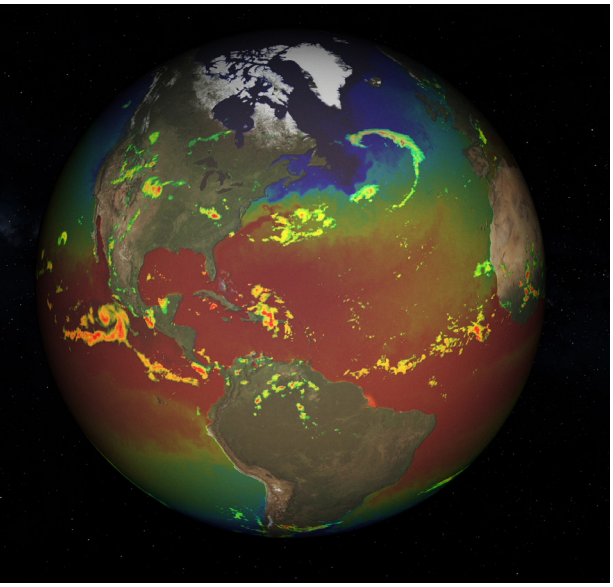
INSIGHT REPORT

Americas: Regional El Nino impact assessment

SEPTEMBER 2026

KEY JUDGEMENTS



- The ongoing El Nino weather event is intensifying rapidly in the Pacific Ocean. Ocean temperatures are well above average compared with those in previous El Nino cycles and are forecast to reach record highs. As a result, abnormal and volatile weather patterns are expected to impact nearly all areas of the Americas. The direct effects of El Nino are forecast to last until at least **early 2027**, with some conditions expected to persist until **April** in some locations.

- El Nino will have a variety of effects depending on the specific location in the region. These effects will include wetter-than-normal, drier-than-normal and warmer-than-normal conditions. Some areas may see an increased risk of hurricanes, while others will see a decreased risk. In some areas, the risk of tornadoes will also increase. The persistence of El Nino effects into **spring 2027** will generate a drier-than-average season in many countries, potentially leading to an active wildfire season in **summer 2027**.

- As conditions worsen in the final months of **2026**, managers should engage in disaster planning and proactive stakeholder engagement. They should also conduct workforce training and briefings and map their facilities' exposure before disasters caused directly or indirectly by El Nino occur.

OVERVIEW

El Nino, also known as the El Nino-Southern Oscillation, is a complex weather phenomenon in the Pacific resulting from the interaction between trade winds and ocean temperatures. When the trade winds weaken, warmer water in the Pacific is pushed east towards the coasts of North and South America. This displaces the Pacific Jet Stream, altering weather patterns throughout the Americas.

The current El Nino is forecast to be significantly hotter than any previously recorded event. Forecasters are referring to it as a 'super El Nino', indicating that ocean temperatures are more than 2°C (3.6°F) higher than normal. It will continue until at least the middle of 2027, according to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The rise in water temperatures will have a noticeable impact on the climate across the Americas. This could potentially include severe droughts in areas that usually experience heavy rain and intense rainfall in drier regions. Environmental temperatures are also expected to increase, boosting demand for electricity and leading to more infectious diseases and dehydration, which will put a strain on healthcare systems.

Additionally, as noted in the 2026 Hurricane Season Insight Report, these changes are projected to result in a more active cyclone season in the Pacific, while the Atlantic is expected to be quieter than average.

Although El Nino affects the whole of the Americas, impacts will vary by country, including above-average temperatures and broader socio-economic effects. These variations will be addressed in this Insight Report.

ASSESSMENT

North America & the Caribbean

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Map 1. El Nino effects on North America and the Caribbean

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Mexico & Central America

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Americas - September 2026

South America

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[redacted]

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Map 2. El Nino effects in Central and South America

Health-related risks

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RECOMMENDATIONS TO MANAGERS

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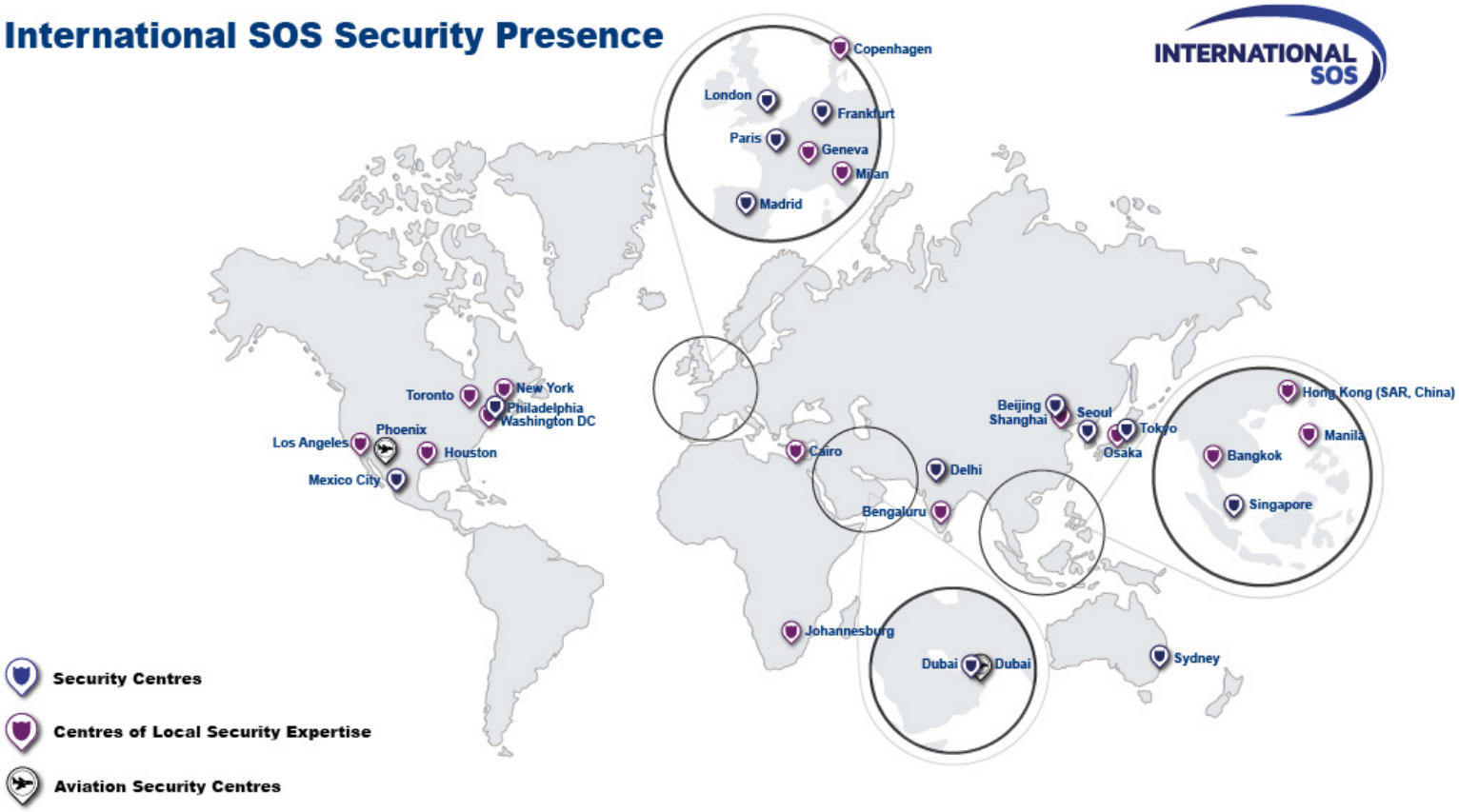

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