

TMP SYSTEMS

Inequality, COVID-19 and Conflict

TMP Systems has built a geospatial model that uses 22 social, political and health indicators to show **communities where COVID-19 and inequality may interact to spark conflict**. It is available (for free) at www.tmpsystems.net/coronavirus.

We estimate **754 million people in 227 districts** across Africa, Asia and Latin America will feel threatened by measures taken to stop the virus, to the point where some violently resist. **Similar violence occurred** during the Ebola outbreaks of the 2010s, the Arab Spring, and the food price crises of 2007-08.

What makes COVID-19 different is that it could create unrest across many countries and cultures simultaneously, which would pose an **unprecedented security challenge**. We estimate that **34 countries are at risk** of simultaneous local incidents of violence snowballing into district-wide conflicts that could threaten their national governments, creating problems in at least three ways:

1. **Health**, by significantly impeding the response to the virus. Affected areas may also constitute a source of ongoing COVID-19 outbreaks or mutations.
2. **Supply chains**, by disrupting production well after various import/export bans have lifted, thereby creating threats to the energy, food or resource security of countries reliant on imports.
3. **Financial stability**, by collapsing tax revenues and investment patterns. This is a source of risk, both for investors in emerging-market debt as well as companies with exposure to the developing world.

Our model focuses on identifying marginalized communities in developing countries who have deeply held grievances against their governments. We believe these communities may **first resent, then eventually resist** restrictions on movement, controls on trade and business and other health measures intended to fight COVID-19. As the virus' death toll and economic impact mount, this resistance may **tip into widespread violence**.

The full report available at www.tmpsystems.net/coronavirus explains the model, its initial conclusions and why principles behind so-called “**social license to operate**” may help address some of the risks faced by health providers. We are preparing similar recommendations for economic interventions based on different datasets. Please contact us at coronavirus@tmpsystems.net for details.