



September 28, 2026

Headlining This Week's Brief

Top Stories

Climate and Natural Hazards

Worldwide

Cyber and Regulatory

Infrastructure and Supply Chain

Health

Demonstrations and Industrial Action

Top Stories

US-Iran Talks to Continue as Mounting Economic Pain Threatens Further Global Unrest

Oil prices rose globally and US stocks fell on Monday, 28 September, after US President Donald Trump rejected an Iranian proposal that may have seen the Strait of Hormuz opened within a week. President Trump was dissatisfied with the terms of the deal at a time when he continues to insist that Tehran is "losing so badly." At least one official has said that Trump expects "concrete progress" on issues with the country's nuclear program before considering concessions such as sanctions relief. Despite his rejection of Tehran's offer, Trump expects further talks in the coming days. Tehran also continues to seek avenues for progress, claiming that "only diplomacy can solve its conflict with the United States and Israel." Mediators are reportedly working toward advancing talks, with Reuters reporting that representatives from Qatar will meet with the two sides separately in New York this week. Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi will remain in the city following the UN General Assembly for the occasion, which could attract demonstration activity. It is unclear whether the US will continue to liaise with Omani mediators after a falling out over earlier reports of progress toward a deal that didn't involve Washington. As the conflict continues, international organizations focused on economics are flagging the steadily accumulating impacts of the conflict on global growth. At a recent public engagement, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva warned that "we should prepare for people being more unhappy" and "maybe on the street" in response to the cumulative...

Southern U.S. Facing Major Flood Risk This Week

Considerable flash flooding is forecast across portions of Arizona, New Mexico, southern Colorado, and western Texas beginning Monday and continuing into mid-week. The shift will then shift over Oklahoma and Central Texas for Wednesday and Thursday. Flash flooding is expected to become life-threatening in spots this week, with burn scars, low-water crossings, and areas of complex terrain most at risk.

Europe Divided Over Response to Rising Russian Hybrid Threat

Days after a similar warning from Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk, Danish and US officials are warning that Russia is planning to escalate its antagonization of NATO member states over the coming months. While Danish Defense Minister Jeppe Bruus specifically cited a heightened risk of “destructive cyberattacks,” the US flagged the potential for a sea-based drone operation targeting coastal countries having significant influence within the EU and NATO, such as France, Italy, and Spain. Their differing assessments of the likely Russian mode of attack highlights the multifaceted nature of Russia’s ongoing campaign of “hybrid attacks” against these countries, which is believed to be associated with rising incidences of sabotage, violent crime, and other threats across the continent. Against this backdrop, Russia’s campaign of instigation against European countries, particularly outspoken supporters of Ukraine and frontier states, continues to cause intermittent disruptions to transport and other aspects of daily life. Airspace closures and security responses are becoming increasingly frequent in response to Russian incursions, which have grown more common (and increasingly impactful) themselves in recent weeks. With many European states increasing their defenses or pressing on with infrastructure plans in defiance of Russian threats, the potential that these border face-offs could escalate further raises the risk of military miscalculation or an accident that spirals into an unintended wider conflict. Despite the growing concern about hybrid attacks that are increasingly being tied to the Kremlin, European officials remain divided over how best to respond. Most tend to agree that the threat is worsening...

Global Diesel Shortage, Other Fossil Fuel Pressures to Last Into 2027 Despite Iranian Offer to Reopen Strait of Hormuz

On 21 September, media reports citing unnamed Iranian officials said that Tehran was willing to reopen the Strait of Hormuz to commercial traffic in as little as seven days if the US “eases military pressure and lifts its blockade on Iranian ports.” While some observers see the unconfirmed reports as a positive sign, leading oil to retreat back below \$100 per barrel on hopes that the US and Iran may soon come to an agreement, the extensive damage done to existing supply lines, impacts to strategic reserves, and rising fuel and insurance costs impacting maritime freight operations suggest that the global energy crisis will persist regardless of the status of the key shipping lane. The most significant concern of the moment is diesel fuel, supplies of which have fallen 8% year-on-year to historic lows in response to the conflict in the Middle East as well as Russia’s war with Ukraine and other factors. Brewing diesel shortages are driving prices to record highs and forcing authorities to re-institute fuel austerity measures around the world. The impact remains significant across other fossil fuels as well, with both US diesel and oil stockpiles falling to their lowest levels since 1982. Analysts project that high prices and shortages of diesel and

other fossil fuels are “unlikely to ease before next year.” The factors conspiring to disrupt such a wide variety of fossil fuel shipments extend far beyond the Strait of Hormuz. Extensive damage to fossil fuel extraction, processing, and shipping facilities across the region...

Climate and Natural Hazards

- Delhi, India Winter Air Pollution Controls to Tighten Beginning in November: Delhi authorities have finalized an expanded winter air-pollution plan targeting vehicle emissions, construction dust, waste burning, industrial pollution and traffic hotspots, with enforcement measures ramping up through October.
- Bengal Cyclone Kills Dozens in Northern India and Nepal: A large tropical cyclone produced life-threatening floods and landslides across northern India and Nepal this weekend. Dozens have been killed, with authorities still carrying out rescue operations in affected areas.
- Monsoonal Rainfall Brings Severe Flooding to Thailand; Myanmar Under Threat: A strong monsoonal disturbance and potential tropical cyclone that brought severe flooding to portions of Thailand will now focus over Myanmar through midweek.
- Bomb Cyclone to Bring Powerful Winds to Ireland and Northern UK: A bomb cyclone will bring powerful winds to Ireland, Northern Ireland, and northern Scotland on Tuesday.
- Hurricane Polo to Bring Heavy Rain and Damaging Winds to Baja California Sur and Northern Mexico: Category 3 Hurricane Polo will make landfall in Baja California Monday evening, before making a second landfall in Western Sonora Tuesday morning. Destructive winds, torrential rainfall, flash flooding, and storm surge are expected.

Worldwide

- Trump-Xi Meeting Results in Limited Progress on Substantial Issues: Analysts are largely underwhelmed by the “limited deliverables” that resulted from Chinese President Xi Jinping’s first state visit to Washington since the Obama administration, noting that “more tangible outcomes” in addressing the two countries’ many strategic differences are needed for momentum to build toward a more lasting détente. Progress was noted on some fronts, including mutual tariff reduction measures covering a combined \$60 billion worth of goods and the establishment of channels for “a new AI dialogue” at a time of growing global concern over the future of the industry. However, analysts also noted the failure to secure more substantive commitments on issues from rare earth metals restrictions to business opportunities. The visit has also been framed as a “PR win’ for China,” with observers noting both the nature of Xi’s reception (including President Trump’s purported offer to sell Beijing weapons) and Xi’s “effort to steer” Trump into alignment with Beijing on Taiwan and other issues alongside the comparatively limited progress. Trump and Xi intend to meet twice more this year: in November at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in China and at the Group of 20 Summit in Miami in December.

- **Conflicts in Northern Colombia Threaten Mining, Tourism Sectors: Worsening clashes between Colombia's various armed groups and government forces are threatening sectors from heavy industry to tourism in the country's northern Antioquia and Magdalena departments.** In Magdalena, "an open conflict between the Gulf Clan and the Autodefensas Conquistadoras de la Sierra Nevada (ACSN) for the control of drug trafficking routes and extortion activities" could undermine growing tourist traffic to the region. In Antioquia, meanwhile, the region's lucrative mining sector is also threatened by rising organized criminal involvement in "gold mining, both legal and illegal," with the Gulf Clan also clashing with the remnants of the FARC and the ELN for control of drug trafficking in Antioquia. While attacks on the military and political violence have remained consistent threats in the country for years, the rising frequency of inter-group conflicts is attracting the attention of President Abelardo de la Espriella, who recently won the presidency by promising a heavy-handed approach to security. The Colombian government has requested increased US security assistance, which could increase the frequency and impact of government operations against cartels, rebels, and other criminal groups in the country. If enforcement operations rise, however, these criminal groups—many of which benefit from transnational links—could more directly target government forces in response, raising the risk of a wider conflict and the threat that these groups may target civilians to discourage further federal pressure.
- **Houthis Continue to Target Saudi Arabia as Riyadh's Allies Fail to Support Defense Effort: As Yemen's Houthi rebels continue their advance across the country, the group has also sustained its attacks on Saudi Arabia, with a 19 September attack reaching as far as Riyadh.** Despite this incident and other successes, including an earlier attack that temporarily forced the closure of the country's critical East-West pipeline, Saudi forces and allied coalition troops fighting in Yemen continue to intercept Houthi missiles more frequently than they hit their intended target. However, fears are growing that the Houthi's widening control over Yemeni territory could enable the group to launch more frequent attacks on targets across the Arabian Peninsula, posing an even greater threat to Saudi efforts to restart oil exports at scale. While Saudi Arabia now faces a persistent militant threat, international allies have thus far not intervened. Pakistan and Türkiye (who recently joined Saudi Arabia in the Mecca Joint Defense Agreement) have expressed their support, but have thus far not publicly expressed an intent to join the fighting. The three countries were joined by Egypt in jointly affirming Saudi Arabia's "right to self-defense," but a meeting between Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi failed to produce any concrete security commitments. Despite deep US investment in the related war in Iran, Washington has also refrained from involvement amid an ongoing military-wide munitions shortage and the Iran war's deep unpopularity at home. Yemen's government has also requested US support, but with the Houthis threatening to target American interests if Washington gets involved, this remains...
- **Rebel Coalition Launches Attacks in Afar, Tigray Regions, Threatening to Reignite Ethiopian Civil War: Ethiopian airlines suspended flights to Tigray regional capital Mekelle, as well as Axum and Shire (both also in the Tigray region), amid renewed fighting between regional rebels and**

government forces that analysts fear could lead to a return to civil war. Rebels clashed with government forces in the Afar region and seized the Alula Aba Nega Airport, leading to its temporary closure. Just days before the offensive, seven of the country's rebel groups (including the FANO militia, OLA, and TPLF, along with four smaller organizations) announced a new coalition dubbed the "Alliance for Survival," seeking "to remove the government in Addis Ababa." In addition to the long-contested regions of Amhara, Oromia, and Tigray, these groups are also active in the Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, and Somali regions, suggesting that the conflict could widen to encompass much of the northern and eastern portion of the country. Both the government and the rebel coalition have accused each other of reigniting the conflict, with the mutual refusal to accept responsibility a potential indicator of further clashes to come. The rebel's capture of the airport is an important signal of both their capability and intent to target strategically important cities and infrastructure. In addition to the long-contested regions of Amhara, Oromia, and Tigray, these groups are also active in the Afar, Benishangul-Gumuz, and Somali regions, suggesting that the conflict could widen to encompass much of the northern and eastern portion of the country. Both the government and the rebel coalition have accused each other of reigniting...

- Severe Indonesian Fire Season Generates Harmful Smog Across Region: Smog billowing from forest fires in Indonesia continues to impact public health and limit business activity, daily life, and transportation across the broader region, with authorities warning that the wildfires could last through early November. While forest fires are a seasonal phenomenon across much of maritime Southeast Asia, this year's fires are already having outsized economic and health impacts and establishing a concerning trajectory with the wildfire season only halfway over. In recent weeks, smog resulting from this especially robust fire pattern has disrupted flights, forced school closures, and may be a factor in as many as 170,000 new respiratory illness cases reported since fire season began. The rising intensity of the annual fire weather cycle, which has likely been supported by the El Niño weather phenomenon, is also threatening the country's growing carbon credit markets. These markets depend on large expanses of undeveloped green spaces and low emissions on a national scale. The spread of the haze across the region, meanwhile, is causing increasingly severe impacts in neighboring countries as well, with respiratory alerts reported in Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines, suggesting these countries may face increasingly severe impacts if the fire season worsens further. While the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has long worked to address the region's smog challenges, little progress has been made. Additionally, while the fires occur cyclically and will likely be influenced by broader environmental phenomena, human activity continues to play an important role, with one expert calling the fires "the legacy of..."

Cyber and Regulatory

- OpenAI Model Accesses Australian Medicare Data Without Authorization, Company Waits Three Months to Notify Canberra: Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese met virtually with OpenAI

CEO Sam Altman on 23 September to express “Australia's extreme concern” after the company informed regulators that an OpenAI model had gained unauthorized access to “non-public aggregate health statistics and internal files” housed in an Australian Medicare data portal on 18 June. Albanese and other Australian officials are particularly dissatisfied with the manner in which OpenAI informed Canberra of the incident—via email to a public government mailbox on 10 September, some three months after the intrusion occurred—though questions have also been raised surrounding why Albanese waited a further two weeks to announce the incident to the public. The government has dismissed these questions by citing the time needed to properly investigate OpenAI’s claims, and noted that the Signals Directorate, a cybersecurity and intelligence agency, continues to investigate exactly what happened. According to OpenAI, no personally identifiable information was accessed.

- **Over 80,000 Relay Servers Used to Allow Chinese Researchers to Access US AI Undetected:** In a report released 22 September, researchers with Team Cymru found that Chinese researchers are using a network of at least 80,000 relay servers to access frontier AI models developed by US firms as part of a broader effort “to circumvent potential access restrictions and monitoring.” In doing so, these researchers are believed to be stealing key features to incorporate into their own “less capable versions at substantially lower cost” without revealing their location or intentions. Relay servers work by allowing a large set of users to access a pool of credentials to various AI models, completing tasks on their behalf for a fee. The revelation follows on the heels of reports that Chinese AI researchers were using distillation methods to glean skills from more powerful US-based models.
- **Hackers Claim to Breach FBI Careers Site, Steal Personally Identifiable Information on Most Agents and Job Applicants:** On 22 September, hackers affiliated with the ShinyHunters cybercriminal organization claimed to have breached the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), stealing “data on a huge number of current and former FBI employees” in the process. The group claims the hack, which took advantage of vulnerabilities in the FBI’s online job application portal, affects “almost ALL FBI Agents, and individuals who filed an application with the FBI for a job.” The attack also briefly disrupted public access to the job portal. The group specifically targeted the FBI after the agency exposed its tactics and advised victims not to pay the group ransoms earlier in 2026. To prove their claim, the hackers posted screenshots of the details of some 5,000 purported agents, including “information about FBI agents' names, home addresses, Social Security numbers, their assignments and, in at least some cases, the names of their family members.” Reuters independently confirmed at least ten instances, including personal details relating to FBI Director Kash Patel. Security experts are now concerned that if details about FBI agents are revealed, it could compromise undercover activities and expose agents to harassment and other pressure.
- **Cyberattack Leaves Utah City of 70,000 With Intermittent Telecommunications Services for Days:** Residents of Eagle Mountain, Utah—one of the fastest-growing cities in the state and home to around 70,000 people—suffered intermittent internet, phone, and other telecommunications disruptions between 17 and 22 September after a distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attack

targeted the operations of local provider Direct Communications. The attack reportedly "affected the company's upstream network providers, causing slow speeds, packet loss and complete service outages." Service was briefly stabilized by technicians with Direct Communications on 19 September before further outages on 20 September, and the company is "working with third-party cybersecurity specialists to look into what happened" and improve the company's cyber-defenses. The company recommends that users experiencing ongoing disruptions cycle their routers, though communication of this and other guidance may be hindered by the temporary closure of the company's offices and a lack of means to reach customers with updates about the outage.

- London-Based Fintech's Clients Suffer Wave of Phishing Attempts Following Breach: British financial services platform Revolut, which has over 80 million global customers and banking licenses in at least 30 countries, discovered a breach earlier this month that is believed to have resulted in about 680 users' "identity and contact details, including their birth date, postal and email addresses, and phone numbers" were exposed to hackers. Amid reports that the company has received calls for a \$3 million ransom to prevent the release of this information and other sensitive files, such as scans of personal identification documents, cybersecurity investigators claim that Revolut customers are seeing an uptick in social engineering attacks, such as smishing campaigns disguised as legitimate communications from Revolut, following the hack. Hackers that reached out to the Financial Times via Telegram to claim the attack reportedly targeted Revolut because unspecified "crypto whales" use the platform. The attackers claim to have breached Revolut through a complex social engineering campaign that unfolded over several months, with the hackers using stolen Italian government credentials to establish a faux law enforcement relationship with Revolut and ultimately, simply request the information. If true, the attack could have compromised far more information than initially thought.
- German Economy, AfD's Surge in Polls Threaten Reform Agenda: A series of reforms to Germany's labor, pension, and tax codes backed by the federal CDU-SPD "grand coalition" government could be threatened by the two parties' heavy losses in recent state elections. While Chancellor Friedrich Merz and others were quick to reiterate their support for the reforms despite the significant losses in Berlin and Mecklenburg-West Pomerania, some within the coalition government are questioning whether the reform agenda should be moderated "to reflect the votes." The planned reforms, first detailed in early July, include changes to the dismissal threshold and sick leave policies for employers, higher taxes for top earners to fund tax relief for others, raising the retirement age, and various other measures meant to address challenges in employment, housing, and other areas. The agenda has proven unpopular, combining measures that could negatively impact workers and the wealthy with costly social schemes at a time when economic uncertainty is believed to be driving many voters to the right. However, economists' expectations that momentum could build in the coming months has driven business sentiment in the country to its most positive outlook in three years, and could support the coalition government's goal of increasing the country's competitiveness as a destination for investment while still supporting the average German worker.

- **British SMEs Make Preparations Ahead of Changes to Union Organizing Rules:** Human resource professionals, business leaders, and others employed by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) across the UK are preparing for new responsibilities and relationship-building with labor organizations in response to new organizing laws coming into effect next month. As part of broader changes to UK labor laws under the Employment Rights Act, which will roll out over the next two years, the country's unions "gain a new statutory right to access workplaces with 21 or more employees" from October. The legislation is expected to facilitate labor organizers' efforts to penetrate historically challenging industries or regions of the country, while employers across the British economy are growing concerned about the potential costs associated with collective bargaining and stronger workforce representation. Some employers have also raised concerns "that greater union representation could create divisions within the workplace." In preparing to enforce the new rules, which carry fines of up to £75,000 (\$99,200) in the event of a violation, the UK's Central Arbitration Committee hired dozens of additional staffers to handle the expected additional caseload.
- **Canadian Prime Minister's Party Proposes Changes to Permitting Policies, Limits to Government Ability to Intervene in Labor Actions:** On 21 September, legislators from Prime Minister Mark Carney's Liberal Party brought legislation to the floor that could limit the federal government's ability to intervene in labor action. The bill, C-39 or the "Building Canada Strong Act," seeks to "establish clearer, simpler, and more predictable processes" for project approvals, logistics improvements, and labor relations in order to provide Canadian workers "the protections, security, and opportunities they need." While the bill would provide a mechanism for the fast-tracking of certain projects, it could also see revisions made to the section of the Labour Code that allows the government to intervene in strike actions in the interest of "industrial peace." Newly proposed conditions could limit when the government is allowed to force striking employees to return to work. Officials have used this authority to end several disruptive strikes in recent years. Some opposition legislators have also raised concerns about investors' reception to stronger labor protections and other aspects of the legislation at a time when Canada's economy already faces pressure from the global energy crisis, US tariffs, and other challenges.
- **Irish Regulator Fines Google Over \$460 Million for Years-Old Privacy Violations:** On 21 September, Ireland's Data Protection Commission (DPC)—the regulator responsible for global tech giant Google's European activities—announced that the company broke EU data handling rules with its processing of certain user location data between May 2018 and February 2020, levying a €403 million (\$461 million) fine as a result. The features in question were designed to allow Google to better target advertising "or to gather details about their health and interests." The DPC specifically found that Google "breached the GDPR's rules on lawful and fair processing and on transparency, and that it retained location data longer than necessary" through its Location Accuracy, Location History, and Web & App Activity features. The DPC also ordered Google to remediate these issues within six months, though Google claims that the controversial features are no longer in use.

Infrastructure and Supply Chain

- **Australian, US Officials Investigating Diversion of Potentially Sensitive Jet Parts to China:** Both Australian and US officials are investigating how a shipment of F-35 fighter jet components made using advanced materials and techniques were “inexplicably diverted” to Hong Kong and ultimately ended up in Chinese government possession. The shipment, carried by UPS, included “a cockpit canopy and weapons-bay door from an Australian military F-35 that was being sent to the US for inspection and possible repair or disposal in late May.” These components are said to be “coated with radar-absorbing material that enhances their stealth capabilities,” which could allow the Chinese government to study and potentially reverse-engineer the material for their own use. The series of events that led the parts to fall into Chinese hands remains unclear, with the flight carrying them reportedly diverted to South Korea while traveling to the US for an unknown reason, before making another stop in Hong Kong during which authorities confiscated the shipment. The US Department of Defense called the parts unserviceable (an assessment echoed by Lockheed Martin’s Australian branch) and “are actively working with US authorities and industry partners to retrieve these components, investigate the incident, and place safeguards to avoid a future occurrence,” according to a Pentagon statement. The investigation could spark calls for more restrictive regulations on the shipment of defense equipment by private carriers, as well as greater scrutiny of trade with China more broadly.
- **New Chinese Canal Could Support Closer Manufacturing Ties With Southeast Asia:** China’s newly-opened Pinglu Canal, described as the country’s “first modern river-to-sea canal,” is expected to play a critical role in the development of the Guangxi Autonomous Region and could increase Beijing’s trade with Southeast Asian countries. Guangxi is laced with a network of rivers connecting it with neighboring provinces and northeast Vietnam. However, the lack of a connection to the Gulf of Tonkin and navigability issues on rivers to the west have historically forced the products of Guangxi’s various industries to be shipped east toward Guangdong for export, benefitting that province’s ports at Guangxi’s expense. The canal’s opening is expected to “dramatically cut down shipping distances between the country’s southern hinterland and Southeast Asia,” where Chinese manufacturers maintain strong supply ties with their local peers. In addition to increasing Guangxi’s attractiveness as a destination for manufacturing investment and facilitating logistics for Southeast Asian supply chains, the canal could also reduce shipping costs along this route, providing a further incentive to bilateral supplier relationships.
- **More Chinese Shippers to Operate During Golden Week in Response to Rising Freight Rates:** China’s Golden Week celebrations, which this year fall from 01-07 October, are typically a challenging period for importers of Chinese goods ahead of the Western holiday season. With most working to bring in goods by October to take advantage of holiday shopping behaviors, many Chinese shippers have traditionally blocked out this period for shipments, increasing competition for the few available voyages. However, with Transpacific voyage rates nearing COVID-19 pandemic-era records in response to the ongoing global energy crisis and other factors, shippers are offering more voyages this year than the past three years, in what is likely

an attempt to capitalize on rising rates. The increased capacity is likely a welcome surprise amid ongoing severe disruptions to supply chains and trade around the world, and could temper prices somewhat as a result.

- **Chinese Water Survey Discovers Two Large Aquifers Under Taklamakan Desert:** The discovery of two large groundwater sources during a survey of China's Taklamakan Desert could boost reforestation and development efforts in the critically water-stressed region. One aquifer is said to be near "Andir township in Minfeng county," while the other is further toward the desert's interior. Alongside the discovery, Chinese authorities are also testing systems for irrigating crops, cooling data centers, and other potential uses of brackish water sources. If Beijing is able to extract and use these water resources to develop energy and data center infrastructure in the area, it could provide a boon to China's efforts to secure sufficient computing capacity. Meanwhile, the water could also be used to reinforce the country's "Great Green Wall Initiative," which seeks to contain desertification through reforestation and cropland establishment. Crops are already cultivated along the edge of the desert, and if brackish water irrigation trials are successful, tapping into these reservoirs could both boost food security and help control the desert's expansion.
- **US Customs Voiding Importer Registrations Over Missing Contact Information:** US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officials are voiding importer registrations over inaccurate contact information, potentially threatening thousands of cross-border shipments with delays, fees, and other knock-on impacts. The enforcement drive began on 18 September, with CBP "voiding importer-of-record numbers containing inaccurate or incomplete information" such as addresses or phone numbers. Once an IOR number is voided, the importer must apply for a new one, which "could prevent affected companies from clearing US-bound freight and leave cargo stranded at ports of entry." The move could impact "customs brokers, freight forwarders, trucking companies, and warehouses," and importers may not be notified that their IOR number has been voided until a shipment is stalled in the supply chain. A 19 August Federal Register notice announced the crackdown as part of a broader federal effort to gain more oversight of importers registered in the US, many of which (such as third-party fulfillment centers) fail to register US premises or points-of-contact. Particularly exposed are importers based in the US and Canada, where "nonresident importers of record" can send goods into the US market.

Health

- **US Measles Cases Top 3,600 As CDC Acknowledges First Death of 2026:** Measles cases continue to worsen across the US, with over 3,600 cases reported as of 25 September. The current epicenter remains Pennsylvania, where at least 890 cases and four deaths have been confirmed across 39 counties so far this year. While Pennsylvania has confirmed four measles-associated deaths, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has thus far only included one in its statistics, though it does not specify in which state. Pennsylvania health officials threatened to

withdraw their request for CDC aid unless the agency begins “to transparently and accurately communicate information about those measles-associated deaths.” Other US states of concern include South Carolina, Texas, Utah, Illinois, Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin.

- **US-Wide Cancer Drug Shortages Threaten Treatment Plans, Potential Delays: A National Comprehensive Cancer Network survey of 31 leading US cancer treatment centers conducted between 04 and 27 August 2026 found that every respondent is experiencing a shortage of at least one drug critical to their operations, while more than half are witnessing shortages of three or more medications. The most common shortage, reported among 94% of recipients, was ifosfamide, “a generic chemotherapy drug used to treat a variety of cancers, including bladder, ovarian, testicular, and pediatric leukemias and lymphomas.” Other drug supply shortages include Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG), carboplatin, and cisplatin, used to treat bladder cancer and a variety of other tumors. Less than a third of respondents said they could provide treatment as planned amid the ongoing shortages, while the modification of existing treatment plans “required treatment centers to re-engage with insurance companies” in the vast majority of cases (though about two-thirds of respondents did not experience delays as a result).**
- **US Pediatricians Seeing Fewer Patients Amid Ongoing Immigration Enforcement Drive: A survey published 15 September by the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) warns that pediatricians across the country are reporting a noteworthy decline in patients seeking healthcare services amid the ongoing US immigration enforcement drive. Nearly 40% of respondents “believe they’re seeing fewer families for medical care because of worries about immigration status,” while over 30% have observed a decrease in parents applying for government benefits. Additionally, more than 20% “said some families have stopped sending their children to school.” The findings are particularly significant for their potential impact on vaccination rates among children, which could fall in response amid a series of dangerous communicable disease outbreaks nationwide and ahead of the typical US flu season. With survey respondents estimating that around a quarter of their patients are from immigrant families, the cumulative impact of falling vaccination rates on community-level immunity could open the door to local outbreaks of dangerous illnesses.**
- **Spread of Certain Mosquitoes Fueling Dengue Outbreak in Florida: A rapidly-expanding outbreak of locally-acquired Dengue fever in multiple parts of Florida is raising concerns about the potential for the virus that spreads the debilitating illness to become endemic in the state. As of 17 September, the state had reported just 152 cases, but by 25 September this had risen to 392 cases and at least one death. The outbreak remains concentrated in the Miami and Tampa Bay areas, with Hillsborough and Miami-Dade Counties together accounting for more than 300 of the cases reported to-date. In response, officials in three Tampa Bay-area counties—Hillsborough, Pasco, and Pinellas —have declared local public health emergencies, granting state authorities extraordinary powers relating to mosquito suppression and other control and treatment measures. Mosquito-borne illness alerts have also been issued in Miami-Dade and seven other**

counties. State officials recommend that Florida residents “take precautions from mosquito-borne illnesses by appropriately applying bug spray, avoiding areas with high mosquito populations, and wearing long pants and shirts when possible.” Authorities also reported an increase in West Nile Virus among poultry in Pinellas County, while the state reported its first locally-acquired case of Chikungunya this year in Miami-Dade. Factors ranging from increased international travel to climate change are believed to be helping tropical species of mosquito spread into new areas around the world, increasing the likelihood of diseases like Chikungunya, Dengue, West Nile Virus, and others circulating locally in communities with no recent history of (or experience in) treating these illnesses.

- Los Angeles County Faces Second Typhus Outbreak in Two Months: Health officials in Los Angeles are investigating an outbreak of flea-borne typhus in the Wilshire Center and Koreatown area of the city. At least seven people have been infected so far, leaving six hospitalized (though all ultimately recovered). The outbreak is the second this year, following earlier circulation of typhus in Pico Union that sickened at least five people in late July. The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health warned that the risk is county-wide, with cases reported “among people with a range of housing and socioeconomic circumstances.” At least 109 cases have been reported in Los Angeles County during 2026 to date, short of the record 220 cases reported in 2025, which exceeded the record set a year earlier by some 17%. Typhus is not spread from human to human, though contact with the feces of fleas carrying the bacteria could cause infection.

Demonstrations and Industrial Action

- **Mexico City to Face a Second Weekend of Unrest Over Unresolved Mass Killings:** Just a week after large-scale demonstrations marking the anniversary of a mass kidnapping at a rural school, Mexico City will see further unrest as community members mark the 58th anniversary of the Tlatelolco Massacre, during which Mexican security forces fired on protesting students, killing as many as 300. Thousands joined Mexico City demonstrations over the weekend to commemorate the "Ayotzinapa 43," a group of students kidnapped from a teachers' college on 26 September 2014 who were never found. Demonstrations over both cases, neither of which have seen the perpetrators brought to justice, recur annually in the country, causing localized disruptions (especially in the Mexico City area, but also other population centers around the country) and occasional clashes with authorities. Mexico City officials estimated that 2025 Tlatelolco memorial demonstrations attracted as many as 10,000 participants, including hundreds described by authorities as masked antagonists. Similar turnout is likely at the 2026 event. Isolated disruptions are possible along the march route, which will begin at the Plaza de las Tres Culturas at 4:00 pm before proceeding to the Zócalo. Transport disruptions are expected along "Avenida Ricardo Flores Magón, Eje Central Lázaro Cárdenas and Avenida 5 de Mayo, in addition to the streets surrounding the Zócalo."
- **France Prepares for Nationwide Public Sector Strike, Students Mobilize at High Schools on 29 September:** Widespread disruptions to public services can be expected across France on Tuesday, 29 September, due to nationwide demonstrations and a public sector strike over wages and working conditions. The day of action, organized by eight of the country's major unions, will see disruptions to education, healthcare, transportation, and other public service sectors. More than 150 demonstrations are planned in conjunction with the strike, including in Paris (march from Place de la République to Place de la Nation at 2:00 pm), Marseille (Réformés at 10:30 am), and Lyon (Manufacture des Tabacs) at 10:30 am. While most demonstrations are likely to remain peaceful, heightened tensions surrounding overcrowded and underfunded high schools in Île-de-France may lead to unrest. The Union Syndicale Lycéenne (USL), which represents students, is calling for a nationwide blockade of high schools during the public sector strike on 29 September, referring to it as a "convergence of struggles." The government has threatened to deploy security forces to intervene in the student blockades, and police have arrested at least 31 people in the greater Paris area since student-led demonstrations escalated on 25 September.
- **South African Anti-Immigration Groups Announce 30 September, Plan Anti-Femicide Demonstrations:** The March and March movement and other anti-immigration groups are planning demonstrations across South Africa to press their demand that undocumented foreign nationals leave the country by 30 September. The call to action follows a similar campaign from earlier this summer that passed without government action. Following weeks of anti-immigration

demonstration activity in the interim, the March and March movement is now calling for a "South African Men March" over a series of recent femicides in the country, and for participants to "defend and protect" women against gender-based violence in South Africa. Deputy National Police Commissioner Tebello Mosikili confirmed that authorities are monitoring activity surrounding the new 30 September deadline, but also shared that "no special budget allocation" has been made to bolster security ahead of the potential disruptions.

- Simultaneous Fuel Price Demonstrations Threaten Significant Transport Disruptions in Philippines: Transporters' strikes taking place in the Philippines are expected to peak on 29-30 September, when a three-day strike organized by the MANIBELA drivers' union, which runs from 28-30 September, overlaps with a nationwide work stoppage organized by drivers associated with the PISTON labor confederation scheduled for 29-30 September. The labor action, organized in both cases in response to the rising cost of fuel and related taxes, could see up to 125,000 commercial and public transport drivers (including private taxi owners) participate, with as many as 25,000 joining MANIBELA's metro Manila action and 100,000 joining PISTON's nationwide strike. Reduced jeepney availability is most likely along major Metro Manila corridors, including Alabang, Commonwealth, Cubao, España, Monumento, Pasig, and Taguig, while PISTON demonstrations near Mendiola could intensify the impact of MANIBELA's actions in the capital region. Cebu drivers will establish strike centers, while Bacolod's action is limited to two hours. The overlap will likely lengthen queues, raise ride-hailing demand, and delay commutes, although government-organized ride programs should prevent a complete public transport shutdown.
- Bolivian Demonstrations Against Repeal of Fuel Subsidy to Escalate to Nationwide Transport Stoppage on 28 September: After Bolivian labor and transport organizations including the Bolivian Workers' Center (COB), the Confederation of Bolivian Driver's Unions, the Cochabamba Transportation Federation, and tanker truck operators declared states of emergency and announced plans to demonstrate indefinitely from 23 September, organizers have escalated their threat to include a nationwide transport stoppage planned for 28 September. The unrest comes in response to the government's adoption of Supreme Decree 5716, which eliminated the country's diesel subsidy, raising the cost of the fuel by over 80%. The threat could paralyze both commercial and public over-the-road transport across the country. One labor leader stated that there would be no public transport in Bolivia on 28 September, with phased escalations potentially leading to "an indefinite suspension of service." The repeal of the diesel subsidy is widely unpopular and could drive heightened turnout at related demonstrations or lead to additional calls to action in the coming days.