led “Generation Z” movement is reportedly planning nationwide demonstrations over insecurity in mid-December.

- **France Pushes EU Sanctions Fight Against Drug-Linked Organized Crime:** France is **urging** the European Union to adopt a new sanctions regime targeting transnational criminal organizations linked to arms trading, drug trafficking, migrant smuggling, and money laundering. Following a tour of Latin America, French Foreign Minister Jean-Noël Barrot **warned** that the EU Foreign Affairs Council that the flow of narcotics into Europe is increasing, and that the EU must disrupt cartel finances through asset freezes and travel bans. The push comes amid rising violence in France, including the murder of a prominent anti-drug activist’s brother in Marseille. Barrot hopes the measures will gain enough support among EU members to eventually formalize a Europe-wide strategy for combatting intercontinental drug trafficking criminal networks.

## Cyber and Regulatory

- **Red Sea Instability Delays Major Cable Projects:** Major subsea cable projects by Google and Meta **remain** stalled in the Red Sea due to security, regulatory, and geopolitical risks, slowing planned global connectivity upgrades. Delays in the critical corridor can degrade **internet** speeds and resilience across the Middle East, including the UAE. The unfinished southern Red Sea segments of Meta’s **2Africa** and Google’s **Blue-Raman** cables join several other delayed systems, bottlenecking one of the world’s **most important** data routes. The Red Sea historically provides the fastest link between Europe, Africa, and Asia, but conflict, missile attacks, and complex permit negotiations now impede cable-laying ships. Rerouted traffic increases **latency**, reduces speeds, and **raises** costs for operators who must buy temporary capacity elsewhere. Future overland alternatives through Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, or Iraq could ease pressure, but regional instability or sudden shifts in access permissions could significantly alter timelines.
- **Trump Administration Weighs Override of State AI Laws:** The White House has **paused**, but is still considering, a sweeping executive order that would **challenge** state AI laws and threaten federal broadband funding in a bid to impose a single national AI standard. The move would dramatically shift regulatory power from states to the federal government, shaping how AI is governed nationwide. The draft order would create an “AI Litigation Task Force” to sue states,

arguing their AI laws obstruct interstate commerce or conflict with federal rules, and would empower the Commerce Department to withhold access to the \$42B BEAD **broadband program** from states with contested AI regulations. Major AI industry players strongly favor federal preemption, while state leaders from both parties have opposed losing regulatory authority. The order is not finalized, and bipartisan pushback or congressional negotiations could significantly alter or derail the proposal.

- **Cloudflare Outage Causes Widespread Internet Disruptions:** On November 18, Cloudflare's network experienced **significant failures** to deliver core network traffic, resulting in Internet users receiving error messages while trying to access a significant portion of the web, including OpenAI, Google, YouTube, and X (formerly Twitter). The outage stemmed from a change to a Cloudflare database system permission, which doubled the size of a file that was then propagated to all the machines in Cloudflare's network. Cloudflare initially investigated the incident as a **DDoS attack**, but identified the correct issue and resumed normal functions in approximately three hours. The outage at Cloudflare comes less than a month after **outages** at other cloud service operators, including Microsoft's Azure and Amazon's AWS. Collectively, Cloudflare, Azure, AWS, and Google Cloud provide the infrastructure that undergirds about two-thirds of the Internet.
- **Salesforce-Linked Breach Exposes Data From Over 200 Firms:** Google has **confirmed** that hackers stole Salesforce-stored data from more than 200 companies through compromised Gainsight applications, highlighting **escalating** risks in third-party integrations across major software as a service (SaaS) platforms. Salesforce is **investigating** the unauthorized activity and has revoked all active Gainsight access tokens, saying the issue **stemmed** from external app connections and not a platform vulnerability. The breach was claimed by Scattered Lapsus\$ Hunters, which has leveraged stolen OAuth tokens from prior Salesforce Drift compromises. Several major companies were named as potential victims in the breach, though many report no confirmed data exposure and have cut Gainsight integrations as a precaution. The true scope of the exposure may expand as additional Salesforce instances are reviewed, and attacker-controlled OAuth tokens could enable further related compromises.
- **ASEAN Faces Widening Divides Strained by AI Imbalance:** AI is accelerating growth in parts of Southeast Asia, but uneven adoption is **widening** economic and labor-market divides, raising concerns about long-term regional inequality. These gaps could reshape jobs, investment flows, and ASEAN cohesion as AI investment and talent are concentrated in countries like Singapore, which leads the region in AI professionals and venture capital inflows, while **others** face infrastructure and skills constraints. Studies estimate up to 164 million regional jobs could be reshaped, with service-heavy economies such as the Philippines' Business Process Outsourcing

(BPO) sector particularly exposed. ASEAN is attempting to close gaps through initiatives like the **Digital Economy Framework Agreement** and the **Responsible AI** roadmap, while local developers build region-specific language models. Rapid policy shifts or global economic changes could either accelerate growth or intensify disparities.

## Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- **Chinese Influence in Supply Chains Beyond Tech Sector Could be 'Weaponized':** U.S. congressional investigators are growing increasingly concerned that, in addition to critical minerals and other tech inputs, Chinese officials and businessowners could **squeeze U.S. supply chains** for **pharmaceuticals** and other imports. Chinese companies' extensive roles in many global supply chains could leave the U.S. market exposed in the event of further trade conflict, with policymakers still unclear on the full extent of U.S. exposure to **weaponized trade**. Amid **persistent volatility** in the U.S. relationship with China, shortages of goods or inputs imported from China in response will remain possible. However, with Chinese President Xi Jinping telling **Chinese media** that relations have remained stable and even improved since meeting with Trump in Busan, the threat could be mitigated by warming ties.
- **U.S. Government Drops Some Tariffs on Latin American Food Imports:** The Trump administration **ended** 40% tariffs on certain Brazilian food products and established **trade frameworks** with Argentina, Ecuador, El Salvador, and Guatemala amid **politically punishing** price increases for an array of goods. Despite these efforts, prices are **expected to remain high** in the near term as retailers work through their inventory of goods purchased at higher costs due to the initial tariffs. The move represents an effort to address a key consequence of the U.S. tariff regime that is believed to be driving **record-low approval ratings** for the president.
- **U.S. Grid Still Strained by Data Center Industry Ahead of Winter:** The energy needs of the data center industry are straining the U.S. energy grid, **raising the likelihood** of blackouts this coming winter, according to the North American Electric Reliability Corporation. While **potentially impacted areas** (including much of Texas, the Carolinas, and the Northeast and Northwest) typically enjoy an adequate supply of electricity even during winter months, consumption across the country has grown by about 20 gigawatts since last winter, a significant increase that has not been met with expanded capacity. In the event of a severe winter storm, several of which have **impacted** these areas in recent years, large swathes of the population could face dangerous blackouts that disrupt business activity or daily life.
- **U.K. Water Treatment Accident Highlights Potential Downside of Some Biotechnologies:** Following an **accident** at the Eastbourne Wastewater Treatment Works that resulted in the

release of millions of plastic beads into Sussex coastal waters, the pellets—used to clean wastewater but which contain potentially toxic and carcinogenic chemicals that could harm pets or wildlife that consume them—have **washed up in large numbers** on local beaches. Environmental cleanup workers and volunteers are working to manually recover the pellets from the sand, an extremely difficult task that could still fail to mitigate the impact. The incident highlights the potential risks in cases where dangerous technologies may be employed due to perceived environmental benefits, in spite of the threats they pose.

- **Global Attempts to Break Chinese Dominance of Mineral Supplies Make Progress, Face Hurdles:** Negotiations between the U.S. and other tech-producing economies on one side, and mineral-wealthy nations in **Africa, the Americas**, and the **Middle East** on the other, seek to break China's **persistent grip** on the resources needed to produce microprocessors and other cutting-edge technological components. Despite this trend, some governments remain protective of their resources, concerned about the potential **human rights implications** of rapid industrialization. **Controls** on trade in advanced tech manufacturing equipment are expected to further impede progress in these efforts. Amid a volatile pattern of **shortages** and damaging regulatory **restrictions** on the flow of these resources, it will become especially important for businesses active in impacted sectors to secure sufficient supplies of critical inputs until new supply lines are established and productive.

## Health

- **Pertussis Rates Increasing Across Several States:** Pertussis rates are **surging** across several U.S. states, including Texas, Florida, California, Oregon, and others, fueled by falling vaccination rates and gaps in surveillance efforts. Texas has already **exceeded** 3,500 cases, quadrupling the number reported through the same period last year, an uptick likely attributable at least in part to a **change in legislation** making it easier for parents to claim nonmedical exemptions from school vaccine requirements. While still relatively rare in the U.S., officials are also growing concerned about the rise in **antibiotic-resistant pertussis** in some countries, including China. The disease is most dangerous to infants too young to be vaccinated.
- **Jamaica Reports Outbreak of Deadly Bacteria Following Hurricane Melissa:** Jamaican health officials have **declared** an outbreak of leptospirosis, a deadly but typically rare bacterial illness often found in contaminated waters after storms. Authorities are attributing at least six deaths to the disease so far, with at least 37 believed to have been sickened to-date, although with telecommunications and infrastructure still coming back online across the island in the wake of

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Hurricane Melissa, that number is almost certainly an undercount. People contract the illness after coming into contact with contaminated water or muddy soil, placing farmers, emergency responders, and others doing cleanup work at particular risk. Confirmed or suspected cases have been **reported** across at least eight parishes so far, with St James tallying the highest number so far, at 17.

- **CDC Reverses Stance on Vaccines and Autism:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **updated** their **website** to state that “studies have not ruled out the possibility that infant vaccines cause autism,” a position long held by anti-vaccine advocates but that a **range** of **medical bodies** say has been repeatedly disproven. The change, made under the **explicit direction** of Health Secretary Robert F Kennedy Jr, has **alarmed** public health experts, who are concerned that the change increases vaccine hesitancy and erodes the credibility of the institution, making any future public health initiatives less likely to succeed.
- **Flu Cases Continue to Climb in Japan, Elsewhere as Subclade K Spreads:** Japanese officials said that this year’s flu caseload at institutions nationwide have reached **warning levels** at the fastest pace in 10 years, prompting a **national alert** five weeks earlier than last season. The growing outbreak has hit Miyagi Prefecture and major urban areas like Tokyo and Osaka particularly hard, triggering closures of over 6,000 day-care facilities and educational institutions. A new flu strain of H3N2 (subclade K) is **reportedly** driving the surge in cases, with officials in Canada, the U.K., **China**, and **Hong Kong** also issuing warnings amid rising cases.
- **Other Stories the Global Intelligence Team is Monitoring:** A Washington State resident in the **U.S.** is believed to have been the **first person** to die from the rare H5N5 strain of avian influenza after likely contracting the disease from a backyard flock of domesticated birds. Despite the death, health officials say that the risk to the general public remains low. Elsewhere, the U.S. Embassy in **Costa Rica** issued an **alert** for incidents of poisoning by aluminum phosphide, a highly toxic pesticide that has **killed** at least one person in recent weeks. And in **Africa**, health officials **warned** that cholera cases, already at triple the number reported in 2022, are likely to rise further as the rainy season sets in. The Democratic Republic of the Congo, Angola, Sudan, South Sudan, and Nigeria have reported the most cases so far.

## Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- **Nationwide Election Day Impacts Expected Across Honduras:** Heightened security and disruptions are likely across Honduras this coming Sunday as voters **choose** a president, 128 National Congress members, and municipal officers. More than 6.5 million eligible voters will cast their ballots at over 5,000 polling sites from 7 am to 5 pm local time. A tight presidential race and escalating **accusations of electoral fraud from each camp** heighten the risk of post-election demonstrations and unrest, especially in main cities like Tegucigalpa, San Pedro Sula, and La Ceiba. Key **issues** include security under a long-running state of exception, job creation, and weak public trust in institutions.
- **Retired Military Personnel Call for Demonstration in Mexico City:** Retired military personnel have called for a large-scale demonstration in central Mexico City on Saturday due to their exclusion from recent salary increase typically granted to active service members. The Movimiento Nacional de Militares Retirados en México is calling on veterans to gather at 11 am at the Ángel de la Independencia before proceeding to the National Palace, according to information shared online. The following weekend, a youth-led **“Marcha del Tigre”** in support of President Claudia Sheinbaum and the Fourth Transformation (4T) is also scheduled to take place in Mexico City.
- **Coordinated Economic Boycott Takes Aim at Major U.S. Retailers, Federal Enforcement Policies:** A coalition of activist organizations is coordinating a nationwide **“Mass Blackout”** from November 25 to December 2, urging participants to halt spending at major corporations, stop work, and limit digital consumption to protest perceived corporate influence and alleged **“authoritarian”** policies by the Trump administration. The campaigns encourage support for small, local businesses and highlight criticism of several companies accused by organizers of enabling or cooperating with administration priorities, including immigration enforcement activities and the rollback of diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Related Black Friday weekend actions include rallies and pickets at major retailers such as Amazon, Walmart, Target, and Home Depot, with messaging focused on opposing corporate complicity in federal enforcement and economic injustice.
- **Pro-Palestine Groups Organizing Around Day of Solidarity:** Multiple notable demonstrations are scheduled across the globe this weekend to coincide with the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People on Saturday, November 29. In the United States, the Palestinian Youth Movement has called for demonstrations in Dallas (NorthPark Center at 2 pm), Los Angeles (City Hall at 1 pm), and New York City (Columbus Circle at 1 pm), while Canada can expect large crowds

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outside Toronto's Union Station at 2 pm. In Italy, unions are **organizing a nationwide strike** on Friday, followed by national pro-Palestine mobilizations on Saturday in Milan and Rome. Elsewhere, major demonstrations are being planned in Buenos Aires (march from Congreso to Plaza de Mayo at 3 pm), Lima (Washington Park at 4 pm), London (march from Park Ln to Whitehall at noon), Paris (Place de la République at 2 pm), and Vienna (Platz der Menschenrechte at 2 pm).

- **Authorities in Giessen, Germany Prepare for Political Event, Counterdemonstrations:** Multiple political organizations and civil society groups are calling for a mass mobilization against the Alternative for Germany (AfD) party this weekend. The AfD will launch a new youth organization at Giessen's Hessehalle event venue; however, the event will be met by possibly **tens of thousands** of counterdemonstrators. Specific details on the location and timing of counterdemonstrations have yet to be confirmed, with local authorities **imposing restrictions** on gatherings in the immediate vicinity of the event venue. The AfD's former youth wing, Junge Alternative (JA), dissolved earlier this year after it was **classified** as an extremist organization. Giessen lies in the center of Hesse state, which **saw** major electoral gains for the AfD in the last state election.

## Upcoming Events

- November 25: Guru Tegh Bahadur Martyrdom Day (India)
- November 26: EU-AU Summit (Luanda, Angola)
- November 27: Thanksgiving Day (United States)
- November 27: General Election (St Vincent and the Grenadines)
- November 28: Independence Day (Panama)
- November 29: Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (Global)
- November 30: General Election (Honduras)
- November 30: Bonifacio Day (Philippines)
- November 30: Parliamentary Elections (Kyrgyzstan)
- December 1: Legislative Elections (St Lucia)
- December 7: Legislative Council Elections (Hong Kong)
- December 8: Feast of Immaculate Conception (Global)
- December 10: Human Rights Day (Global)
- December 13: Anniversary of Japanese Capture of Nanjing (China)
- December 14: Presidential Runoff Election (Chile)
- December 14-22: Hannukah (Global)
- December 27: Legislative Elections (Ivory Coast)
- December 28: First Phase of General Elections (Myanmar)