Semi-Weekly MLP Data Update

AUTHOR
DevLab@Penn

PUBLISHED
March 21, 2023

Introduction

This memo describes updated data and forecasts for Albania, Kosovo, Serbia, Tunisia, and Nicaragua. In these memos, we describe any major events that were detected by our data since the last update. We hope that this information can be useful for monitoring conditions across countries. We also review any notable forecasts made during the last data update and highlight any notable events we are forecasting over the next seven months. Importantly, we only highlight predictions of relatively large events from models with relatively high accuracy scores. In some cases, models with lower performance predict major events, or models with high performance predict smaller events, but we do not highlight these predictions.
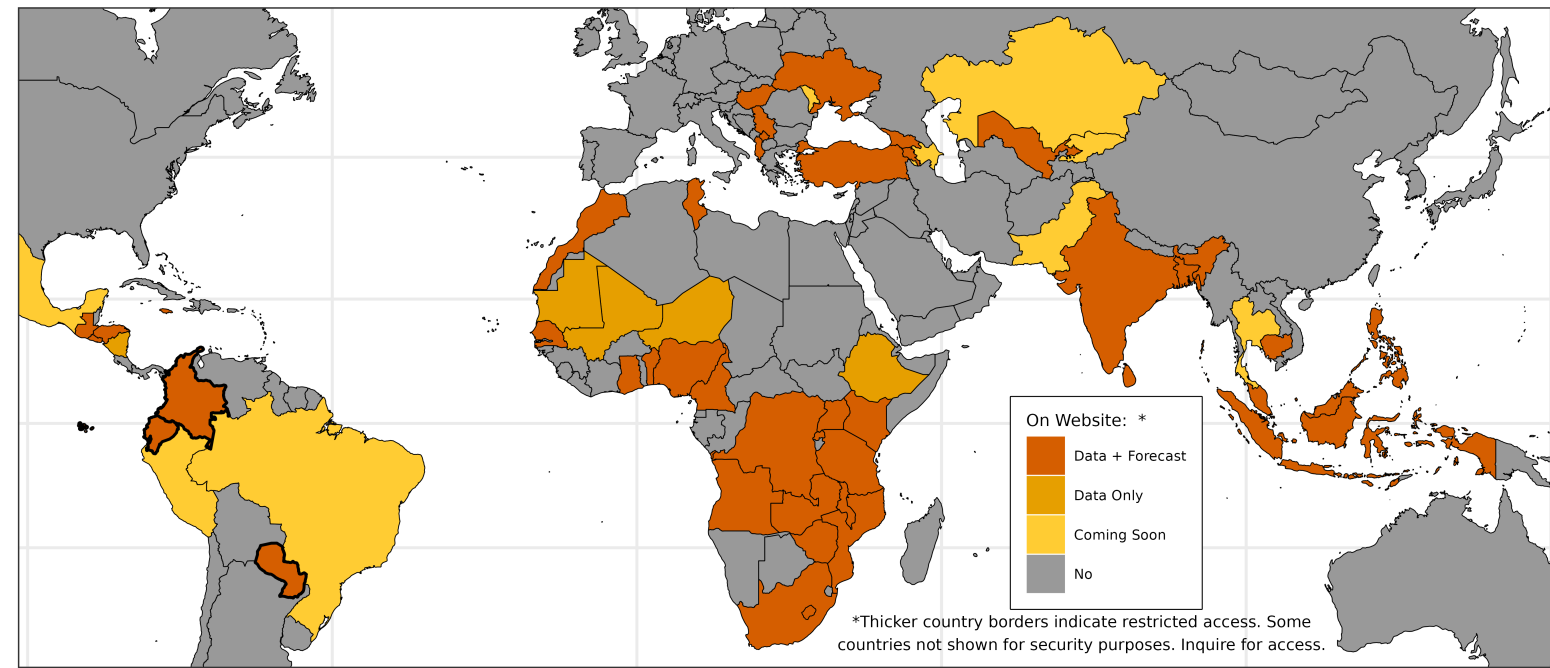
We encourage you to visit the MLP website to explore all of our data, forecasts, and recent pipeline updates.

MLP Website: here

PW Protected Page: here (email jspr@sas.upenn.edu for access)

Dashboards and Pipeline Updates: here

Current country coverage

Albania Update

For Albania, our data includes coverage through the end of February 2023. Since the data was last updated for December, we saw increases in reporting on:

- Arrests, Corruption, and Legal actions in January: There were a series of arrests of senior members from the Ministry of Finance related to a corruption investigation.
- Protests and Troop mobilization in February: There were large anti-corruption protests on February 11 with a heavy policy presence.
- Purges/Replace in January-February: Several cabinet ministers were forced to resign after reports that they took a meeting with a former FBI agent who offered illegal services to officials in several Eastern European countries.
- Raids in January: The government launched Operation Fire, an effort to identify and remove hundreds of illegal security cameras installed by private citizens in Tirana.

Forecasts

In our standard civic space forecasts from December, we predicted an increase Legal Changes in Q2 2023. Our updated forecasting models are still predicting this increase in Q2.

In our civic space shocks forecasts from December, we predicted a shock to civic activism in Q2 2023. Our updated forecasting models are still predicting this increase in Q2.

Serbia Update

For Serbia, our data includes coverage through the end of February 2023. Since the data was last updated for December, we saw increases in reporting on:

- Corruption in January: Serbia fell in the Transparency Index corruption rankings for the first time, causing a great deal of reporting on the issue.
- Irregular transitions in February: The President of Moldova alleged that Serbian citizens were part of a an attempted coup in Moldova, prompting strong denials from Serbia's incumbent government.

Forecasts

In our civic space shocks forecasts from December, we predicted a shock to legal actions in Q2 of 2023. In our updated forecasting models, we are no longer expecting any shock to occur over the next 7 months.

Kosovo Update

For Kosovo, our data includes coverage through the end of February 2023. Since the data was last updated for November, we saw increases in reporting on:

- Civic Space Index in December: Events related to the 'North Kosovo Crisis' caused spikes in reporting across several of our event categories.
- Defamation Cases in January: A court failed to convict a journalist that was accused of defamation by Kosovo's ambassador to Croatia after the journalist implicated him in a corruption scandal.
- Protests, Non-lethal violence, and troop mobilization in December: Serbs in Northern Kosovo engaged in violent and disruptive protests and erected barricades to prevent movement between Serbia and Kosovo as part of the 'North Kosovo Crisis'.

Forecasts

In our civic space shocks forecasts from December, we predicted a shock to legal actions in Q2 of 2023. In our updated forecasting models, we are no longer expecting any shock to legal actions over the next 7 months. However, we are now expecting a shock to arrests (a related category) in Q2 2023.

Tunisia Update

For Tunisia, our data includes coverage through the end of February 2023. Since the data was last updated for September, we saw increases in reporting on:

- Arrests, Activism in February: Several prominent political figures, business leaders, and journalists were arrested, prompting widespread condemnation from civil society groups and foreign countries.
- Election activity and irregularities in December: Tunisia held parliamentary elections in December, which were widely criticized as being flawed.

Forecasts

Over the next seven months, we are not predicting any major events.

Nicaragua Update

For Nicaragua, our data includes coverage through the end of February 2023. Since the data was last updated for October, we saw increases in reporting on:

- Arrests in November: There was an increase in reporting on criminal arrests not related to any specific event. There was also an arrest of an academic returning from exile.
- Activism in December: There was an increase in reporting on activism around several human rights issues, including prisoners' rights and press freedoms.
- Non-lethal violence in November: There was an increase in reporting on violence, especially state violence, not related to any specific event.
- State of Emergency in January: The government implemented curfews and other restrictions on movement in several regions.
- Election activity in November: Nicaragua held municipal elections in November.

Forecasts

We are predicting a shock to arrests in Q3 2023.