

GLOBAL NEXUS BRIEF



ISRAEL-PALESTINE CONFLICT

Tensions in the Israel-Palestine region escalated significantly in April 2024, leading to severe humanitarian crises. The month was marked by intense military confrontations between Israel and Hamas, with significant casualties on both sides. A notable development includes the UN's urgent call for restraint and a ceasefire to prevent a full-scale regional conflict, especially after Iran's involvement through drone and missile attacks against Israel. The situation in Gaza is particularly dire, with reports indicating a famine in northern Gaza as the conflict disrupts essential services and aid deliveries.

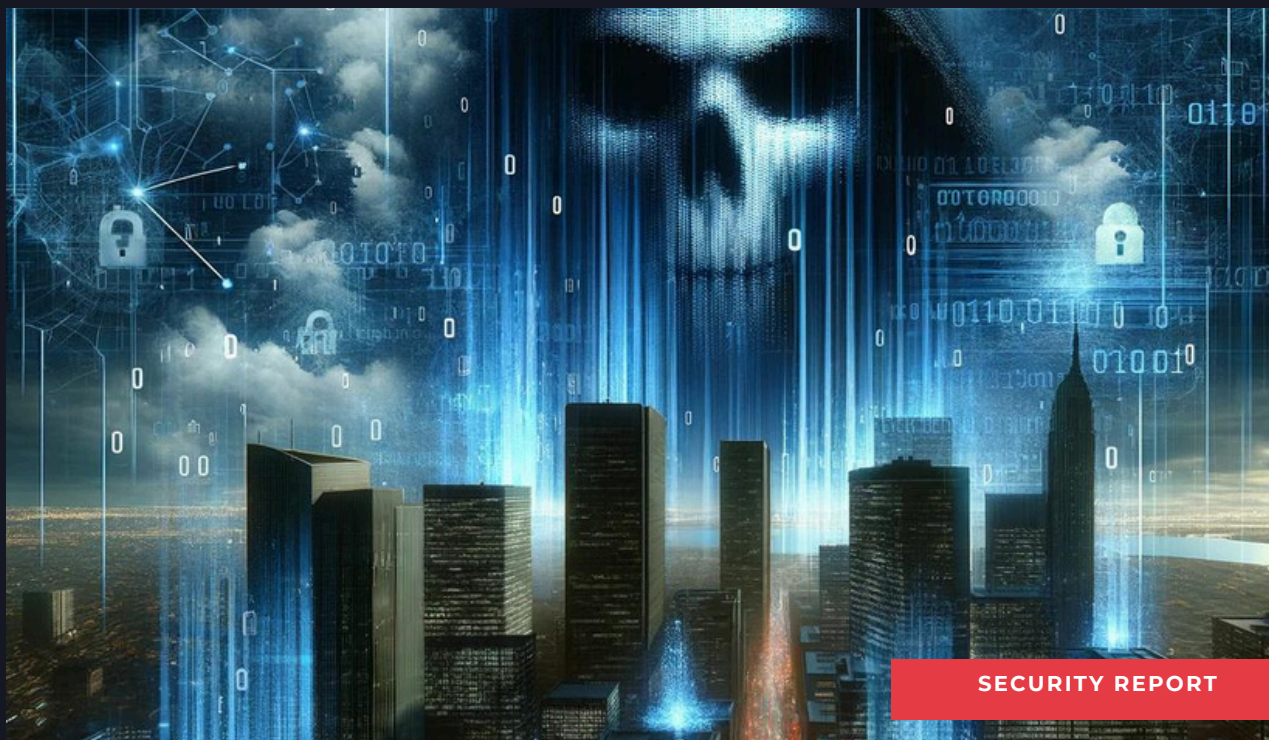
WAR IN UKRAINE

The conflict in Eastern Ukraine remains entrenched, with continuous hostilities marked by sporadic skirmishes along the frontlines. Despite various peace overtures and international mediation efforts, April saw no substantial progress in resolving the conflict. Russia has maintained its military presence and control over the occupied territories, while Ukraine continues to receive international support aimed at bolstering its defense capabilities.

POLITICAL INSTABILITY IN AFRICA



April 2024 saw continued political instability in various parts of Africa, with military coups and governmental upheavals notably affecting the regions' security dynamics. These events have led to widespread international concern about the stability and governance of the affected nations, with external actors calling for peaceful resolutions and respect for democratic processes.



SECURITY REPORT

April 2024 has seen a marked increase in cybersecurity threats, with a focus on financial stability and the exploitation of cloud computing vulnerabilities. The rapid adoption of cloud technologies has provided new avenues for attackers.

Ransomware continues to be a dominant threat, with adversaries increasingly using AI to enhance their attacks. The Check Point 2024 Cyber Security Report notes significant developments in ransomware tactics, including the exploitation of zero-day vulnerabilities and increased attacks on software supply chains. The role of AI in cybersecurity is double-edged, providing both new methods for defense and powerful tools for attackers.

The CSIS Global Terrorism Threat Assessment 2024 outlines a shifting landscape in terrorism threats, with a continued focus on cybersecurity risks. It highlights how technological advancements and geopolitical tensions are reshaping security priorities worldwide.

The evolving relationship between the U.S. and China continues to shape global trade, especially around the exchange of Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) and technology. While trade has provided economic benefits and reduced the U.S. trade deficit, it also grants China significant leverage over U.S. energy sectors.

Global climate risks are increasingly affecting geopolitical stability. The frequency and severity of climate-induced natural disasters are impacting nations' security and economies, prompting a reevaluation of global cooperation on climate policy.

The global economy is showing resilience but faces diverging growth rates among developed and emerging markets. While overall growth is steady, structural challenges such as labor and capital inefficiencies persist, with significant impacts expected from slower growth in major economies like China.

Highlights of April

Cybersecurity Landscape

Ransomware and AI Threats

Global Terrorism and Geopolitical Risks

Geopolitical Tensions and Trade Dynamics

Climate Risks and Policy Responses

Global Economic Fragility



Middle East

The Middle East continues to experience significant geopolitical challenges in April 2024, particularly with the ongoing conflicts in Syria, Yemen, and the heightened tensions between Iran and its neighbors.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has also seen escalated hostilities, with renewed clashes resulting in significant casualties. These conflicts have severe implications for regional stability and are closely watched by international actors.

Economically, countries like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates are intensifying their efforts towards diversification away from oil dependence. This shift is part of broader Vision 2030 plans, which aim to develop non-oil industries such as tourism, entertainment, and technology.

However, the region's economies are still heavily impacted by global oil price fluctuations and the geopolitical tensions that occasionally disrupt oil supplies.

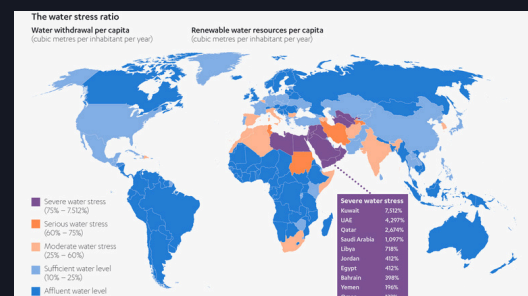


Social Aspects

Socially, there is an ongoing transformation in several Middle Eastern countries, highlighted by Saudi Arabia's social liberalization initiatives.

However, human rights issues remain a significant concern, with international watchdogs criticizing many countries for restrictions on freedoms and ongoing human rights abuses.

The treatment of migrant workers in the Gulf and women's rights across the region continue to draw global attention.



Environment

Environmental concerns are increasingly prominent, with water scarcity and climate change impacting vast areas of the Middle East.

Countries are investing in renewable energy projects and green technologies to mitigate these issues.

Nevertheless, the effectiveness of these initiatives is yet to match the scale of environmental challenges faced.

Europe



WAR IN UKRAINE

April 2024 saw heightened tensions in the ongoing Ukraine-Russia conflict. Despite international efforts to negotiate peace, clashes intensified along the eastern Ukrainian borders. The economic impact is profound, with Ukraine experiencing significant disruptions in trade and local economies, particularly in contested regions.

Nordefco



Amidst growing concerns about Russian aggression, Nordic countries have significantly increased their defense cooperation. A new strategic defense pact among Sweden, Norway, Finland, and Denmark aims to bolster military capabilities and ensure rapid deployment across the region.

Balkans Instability



The political landscape in the Balkans remains volatile, with ongoing disputes over governance and territory exacerbating tensions. International bodies have called for calm and dialogue, but nationalistic rhetoric continues to dominate the political discourse, raising fears of renewed conflict.

EU's Economic Outlook

The European economy shows signs of a sluggish recovery amidst global economic instability. The lingering effects of the pandemic, coupled with geopolitical tensions and internal disparities among EU member states, contribute to a cautious economic forecast. Key industries, particularly manufacturing and services, face significant challenges due to supply chain disruptions and fluctuating market demands.



AFRICA

April 2024 witnessed an unsettling continuity in political instability and military coups across Africa, characterized by a pattern of extended transitional governments and increased foreign involvement in post-coup states. Coups often promise change but tend to result in extended periods of military rule, with little to no progress towards re-establishing democratic governance.

Burkina Faso



Burkina Faso remains under the grip of a military junta following the overthrow of democratically elected President Roch Kaboré in January 2022. The junta, led by Captain Ibrahim Traoré, has indefinitely postponed the elections initially set for July 2024, citing preservation of public order as a justification.

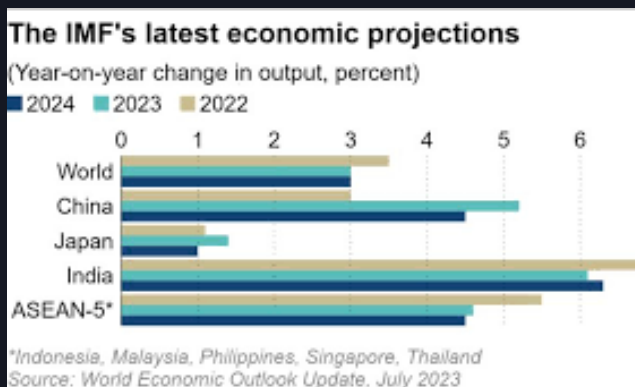
Chad



The death of President Idriss Déby in 2021 led to his son, Mahamat Idriss Déby, assuming power through a transitional military council. Despite international scrutiny, the junta has faced minimal punitive measures from Western countries, focusing instead on maintaining stability and counterterrorism efforts within the region.

The Sahel Region

The region has seen a decrease in Western influence, as countries like Mali, Niger, and Burkina Faso have expelled French military forces and shifted towards more autonomous or alternative alliances, notably with Russia and Turkey. This shift reflects a broader dissatisfaction with former colonial powers and a pivot towards partners perceived as less interventionist.



Asia

April 2024 saw a continuation of geopolitical tensions in East Asia, particularly surrounding the South China Sea.

Regional disputes over territorial claims have intensified, with China, Taiwan, and several Southeast Asian nations engaging in naval stand-offs.

These confrontations underscore the strategic importance of the region and have drawn global attention to the balance of power in Asia.

Asia's economic landscape in April 2024 presented a mixed picture. While China reported a steady growth trajectory, aiming for a 5% increase in GDP, other parts of the region faced economic challenges.

India continued to show strong economic performance, driven by its manufacturing and service sectors, but countries like Japan and South Korea experienced sluggish growth due to declining exports and internal market saturation.



Social Aspects

Social and political movements in Asia have gained momentum, with significant demonstrations in Hong Kong, Thailand, and Myanmar.

These movements reflect deeper societal shifts towards demanding greater political transparency and accountability.

Governments across the region have responded with various measures, ranging from crackdowns to dialogues, indicating a complex interplay between state authorities and civil society.

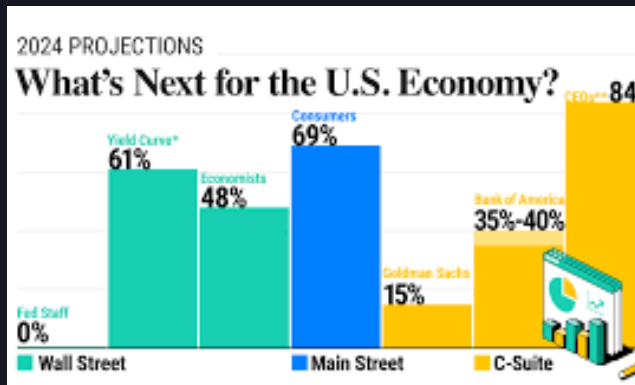


Technology

Asia remains at the forefront of technological innovation, particularly in fields like semiconductors, artificial intelligence, and digital finance.

However, this rapid growth brings cybersecurity risks, with several high-profile cyber attacks reported in the region during April.

These incidents highlight the critical need for robust cybersecurity strategies and international cooperation to secure digital infrastructures.



America

Latin America faced a series of political crises in April 2024, with Venezuela and Nicaragua experiencing heightened tensions both domestically and with international actors.

These tensions are rooted in ongoing governance and human rights issues, leading to economic sanctions and diplomatic standoffs, particularly with the United States. The region's political instability continues to impede its economic development and international relations.

The Americas, particularly the United States and Canada, have shown signs of economic resilience amidst global financial uncertainties.

However, stark inequalities persist, especially in parts of Latin America where economic growth has not translated into broad social benefits.

The disparity is most apparent in access to healthcare and education, which has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic's long-term impacts.



Social Aspects

April 2024 also saw significant social movements across the Americas, particularly focusing on issues of immigration and civil rights.

The United States faced challenges with a surge in migrants at its southern border, prompting national debates on immigration policy and humanitarian responses.

These movements highlight the ongoing struggles for social justice and equitable treatment across the region.



Environment

Environmental issues remain at the forefront in the Americas, with climate change driving policy decisions in both North and South America.

The U.S. has continued to push forward with ambitious climate policies aimed at reducing carbon emissions and promoting green energy.

Meanwhile, countries like Brazil and Mexico face ongoing challenges with deforestation and resource management, stressing the need for sustainable development practices.

Notable Events



Asia

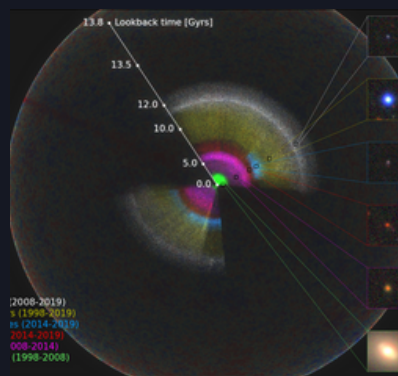
A significant escalation in the South China Sea dispute saw the Philippines assert that it would retaliate against any Chinese interference with its troop resupply missions. This came amid heightened military tensions as Taiwan reported over 30 Chinese military aircraft entering its airspace, prompting a defensive response from Taiwanese forces.

Europe

Ukraine experienced continued aggression with multiple drone strikes from Russia targeting Kharkiv, resulting in civilian casualties. This escalation comes despite international calls for restraint and has significant implications for regional stability.

Australia

On a political note, Sam Mostyn was appointed as the next Governor General of Australia, set to take office in July 2024. This appointment could influence Australia's policy directions in the coming years.



Middle East

The former emir of the Al-Nusra Front, Abu Maria al-Qahtani, was killed in a suicide bombing in Idlib, Syria, with the Islamic State being implicated. This attack underlines the ongoing volatility in Syrian territories despite the diminished presence of ISIS.

Africa

Uganda's Constitutional Court upheld the controversial Anti-Homosexuality Act of 2023, which includes severe penalties for homosexual acts, drawing international criticism.

America

The United States Army Corps of Engineers began dredging San Juan Bay in Puerto Rico to facilitate the construction of a new natural gas terminal.

Researchers in Arizona released the largest 3D map of the universe, which includes over six million galaxies.



Global Food Crisis

The most critical issue is the escalating global food insecurity, highlighted by rising domestic food price inflation across various income groups. As of late April 2024, more than half of low-income countries have reported food inflation rates exceeding 5%, impacting the most vulnerable populations severely. This situation is exacerbated by higher cereal and agricultural prices, contributing to the stress on food systems in these regions. Notably, global wheat stocks are forecasted to reach an eight-year low due to decreased production in key regions like India, leading to further pressures on global food supplies (World Bank).

Moreover, nearly 282 million people in 59 countries faced acute hunger in 2023, marking a significant rise from the previous year due to deteriorating conditions in food crisis regions such as the Gaza Strip and Sudan. This ongoing crisis underscores the need for enhanced international cooperation and immediate policy interventions to stabilize food markets and ensure equitable access to food resources globally (World Bank).

The recommendation for addressing this crisis involves several strategies. Primarily, enhancing international collaboration to stabilize food prices and ensure that agricultural supply chains are resilient against geopolitical tensions and climatic changes is crucial. Additionally, investments in agricultural technology and infrastructure to boost productivity in vulnerable regions could mitigate some of the adverse effects of this crisis. There is also an urgent need for global mechanisms to support countries severely affected by food inflation, ensuring that humanitarian aid and development initiatives are adequately funded and targeted to meet the increasing demands of food-insecure populations.

Addressing these challenges requires a multi-faceted approach that involves both immediate relief measures and long-term strategies to foster a resilient global food system capable of withstanding future economic, climatic, and geopolitical challenges.

Thank you for reading!

NEXUS INSIGHT

44-783-140-9107

www.nexusinsight.org

Q Sentral, Floor 21, Units 08 & 09,
Kuala Lumpur Sentral, 50470 Kuala
Lumpur, Malaysia