

WEEKLY POLITICAL COMPASS

Welcome to this edition of the Weekly Political Compass from Teneo's political risk advisory team.

This week, we are taking a closer look at **Russia** hosting an expanded BRICS summit. Meanwhile, **Japan** will hold a general election, while tensions are high on the **Korean** border. **Georgia** general's election could determine its future geopolitical orientation, while **Chile**'s regional elections will test parties ahead of next year's presidential vote. And unrest is being reported in **Mozambique**, in the wake of a contested presidential election there.

Should you have questions or wish to discuss any of these stories in greater detail, please do not hesitate to reach out to us.

GLOBAL SNAPSHOT

With Russia hosting the annual BRICS summit in Kazan on 22-24 October, we ask our Central and Eastern Europe advisor [Andrius Tursa](#) to look ahead.

Why is the summit important?

The BRICS summit will be the key event of Russia's presidency of the bloc in 2024. Russia's President Vladimir Putin will preside over an expanded gathering including new member states that joined the bloc at the start of this year, namely, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates.

What are the likely outcomes?

During the summit, Putin is scheduled to hold a series of bilateral meetings, including with his Chinese and Indian counterparts. Although the summit is unlikely to result in any major agreements, the Kremlin will present the event as evidence of failed Western efforts to isolate Moscow diplomatically and of rapidly emerging new global institutions to replace the existing ones.

WHAT TO WATCH

ASIA PACIFIC

China/Russia

President Xi Jinping will travel to Russia for the BRICS summit, China's foreign ministry announced. Ahead of the trip, the State Council also announced new export controls on dual-use items, following accusations from Washington that Chinese companies are supporting Russia's war economy with machinery and electronics.

Japan

New prime minister Shigeru Ishiba's Liberal Democratic Party faces an uncomfortable final week on the campaign trail, ahead of the general election on 27 October. The latest public opinion polls over the weekend suggest the gap between the ruling party and the opposition Constitutional Democratic Party is narrowing to the point where the LDP may

struggle to reach the 233 threshold needed for a simple majority. That would make the LDP increasingly reliant on junior coalition partner Komeito and perhaps even a third party in the 465-seat Lower House.

South Korea/North Korea

Tensions remain high on the Korean border, with North Korea blowing up rail and road links and accusing South Korea of sending drones to drop leaflets in Pyongyang. With dialogue channels also broken, there are concerns that North Korea could [further escalate the situation](#) ahead of the US election, with a seventh nuclear test or a unilateral redrawing of the maritime border among the options. South Korea also reported that North Korean troops had arrived in Ukraine to support Russia's invasion there, a move that could cause Seoul to consider stepping up assistance to Kyiv.

Vietnam

The national assembly opened its month-long meeting today. Its first act was to confirm four-star general Luong Cuong as president, nominally restoring the balance of power in the top leadership after the position was simultaneously held by Communist Party general secretary To Lam. Closely watched will be the legislature's action on the government's proposal, which was submitted last week, to build a USD 67-bn high-speed rail between Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh cities, with a target completion date of 2035. In 2010, the national assembly voted down a Japanese-backed proposal, but the latest plan has the support of the communist party's top two decision-making bodies, the politburo and the central committee, which makes it approval likely.

EUROPE

Bulgaria

Early parliamentary elections scheduled for 27 October are not expected to break a protracted political stalemate.

Although Citizens for the European Development of Bulgaria (GERB) led by former prime minister Boyko Borisov is set to win a plurality of seats, it will likely struggle to form a majority government in a fragmented parliament. As a result, a technocratic government or another early election are the most likely outcomes. Political instability and a surging budget deficit are key challenges to Bulgaria's accession to the eurozone.

Georgia

A potentially pivotal parliamentary election that could determine the country's geopolitical orientation and political governance system will take place on 26 October. Although the governing pro-Russian Georgian Dream (GD) is expected to get most votes, independent polling shows that pro-EU opposition parties together are on course to win a majority of seats in a 150-seat parliament. Given GD's extensive influence over various state institutions, its attempts to manipulate the election result cannot be ruled out. Regardless of whether the governing or opposition parties win, the risk of post-election protests and violence is considerable.

Moldova

Incumbent Maia Sandu won the first round of the presidential elections and the "yes" camp claimed a narrow victory in a binding referendum on joining the EU on 20 October. Neither the results nor the conduct of the vote demonstrated a strong determination to pursue a Westward direction, with concerns about extensive Russian meddling. Sandu will now face a Moscow-friendly candidate Alexandr Stoianoglo in a likely tight runoff on 3 November. In the meantime, public protests against the referendum result cannot be ruled out.

LATIN AMERICA

Brazil

President Lula da Silva canceled his trip to the BRICS meeting in Russia due to medical reasons. The president had a domestic accident (a minor brain haemorrhage following a fall) and was advised against long-distance travel. He will take part in the meeting by video conference and keep a regular agenda in Brasilia. Brazil will veto a proposal for Venezuela to become one of ten new associate members (without decision-making power) of the BRICS out of a list of 30 interested nations, since it does

not recognize the government of Nicolas Maduro. Special international advisor to the presidency, Celso Amorim, who just returned from China to prepare announcements for President Xi-Jinping's state visit to Brazil on the margins of the Rio G20 Summit in November, will attend the meeting with foreign minister Mauro Vieira. Brazil will hold the BRICS presidency and host COP30 in 2025.

Chile

Regional and municipal elections take place on the weekend of 26-27 October. The vote represents a major real-world test for all parties ahead of the 2025 presidential and legislative elections. Voting will be obligatory. Two important ways that parties will measure success will be the number of mayoralties they win and the total population they end up governing. Parties in the governing coalition have the most to lose, having reached a high-water mark in the previous elections in 2021. These parties may have been hoping that they might limit losses amid the Right's divisions and general disarray and in the wake of a graft scandal that has hit the *Chile Vamos* (CV) opposition coalition. However, the government has its own problems, not least the sudden resignation last week of the high-profile sub-secretary for the Interior Manuel Monsalve following a sexual assault allegation. The election results may produce further fragmentation and see non-aligned independents gain ground as many voters reject establishment parties.

MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

Mozambique

Unrest is being reported in Mozambique today, 21 October. Independent presidential candidate Venancio Mondlane, who claims to have won the 9 October elections, had called for a peaceful general strike. The assassinations of his lawyer and an election aide over the weekend have reinforced concerns about electoral violence. The electoral commission (CNE) is expected to declare the results on 23 October. So far, provincial results point to a sweeping victory for ruling party Frelimo. Podemos is still expected to challenge the results via the Constitutional Council (CC). Yet despite widespread allegations of irregularities, the CC is unlikely to overturn the results. The security forces may use force to deal with the protests, highlighting that risks to stability will be greatest in the coming days.

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