



# Travel Risk Advisory: FIFA World Cup 2026

An assessment of the security, geopolitical, and operational risks surrounding the FIFA World Cup 2026 across Canada, the United States, and Mexico.

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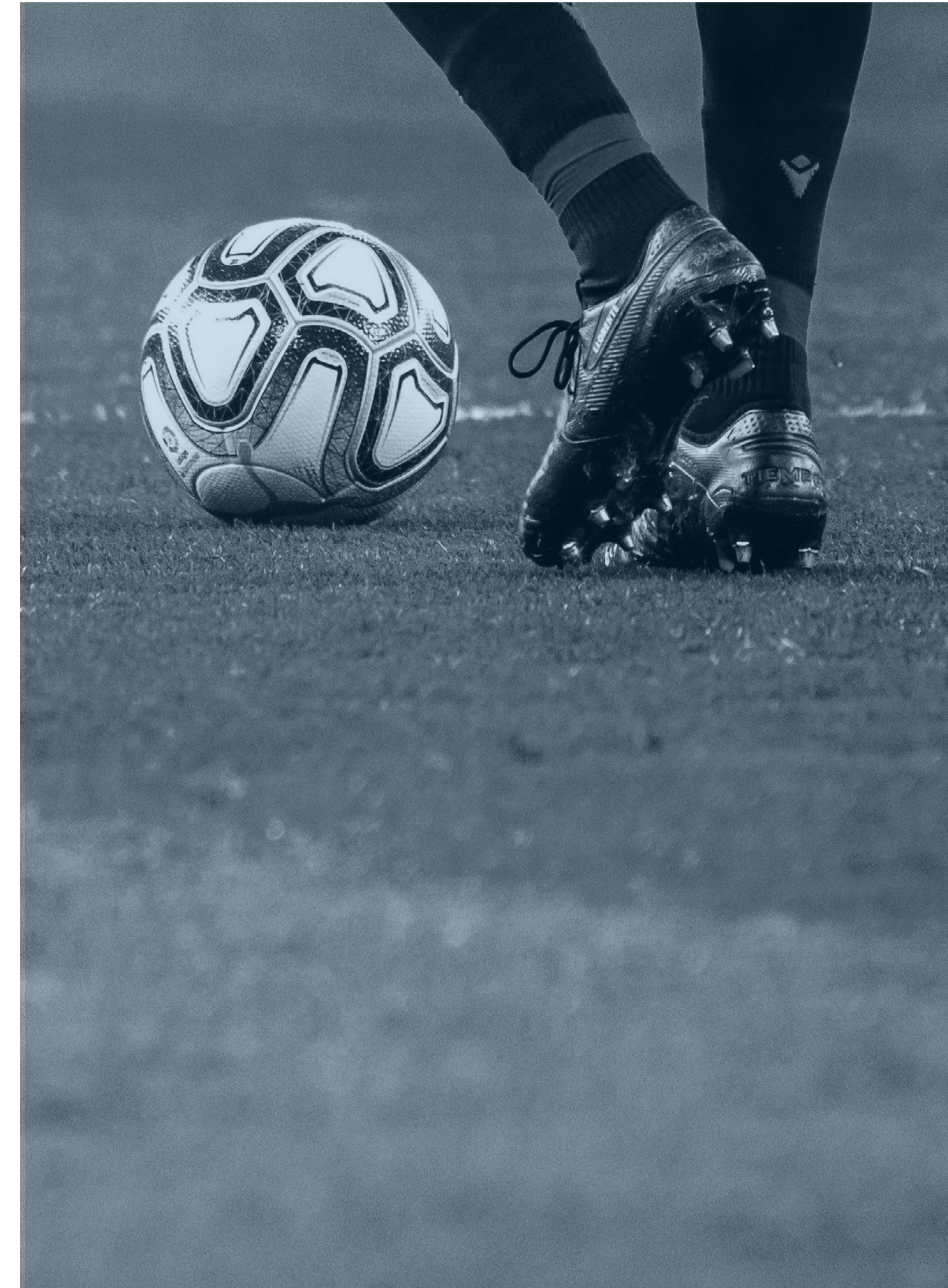
# Travel Risk Advisory: FIFA World Cup 2026

The 23rd edition of the FIFA World Cup will take place between 11 June and 19 July in North America. The tournament, which is the most-watched sporting event worldwide, will be hosted across 16 cities in Canada, the United States, and Mexico.

For the first time, 48 teams will participate, up from the previous 32, meaning that a total of 104 matches will be played during the competition. Approximately 6.5 million people are expected to visit the host countries.

The structure, expanded scope, and duration of the tournament are likely to pose unique security and logistical challenges. The tournament also coincides with significant global and regional instability, which is likely to affect the risk profile of the tournament.

This report provides an overview of the potential risks associated with travel to Canada, the US, and Mexico during the World Cup. It first assesses the baseline risk environment in each host country, outlining the broader security picture, before analysing key threat categories and assessing how these may be affected by the tournament itself and by current geopolitical trends.



# Stadium Locations

Vancouver

BC Place



Seattle

Lumen Field



San Francisco

Levi's Stadium



Kansas City

Arrowhead Stadium



Los Angeles

Sofi Stadium



Dallas

AT&T Stadium



Monterrey

Estadio BBVA



Guadalajara

Estadio Akrom



Mexico City

Estadio Azteca



Toronto

BMO Field

Boston

Gillette Stadium

New York / New Jersey

Metlife Stadium

Philadelphia

Lincoln Financial Field

Atlanta

Mercedes-Benz Stadium

Miami

Hard Rock Stadium

Houston

NRG Stadium

# Canada

Canada is a stable democracy and one of the largest economies in the world. It is generally considered to be a very safe country, however, routine levels of security awareness should be maintained.

Crime levels are comparatively low compared to other countries, yet the threat of criminal activity is still present, especially in urban areas and tourist spots. There have also been terrorist incidents in recent years, so vigilance should be maintained, especially in areas of political significance.

<b>Overall Risk Level</b>	Low
<b>Capital</b>	Ottawa
<b>Languages</b>	English, French
<b>Currency</b>	Canadian Dollar (CAD)
<b>Emergency Number</b>	911
<b>Security</b>	Stable environment with low levels of violent crime; petty crime in major cities
<b>Primary Risks</b>	Extreme weather, wildfires (seasonal), travel disruption
<b>Health</b>	High standard of medical care; insurance recommended for international travellers
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Reliable transport and communications; delays possible during severe weather
<b>Political Stability</b>	Low risk; occasional protests in urban centres





**Canada is likely to be the lowest-risk host country and has the fewest number of host cities: Vancouver and Toronto. Canada has overall low levels of crime compared to both the US and Mexico. The main crime-related threat in Canada is from petty and opportunistic offences, with violent crimes being considerably less common.**

Civil unrest is the second-most likely threat to affect travel to the World Cup. Canada's overall civil unrest risk remains low, primarily because most protests are peaceful and police retain sufficient crowd-control capability, and rarely resort to violent methods. However, several recent large-scale protest movements have been staged in Canada that have resulted in travel and service disruptions, as well as occasional episodes of political violence.

Recent protest triggers have included labour disputes and domestic politics, such as the 2022 convoy protests and the more recent truckers' protests, and global developments and threats, such as environmentalist concerns, the war in Gaza and Iran's repression of large-scale anti-regime protests.

The terrorism threat in Canada is lower than that in the US, but higher than in Mexico. Canada remains a desirable target for actors such as jihadist terrorist groups wishing to carry out "retaliatory" attacks for Western military operations. Moreover, Canada shares, alongside the US and other English-speaking countries, a growing threat from self-radicalised "lone wolves". These typically espouse a diverse range of

ideologies, from jihadism to far-right beliefs, to even more niche sets of beliefs existing in small online communities. This type of attacker is harder to detect and track, making mitigation more difficult.

Environmental threats are likely to be higher in Canada than in the other host countries. As the tournament will take place during the summer, it will fall during a period marked by a high rate of wildfires. Canada has experienced several destructive wildfire seasons in recent years, including the one in the summer of 2023, which had the most area burned in North American recorded history.

The 2026 wildfire season could be more severe if forecast El Niño conditions develop as expected. Wildfires and other environmental threats are unlikely to pose direct safety hazards to visitors to Vancouver and Toronto. However, the scale of recent wildfire seasons has resulted in significant secondary impacts, such as worsening air quality and air travel disruptions.

Experts have warned that poor air quality can pose health risks to both spectators and players, including respiratory issues and reduced cognitive performance, which could increase the risk of injuries during matches. During the 2025 wildfire season, Toronto was regularly ranked among the ten cities with the worst air quality worldwide due to multiple ongoing wildfires in Ontario. Moreover, critics have argued that FIFA has not clearly outlined contingency plans for matches affected by poor air conditions.

# United States

The United States is the world's largest economy and one of the world's largest countries by area and population. Since the middle of the twentieth century, the United States has remained a military, economic, and cultural superpower.

The main risk to travellers in the US is that of crime, including petty and opportunistic offences. Gun-related crime poses a higher threat in the US than in other Western countries, and mass shootings occur frequently. Drug-trafficking networks from Central and South America are important drivers of crime in large urban centres and near the US-Mexico border.

<b>Overall Risk Level</b>	Moderate
<b>Capital</b>	Washington, D.C.
<b>Languages</b>	English
<b>Currency</b>	US Dollar (USD)
<b>Emergency Number</b>	911
<b>Security</b>	Generally stable, though higher levels of violent crime than other developed countries in some cities
<b>Primary Risks</b>	Crime (city-dependent), civil unrest (localised), terrorism, extreme weather (hurricanes, wildfires)
<b>Health</b>	High-quality healthcare; treatment costs are high - comprehensive insurance advised
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Advanced and reliable; disruption possible during severe weather or major events
<b>Political Stability</b>	Stable overall; protests occur regularly and can escalate in specific locations





**The US is scheduled to host the most matches in the tournament and has 11 venues, amounting to more than half of the World Cup's total host cities. Moreover, the US will host both semi-finals in Atlanta and Dallas, the third-place final in Miami, and the final in New York on 19 July.**

**The US will almost certainly receive the highest number of international visitors to the event, with some projections assessing that the tournament will draw an extra 1.2 million international tourists.**

The US has a moderate crime risk level, higher than Canada but lower than Mexico. However, crime rates vary considerably between the host cities, with some, like Atlanta and Kansas City, having a crime rate that greatly exceeds the national average. Many US cities have high rates of firearm-related homicides. However, the main crime-related threat for visitors remains petty and opportunistic crime.

Several large-scale protest movements have emerged in the US in recent years, and the 2026 tournament takes place just months before the November midterm elections, with protest movements likely to exploit the global visibility of the event to draw attention to domestic and international issues and influence the electorate ahead of the polls. The current administration's domestic crackdown on immigration and widespread deployments of Immigration and

Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents have provoked significant backlash, with large-scale protests occurring across most of the cities that are scheduled to hold World Cup games.

Geopolitical sources of unrest include the conflict in Gaza and, more recently, the outbreak of conflict between the US and Iran. Allegations that President Trump will use the World Cup to deflect attention from controversial domestic policies, a practice referred to as "sportswashing", are likely to further motivate protest movements across the US.



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Both international and domestic organised terrorist groups and radicalised individuals likely consider the US a high-value target during the World Cup, with high-profile attacks likely to gain maximum visibility and undermine the US on a global stage. Moreover, there has been a significant increase in terrorism and/or political violence in the US, including several attempts to assassinate President Trump. According to the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), targeted violence increased by around 30 per cent between 2024 and 2025. Over the same period, the US Capitol Police reported an almost 60 per cent increase in the level of threats against Congress members.

The US is effectively treating the World Cup as a major federal security operation, resulting in the establishment of the White House World Cup Task Force to coordinate planning across federal, state and local agencies, with security one of its primary areas of responsibility.

All 78 matches hosted in the US are expected to be designated as National Special Security Events (NSSE), a USD 625 million Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) grant package will be distributed across the 11 host cities, inter-agency

intelligence sharing and coordination will likely increase, and security planning is likely to extend beyond stadium protection to include transport, hotels, ticketing, and fan zones, and border security and checks will increase significantly. Such measures are likely to reduce the risk of organised attacks, where planning, coordination and communication between actors are more likely to be detected and disrupted by enhanced security and intelligence operations.

However, 2025 assessments indicated that the threat from domestic terrorism now represents a greater threat to the US than international terrorist organisations, with domestic actors exposing a range of ideologies, such as white supremacy, partisan extremism, and jihadism. Domestic attacks are conducted by lone actors or small groups, requiring minimal coordination and communication, thus providing fewer opportunities to detect, monitor, disrupt or neutralise any hostile threats.

Visitors to the US are likely to face more stringent checks, including security checks, ahead of their admission to the country, compared to those in Mexico and Canada. In 2025, US authorities introduced new policies to expand screening

and vetting for non-immigrant Visa applicants. Under these, applicants may be required to allow access to their social media accounts and personal devices.

To mitigate against these developments, travellers will likely have to conduct reviews of their social media footprint and of the information stored on their personal devices, such as phones and laptops. Any inconsistencies between declared travel intentions, visa documentation, social media activity or information held on personal devices are likely to result in additional questioning, delays, device searches or denial of entry.



# Mexico

Mexico is a high risk travel destination, it has a severe risk of crime, as well as a high risk of transportation. Civil unrest and political violence are also concerns for travellers.

The risk of crime in Mexico is severe. Violence is commonly reported nationwide, and the country has a high rate of murders. Organised crime is a major concern nationwide and inter-gang violence is common, civilians do often get caught up in these crimes.

<b>Overall Risk Level</b>	Moderate to High
<b>Capital</b>	Mexico City
<b>Language</b>	Spanish
<b>Currency</b>	Mexican Peso (MXN)
<b>Emergency Number</b>	911
<b>Security</b>	Elevated crime levels, including organised crime in certain regions; risk varies significantly by state and city
<b>Primary Risks</b>	Violent crime, kidnapping (targeted), petty crime, road security concerns
<b>Health</b>	Adequate private healthcare in major cities; variable standards elsewhere - insurance recommended
<b>Infrastructure</b>	Developed in key business and tourist areas; less reliable in rural regions
<b>Political Stability</b>	Generally stable; localised protests and security operations may occur





**Mexico has three host cities and will host the tournament's opening matches on 11 June. Out of the three host countries, Mexico has the highest overall risk level. This is mostly due to the heightened crime threat in Mexico, with cartel-related violence constituting the primary risk.**

**In 2025, Mexico intensified its campaign against the cartels, with security forces carrying out raids that have led to the incarceration or killing of several prominent cartel members. This has occurred amidst a surge in inter-cartel fighting due to the fragmentation of the Sinaloa Cartel after the arrests of its key leaders.**

All three host cities have some reported cartel presence, with Guadalajara, in Jalisco state, being a stronghold for the Jalisco New Generation Cartel (CJNG), currently the most powerful cartel in the country. After a Mexican Army raid in February, which killed "El Mencho", CJNG's leader, a wave of retaliatory unrest and violence was recorded across Mexico, with Guadalajara one of the most affected cities.

Street crime, including violent offences like kidnapping, carjacking, and mugging, is also more frequent in Mexico than in the other host nations. Travellers can be singled out, including in upscale areas of large Mexican cities, due to perceived higher wealth and lack of familiarity with the area.

There have been several large-scale protests in Mexico in recent years. These have often turned violent, with police using forceful crowd control measures, such as tear gas. Most protests in Mexico are linked to domestic developments and socioeconomic grievances. These include the cost-of-living crisis, pension reform and reactions to cartel violence.

While less prominent than domestically motivated protests, several cases of unrest have also been linked to geopolitical developments, including the US. Mexico-US tensions, the US crackdown on immigration and the negative rhetoric towards Mexican migrants, the US operation that led to the capture of Venezuelan President Maduro, and the ongoing crisis in Cuba have all driven unrest in Mexico.

Health-related threats are also likely to be elevated in Mexico, particularly due to the higher prevalence of endemic diseases, variable healthcare standards outside major urban centres and potential strain on medical services during the tournament period.

# Crime

**For most travellers, crime is likely to be the most prominent risk category across all event locations. There is almost certainly a correlation between crime, particularly property crimes and antisocial behaviour (mostly driven by high alcohol consumption), and large sporting events in urban centres.**

**Gatherings of tens of thousands of visitors, most of whom are unfamiliar with the local area, are highly likely to attract petty and opportunistic criminals, and increase the threat of offences such as pickpocketing and bag-snatching near event venues and at already at-risk locations such as tourist attractions and public transport hubs.**

Large events are also likely to attract both physical and online scams. The sale of fraudulent tickets on spoofed websites and

the sharing of fake hotel advertisements on popular booking platforms are common forms of crime that will almost certainly pose a threat to visitors to the tournament's host cities. Recent improvements in agentic AI have allowed scammers to automate large-scale online "reconnaissance", automatically identifying victims at scale and targeting them with phishing messages or deepfakes.

In late 2025, Canadian cybersecurity firm Check Point identified more than 4,300 website domains spoofing official World Cup sites or sites connected to the tournament (for instance, those selling merchandise or promoting livestreams of the event).

Luxury property crime will likely be a major concern across all three host countries, with small, organised groups of criminals targeting wealthier individuals attending World Cup games or

visiting the host cities during the event. This type of offence, which has considerably increased in relevance after the rebound in travel and the luxury goods market following the Covid-19 pandemic, is highly likely to pose a disproportionately high threat to a relatively smaller subsection of high-net-worth individuals (HNWI), similar to cases observed in popular global tourist destinations in Europe, North America, and beyond.

These crimes are often carried out by groups of several criminals, with members often assigned specific roles, including "scouting" potential targets, following them to identify their accommodation and habits, and eventually targeting them when they are isolated or less likely to resist or receive help.



During the Paris Olympics, several cases of HNWI's being targeted by criminals were reported. In one instance, a famous former player of the Brazilian national football team was robbed of a briefcase reportedly containing approximately USD 500,000 worth of jewellery and cash as he was boarding a taxi outside of his hotel. According to available reports, the victim was targeted by multiple criminals, with one distracting the driver of the taxi, while another secured the briefcase.

Local authorities have pledged to strengthen police presence across the host locations, focusing on securing urban areas where attendees are likely to gather. Mexican authorities have produced the most comprehensive policing plan of the three host nations. "Plan Kukulcán" entails the deployment of around 100,000 extra security personnel (including 20,000 armed forces members) across its three host cities, alongside the deployment of technology, including surveillance drones, facial recognition, and AI-powered surveillance and analytics.

Enhanced police presence is likely to deter petty criminals within security perimeters and near event venues. However, there is a realistic possibility that it will have the effect of "pushing" criminals to areas where police are less likely to have a large footprint, but where visitors are still likely to transit in large numbers. These areas will likely include public transport and stations, private venues like bars and restaurants, and locations associated with the local nightlife scene.

Organised crime is likely to pose a comparatively lower threat to foreign visitors than property crime and antisocial behaviour. The event may also have a temporary deterrent effect on cartel violence in Mexico. Criminal groups are unlikely to deliberately target World Cup events or foreign visitors, as doing so would almost certainly attract global attention and prompt a significant security response from Mexican authorities. Furthermore, cartels retain control over large numbers of formal economy businesses in several host cities, meaning that they stand to benefit from the increased tourist inflows during the tournament.



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# Protests

Unlike crime, the risk of civil unrest is unlikely to affect travel in every host city. However, the World Cup will likely exacerbate the overall risk of unrest, as its visibility, political importance, and economic value are all factors that are likely to attract protest activity from a myriad of actors.

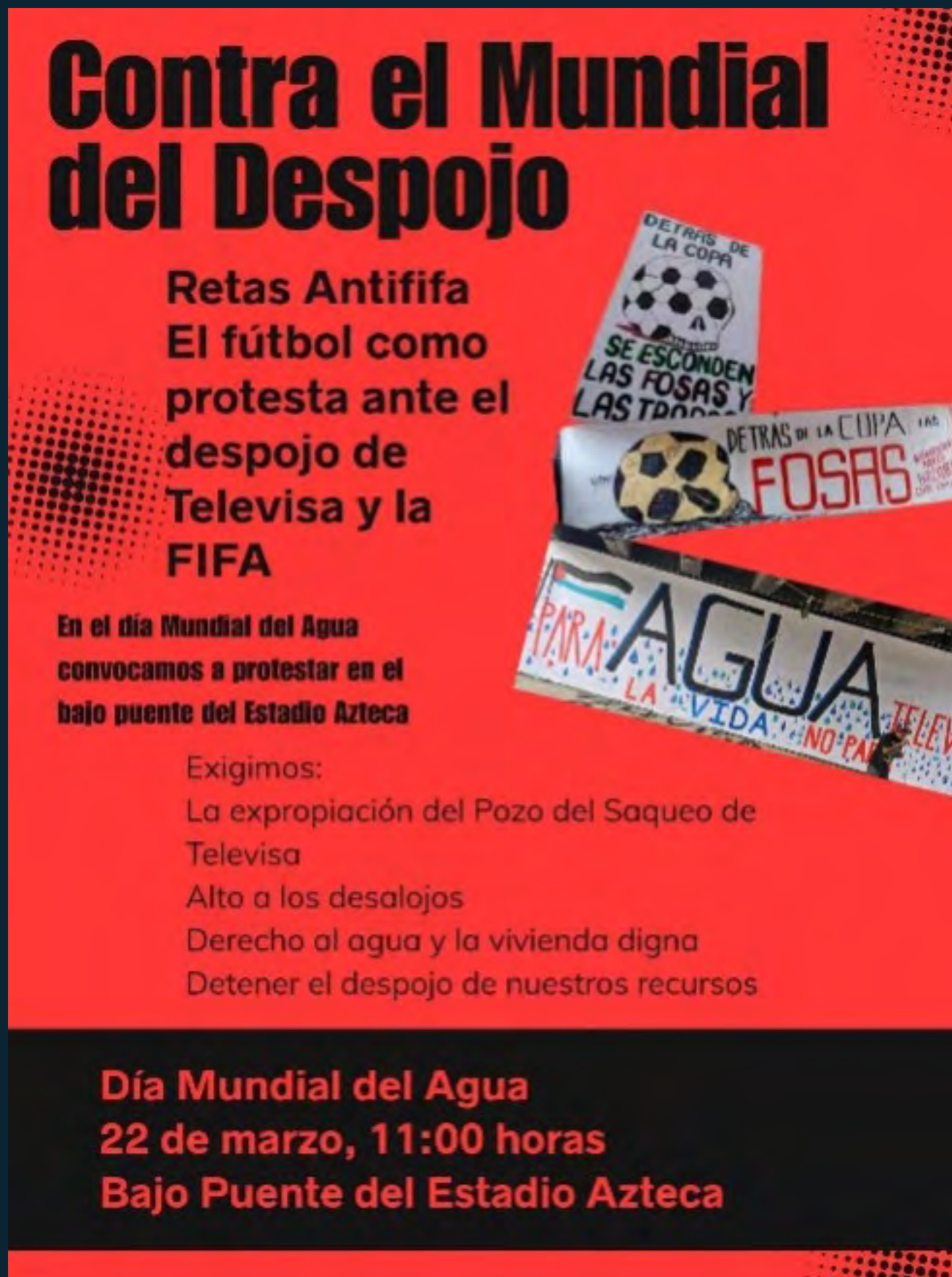
Across Canada, the US, and Mexico, international and global political events are likely to be key drivers of unrest. Recent developments that have the potential to drive civil unrest across all three countries include the recent conflicts in Gaza and the broader Middle East, the US operation that led to the capture of Venezuelan leader Nicholas Maduro, the worsening economic crisis in Cuba, and the war in Ukraine. Broader global issues, such as environmentalist concerns or opposition to AI and other technological innovations, could also drive protests.

Iran's participation in the tournament, while still unconfirmed, would almost certainly increase security risks due to the recent conflict. Iran's first scheduled game, against New Zealand on 16 June, will be played in Inglewood, Los Angeles County. Southern California, especially parts of West Los Angeles or "Tehrangeles", has the largest Iranian diaspora community in the world, comprising around

700,000 people, which has already partaken in several protests against the regime in Iran, including during the June 2025 12-Day War, in response to anti-regime protests and during the current conflict. On 14 February, an estimated 350,000 people attended a rally in Los Angeles, after Reza Pahlavi declared a global day of action.

Los Angeles has also been one of the focal points for pro-Palestine protests, and it is highly likely that activists associated with the pro-Palestine movements will seek to leverage the visibility of the World Cup, particularly during US or Iran games. The Iranian team's matches will likely coincide with large protests in the host cities, with a realistic possibility of clashes between protesters and counterprotesters.

Protests related to Iran's participation could also occur in other host cities. In February, Toronto had the largest protest in its history, with more than 350,000 people gathering to oppose the Iranian government's crackdown on the then-ongoing domestic protest movement.



Poster promoting anti-FIFA World Cup protests in Mexico



Local issues specific to the host countries (or host cities) will also almost certainly play an important role in shaping the civil unrest risk during the World Cup. In the US, the event occurs only months before the key midterm elections, which are likely to shape the second half of the current administration.

In Mexico, the World Cup will take place only a year after a major wave of “anti-tourism” protests, mostly centred in Mexico City, which were organised in opposition to rising costs of living and a growing presence of tourists and expats. These protests were notably violent, with multiple cases of foreign individuals or foreign-owned businesses being attacked.

In Canada, the deployment of US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents to assist with joint investigations is highly likely to prove extremely unpopular. As in the case of the recent Winter Olympics in Italy, ICE agents’ deployment could become a key trigger of protests before and during the events.

Some anti-World Cup protests have already taken place. In Mexico City, protesters have been staging weekly protests, called Jornadas Anti-Mundialistas (anti-World Cup days), closing off parts of highways near the local World Cup stadium, in opposition to the event. These blockades, which have taken the form of improvised football games on the carriageway, are likely to continue and intensify as the tournament approaches. In Los Angeles, workers at

SoFi Stadium have threatened to stage a strike during the event in opposition to the growth in short-term rentals in the city and the ICE anti-immigration operations.

There is also likely an increased risk of direct action by hardline actors. This could take the form of sabotage or other actions designed to maximise transport disruptions or prevent the events from being carried out as planned. During the 2024 Summer Olympics in France, activists targeted public transport infrastructure to prevent fans from reaching the venues.

Activists have also increasingly targeted power stations or other critical national infrastructure (CNI) critical to the running of the event. Road blockades have also increasingly been adopted by activist groups, particularly environmentalist groups. Such actions are likely to disrupt event operations, restrict access to venues and create wider transport delays, even where they do not pose a direct threat to travellers’ physical safety.

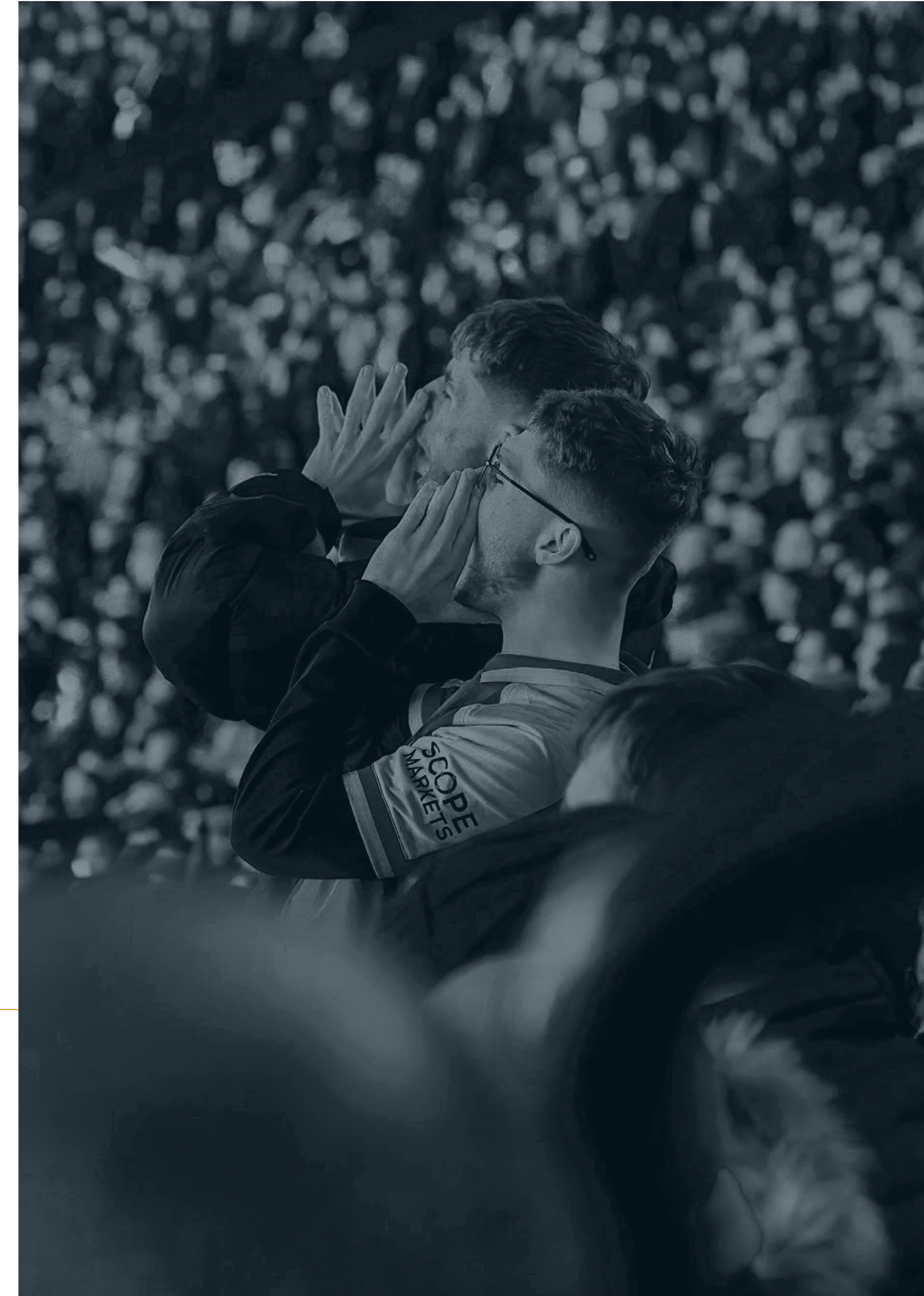
# Hooliganism and Fan-Driven Violence

Several World Cup participant nations have established histories of football hooliganism, including organised domestic supporter groups that have been involved in violent clashes at both club and international fixtures. Certain fixtures are also likely to carry a higher risk of violence, particularly where they involve rival supporter groups, previous incidents of fan disorder, or broader historical and geopolitical tensions between participating countries.

In the group stage, several matches may have a higher probability of violence. These include France v. Senegal (16 Jun., East Rutherford), Croatia v. England (17 Jun., Dallas), and Egypt v. Iran (26 Jun., Seattle). Further “at-risk” matchups could emerge during the elimination stages, such as a potential England v. Argentina semi-final.

Authorities have taken preventative measures to discourage hooliganism during the event. Mexican officials proposed, in late 2025, a “Ley Antibarras” (“Anti-Hooligan Law”), which increases sanctions for fans who engage in violence during sporting events. Authorities have characterised the law as necessary to reinforce Mexico’s legislative and preventative tools to combat hooliganism ahead of the World Cup.

The areas in the vicinity of stadiums are the likeliest areas for fan-related violence. These will include the immediate vicinity of security perimeters within stadiums or public transport hubs that large volumes of fans will use to reach the venues. In addition to these areas, violence between rival fans could also occur at nightlife establishments or public locations hosting match viewing parties.



# Terrorism

**The World Cup is the most-watched sporting event globally, with an estimated viewership of more than 3.5 billion people. This, alongside the concentration of large numbers of foreign nationals at the events, makes it a desirable target for both organised terrorist groups and self-radicalised lone wolves.**

**Moreover, the recent US involvement in conflicts in the Middle East is likely to further increase the terrorist threat. The terrorism risk is likely lower in Mexico, while Canada, a NATO member and key strategic partner for Washington, is also a desirable target for extremist actors espousing different ideologies.**

The main terrorism-related threat is likely to be from individuals and groups espousing jihadist ideology. Groups like Islamic State

(IS) have repeatedly called on supporters to stage attacks at large sporting events, including the 2024 Paris Olympics, the 2024 Cricket T20 World Cup, and the 2022 and 2018 World Cups, held in Qatar and Russia, respectively. IS is likely to renew its calls to supporters in the host countries to stage attacks during the event.

Jihadist groups and self-radicalised individuals are likely to view high concentrations of attendees as attractive targets, particularly outside stadium security perimeters or in other high-traffic areas, such as tourist attractions, public transport hubs, match-viewing sites and fan celebration areas. Jewish places of worship and locations associated with Israel may also be perceived as desirable targets by jihadist actors.

The host countries face a growing threat of terrorism from self-radicalised individuals espousing a range of beliefs, but also increasingly many with no clear ideology, but rather motivated by a desire to achieve maximum visibility for their violent actions. The FBI adopted the term Nihilistic Violent Extremism (NVE) to describe these attacks, which are often carried out by young individuals who idolise school shooters and terrorists from a variety of different and often conflicting ideological backgrounds.

While the threat from NVE actors is highest in the US and Canada, researchers have noted how, in 2025 and early 2026, it has expanded to non-English speaking countries – the Institute for Strategic Dialogue (ISD) notes NVE-linked activity also being recorded in Mexico.



# Cyber Risks

The profile and importance of the World Cup will highly likely make it a desirable target for hackers and cybercriminals, including both state and non-state actors. Past football tournaments and sporting events have been targeted by cyberattacks. For example, French authorities stated that, during the 2024 Summer Olympics, they identified dozens of attempted cyberattacks aimed at disrupting the event.

Authorities further noted that the volume of attacks targeting Olympic events had risen considerably compared to previous events, with “eight to ten more” cyberattacks targeting the Paris event than the previous 2021 Tokyo Olympics.

While the organisers of the 2024 Olympics noted that the attacks caused no disruptions, there are cases of cyber attackers successfully affecting the events. During the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea, cyberattacks resulted in the official website being taken offline and the broadcast of the opening ceremony being cut. The incidents were subsequently linked to malware called “Olympic Destroyer”, which US authorities reported had been developed by Russian-

backed hackers, who deliberately tried to disguise the attack as originating from North Korea.

The volume of cyberattacks targeting the 2026 World Cup will likely match or exceed that recorded at previous editions of the tournament and at other large-scale sporting events like the Olympics. Geopolitical developments, such as the US-Iran conflict or the ongoing war in Ukraine, are likely to provide further incentives to state-sponsored actors.



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On 7 April, several US security and government agencies, including the FBI, NSA, Department of Energy, and Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), published a “Joint Cybersecurity Advisory”. The document singles out Iran-affiliated cyber threat actors, reporting attempts to target critical national infrastructure (CNI) like water, energy and waste disposal systems.

These attacks are often linked to Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)-affiliated actors and have increased as a result of the US-Iran conflict. Even if a US-Iran ceasefire extension or peace agreement is reached, cyberattacks are likely to continue, as such activity is highly deniable and hard to attribute to a state actor.

State-sponsored cyberattacks are more likely to target institutions, event organisers, broadcasters, and CNI. As such, they mainly pose indirect threats to travellers, such as by disrupting transport during the events or disrupting the provision of key services. However, state actors may also conduct operations that could directly target visitors. These

may include mass phishing campaigns or operations aimed at blocking bank transactions or digital consular services.

AI is likely to increase the scale, speed and sophistication of cyber threats to public institutions, private companies and individuals during the tournament. In November 2025, Anthropic reported that suspected Chinese state-sponsored actors had used its Claude Code tool to target roughly 30 organisations globally, including technology companies, financial institutions, chemical manufacturers and government agencies, with the tool allegedly performing much of the tactical work with limited human oversight.

With both state-sponsored actors and cybercriminals likely to increasingly leverage AI, the threat to World Cup host countries, organisers, transport operators, hotels, ticketing systems and spectators is likely to be high.



# Travel Risks

**Worldwide fuel supply insecurity due to the disruptions caused by the US-Iran conflict is likely to affect the tournament. The blockade of the Strait of Hormuz and Iranian attacks on oil and gas production and export infrastructure across the Gulf have significantly impacted fuel supply chains. Any resumption or expansion of the conflict would likely deepen these disruptions, particularly if attacks on energy increase or if the Houthis attempt to disrupt shipping in the Bab al-Mandeb Strait and Red Sea.**

Before the conflict, the Gulf region accounted for about 20 per cent of global jet fuel exports. This percentage has plummeted into the low single digits since the beginning of the conflict. The sharp decline in available fuel stocks has prompted airlines to pass costs onto consumers by increasing flight prices and has also caused several operators to limit the number of services on some routes or cancel routes altogether. Europe and Africa are particularly exposed, as they receive most of their jet fuel from the region.

Even if the Strait of Hormuz reopens, the disruption is likely to have lasting effects beyond the immediate crisis. Damage to Gulf energy infrastructure will reduce output while repairs are carried out, while the depletion of strategic reserves is likely to sustain pressure on fuel supplies. Jet fuel is particularly vulnerable, as its limited storage life makes it harder for states to build and maintain large reserves.

Rising airfares and a corresponding increase in the risk of last-minute flight cancellations will likely affect visitors heading to the World Cup. These trends are likely to disproportionately affect travellers from outside the Americas, particularly those exposed to Gulf-related fuel shocks or reliant on longer flight routes. Furthermore, the Gulf region is also a key transit hub for flights to North America from Asia and other parts of the world. If regional airspaces were forced to close again or if airlines are forced to significantly reduce flight operations, disruption is likely to have wider knock-on effects on long-haul travel to the tournament.

While the threat to long-haul flights is likely the most acute, regional and domestic flights within North America could also face major disruption. North America carriers have not been immune to the effects of higher fuel prices, supply-chain disruption and aircraft availability constraints. Delta has suspended several routes and has increased luggage fares to offset price increases, whereas Air Canada has reduced flights between Toronto and Montreal to New York City. Should the situation deteriorate, further route reductions, fare increases and short-notice cancellations are likely, increasing both costs and uncertainty for visitors to the World Cup.

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