Research

14 Jul 2026

Geopolitics

BBVA Research Big Data Geopolitics Monitor

Big Data Unit

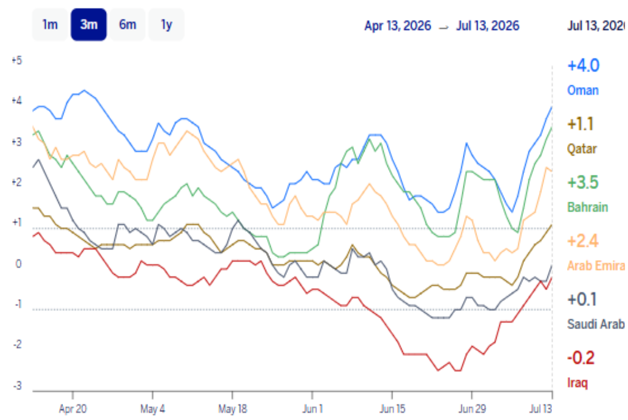
US-Iran confrontation intensifies with new strikes and maritime tensions in the Strait of Hormuz. European leaders strengthen the military support framework for Ukraine.

US-Iran confrontation intensifies with new strikes and maritime tensions in the Strait of Hormuz: The United States carried out another round of strikes against Iranian military targets as the confrontation with Tehran continued to escalate. Iran responded with missile attacks against US military facilities in the Gulf and has been accused of attacking commercial tankers near the Strait of Hormuz, increasing concerns over regional security and maritime traffic.The renewed fighting has prompted international diplomatic reactions from regional and global powers, while concerns over the security of one of the world's most important shipping lanes continue to grow.
European leaders strengthen military support framework for Ukraine: At a summit in Paris, European leaders and NATO partners reaffirmed long-term military support for Ukraine. Participants announced additional defense cooperation initiatives, including expanded air defense efforts, new sanctions targeting Russian hybrid activities, and further financial commitments for Kyiv.The meeting highlighted growing European coordination on missile defense and long-term security planning amid the continuing war with Russia.
Ukraine and partners launch new ballistic missile defense coalition: Ukraine and several allied countries announced the creation of a coalition focused on strengthening protection against Russian ballistic missile attacks. The initiative seeks to accelerate joint development and deployment of advanced air-defense capabilities.

The BBVA Monitor: Geopolitical risk and economic policy uncertainty indicators surge again across the Middle East over the week

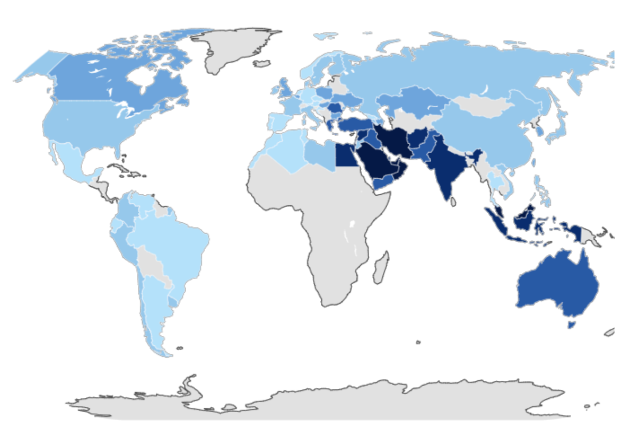
- The **geopolitical risk indicators** rose sharply over the week across the **Middle East,** returning to extreme levels in countries such as Oman and Bahrain following the intensification of strikes near the Strait of Hormuz. Similarly, **Economic Policy Uncertainty indices** also increased sharply across the region, as shown in the global map in Figure 2, with Oman and Qatar recording the highest values (see Fig. 5). Economic sentiment indicators also deteriorated over the week (see Fig. 1, Fig. 2, Fig. 3 and Fig.4).
- In Europe, despite heightened tensions related to the war in Ukraine, geopolitical risk indicators remain relatively contained, as shown in Fig. 6.

FIG 1. MIDDLE EAST - GEOPOLITICAL RISK
(Total 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. GLOBAL MAP - EPU
(Total media. 28-day weighted mov avg, normalized by its own history)



Source: BBVA Research & www.gdelt.org. **Dark (light) color indicates higher (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.**

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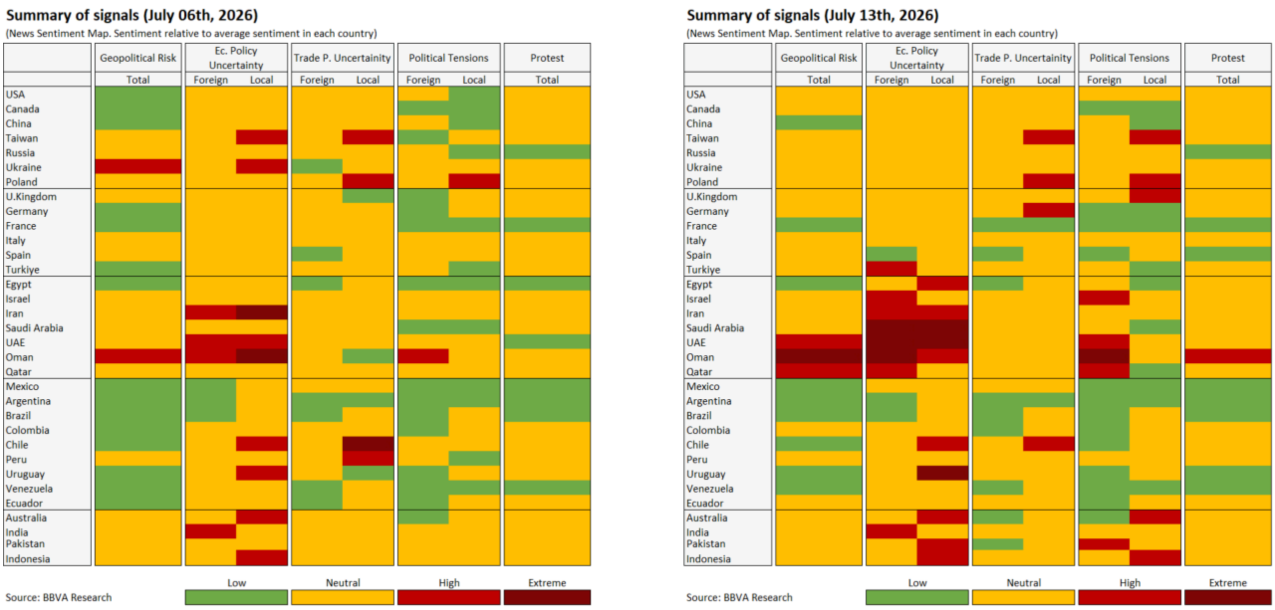
FIG 3. BBVA RESEARCH GEOPOLITICS MONITOR "SIGNAL" CHANGES

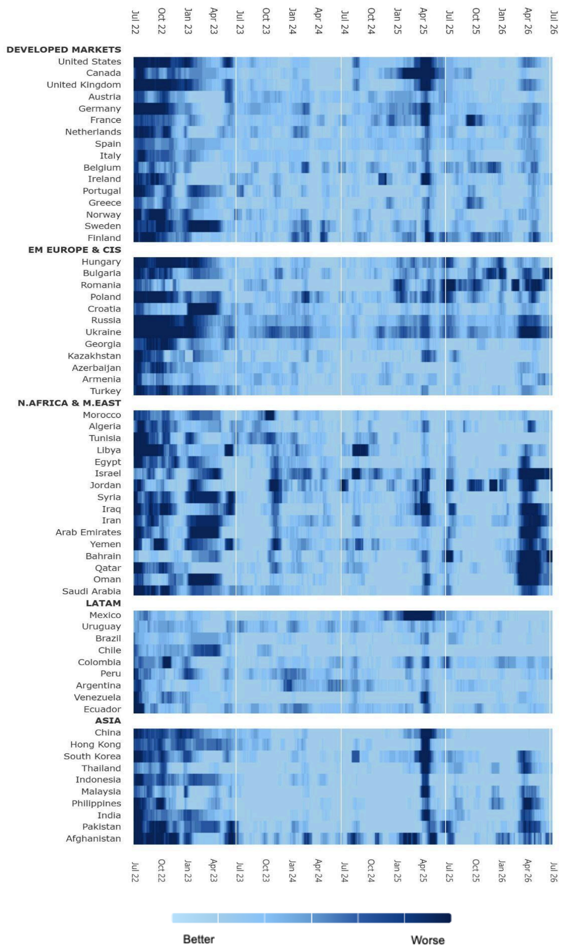
(Signals in Geopolitical Risk, Economic Policy Uncertainty, Trade Policy Uncertainty, Political Tensions and Protest according to Standard Dev)



Source: BBVA Research and http://www.gdelt.org/

FIG 4. ECONOMIC SENTIMENT MAP

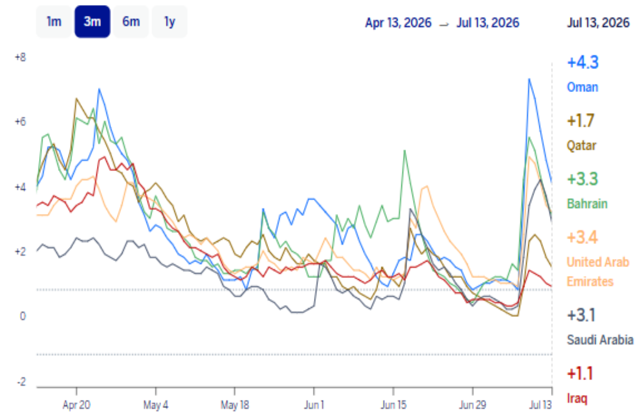
(Local media. 28-day weighted mov avg, normalized by its own history)



Source: BBVA Research & www.gdelt.org. **Darker Blue colors stands for higher economic policy uncertainty while lighter blue colors for low uncertainty**

FIG 5. MIDDLE EAST - EPU

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



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

FIG 6. EUROPE - GEOPOLITICAL RISK

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

Source: BBVA Research & www.gdelt.org. **Positive (negative) values indicates better (lower) sentiment 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 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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