

Geopolitics

BBVA Research Big Data Geopolitics Monitor

Big Data Unit

20 May 2025

India & Pakistan ceasefire holds but tension remains. Chinese exporters cautiously optimistic. Khamenei has dismissed US demands to halt uranium enrichment

Ukraine accuses Russia of stalling Peace Talks & EU-UK imposes new sanctions on Russia: Zelenski has accused Russia of exploiting peace negotiations to delay and prolong its military campaign and warned that Moscow is using diplomacy as a stalling tactic, while continuing its aggression. In response, the EU and UK imposed new sanctions targeting Russia's "shadow fleet" of oil tankers and financial networks that help evade existing restrictions. Germany expressed disappointment over Russia's lack of commitment to peace. Meanwhile, Ukraine called on the G7 to increase pressure by lowering the price cap on Russian oil exports from \$60 to \$30.

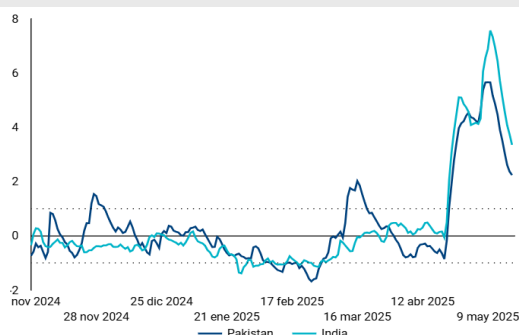
Netanyahu faces increasing international pressure amid the Gaza War: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is under increasing political pressure as international calls to end the Gaza war intensify. Allies, including the US, UK, France, and Canada, have urged Netanyahu to cease hostilities. Negotiations in Doha with Hamas have failed to yield a ceasefire, and Netanyahu's political future appears increasingly uncertain.

Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has dismissed US demands to halt uranium enrichment: Ali Khamenei has dismissed US demands to halt uranium enrichment labelling demands "excessive and outrageous". This stance comes amid stalled negotiations over Iran's nuclear program, with Tehran expressing skepticism about the success of ongoing talks. Iranian officials have not confirmed attendance at a proposed fifth round of discussions in Rome, citing concerns over the US's "illogical" positions ([Reuters](#)).

The BBVA Monitor: India–Pakistan tensions ease but risks remain. Trade Policy Uncertainty Indicators continue to decline

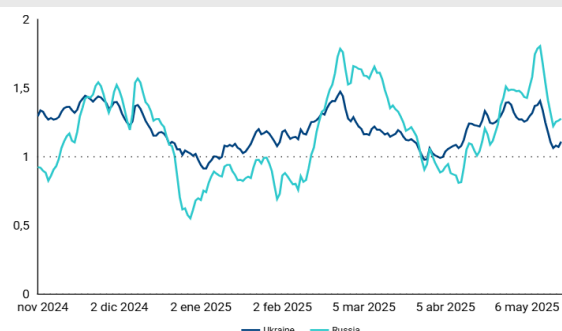
- **Geopolitical risk indicators** decreased rapidly this week in **India and Pakistan** following the ceasefire between both countries, after a sharp increase the previous weeks. However, they remain in the extreme risk area (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 3).
- The conflict between **Russia and Ukraine** remains unresolved despite recent ceasefire attempts in the past few weeks. The indicators slightly increased this week after the observed decreasing trend over the previous weeks (see Fig. 2 and Fig. 3).
- Regarding trade tariffs, both the **Trade Policy Uncertainty and Economic Policy Uncertainty indicators** continued to decline this week, albeit at a slower pace. These indicators reached neutral levels in local media coverage, especially in **Latin American** countries and **Germany** (see Fig. 3, Fig. 4, and Fig. 5).

Fig1. **GEOPOLITICAL RISK INDEX**
(Local media. 28-day weighted mov avg, normalized by its own history)



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

Fig2. **CONFLICT INDEX**
(Total media. 28-day weighted mov avg, normalized by its own history)



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

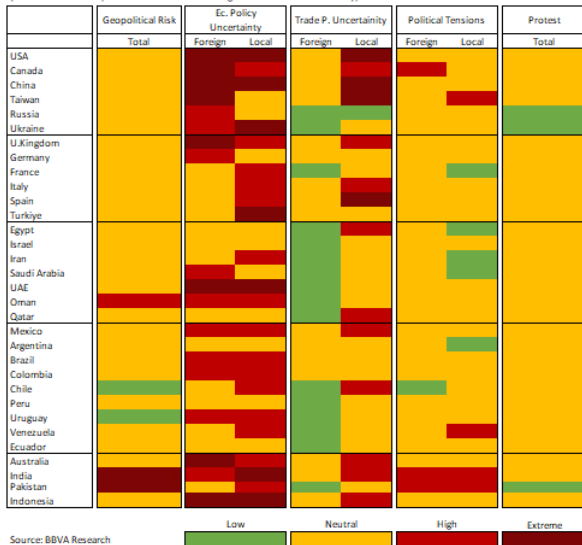
*The selection of news has been enriched by the BBVA Research Geo Assistant developed with Chat-GPT.

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 (May 13th, 2025)

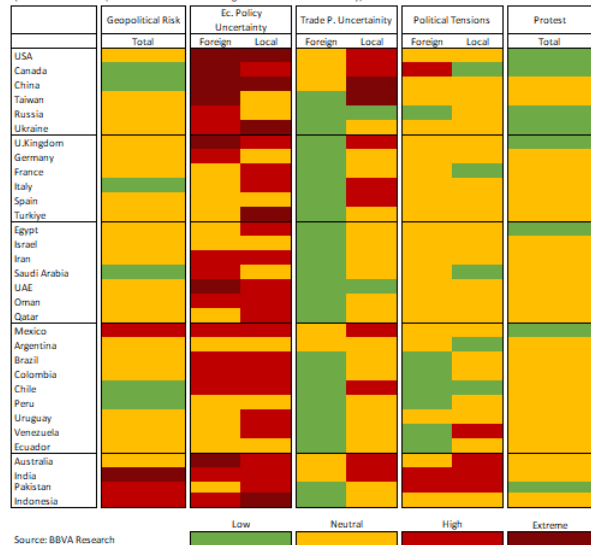
(News Sentiment Map, Sentiment relative to average sentiment in each country)



Source: BBVA Research and www.qdelt.org.

Summary of signals (May 20th, 2025)

(News Sentiment Map, Sentiment relative to average sentiment in each country)



Source: BBVA Research

Fig4. **TRADE POLICY UNCERTAINTY INDEX**

(Local media. 28-day weighted mov avg, normalized by its own history)

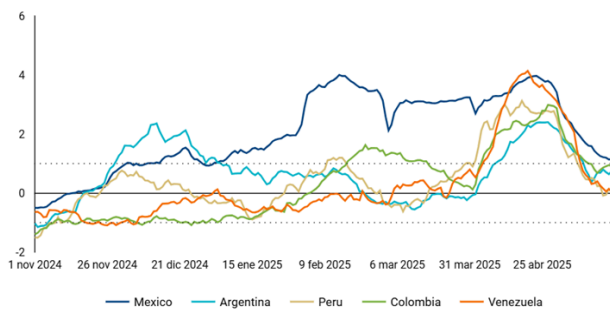
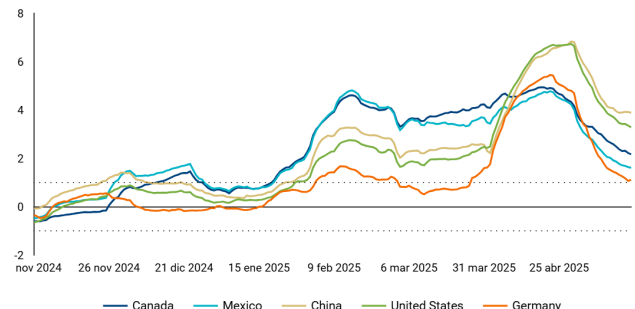


Fig5. **TRADE POLICY UNCERTAINTY INDEX**

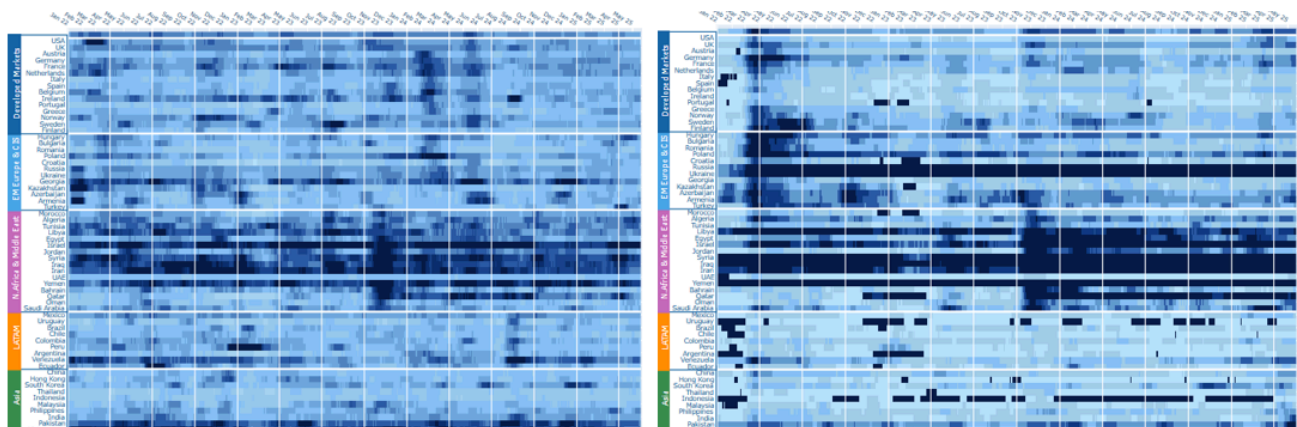
(Local media. 28-day weighted mov avg, normalized by its own history)



Source: BBVA Research & 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)



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 Schrodt (2013). GDELT is an open-source database that 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 normalized by their country's 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 the 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 has been happening in the last few days.

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