

# Global Travel Risk 2022

## We can probably all agree...bye, bye 2021!

With 2021 in the rearview mirror, travel programmes of all shapes and sizes are now looking ahead to 2022 and beyond as new challenges and opportunities arise in a world driven by ever-changing travel risks.

But sometimes to look forward, we need to look back. In 2021, Corporate Traveller helped travellers, travel arrangers, and travel managers confront a wide range of unique travel disruptions. From extreme weather to unexpected flight and rail disruptions, 2021 was a lesson to all to have a plan, be prepared, and expect the unexpected.

As predicted back in 2020, companies with employees on the road faced new and familiar hurdles posed by testing, vaccine, and entry/exit requirements. Throughout 2021, Corporate Traveller delivered over 5,800 entry/exit alerts to customers looking to restart their travel programmes, making up just a third of the 17,000 travel alerts sent to each programme via e-mail, through our Melon App and platform, in coordination with its travel risk management partner, Crisis24.

One example of how these alerts proved vital was during the turbulent opening of the Trans-Tasman travel bubble between Australia and New Zealand as authorities grappled to keep their two-way travel lane open between April and July. With Corporate Traveller's alerts, travel managers were able to proactively monitor, assess, and respond to new developments and make critical decisions to mitigate risks facing their travellers.

Aside from attempts by governments to re-open safe travel corridors, COVID-19's variants of concern and other critical risk factors made up just some of the obstacles overcome by travel and risk managers in 2021. Some, for example, had to cope with disruptions driven by commercial airlines that struggled to maintain flight operations while working to bring back workers from furlough and re-incorporate grounded aircraft back into their rotations, all while enforcing COVID-19-related rules and mandates. As a result, passengers had to face challenges posed by long-delays, cancellations, and in-flight disruptions.

While some companies chose to place restrictions on international travel, others had to cope with a range of domestic challenges that put strains on local lodging and transportation. For example, social unrest was a common theme globally in 2021 with environmental, political, and anti-COVID lockdown protests taking place in major cities throughout the world – from Melbourne to Paris, and Glasgow to Washington D.C.

With a myriad of challenges facing travel managers, the travel risk management community welcomed with open arms ISO 31030. Formally published in September 2021, ISO 31030 is a new international standard that provides organisations with a common approach on how to manage risks facing its travelling workers. In particular, the standard offers a structured approach to the development, implementation, evaluation, and review of everything from policy, programme development, and mitigation strategies.

For many organisations, having a travel risk management strategy helped in 2021 when confronting the unexpected. Transportation incidents and accidents were rare but not absent in 2021. In Taiwan, for example, an express train derailed as it was entering a tunnel between two cities. The eight-carriage train, which at the time was carrying 494 passengers and 4 staff members, collided with a truck shortly before entering the tunnel resulting in the deadliest rail accident in Taiwan since 1948.

In the United States, travellers were also not immune from risks as seen in February when a United Airlines flight, scheduled to depart from Denver to Honolulu, suffered an uncontained engine failure four minutes after take-off and safely returned to the airport. The incident resulted in a recommendation from Boeing and other civil aviation authorities globally to temporarily ground B777 aircraft with Pratt & Whitney PW4000-112 series engines.

In 2022, organisations can expect similar challenges to impact their travellers' journeys in addition to disruptions posed by inclement weather and operational difficulties. An emphasis on traveller tracking and communication will be a key for many.



# 2021 A global year in review

## UNITED STATES

On September 25th, 2021, an Amtrak train carrying 141 passengers and 17 crew members derailed near Joplin, Montana, triggering Corporate Traveller's Crisis Communications Protocol, an automated process designed to help travel managers become immediately aware of critical incidents impacting their travel programmes.

Other threats faced by the United States in 2021 included a turbulent presidential transition that culminated into a January 6th Capitol riot in Washington DC. In 2022, the US will continue to face political challenges with mid-term elections set for November, as well as environmental challenges as the country tackles increasingly stronger hurricanes, tornadoes, and other severe weather.

Companies should prepare for flight disruptions as airlines face a growing number of operational challenges.

## UNITED KINGDOM & FRANCE

On May 24th, 2021 the UK Civil Aviation Authority ordered all flights to avoid Belarusian airspace after a Ryanair flight was diverted to Minsk to detain an opposition journalist.

The suspension was followed by French carriers and others in the EU as countries condemned the action and sought to put in counter-measures to protect their citizens.

The U.K. and France have faced other threats as well including a November 15th decision by the UK to raise its National Threat Level following a string of serious violent extremist attacks, and severe flight and rail disruptions by both countries in the wake of operational challenges driven by the COVID-19 pandemic.

## ISRAEL

On May 11th, following an outbreak of violence on the Israeli-Palestinian border, authorities in Israel announced that they would be temporarily halting all commercial air traffic at Ben Gurion Airport (TLV) in Tel Aviv.

The conflict was a reminder that airports in conflict-prone regions are particularly susceptible to disruptions. In 2020 for example, airlines had to re-route flights around the Persian-Gulf in the wake of a conflict between US forces in Iraq and Iran. In 2022, organisations operating in the region should continue to monitor for unexpected flare-ups and regional conflict.

## TAIWAN

On April 2nd, 2021, a Taroko Express operating from Shulin to Taitung derailed as it was entering a tunnel between Heren and Chongde. The eight carriage train, which at the time was carrying 494 passengers and 4 staff members, collided with a truck shortly before entering the tunnel resulting in the deadliest rail accident in Taiwan since 1948. Just one of the many incidents tracked by Corporate Traveller's Crisis Management Team in 2021.

The accident acts as a reminder that heading into 2022, even for countries where international travel remains at lower-than-normal volumes, unexpected incidents can occur.

## INDONESIA

On January 9th, 2021 Sriwijaya Air (SJ) Flight 182, a Boeing 737-500, crashed into the Java Sea near Jakarta. The flight carrying 50 passengers and 12 crew members was just one of 15 fatal accidents observed in 2021: a significant decrease from the prior year as air traffic remained muted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2022, airline safety will remain a challenge in Southeast Asia as airlines bring back pilots from furlough and aircraft from temporary storage.

## AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND

On March 5th, 2021, New Zealand experienced a series of earthquakes measuring as high as 8.1 on the Richter scale, capping off a year that witnessed the most 8.0+ seismic activity globally since 2007. While no significant damage was reported, Kiwis located in the North Island were still notified to evacuate to higher ground in the wake of a tsunami warning, as a precaution.

Fast forward to September 21st, 2021, New Zealand's closest neighbor, Australia, was also struck by a 5.9 magnitude earthquake that left residents startled in the middle of the night and businesses and homes with minor structural damage. The quake was reportedly the largest to hit Victoria in 50 years. In addition to naturally occurring phenomena, Australia also confronted a number of civil unrest events ranging from COVID-19 lockdown protests to climate change rallies leading up to COP26.

In 2022, look to Australia and New Zealand as they plot their individual paths towards re-opening their borders.

## CHILE

In 2019 and 2020, Chile experienced a wave of civil unrest, often at times disrupting air travel out of hubs like Santiago International Airport (SCL). With the country growing increasingly impatient and the government failing to showcase confidence, Chile took a big step in 2021 by electing its youngest-ever president in Gabriel Boric.

Historically, Chile has been at the epicenter of social, political, and economic change in South America. Look to the country in 2022 as their newly elected president takes office in March.

## SPAIN

On September 19th, 2021 memories of the Eyjafjallajökull eruption confronted Europe as Spain began tracking the eruption of Cumbre Vieja in La Palma. With all said and done, the eruption forced the evacuation of over 7,000 people and at 85 days is known as the longest known eruption in the La Palma region.

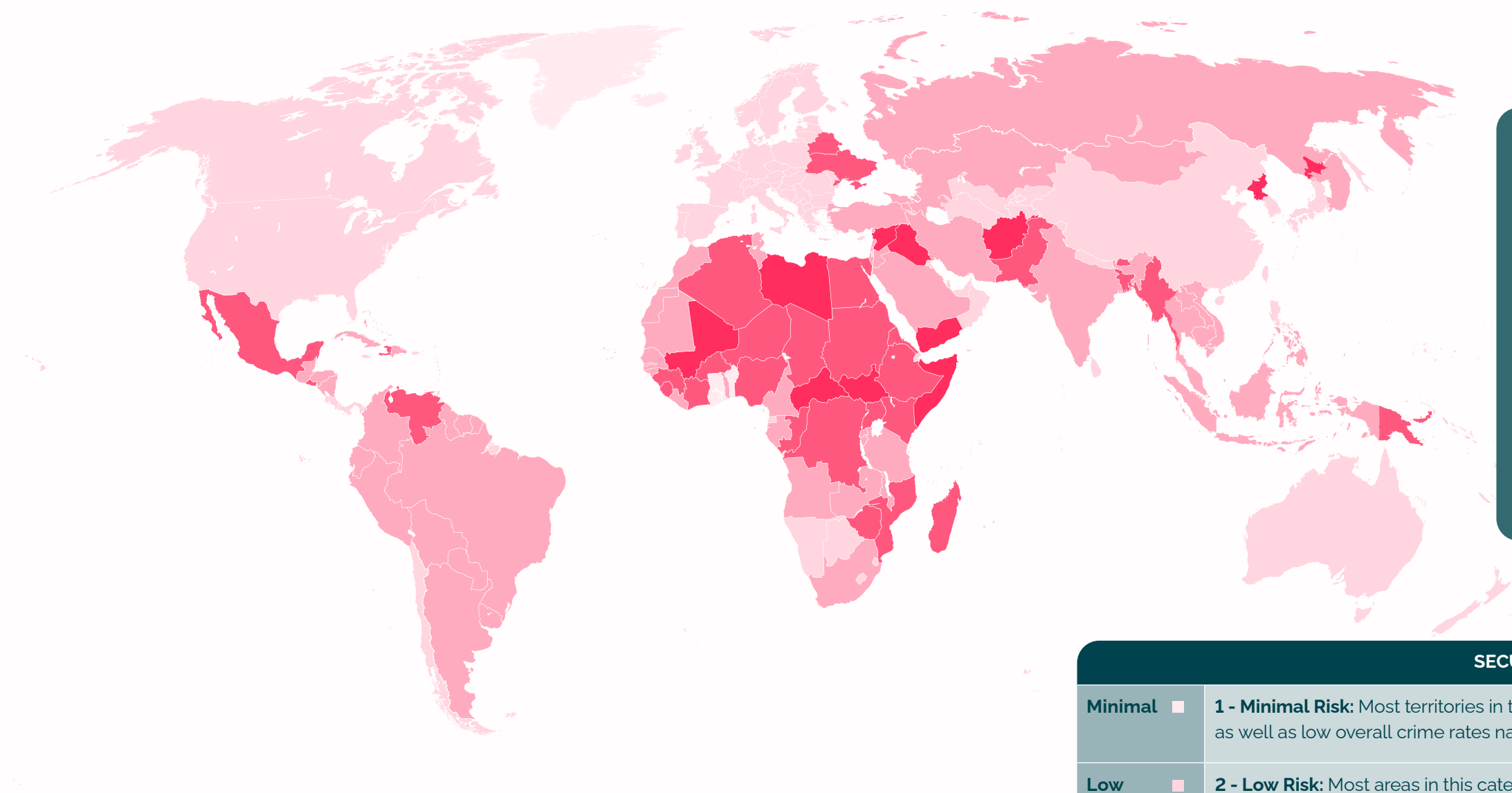
The eruption was a reminder of the impact natural disasters can have on travel as La Palma Airport suspended flights and Eurocontrol activated its volcanic ash protocols.

## ETHIOPIA

Addis Ababa (ADD), a transit and destination hub for many airlines globally, became the focal point of attention in 2021 as Ethiopia declared a State of Emergency. The escalation came at a time where a year-long civil war was on the verge of spilling onto the streets of Addis Ababa, leading many countries like the United States and United Kingdom to raise travel advisories and urge citizens and personnel to travel home immediately.

While flights continue to operate throughout the region, organisations should continue to monitor the conflict and its impact on travel through 2022.

# Global travel risk map 2022



**TOP 5: FUTURE COUNTRY RISK TRENDS**

- Belarus - Sanctions, transportation
- Ethiopia - War, civil unrest
- China - Lockdowns, national security legislation
- Mexico - Crime, economic strife
- United States - Severe weather, mid-term elections

**TOP 5: FUTURE STABILITY RISK TRENDS**

- Fragmentation - Vaccine inequality, health passports
- Environment - Severe weather, other natural hazards
- Entry/Exit - Travel bubbles, border restrictions
- Cyber - Cyber-ransom, cyber-crimes, data protection
- Transportation - Personnel shortages, operational risks

About the Travel Risk Map: Our 2022 Risk Map ratings are a compilation of several travel risk management sources. The information in this report does not and is not intended to constitute advice. Instead, all information, content, and ratings on this update are for general informational purposes only.

SECURITY RISK LEVEL	
Minimal	<b>1 - Minimal Risk:</b> Most territories in this category will have a stable health and political infrastructure as well as low overall crime rates nationwide.
Low	<b>2 - Low Risk:</b> Most areas in this category will have a stable health and political system with some unemployment and low crime rates.
Medium	<b>3 - Medium Risk:</b> Most countries in this category will have a somewhat stable health and political infrastructure with moderate levels of crime.
High	<b>4 - High Risk:</b> Most countries in this category will have unstable health and political systems with high rates of unemployment and exposure to violent and petty crimes.
Critical	<b>5 - Critical Risk:</b> Most areas in this category will lack adequate health and political systems and experience very high rates of violent and petty crime.





# What's in store for 2022?

Some things are for certain: businesses are looking to hit the road again, and digital strategies will be a vital component to travel managers looking to build or strengthen their travel risk management strategy. Digital transformation was a driving force in 2021 and will continue to be a benefit for businesses in 2022.

While risk management companies will focus on tracking major global events such as the 2022 Beijing Olympics, FIFA World Cup in Qatar, and Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, look to your TMC to play a pivotal role in helping companies locate, communicate, and facilitate critical information and transportation needs to travellers, arrangers, and managers alike.

With the theme of 'expect the unexpected' in mind, Corporate Traveller has invested in tools to help companies manage their return-to-travel strategies; from the acquisition of Whereto and Shep, to its recent partnership with Sherpa and new investment in Melon to help keep travellers up-to-date on changing e-travel restrictions and help companies facilitate a cleaner, more refreshing online travel experience.

So, what other types of disruptions can organisations with travel programmes expect heading into 2022? Look to obstacles posed by cyber-threat actions to be a focus for many as travellers take to the road, more connected now than ever before. For others, look to political, economic, and other transportation challenges to pose a substantial risk to travellers in the next 12-months and beyond.

What can organisations do to prepare for the road ahead? Travel managers can turn to their TMC to showcase their true value with the help of their people, products, and partnerships. From dedicated 24/7 travel support, to tools to help facilitate rapid and critical communications, and finally crucial 3rd party relationships with both air, rail, and hotel providers and security, health, and assistance professionals.



We're ready when you are. Connect with us [here](#).