

## Geopolitics

# BBVA Research Big Data Geopolitics Monitor

Big Data Unit

## Iran's Regime Faces Unprecedented Internal and External Pressure. US-Greenland Tensions Escalate Amid Trump Push for Acquisition. Venezuelan Prisoner Releases Continue

**Iran's Regime Faces Unprecedented Internal and External Pressure:** Iran's government is under significant strain from widespread domestic protests, ongoing economic hardship, and heightened military threats from Israel and the United States following a costly 2025 war. Nationwide demonstrations have resulted in hundreds of deaths amid a severe government crackdown, and Tehran is struggling to maintain political cohesion. External military pressure from US and Israeli forces has further weakened the regime's strategic posture.

**US-Greenland Tensions Escalate Amid Trump Push for Acquisition.** Trump reiterated that the United States is not seeking a lease but full acquisition of the autonomous Danish territory to counter perceived Russian and Chinese influence in the Arctic. Greenland's government and Denmark have firmly rejected these proposals, insisting on sovereignty and defense under NATO. EU officials warn that any US attempt to seize Greenland could spell the end of NATO and severely strain transatlantic relations. NATO leadership has emphasized broader Arctic security measures but stopped short of directly addressing the acquisition threat ([link](#)).

**Venezuelan Prisoner Releases Continue:** The Venezuelan government announced the release of 116 prisoners reportedly detained for actions deemed to destabilize the constitutional order, and independent rights group Foro Penal reported at least 41 political detainees freed in recent days. The developments are seen as part of broader gestures toward easing political tensions.

### The BBVA Monitor: the escalation of instability continued in Iran, triggering higher regional geopolitical risk

- The social unrest indicator in Iran is reaching unprecedented values in the extreme risk area.** Nationwide protests have intensified domestic unrest, while worsening economic conditions and mounting external military pressure have pushed the rest of the indicators into the high-risk zone, particularly geopolitical risk (see Fig. 1 and Fig. 3).
- Geopolitical risk and conflict remain high in Venezuela,** although they have moderated compared with previous days. The remaining indicators are increasing at a moderate pace. Spillover effects are evident across the region, with **Colombia, Peru, Mexico, and the US** registering geopolitical risk levels in the high and extreme-risk range. **Brazil corrected sharply**, coming to the neutral area (see Fig. 2, Fig. 3, and Fig. 5).
- In Europe, geopolitical risk increased in Norway and Denmark**, moving into the high-risk area amid rising US - Greenland tensions (see Fig. 3 and Fig. 6).
- Protests became more widespread globally** over the past week (see Fig. 3).

**FIG 1. IRAN: MAIN GEO INDICATORS**

(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)

**FIG 2. VENEZUELA: MAIN GEO INDICATORS**

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



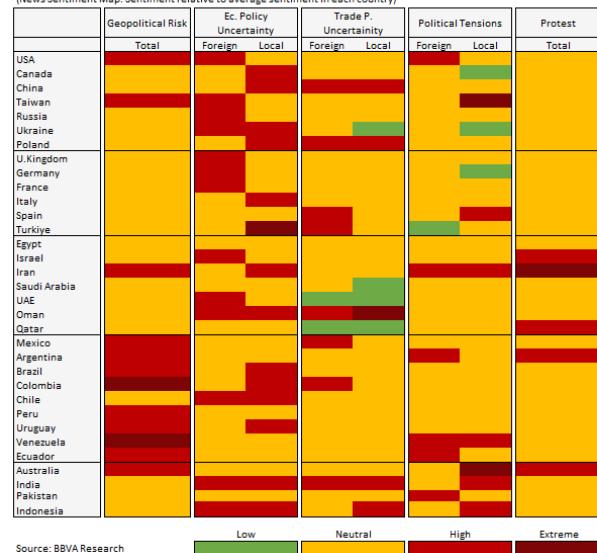
Source: BBVA Research & [www.gdelt.org](#). Positive (negative) values indicate greater (lower) interest relative to the mean of period 2021-nowadays)

### FIG 3. 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 (January 05th, 2026)

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

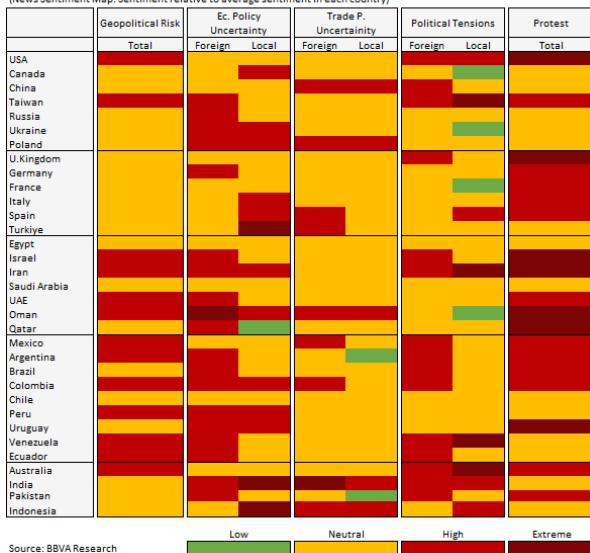


Source: BBVA Research

Low Neutral High Extreme

#### Summary of signals (January 13th, 2026)

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

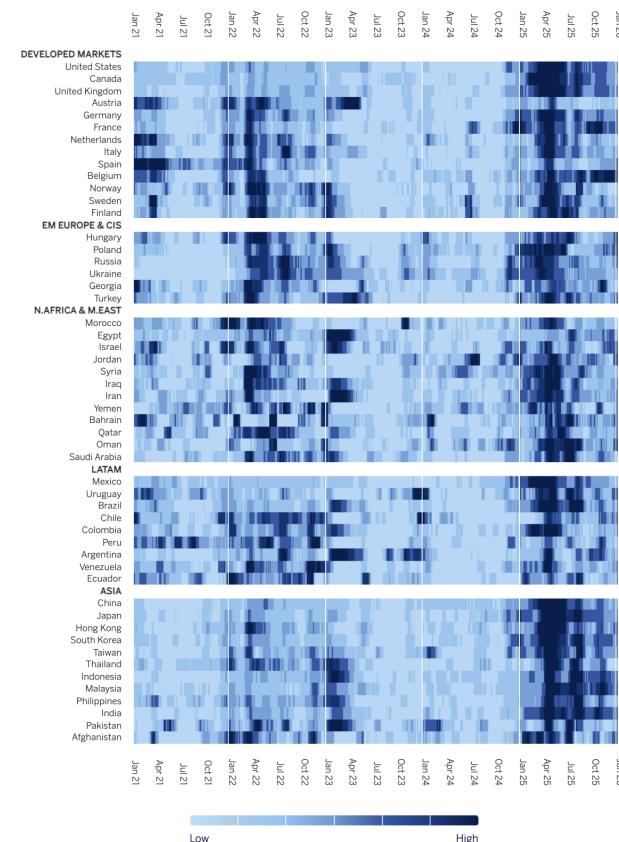


Source: BBVA Research

Low Neutral High Extreme

### FIG 4. ECONOMIC POLICY UNCERTAINTY MAP

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



Source: BBVA Research & [www.gdelt.org](http://www.gdelt.org). Darker Blue colors stands for higher economic policy uncertainty while lighter blue colors for low uncertainty

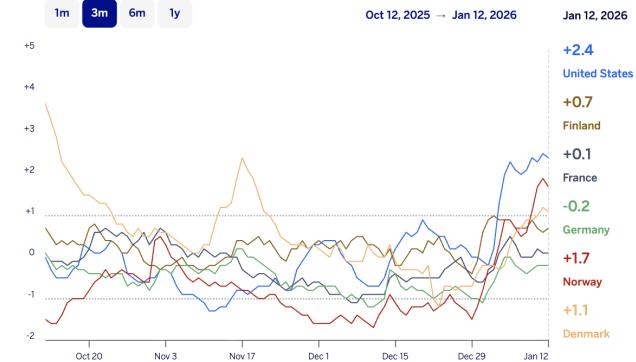
### FIG 5. LATAM: GEOPOLITICAL RISK

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



### FIG 6. US-EUROPE: GEOPOLITICAL RISK

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



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

## 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 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.

**DISCLAIMER**

The present document does not constitute an “Investment Recommendation”, as defined in Regulation (EU) No 596/2014 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 April 2014 on market abuse (“MAR”). In particular, this document does not constitute “Investment Research” nor “Marketing Material”, for the purposes of article 36 of the Regulation (EU) 2017/565 of 25 April 2016 supplementing Directive 2014/65/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council as regards organisational requirements and operating conditions for investment firms and defined terms for the purposes of that Directive (MiFID II).

Readers should be aware that under no circumstances should they base their investment decisions on the information contained in this document. Those persons or entities offering investment products to these potential investors are legally required to provide the information needed for them to take an appropriate investment decision.

This document has been prepared by BBVA Research Department. It is provided for information purposes only and expresses data or opinions regarding the date of issue of the report, prepared by BBVA or obtained from or based on sources we consider to be reliable, and have not been independently verified by BBVA. Therefore, BBVA offers no warranty, either express or implicit, regarding its accuracy, integrity or correctness.

This document and its contents are subject to changes without prior notice depending on variables such as the economic context or market fluctuations. BBVA is not responsible for updating these contents or for giving notice of such changes.

BBVA accepts no liability for any loss, direct or indirect, that may result from the use of this document or its contents.

This document and its contents do not constitute an offer, invitation or solicitation to purchase, divest or enter into any interest in financial assets or instruments. Neither shall this document nor its contents form the basis of any contract, commitment or decision of any kind.

The content of this document is protected by intellectual property laws. Reproduction, transformation, distribution, public communication, making available, extraction, reuse, forwarding or use of any nature by any means or process is prohibited, except in cases where it is legally permitted or expressly authorised by BBVA on its website [www.bbvareresearch.com](http://www.bbvareresearch.com).