



January 26, 2026

## Headlining This Week's Brief

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### Top Stories

#### **Major Winter Storm Exits the Coast, Dangerous Cold Sets in Across Central and Eastern U.S.**

Over 185 million Americans were placed under winter storm alerts this weekend as a [blockbuster winter storm](#) trekked across the South, Southeast, Midwest, and Northeast, causing over one million power outages and thousands of flight cancellations. Over [9,000 flight cancellations](#) on Sunday is the single highest day of U.S. cancellations since the COVID-19 peak, according to national media. The most impactful ice accumulations were observed in Mississippi and Tennessee, including Nashville, where widespread tree and powerline damage was reported. Residents in northern Mississippi may be without power for weeks due to catastrophic damage to the [Tippah Electric distribution system](#). The most significant snowfall totals were recorded from Lower New York State through Southern New England, with several locations in Massachusetts reporting 20 or more inches of snow. As of Monday morning, over 800,000 customers remain without power nationwide, and dangerous travel conditions are being reported in major cities as crews conduct road clearing and recovery operations. A total of 23 states remain under a state of emergency.

To compound issues, dangerously cold temperatures are expected across the Central and Eastern U.S. into early February. Continued sub-freezing temperatures will keep untreated roads icy, making travel conditions dangerous, especially in southern areas that experience nightly refreezing. Temperatures are forecast to plummet to well below zero from the North-Central through the Ohio Valley and Northeast

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U.S. into the weekend, with dangerously low wind chills expected. Extremely cold temperatures across the Northern U.S. could lead to [frostbite](#) in less than 30 minutes. Additionally, there is growing confidence that sub-freezing temperatures will reach the Gulf Coast several early mornings this week. Well below-average temperatures across the eastern half of the Lower 48 may lead to additional strain on power grids and necessitate the opening of local warming centers.

Looking further ahead, there have been grumblings on social media from meteorologists and amateur forecasters alike about the potential of another major winter storm for the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast U.S. this weekend. At this time, reliable mid-range forecast models show consistent development of a strong low pressure system off the East Coast, though the timing and exact placement remain uncertain. It will be very important to monitor this upcoming storm as current indications suggest widespread heavy snow and gusty winds will be possible depending on the storm track.

## **Protests Intensify Following Second Fatal Shooting by Federal Agents in Minneapolis**

The situation in Minneapolis further escalated on Saturday following a second fatal shooting involving federal law enforcement agents during an operation in the city. The incident occurred near the intersection of 26th Street and Nicollet Avenue in the Whittier neighborhood. According to a statement from federal officials, U.S. Border Patrol agents were conducting an enforcement operation when an individual allegedly approached officers while armed with a 9mm semi-automatic handgun. Federal authorities stated that officers attempted to disarm the individual, that he violently resisted, and that an agent fired defensive shots in response to the perceived threat, resulting in the individual's death.

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz stated that he had reviewed several videos of the incident and said they do not align with the Department of Homeland Security's account, describing the federal statement as "nonsense." Walz also stated that Minnesota intends to conduct its own investigation into the shooting, indicating that the state will not rely solely on the federal government's review of the incident. Subsequent statements from local police officials indicated that the man who was killed, Alex Pretti, was a 37-year-old Minneapolis resident, an American citizen, and had no known criminal record. Authorities stated that he held a valid permit to carry a firearm, which legally allowed him to openly carry a weapon under Minnesota law.

In the hours following the shooting, protesters gathered at the scene in the Whittier neighborhood, with demonstrations continuing throughout the day. On Saturday evening, more than 1,000 protesters assembled near the site for a rally and vigil. At the request of local officials, the Minnesota National Guard has been deployed to support local authorities and assist with public safety operations. Demonstrations

are expected to continue, with some groups on social media calling for a repeat and expansion of the “General Strike” that brought tens of thousands to the streets of downtown Minneapolis on Friday.

Separately, organizers and advocacy groups that have been mobilizing since the first fatal shooting involving federal officials in Minneapolis earlier this month have renewed calls for demonstrations across the United States. In addition to prominent public places, demonstrators are increasingly targeting hotels and other companies believed to be assisting federal immigration agent.

## World Economic Forum Concludes With a “Concept of a Deal” on Greenland and Further Cracks in the Global Order

At the 56th World Economic Forum in Davos, the agenda was dominated by U.S. President Donald Trump’s interv collectively pushed back against Trump’s controversial comments about Greenland, treating them as a violation of sovereignty. Trump then walked back the idea of using military force to take the island, saying instead that he had “[formed](#) the framework of a future deal” with NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, without sharing details. Despite this clarification, the Trump administration’s continued focus on Greenland is likely to further strain transatlantic relations. On the security front, Trump has [questioned](#) the U.S. commitment to NATO if European allies continue to resist U.S. interests related to Greenland. Economically, European officials have put [approval](#) of a proposed tariff deal with Washington on hold and are [weighing](#) the potential use of the EU’s Anti-Coercion Instrument, a move that could restrict U.S. companies’ access to the European market.

The trade tensions between the EU and U.S. reflect a growing dissatisfaction with the current economic world order and the principles of multilateralism, a sentiment that was fully on display during Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney’s [speech](#) on the current “[rupture](#)” in the rules-based international system that had been in place since World War II and the path forward for “middle powers.” As an illustration of the way the U.S. approach to trade has prompted a reconsideration of what were not-long-ago some of the core tenets of the global economy, Maroš Šefčovič, the EU’s trade commissioner, [floated](#) the idea of reforming “Most Favored Nation” trade rules and allowing World Trade Organization members greater freedom to raise tariffs.

## Climate and Natural Hazards

- **Active Weather Week Across Southern and Western Europe:** An active weather pattern over large portions of Europe will lead to an elevated flood and power outage risk across several countries this week. [Spain](#) and [Portugal](#) will be some of the locations most at risk, as numerous disturbances track over the peninsula through the week. AlertMedia meteorologists are also tracking a strong low pressure system that could create scattered damaging winds and locally heavy rain across [Ireland](#) and portions of the [United Kingdom](#) by early Tuesday morning.

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- **Severe Heatwave, Fire Weather Conditions in Southeast Australia:** [Record-breaking temperatures](#) are forecast across large portions of southern and southeastern Australia this week, with maximum temperatures in the interior (and Adelaide) of 45°C expected. Overnight temperatures will remain high, providing little to no relief. The severe heat will shift east in Victoria on Tuesday, with a chance to challenge the all-time Victoria high temperature record. [Bushfire weather conditions](#) are expected to peak on Tuesday as winds increase over western and central Victoria.
- **Record-Breaking Snow in Japan:** A multi-day sea effect snow event has resulted in [record-breaking snow](#) in Sapporo. Snow depth rapidly increased to over one meter by Sunday evening, leading to widespread disruptions across the city. Just south of Sapporo, [7,000 people](#) were forced to stay overnight at the New Chitose Airport as air, rail, and bus services were suspended amid the heavy snow. Another cold wave is forecast to move over Japan on Tuesday, which will likely lead to additional sea effect snow at times across Chubu, Tohoku, and portions of Hokkaido, into the weekend.

## Worldwide

- **Support for Trump's 'Board of Peace' Grows, but Major Players Remain Elusive:** Some countries have announced their support for U.S. President Donald Trump's '[Board of Peace](#)' international organization. Observers are concerned that an alternative to the United Nations could sap funding and other support for that organization's initiatives and hold broader fears about the United States (and Trump in particular) wielding undue influence in world affairs. However, few significant military powers have [expressed their support](#), which could limit the organization's capacity to achieve its stated aims. In fact, many of the countries that have expressed support to-date—a class [including](#) Belarus, Egypt, Indonesia, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Türkiye—have faced recent scrutiny for domestic rights abuses, involvement in international conflicts, or both. Meanwhile, earning the support of important Western military allies such as France and Sweden [appears unlikely](#) amid the rift surrounding Trump's desire to control Greenland, and world powers like China and Russia are also likely to [remain skeptical](#) of the initiative, at least in the near term.
- **Chinese Antagonism Rising Again in East China and Yellow Seas:** Following years of clashes with countries such as the Philippines over territorial claims in the South China Sea, rising Chinese maritime activity in the East and North China (Yellow) Seas is raising concerns that similarly aggressive confrontations could soon threaten Japanese and South Korean fishing and shipping lanes. In the Yellow Sea, the buildout of [new infrastructure](#) with potential military uses in waters shared with South Korea could be indicative of China's growing interest in those waters, which could lead to Chinese ships harassing their Korean peers or the installation of further (perhaps more permanent or threatening) structures in the area. Meanwhile, Chinese vessels

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plying the East China Sea have recently been [noted](#) to engage in coordinated activities such as the formation of blockades, conduct typically seen in China's South China Sea campaigns and a potential indicator that similar tactics could be employed against Korean or Japanese vessels in the area, which could have lasting impacts for global trade, particularly in the [energy sector](#).

- **Milei Decree Granting Arrest Powers to Argentine Intelligence Agency:** Argentina's President Javier Milei has issued an emergency decree restructuring the intelligence agency SIDE and granting its agents expanded powers to detain individuals. The move has prompted alarm from 23 human rights organizations, including CELS, Amnesty International Argentina, and Greenpeace, which argue the measure allows arrests without clear criteria or judicial authorization. Critics warn the decree could open the door to arbitrary detention, political persecution, and expanded surveillance. The measure also requires public agencies to share citizens' personal data with [SIDE](#), further raising concerns about privacy and oversight. In response, NGOs have appealed to Congress, local courts, the United Nations, and the Inter-American Human Rights System, arguing the reforms weaken legal safeguards, blur military and civilian boundaries, and risk transforming intelligence services into a political police force.
- **Ecuador Imposes Tariffs on Colombia as Drug Trafficking Dispute Deepens:** Ecuador and Colombia are locked in a [escalating](#) trade dispute after Ecuador [imposed](#) a 30% "security charge" on Colombian imports, accusing Bogotá of failing to cooperate in combating drug trafficking along their 600-km border. President Daniel Noboa stated that Ecuador is fighting against criminal groups alone and will maintain the tariff until Colombia shows a stronger commitment. Colombia rejected the accusations and retaliated by suspending electricity [exports](#) to Ecuador and imposing a 30% tariff on 20 Ecuadorian products, describing the move as proportional and temporary. The standoff unfolds as Colombia faces renewed violence, including [clashes](#) between rival FARC dissident factions that left at least 27 fighters dead in a cocaine-producing region. •
- **New U.S. National Defense Strategy Emphasizes Focus on Western Hemisphere:** The U.S. released its 2026 National Defense Strategy, [emphasizing](#) the priorities of homeland defense and Western Hemisphere security that were prevalent in the [National Security Strategy](#) that was released in December. To that end, the document reiterated the need for "credible options to guarantee U.S. military and commercial access to key terrain," including Greenland and the Panama Canal. Contrary to the position taken under the Biden administration, the new National Defense Strategy emphasizes seeking "a stable peace, fair trade, and respectful relations with China" and makes no mention of Taiwan. While a softer stance than that pursued under the previous administration, it did emphasize deterring China in the Indo-Pacific through military strength and strategic stability, stressing that the U.S. must not be denied access to the Indo-Pacific region.

## Cyber and Regulatory

- **U.S. Telecoms Remain Vulnerable to Espionage:** Chinese hacking group Salt Typhoon **compromised** email systems used by staffers working on several U.S. House committees, including those overseeing China, foreign affairs, intelligence, and the armed services. The activity was detected in December 2025, though it remains unclear whether lawmakers' personal accounts were accessed. Officials have not confirmed the details, and the incident highlights **persistent** national security and counterintelligence risks. The breach follows earlier Salt Typhoon intrusions to major U.S. telecommunications networks, which enabled surveillance of phone communications and geolocation data tied to government and political targets. Assessment of U.S. telecommunications networks, largely built from **fragmented** legacy and modern systems, are too complex to fully purge sophisticated actors, especially after long undetected access. Limited indicators make it difficult to verify complete removal, leaving a continued risk of re-entry. Improved detection tools, coordinated federal action, or major infrastructure reforms could disrupt attacker access, while new vulnerabilities could worsen exposure.
- **EU Plans High-Risk Tech Phase Out:** The European Commission has unveiled a cybersecurity **overhaul** that would phase out "**high-risk**" foreign suppliers from critical infrastructure, widely seen as targeting Chinese firms like Huawei. The move would reshape EU tech supply chains, raise costs for operators, and trigger **retaliation** from Beijing while aligning Europe more closely with U.S. security priorities. The proposal builds on the EU's 2020 voluntary 5G Security Toolbox, which was unevenly applied and failed to curb reliance on vendors seen as security risks. It would cover 18 critical sectors, give Brussels power to coordinate EU-wide risk assessments, and require mobile operators to remove key components within up to 36 months. China has denounced the plan as a "blatant protectionism," warning it will take the necessary measures to defend Huawei and other tech firms. Final outcomes hinge on negotiations with EU governments and Parliament, and potential Chinese retaliation or industry pushback could quickly alter the trajectory.
- **Authorities Warn of North Korea Phishing Evolution:** U.S. authorities have **warned** that North Korea-linked hackers are **expanding** cyber-espionage tactics by abusing trusted tools such as QR codes and developer software to gain cover access to targeted victims. The methods bypass common security awareness cues and increasingly affect professionals with access to sensitive systems and data. The FBI reports a Kimsuky-linked campaign using QR code phishing ("quishing") emails to steal credentials, deploy malware, and collect device intelligence, with activity observed since May 2025. Separately, the Contagious Interview campaign delivers backdoors through malicious Visual Studio Code projects disguised as job assessments were also first detected in December 2025. Both efforts rely on spear-fishing and legitimate platforms (email, Git repositories, VS Code) to increase credibility and success. The threat landscape may evolve quickly as these actors adapt tooling, automate malware development, or exploit new trusted platforms with little warning.



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- **Global CVE System Faces Structural Uncertainty:** A European cybersecurity group has [launched](#) the Global CVE Allocation System (GCVE), a decentralized alternative to the CVE program, after repeated funding scares exposed how fragile the global vulnerability tracking has become. Operated by the CIRCL, GCVE allows independent numbering authorities to assign vulnerability IDs without relying on a single centralized allocator. The move follows a 2025 near-shutdown of the 25-year-old CVE program, when U.S. government funding delays briefly threatened to halt vulnerability assignments, underscoring the systemic dependence on MITRE and CISA. While GCVE is designed to remain compatible with existing CVEs by mapping identifiers into its system, competing models could fragment vulnerability databases, creating duplication and confusion for [defenders](#) who depend on consistent identifiers to assess and manage risk.
- **U.K. Police Acknowledge AI “Hallucinated” Key Piece of Intelligence:** The West Midlands Police in the United Kingdom [acknowledged](#) that Microsoft’s AI assistant Copilot produced false information that was included in an official intelligence report. The AI tool “hallucinated” a football match between West Ham and Maccabi Tel Aviv that never occurred, and this fabricated detail contributed to classifying a match as “high risk,” leading to a ban on Israeli fans at a Europa League game. Police initially denied using AI and attributed the error to other causes but later admitted Copilot’s involvement. The incident has highlighted concerns about the reliability of generative AI in sensitive institutional decision-making and the need for verification of outputs.

## Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- **Texas Data Center Boom Brings Challenges for Electricity Grid:** Texas is on track to [become the largest U.S. data center market](#) within the next two to three years as artificial intelligence drives demand for computing capacity and power. A report by Bloom Energy projects electricity demand from Texas data centers could exceed 40 gigawatts by 2028, up from around eight gigawatts in 2025, significantly increasing pressure on the state’s grid. The report highlights a mismatch between developers and the current energy environment, noting that those that do not update their working assumptions around grid capacity could find their projects significantly delayed as capacity is built out. The challenges are prompting more facilities to incorporate onsite power sources, such as natural gas plants and fuel cells, rather than relying solely on the grid.
- **Low-Cost Chinese EVs Reshape Mexico’s Auto Market:** China is [expanding](#) the export of low-cost electric vehicles into markets with limited domestic EV production capacity and developing infrastructure. In Mexico, BYD Co., the world’s largest electric vehicle manufacturer, accounts for nearly 70% of electric and plug-in hybrid vehicle sales, with these vehicles comprising roughly 9% of all new car sales. BYD’s dominance is largely driven by aggressive pricing and [limited](#) competition in the domestic EV market. While President Claudia Sheinbaum has announced 50% tariffs on Chinese auto imports and other goods, it remains unclear whether these measures will significantly affect consumer prices. BYD’s large-scale production capabilities and vehicle

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oversupply in China are expected to sustain lower prices than competitors, potentially offsetting tariff impacts. The company has also announced plans to expand Mexico's EV charging infrastructure using its own technology, which could further entrench its market position.

- **Amazon Workforce Reductions Highlight AI Cost Pressures:** Amazon is [reportedly](#) planning to cut up to another 16,000 jobs over the coming days. The layoffs are the second half of the company's plans to remove 10% of its corporate positions. Roles within Prime Video and Amazon Web Services are among those expected to be cut. Amazon CEO Andy Jassy states that the company became too bloated during its rapid growth, though he had initially attributed the layoffs to the rise of AI. Further layoffs can be [expected](#) as companies invest in AI infrastructure, and the technology efficiency improves.
- **UN Report Describes New Era of "Water Bankruptcy":** The United Nations University (UNU-INWEH) issued a **report** that concludes the world has entered a state of "water bankruptcy," where long-term water use exceeds natural renewal and has degraded key water storage systems, making historical baselines unattainable without transformative change. It reframes water risk from episodic "crises" to a chronic, structural condition requiring a shift from reactive crisis management to "bankruptcy management" with transparent water accounting, enforceable limits, and protection of remaining water capital. The report emphasizes equitable transitions and positions water security as central to climate resilience, food systems, and social stability, urging international cooperation and policy reform. The UN's report comes alongside another [paper](#) that predicted that crop droughts will worsen in much of Europe, northern South America, and western North America.
- **Geopolitical Shifts and U.S. Policy Uncertainty Could Benefit Asian Economies:** Asia's economies [may](#) benefit from growing uncertainty around U.S. foreign and economic policy, which is accelerating diversification away from the United States and Europe. Resource exporters, including Canada, are increasingly redirecting oil and gas exports toward Asian markets to reduce reliance on a less predictable U.S. market, expanding supply options for the region amid heightened geopolitical tensions involving Iran, Venezuela, and Greenland. At the same time, the prospect of a broader trade dispute with Europe is prompting investors to reassess exposure to Western markets. Asian countries that can strengthen energy security through improved efficiency, expanded renewable capacity, and more diversified oil and gas sourcing stand to benefit as capital and trade flows increasingly shift away from the United States and Europe.

## Health

- **New World Screwworm Inches Closer to U.S.:** New world screwworm (NWS) is creeping closer to the United States, worrying livestock farmers in the region. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) issued a [health advisory](#) warning that cases of screwworm have been reported in the northern Mexico state of Tamaulipas, bordering Texas. As of January 20, nearly 1,200 cases of NWS have been [reported](#) over Central America and Mexico, with eight of those in



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Tamaulipas. All southern U.S. ports of entry remain closed to the livestock trade, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has granted conditional approval for NWS treatments in [cattle](#) and [dogs](#). The U.S. Department of Agriculture has also [announced](#) additional funding for novel ways to combat NWS or expedite existing methods.

- **Infant Formula Recall Due to Contaminated Ingredient Widens:** Danone, Lactalis, and Nestle, three of the world's largest dairy companies, are [recalling](#) and blocking several batches of infant formula in multiple countries. The recall started with Nestle, which pulled products in dozens of countries after detecting possible contamination with the toxin cereulide. Singapore then ordered a precautionary recall of Danone and Nestle products followed by Lactalis announcing it was recalling batches in 18 countries. While the specific supplier has not been named, the contaminated ingredient was arachidonic acid from a Dutch supplier, but the ingredient itself originated in China. Within the tightly regulated infant formula sector, producers often use the same suppliers, which can have wide ranging impacts if one of the ingredients is possibly contaminated.
- **HHS Shakes Up Another Key Vaccine Panel:** U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. has removed at least four members of the Advisory Commission on Childhood Vaccinations (ACCV), the panel that advises on the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program (VICP). The dismissals occurred before the members' terms were due to expire, and no replacements have been named. Kennedy's actions echo his prior overhaul of the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and may signal an effort to reshape the vaccine injury compensation system, potentially expanding the injuries it covers. The firings could have significant implications for U.S. vaccine policy and immunization infrastructure, including potentially [driving](#) drugmakers from the market or limiting access to childhood vaccinations.
- **U.S. Trade Policies Threaten Pharmaceutical Access in Europe:** U.S. tariffs on non-generic medicines and proposed Most-Favored Nation (MFN) pricing policies are [increasing uncertainty](#) for pharmaceutical companies, leading many to delay investment and product launches in Europe. A survey by the European Confederation of Pharmaceutical Entrepreneurs indicates that 57% of respondents expect research and development spending to decline amid this uncertainty. Companies are adopting a "wait-and-see" approach and may shift investment and launch strategies away from the EU, favoring the U.S. market instead. Survey results suggest that, without policy changes, Europe risks losing priority as a destination for innovation and patient access to new medicines.
- **U.S. Exit from WHO Becomes Official:** The United States has officially completed its withdrawal from the World Health Organization (WHO), a step initiated by U.S. President Donald Trump. The U.S. will leave the WHO with roughly \$278 million in unpaid dues for 2024 and 2025 and has no intention of settling this debt before exit. Critics warn the move undermines global health

cooperation, weakens WHO's ability to respond to outbreaks, and [threatens](#) virus surveillance within the United States, impacting everything from monitoring emerging outbreaks of Ebola to developing annual flu shots. Legal and procedural questions persist over obligations tied to the withdrawal process, with the WHO saying that the U.S. withdrawal is not official until it pays its debts to the organization, although there's [little hope](#) that Washington will settle its debt.

## Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- **Unions Call Strikes Across Spain's Fish Canning Sector Over Pay Dispute:** Spain's main trade unions [announced](#) strike actions in late January and February after rejecting employers' latest collective bargaining proposal in the fish canning sector. CCOO, UGT FICA, and CIG argue the offer shows little progress beyond a CPI-linked raise and a temporary increase, calling it insufficient amid rising living costs. Workers plan stoppages on January 27–28 and February 24–25, alongside demonstrations in Vilagarcía de Arousa and Cantabria. Unions are demanding a 5% annual wage increase with inflation protection and warn that protests could escalate if companies fail to improve terms in a sector that is critical to regional employment.
- **Iran Suppresses Economic Protests After Deadly Crackdown, Internet Blackout, and Mass Arrests:** Iran's nationwide protests, sparked by an economic collapse, have been largely [suppressed](#) after a severe security crackdown that started on January 8. This [crackdown](#) included a near-total internet [blackout](#) that lasted over 400 hours. The casualty figures are hotly debated. Iranian authorities report around 3,117 deaths, while rights groups [confirm](#) over 5,000. Leaked health ministry sources and independent reports suggest around 30,000 may have been killed, many during the massacres on January 8 and 9. International pressure on Iran is mounting, with UN emergency sessions convened, expanded EU and U.S. sanctions imposed, and President Trump deploying a U.S. naval [armada](#) toward the country amid widespread protests. Trump claimed his actions persuaded Tehran to cancel mass executions, though Iran's leadership rejected this, accusing the U.S. of fomenting the unrest.
- **Peru's Generation Z Leads "March of Sacrifice" Demanding Justice for Protest Victims:** On January 28, Generation Z collectives in Lima, Peru, will organize a ["March of Sacrifice"](#) demanding justice for victims of the 2022–2023 protests. Delegations from Puno, Ayacucho, Cusco, and other regions will assemble at Ovala Curva De Nueva Esperanza at 8 am before proceeding toward downtown Lima. Protesters are calling for the reactivation of the Special Prosecutors Team for Cases with Victims during Social Protests (EFICAVIP), accountability for perpetrators, survivor support, and reparations for families. The mobilization also criticizes interim President José Jerí and highlights the growing influence of youth-led activism in shaping Peru's political and social discourse.

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- **Truck Drivers From Western Balkans Stage EU Border Protests Over Biometric Entry System:** Truck drivers from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and North Macedonia are set to [block](#) EU border terminals toward the Schengen Area today, protesting the European Union's new Entry/Exit System (EES). Introduced in October 2025, the digital system registers biometric data of non-EU travelers and enforces the 90-day stay limit within 180 days, which drivers say threatens their ability to work due to frequent crossings. Transport associations are calling for professional drivers to be treated as cross-border workers. The European Commission says entry rules remain unchanged, while the Transport Community confirms it has raised concerns with Brussels.
- **Auckland Braces for Simultaneous Nationalist March and Counter-Hīkoi on NZ Day:** On January 31, Auckland will host two major demonstrations scheduled to take place in the city center. Toitū te Aroha [plans](#) a peaceful hīkoi from Te Komititanga in Britomart to Pokapū Aotea Square beginning at 11 am, promoting messages of identity, community, and cultural unity. At the same time, Brian Tamaki's nationalist "Bridge to Better" [march](#) is expected to cross the Auckland Harbour Bridge, emphasizing patriotic themes and New Zealand's future. While both groups have encouraged peaceful participation, the timing and locations of the events are likely to place additional strain on transport

## Upcoming Events

- January 26: Republic Day (India)
- January 26: Australia Day (Australia)
- February 1: General Election (Costa Rica)
- February 6 – March 15: Milano Cortina Olympic and Paralympic Games (Italy)
- February 7 – March 8: Men's T20 Cricket World Cup (India, Sri Lanka)
- February 8: Super Bowl LX (Santa Clara, United States)
- February 8: General Election (Thailand)
- February 8: Presidential Runoff Election (Portugal)
- February 12: General Election, Constitutional Referendum (Bangladesh)
- February 13-15: Munich Security Conference (Munich, Germany)
- February 17: Chinese New Year begins (Global)
- February 17: Tét (Vietnam)
- February 17: Mardi Gras (Global)
- February 17 – March 19: Ramadan (Global) *Dates approximate and vary by location*
- February 18 – April 2: Lent (Global)
- February 21-22: Africa Union Summit (Ethiopia)
- February 24: Fourth Anniversary of Russian Invasion of Ukraine (Global)