

Geopolitics

# BBVA Research Big Data Geopolitics Monitor

Big Data Unit  
30 April 2024

## US and UK urge Hamas to accept the Israeli truce proposal. Zelensky asked for more weapons. Spanish Prime Minister remained in office

**Truce proposal from Israel to Hamas:** the US and UK urge Hamas to accept Israeli truce proposal in war on Gaza. British Foreign Secretary David Cameron said on Monday that the Israeli proposal delivered to Hamas includes a 40-day ceasefire in the Gaza war and the release of “potentially thousands” of Palestinian prisoners in return for the release of some Israeli hostages ([Al Jazeera](#)).

**Russian-Ukrainian Conflict:** President Zelenskiy indicated that more Western armored vehicles are needed before launching a counteroffensive to recapture Russian-occupied territory. This statement underscores the ongoing military and strategic dimensions of the conflict ([Reuters](#)). CIA Director William Burns has emphasized that not providing further aid to Ukraine would be a significant mistake ([POLITICO](#)).

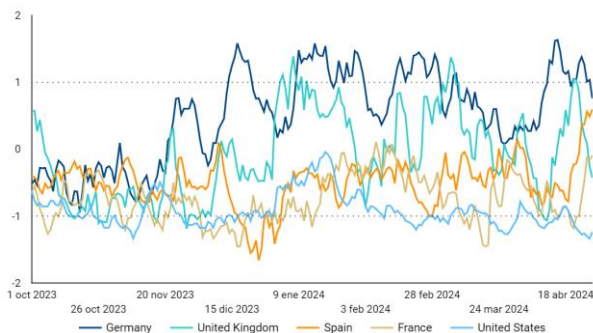
**Spanish Prime Minister stays:** Spain’s Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez decided to remain in office ‘with even more strength’ after several days of reflection. Our political tension index signaled the negative media sentiment, mainly in the local news. Despite the increase of the economic policy uncertainty in local media, the indicator remains in the neutral area (Fig 2).

### The BBVA Monitor: Economic Policy Uncertainty indexes relaxed in most of the countries, while it increased in Spain given the uncertainty for the potential resignation of the Prime Minister

Middle East continues to be the main hot spot as the conflict continues well alive. However, the reaction of the economic policy uncertainty indicators observed last week in some developed markets started to correct:

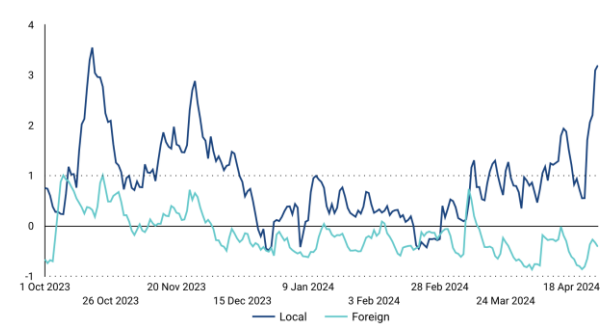
- The **levels of Geopolitical risk, Conflict and Political Tensions decreased during the week in the Middle East**. However, **protest indicators increased sharply in Israel** (Fig 3) given the country was rocked by the largest protests demanding a hostage deal since the war began. This social movement spread to other universities in other countries such as the US. The economic policy indicators started to recede after last week’s increases, coming back to the neutral area in the case of Germany (Fig 1 and Fig 3).
- In the case of Latam, the **Geopolitical risk** indicators decreased in most of the countries (Fig 3 and Fig 4).

Fig1. **ECONOMIC POLICY UNCERTAINTY: EU & US**  
(28-day weighted moving avg, normalized by its own history)



Source: BBVA Research & [www.gdelt.org](http://www.gdelt.org). Positive (negative) values indicate greater (lower) risk relative to the mean of period 2021-nowadays

Fig2. **POLITICAL TENSIONS: SPAIN**  
(28-day weighted moving avg, normalized by its own history)

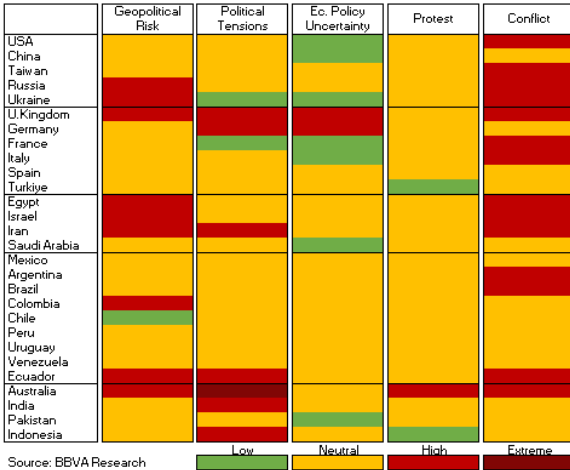


Source: BBVA Research & [www.gdelt.org](http://www.gdelt.org). Positive (negative) values indicate greater (lower) risk relative to the mean of period 2021-nowadays

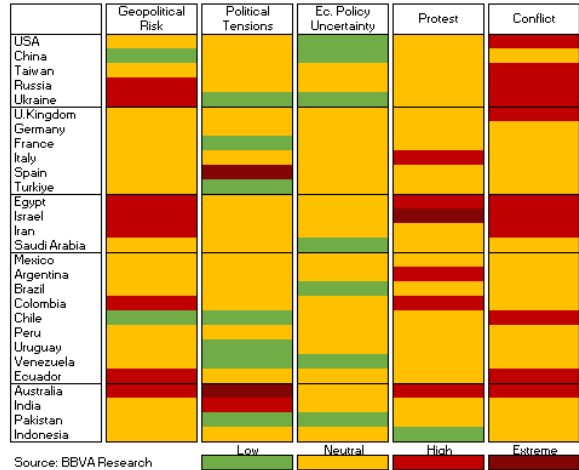
\*The selection of news has been enriched by the BBVA Research Geo Assistant developed with Chat-GPT.

**Fig3. BBVA RESEARCH GEOPOLITICS MONITOR "SIGNAL" CHANGES**  
(Signals in Geopolitical Risk, Political Tensions, Economic Policy Uncertainties, Protest and Conflict according to Standard Dev)

**Summary of Signals After Hamas-Israel Conflict (April 22nd, 2024)**  
(News Sentiment Map. Sentiment relative to average sentiment in each country)

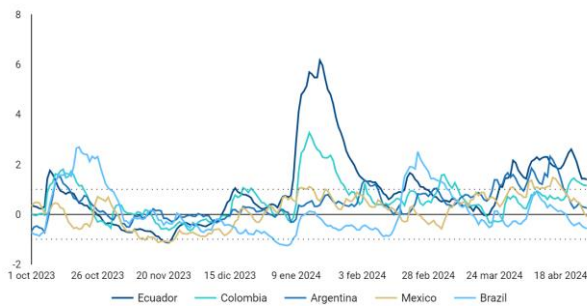


**Summary of Signals After Hamas-Israel Conflict (April 29th, 2024)**  
(News Sentiment Map. Sentiment relative to average sentiment in each country)



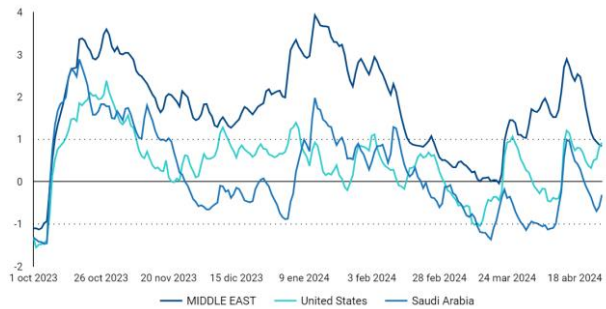
Source: BBVA Research and [www.qdelt.org](http://www.qdelt.org)

**Fig4. GEOPOLITICAL SENTIMENT: LATAM**  
(28-day weighted moving avg, normalized by its own history)



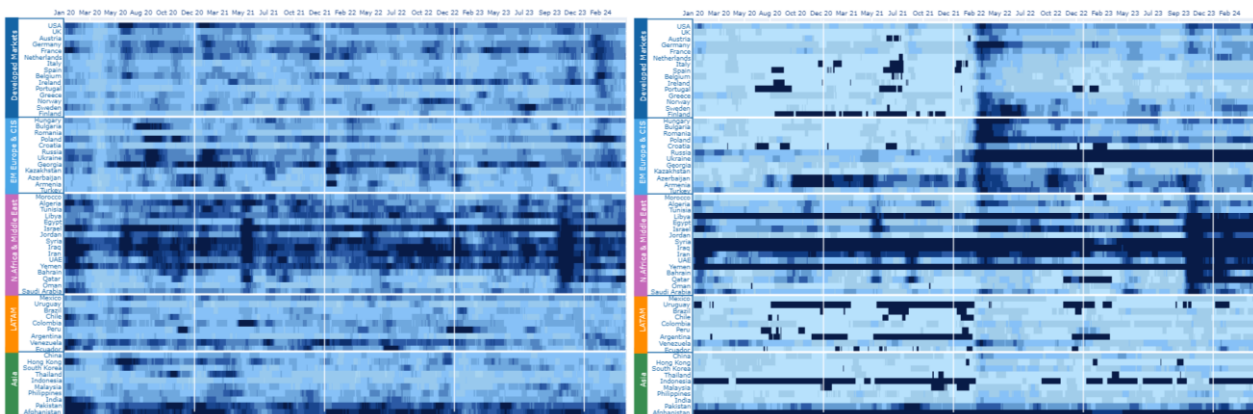
Source: BBVA Research & [www.qdelt.org](http://www.qdelt.org). Positive (negative) values indicate greater (lower) risk relative to the mean of period 2021-nowadays

**Fig5. GEOPOLITICAL RISK: ME, US & SAUDI ARABIA**  
(28-day weighted moving avg, normalized by its own history)



Source: BBVA Research & [www.qdelt.org](http://www.qdelt.org). Positive (negative) values indicate greater (lower) risk relative to the mean of period 2021-nowadays

**Fig6. BBVA RESEARCH PROTEST AND CONFLICT HEAT MAPS**  
(Evolution of Protest and Conflict over time by regions)



Source: BBVA Research and [www.qdelt.org](http://www.qdelt.org)

## Methodological annex: indicators' construction

We have developed a daily tracker with weekly updates to monitor protest and conflict indicators for every country in the world from 2019 to present day. To construct this, we use a rich 'big database' of international events (GDELT), created by Leetaru and Schrod (2013). GDELT is an open-source database which extracts and parses digital news monitoring world events covered by news media from nearly every corner of the world, whether broadcast, printed or published on the web, in over 100 languages, every moment of every day, updated every 15 minutes. Thus, it contains a comprehensive and high resolution catalog of geo-referenced events and themes.

Using different dictionaries, several thousands of taxonomies and themes are identified in the news pieces to classify the information. The algorithms used by GDELT also identify emotions, organizations, locations, news sources and events across the world as well as their average sentiment using Natural Language Processing (NLP) techniques and the lexicon approach.

The included indicators are:

- Geopolitical Risk: or sentiment (weighted by coverage) of the country's geopolitical risk perception.
- Political Tensions: or sentiment (weighted by coverage) of the country's political tensions.
- Economic Policy Uncertainty or sentiment (weighted by coverage) about the country's economic policy uncertainty, also disaggregated by media origin.
- Protests or coverage regarding social protests or unrest in the country.
- Conflict or coverage of armed conflicts, which go beyond verbal protests.
- Bilateral Tensions or the sentiment (weighted by coverage) between a specific pair of countries that appear together in the news article (plus NATO and EU).

The indicators track the evolution of tensions and are normalised by its own country history since 2019, thus they are all expressed in terms of standard deviations from their historical patterns. Indicators usually lie within the range  $[-1, 1]$ . Therefore, when the values exceed one (the upper boundary of the range), this means escalating tensions. While it's possible to observe simultaneous tensions arising in multiple countries (for example, due to geopolitical events affecting several nations, as seen in some of our heatmaps), using these indicators for direct quantitative comparisons of risk levels between countries is not recommended.

We apply a weighted moving average of 28 days (to include four complete weeks with the same number of days of the weeks) to reduce noise of daily information and identify signals more clearly. The weights have been calculated using a discrete geometric distribution such that it puts more weight on recent data and less on past data (see Graph 1). Aggregating by weeks, the weight of the most recent week has a weight of 68%, the past week 22%, the previous 7% and the fourth 3%. The weight of the 28 days can be seen in the following image. In such a way, the indicators reflect what is happening in the last days.

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