



World Cup 2026 – Rolling Risk Brief

Issue: 03 Date/Time: 20 May 2026 | 09:00 EST Coverage Period: 20-27 May 2026

Executive Snapshot

Key Shift Since Last Brief:

- US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Markwayne Mullin stated that the 76-day government shutdown had impacted aspects of the World Cup preparation and coordination. Separately, he described the broader threat environment as “extremely high,” highlighting the vulnerability of soft targets outside match stadiums. He nonetheless expressed confidence DHS would maintain public safety across the tournament.
- Teacher union-led protest activity is picking-up in Mexico City and threatening to disrupt mobility and operations ahead of and potentially during the tournament period. Separately, recent survey data from the National Institute of Statistics and Geography (INEGI) shows the impact of February’s cartel backlash on public perception of security in Guadalajara.
- A fragile ceasefire between the US and Iran remains in place following an exchange of fire near the Strait of Hormuz on 7 May. Talks remain stalled. Neither side has formally abandoned the ceasefire, but a resumption of hostilities cannot be ruled out.

Highest Attention Cities (Next 14 Days):

- **Mexico City** – A coalescence of grievances surrounding labor laws, housing and insecurity continue to prompt large mobilizations across key thoroughfares and public spaces ahead of the tournament, impacting logistics and mobility. The CNTE teacher’s union in Mexico continues to stage demonstrations over salary and other demands – threatening operational impacts across the tournament. The union has called for a national strike and sit-in at the Zocalo from 1 June, with implications for mobility and operations in the capital.
- **Guadalajara** – Recently released data from an INEGI survey of insecurity perception revealed that residents of Guadalajara remain deeply affected by the February 22 cartel backlash following the killing of CJNG leader “El Mencho.” The survey, which began collecting data on February 23, showed a 21% increase in public perception of insecurity in Guadalajara compared to December 2025 statistics reinforcing broader sensitivity around safety and traveller confidence in a major host city.

Analyst View

In Mexico, the progression of CNTE protests and negotiations with the Sheinbaum administration, as well as the administration’s response to reports of CIA operations in Mexico warrant further monitoring. In recent months, Mexican authorities have targeted several high-profile cartel leaders. A criminal backlash of the scope and scale of 22 February following the killing of El Mencho is unlikely, but the removal of lower-level cartel leadership often prompts short-lived, localized escalations in violence.

In the US, the situation is broadly stable, but conditions (economic stress, political division) are increasingly in place for a disruptive and sustained protest campaign in the event a trigger incident is realized.



What's Changed (Since Last Issue)

New Developments

- CNN reported that the CIA had ramped up operations against cartel groups in Mexico, including targeting mid-level members. The CIA denied the report.
- In the US, ongoing redistricting battles across Southern states ahead of the November midterms are deepening political tensions and elevating conditions for protest activity in several World Cup markets ahead of the tournament.

De-escalations / Stabilising Factors

- Public order remains stable across the US and Canada. Renewed funding for DHS has permitted various responsible agencies to advance their planning.

Key External Factors:

- The conflict in Iran meanwhile continues to raise tensions as well as drive up the price of fuel, with knock-on economic impacts and potential for further supply chain disruption.
- US authorities announced public health measures to safeguard against Ebola caused by the Bundibugyo strain. The measures include enhanced health screenings at ports of entry and a travel ban targeting non-US passport holders who have travelled to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Uganda or South Sudan in the past 21 days. The measures are presently in place until 17 June.

Methodology Note

This rolling brief applies the baseline risk and Fan Tension Index (FTI) methodology outlined in the World Cup 2026 Risk Outlook, updated to reflect current conditions and developments.

Forward Look (Next 14 Days)

High-Attention Fixtures

- No fixtures within this period

City Pressure Outlook

- **Mexico City** – The CNTE has rejected the administration's proposals and announced plans to stage a nationwide strike, including a march to the Zocalo and sit-in protest beginning 1 June. The union has specifically referenced disrupting mobility during World Cup matches in the city if their demands are not met.
- **Vancouver** – The city entered its "event period" on 13 May, under which new regulations surrounding vending, advertising, noise and temporary event infrastructure went into place. On 23 May, a large part of Pacific Boulevard will be closed through the end of July.

Emerging Watchpoints

- The role of ICE during the tournament – DHS Secretary Mullin affirmed that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) will support security operations across the tournament, while emphasizing that enforcement activity will not focus on large-scale arrests of undocumented migrants. Separately, officials in Boston, Los Angeles and Miami downplayed the role ICE would play in stadium security operations.
- Kansas City readiness and nighttime economy: The Chief of Police in Kansas City assured the public that the department was prepared for the tournament after hiring additional staff and running numerous exercises. The department has not yet received any federal funding toward World Cup preparations. Meanwhile, the City Council has voted to permit businesses to sell alcohol until 04:00 AM during the tournament. This move will likely increase pressure on policing, transportation and entertainment districts during late-night operating hours.



City Spotlight – Dallas

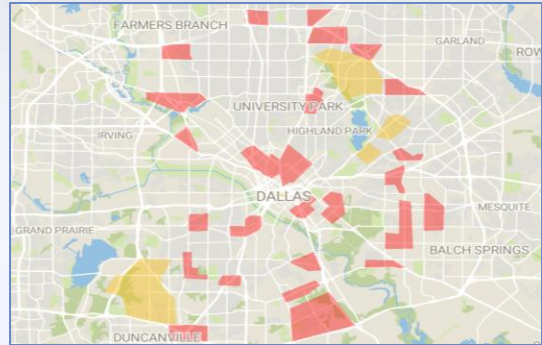
Current Posture: Elevated

Key Pressure Points:

- Data from Kayak shows flight searches to Dallas have increased 64%, while average hotel prices have risen nearly 40% compared to 2025 figures.
- Dallas will host nine tournament matches – the most of any host city. Mullin’s comments surrounding preparedness and the “extremely high” threat environment particularly resonated in Dallas and was reported widely in local media.
- The Dallas City Council approved \$10.3m USD in FEMA grants to enhance drone detection and mitigation ahead of the tournament.

Implications:

- The data points to a potential late surge in bookings to Dallas. Several high-profile national teams including Argentina and Germany are scheduled to play in the city.
- Hosting more matches than any other city, Dallas’ operational exposure is extended and resources in the city run the risk of being stretched thin across the tournament.



Implications for Organizations

- Revalidate executive travel plans and broader preparations in Dallas. Confirm bookings accounting for a potential late notice surge.
- Executive Movement: in all cases, conduct low-profile movement; secure routing and plan for contingencies.
- Events / Meetings: Reconfirm the availability of accommodations and other bookings.
- Operations: Track heat, staffing constraints, and disruptions ahead of and during the tournament.

Reporting Cadence

		Cadence	Coverage Window
03	20 May	Switch to weekly	20–27 May
04	27 May	Weekly	27 May–03 Jun
05	03 Jun	Weekly	03–10 Jun
06	10 Jun	Weekly	10–17 Jun (tournament start window)