

# Dentons Flashpoint

## Daily Global Situation Report

April 21, 2022

# Global Situation Update: April 21, 2022

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## KEY TAKEAWAYS

Russia test-launched its new Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile.

The global travel and tourism sectors are projected to return to pre-pandemic levels in 2023.

Global COVID-19 cases and deaths continued solid decline for a third week.

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## WHAT WE'RE WATCHING

Slovenia will hold a general election this Sunday. Prime Minister Janez Jansa's Slovenian Democratic Party is in a close contest with the center-left Freedom Movement party headed by Robert Golob. Neither is expected to secure an outright majority in parliament and both leaders are trying to convince smaller parties to join a ruling coalition. The winner of the election is not guaranteed to lead the next government and thus a protracted period of deal-making may follow.

According to Freedom House, democratic standards in Slovenia declined more in 2021 than any other country in Eastern Europe. The Jansa-led government is accused of sidelining parliament and exerting pressure on civil society organizations and independent media. Jansa is an ally of Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orbán so the election result could have broader geopolitical implications. Elections in Slovenia, however, are usually considered free and fair and few security issues should arise during the vote.



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# Global

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**At a meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors from G7 nations pledged more than \$24 billion in further support for Ukraine and condemned Russia's inclusion in the G20 group of nations.**

- British military intelligence assessed Moscow could be pushing harder with its **offensive in Donbas** in an effort to make gains ahead of Russia's Victory Day, held annually on May 9. Ukrainian officials warn that seizing Donbas is just an intermediate objective for Russian President Putin, and that his initial war aim—destroying Ukraine as an independent state—has not changed.
- Novavax has published phase 1 trial data for a **combined COVID-19 and flu vaccine**, with promising initial findings that a two-in-one shot could be safe and effective. Novavax plans to start phase 2 trials before the end of the year and the vaccine could be ready for rollout by the end of 2023.
- The IMF cut its growth forecast for China this year to 4.4 percent, well below Beijing's target of around 5.5 percent, on the risks of widespread COVID-19 lockdowns and supply chain disruptions. IMF Managing Director Georgieva warned that a **prolonged slowdown in China** would have substantial **global spillovers**.

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# Markets & Business

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**The global travel and tourism sectors are projected to return to pre-pandemic levels in 2023 and grow at a rate that will outpace global GDP growth, per the World Travel and Tourism Council.**

- **Boeing Co** advised key airlines and parts suppliers that 787 Dreamliner deliveries would resume in the second half of 2022.
- **Radisson Hotel Group** plans to add 150 hotels in Asia-Pacific this year as it bets on travel, tourism, and economic recovery in the region.
- **Deloitte** has been fined more than £2 million by the UK accounting regulator after admitting rule breaches relating to its audit of outsourcing group **Mitie**.

# Environment, Sustainability & Governance

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**EU countries are nearing a deal on how to share the burden of cutting greenhouse gas emissions within the EU, with states poised to accept national targets proposed by Brussels last year.**

- Moody's Investors Service expanded its **ESG profile and credit impact scores** to new sectors, including retail and apparel, construction and building materials.
- A new report by the US Bureau of Land Management found that the US has accelerated the permitting of **wind and solar projects** on federal lands under President Biden, but his administration needs more staff and less administrative red tape to keep up with the clean energy industry's demand for land.
- Hong Kong's Cathay Pacific Airways Ltd said it would work with corporate customers to launch a major corporate **sustainable aviation fuel program** in Asia.
- Carl Icahn is urging BlackRock Inc. and other big index-fund managers focused on socially conscious investing to support his proxy fight at McDonald's Corp. for **better treatment of pregnant pigs**.

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# Africa

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- The **Ivory Coast's** new vice president, Tiemoko Meyliet Koné, was sworn in following his appointment earlier this week; the office had been empty for two years.
- Images of ousted **Sudanese** dictator Omar al-Bashir walking in a hospital, where he was transferred after being found too ill for detention in a prison, leaked to social, drawing anger from many who feel that the military junta is easing al-Bashir's punishment.
- The UN expressed concern after a team of its inspectors were reportedly denied access to a **Malian** town where **Russian** military contractors reportedly killed hundreds of civilians.
- **Nigeria's** ruling party All Progressives Party has set its presidential primaries for May 30-31. Nigerian President Buhari will step down after serving two four-year terms following a February 23, 2023 ballot.



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# Asia

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- **New Zealand's** consumer prices increased 6.9 percent in the 12 months to March 31, the biggest increase in 32 years.
- The UN has asked **Sri Lanka** to introduce a temporary basic income and negotiate "*debt-for-nature*" swaps tied to environmental conservation as part of measures to mitigate the country's economic meltdown as part of talks with the IMF.
- **Chinese** President Xi reiterated China's opposition to unilateral sanctions when speaking at the annual Boao Forum for Asia. Xi criticized "*long-arm jurisdiction*," said that "*de-coupling*" and pressure exerted by cutting off supply chains would not work.
- Independence leader and Nobel laureate Jose Ramos-Horta declared victory in **East Timor's** presidential election, saying that he had secured "*overwhelming*" support and would now work to foster dialogue and unity.

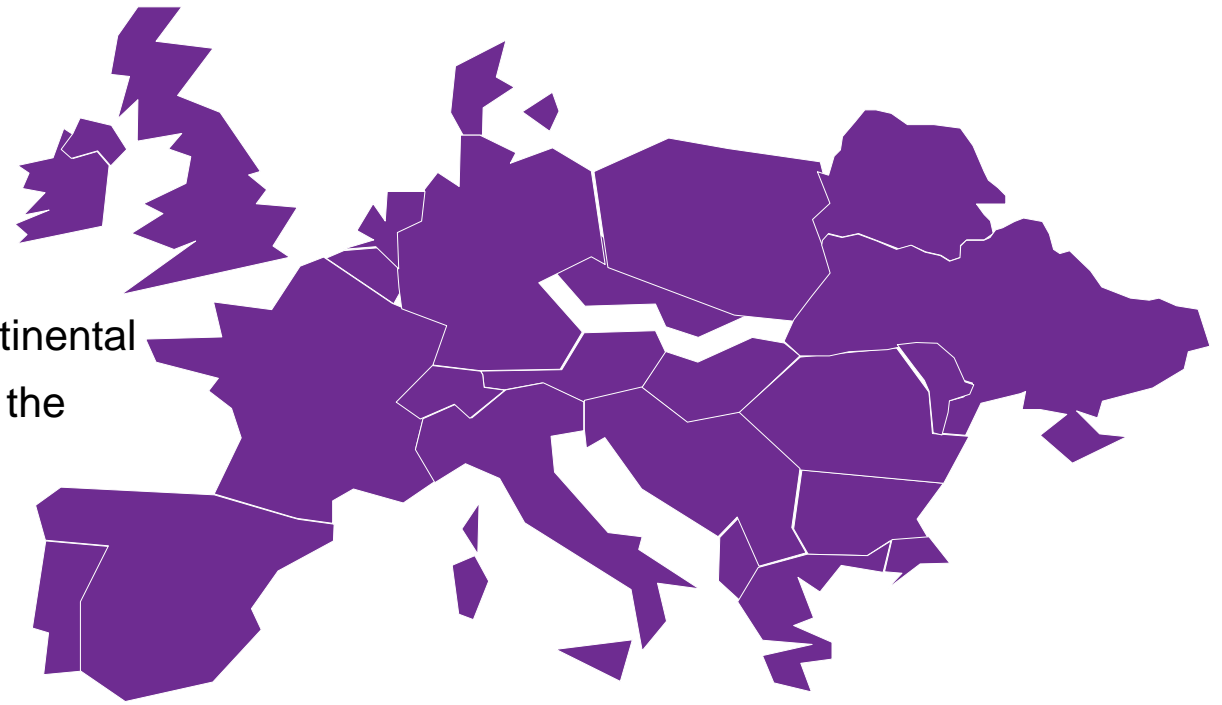




# Europe

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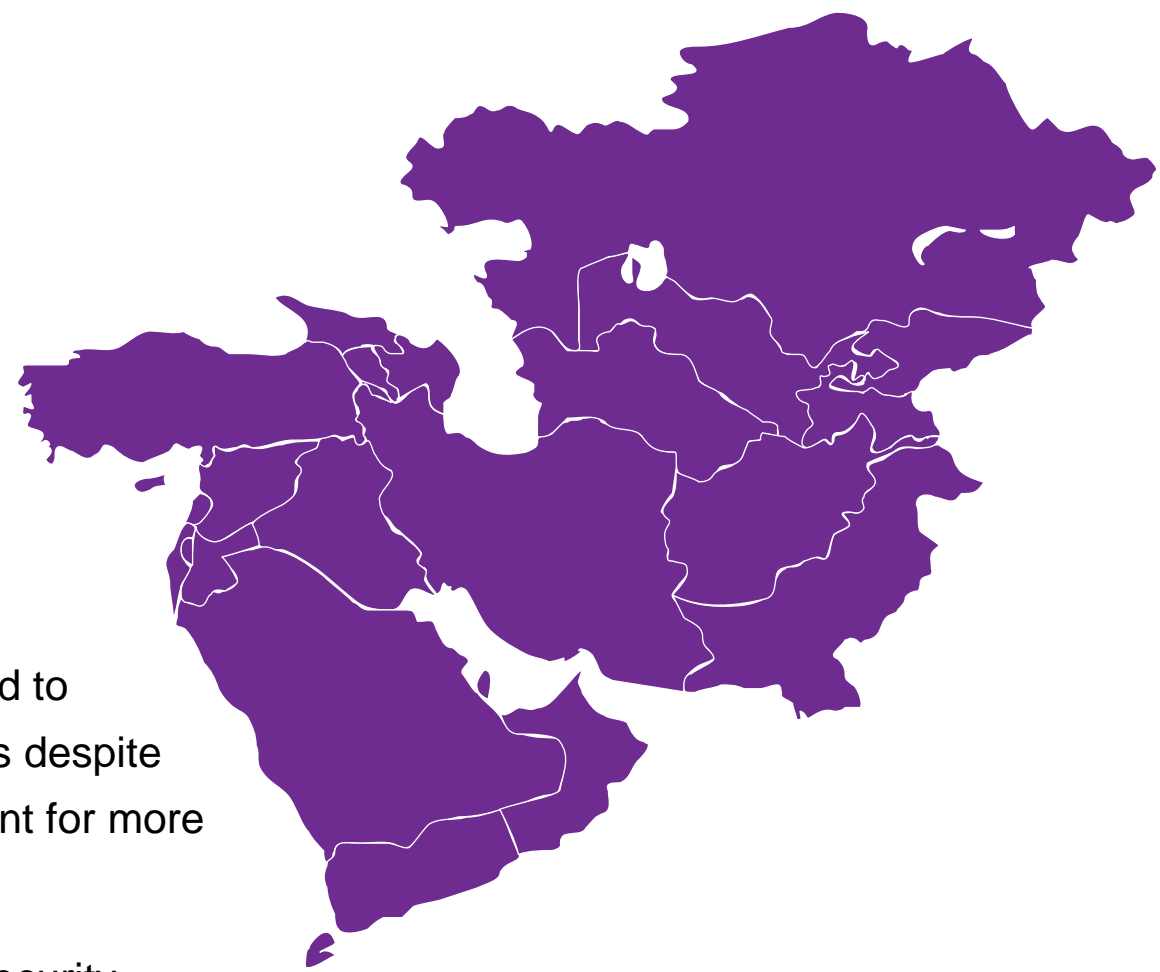
- **Russia** said it has test-launched its new Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile. **US** officials said they had been aware of the Russian launch and viewed as a routine one.
- **German** exports to non-EU countries have declined in March, 7.2 percent less than in the previous month, revealing the impact of sanctions over **Russia's** invasion of **Ukraine** and lockdowns in **China**.
- Catalonia's leftist Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya party will stop backing the **Spanish** government in parliament unless Madrid takes measures to restore confidence after reports that it spied on pro-independence figures.
- **Turkish** President Erdogan claimed that the government in Baghdad had secretly supported a recent offensive against Kurdish militias in **Iraq**.



# Middle East

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- **Israel** lifted its indoor mask mandate for the second time.
- UNICEF reported that maternal deaths in **Lebanon** have tripled amid a political and economic crisis that has caused doctors and midwives to leave the country in droves.
- A group of **Israeli** ultra-nationalists announced that they intend to go through with a nationalist parade through Palestinian areas despite a ban intended to cool tensions, teeing up a potential flashpoint for more violence.
- The World Bank earmarked additional funds to protect food security in **Yemen**.



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# How do You Manage Incident Response?

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*2021 has already seen business disrupted by extreme weather, ransomware attack, the ongoing pandemic and more. The common refrain “It’s not if, but when” rings truer than ever for disruptive incidents that will impact business as usual.*

*Working with Dentons, you can effectively develop an organizational incident-behavior adopted by all your team members. Dentons will help you build muscle memory through tabletop exercises, which are crafted to fit the business strategy of every client.*

*Our team plays events and incidents of different severities and complexities and accounts for real-world factors such as inconclusive evidence, mistakes by responders, and the business impact of eradication steps. Our tech-savvy lawyers continuously revise the playbooks per the evolving sector-specific threat landscape.*

*Dentons tabletop sessions are fluid, and designed to enhance preparedness with services, including:*

- ❖ Ransomware tabletop exercises
- ❖ Post-tabletop action reports
- ❖ Maturity assessments for preparedness
- ❖ Supply-chain attack simulation
- ❖ Comprehensive incident response plan
- ❖ Threat analysis and monitoring

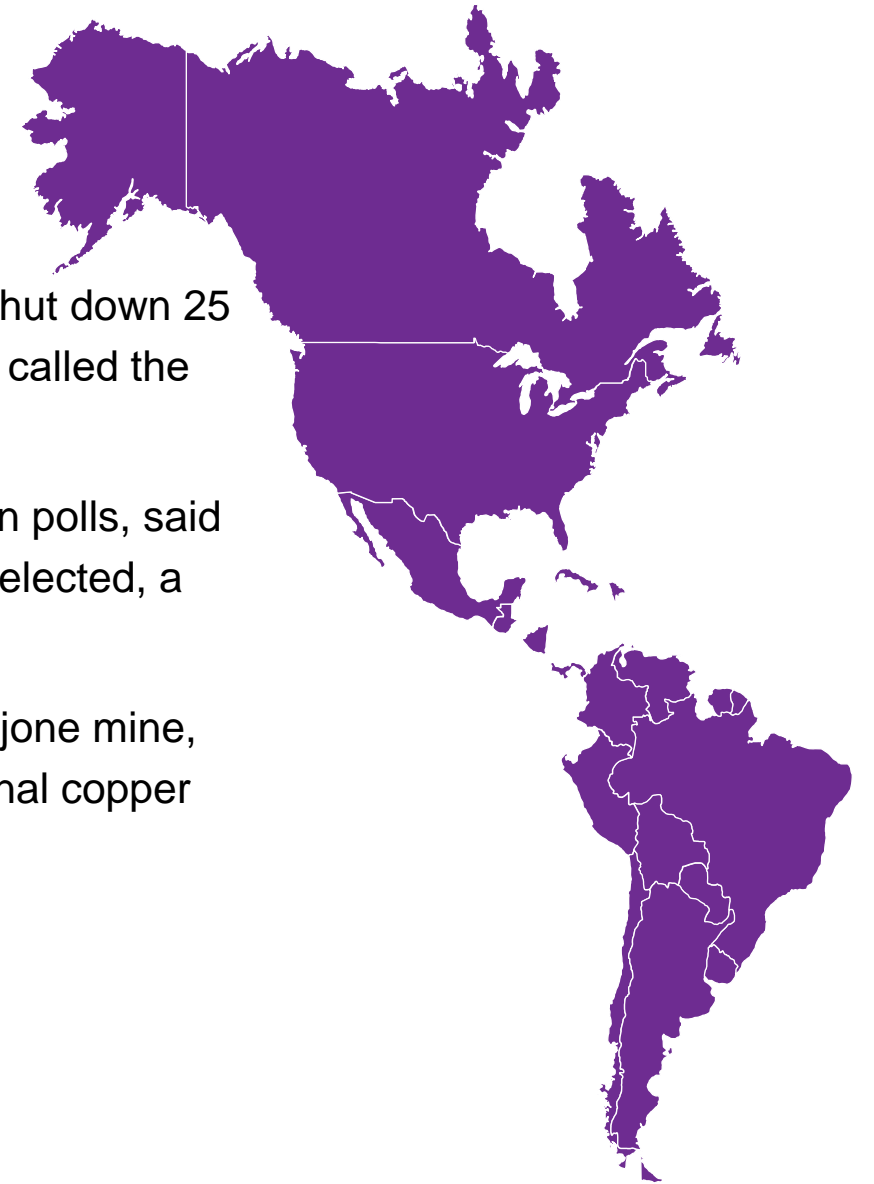
*All interaction with Dentons is attorney-client privileged*

*To learn more about the bespoke intelligence and risk services from Dentons, contact [Karl Hopkins](#).*

# Americas

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- **Nicaragua's** parliament, controlled by allies of President Daniel Ortega, shut down 25 NGOs, many of which had criticized Ortega's government; the opposition called the move a further attack on civil society.
- Former **Brazilian** President Lula, currently leading incumbent Bolsonaro in polls, said that he would recruit a seasoned former official to lead economic policy if elected, a likely bid to calm voters worried by his leftist politics.
- **Peru** will declare a state of emergency near Southern Copper Corp's Cuajone mine, as protests hit top mines in the Andean nation, halting 20 percent of national copper output.



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# Americas: US

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- The Justice Department appealed a judge's ruling ending a **mask mandate** on public transportation and airplanes after the CDC said the measure was still needed.
- The Republican-led Florida Senate passed a bill yesterday that would eliminate a special tax district that allows **Walt Disney Co.** to govern the land where its theme parks sit, as **lawmakers target the company** for opposing legislation restricting classroom instruction on gender and sexuality.
- **US home prices** hit a new record in March while mortgage rates continued to rise rapidly, slowing home sales in what has been the hottest housing market in more than 15 years.
- The **US Capitol building** was briefly evacuated on Wednesday after aircraft from the US Army's Golden Knights parachute demonstration team sparked a **security scare** during a performance at the nearby Washington Nationals baseball stadium.



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# Lures Related to War in Ukraine Target Victims for Cyber Espionage Campaigns, Financial Gain

By Emilio Iasiello, Global Cyber Threat Intelligence Manager, Scott Muir, Senior Analyst, and Courtney Barnard, Global Cyber Threat Intelligence Coordinator

***As the war in Ukraine rages on, hostile actors in cyberspace are once again using legitimate news content as part of social engineering attacks. Whereas pandemic-themed phishing emails were a favorite of malicious actors over the past couple of years, today online content related to the Russia-Ukraine war is maximizing their potential of fooling victims and compromising targets with weaponized links and attachments.***

In some recent reported examples, polished phishing emails were tailored to lure specific organizations and individuals. Most of this activity is motivated by financial theft and cyber espionage, the latter being orchestrated by a myriad of advanced persistent threat (APT) actors capitalizing on worldwide concern about the war to facilitate intelligence gathering operations. Organizations must educate and regularly update staff on themed-emails they may receive.

## ***Cybercriminals, APTs Leverage Legitimate Content***

Since the invasion of Ukraine, every region of the world is experiencing a surge in cyberattacks, with the volume of reported

incidents up at least double digits in Europe (18 percent increase), the Asia-Pacific (16 percent), North America (14 percent), and Latin America (13 percent), according to cybersecurity company Check Point Research. Cybercriminals are exploiting victims by appealing to human sympathy with phishing emails and fake URLs, aka typosquatting, that claim to support humanitarian aid to Ukraine and donations for refugees. Bad actors are using legitimate news articles and content to project a level of authenticity that will enable them to successfully steal money or even user credentials for wider scale and more damaging endeavors.

State actors are also taking advantage of the war in Ukraine with tailored spearphishing emails to entice victims into clicking on

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weaponized attachments and links. In some instances, APT actors ensured that content was directly appealed to the interests of the target. Several leading cybersecurity companies are tracking this APT activity and have thus far blamed Belarus, China, India, Iran, and an unidentified Latin American country as perpetrators of hacks against individuals, NGOs, governments and other targets. All of these monitored campaigns used actual content related to the Ukraine war as lures for cyber espionage and sensitive information collection.

## *Crisis Themes Prove Effective*

During the height of the coronavirus pandemic, INTERPOL reported that COVID-related lures were the most reported phishing theme and drove a marked increase in offensive criminal and APT cyber operations. These fraudulent appeals for help with a major crisis impacted individuals, small and large business, governments, and even critical infrastructure organizations. Hostile actors have a consistent track record of employing phishing lures with timely information and sources, ranging from natural disasters, regional conflicts, terrorist attacks, and sporting events like the Olympics or World Cup. Leaders of organizations can be sure that this tactic will be used again and again in the future.

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## *What Should Organizations Do?*

Organizations should be cognizant of the connection between geopolitics and cybersecurity as both state and nonstate actors tend to carryover tensions into the virtual world. Since the kinetic and cyber domains tend to mirror one another, situational awareness about how the diverse multitude of threat actors are leveraging geopolitics will help leaders of organizations enhance their cybersecurity posture. An easy step to empower staff would be an internal memo that calls attention to and provide examples of the latest conflict-themed schemes.

Dentons offers business leaders a full complement of counseling and advice for addressing the complex economic and political changes affecting international business today. For cyber risk management, Dentons also offers regulatory and litigation services, as well as analysis and intelligence products to better understand fast-changing complex operating environments. Importantly, all interaction with Dentons is attorney-client privileged. To learn more about the bespoke cyber intelligence and risk services from Dentons please contact us today.

# Ukraine War Update: Mariupol Evacuation, G7 Financial Aid, Russia's Victory Day Parade

***Ukrainian officials warn that seizing Donbas is just an intermediate objective for Russian President Putin, and that his initial war aim—destroying Ukraine as an independent state—has not changed. Should Moscow succeed in encircling and destroying Ukraine's best units in Donbas, it could push forward and try taking Kyiv once again.***

## ***Political Developments***

Ukrainian President Zelensky denied receiving a written offer for a negotiated settlement to the war which the Kremlin claims to have sent to Kyiv on Wednesday.

UN Secretary-General Guterres has officially requested to meet with Russian President Putin and Ukrainian President Zelensky to press for peace. Guterres also called for a four-day "*humanitarian pause*" in the shelling over Orthodox Easter, which would also allow civilians to be evacuated and receive aid.

US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen led a multi-nation walkout of a G20 finance meeting in protest of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine. At a meeting of finance ministers and central bank governors from G7 nations pledged more than \$24 billion in further support for Ukraine and condemned Russia's inclusion in the G20 group of nations.

On Wednesday, Ukrainian President Zelensky discussed with the President of the European Council Charles Michel sanctions against Russia, as well as defense and financial support of Ukraine. Michel said the EU will hold an international donors conference on May 5 to ensure "*the victory of Ukraine.*" Prior to his meeting with Zelensky, Michel visited Borodyanka, the small city near Kyiv devastated during the Russian occupation.

Spanish prime minister Sánchez and Denmark's prime minister Frederiksen are in Kyiv on Thursday for talks with President Zelensky.

The Biden administration is expected to announce today another \$800 million in military aid to Ukraine to boost the country's defenses against Russia.

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As Ukraine presses the international community for more military aid, Israeli authorized the supply of helmets and flak jackets to Ukrainian rescue services. Israel has sent medical aid and cold-weather supplies but had thus far rebuffed Ukrainian requests for military equipment.

Facing criticism of foot dragging, German Foreign Minister Baerbock said Berlin has chosen not to make public all the weapons that it has sent to Ukraine to help defend the country from Russia's invasion.

Tennis players from Russia and Belarus will be banned from the Wimbledon tournament in June. Russian athletes have been barred from a number of international tournaments, including the upcoming World Cup in Qatar. However, the French Open, the first tennis grand slam tournament to be held since the invasion began, is expected to welcome Russian players when it begins next month.

Russia has ordered the closure of the Latvian, Lithuanian and Estonian consulates and asked their employees to leave in a retaliatory move.

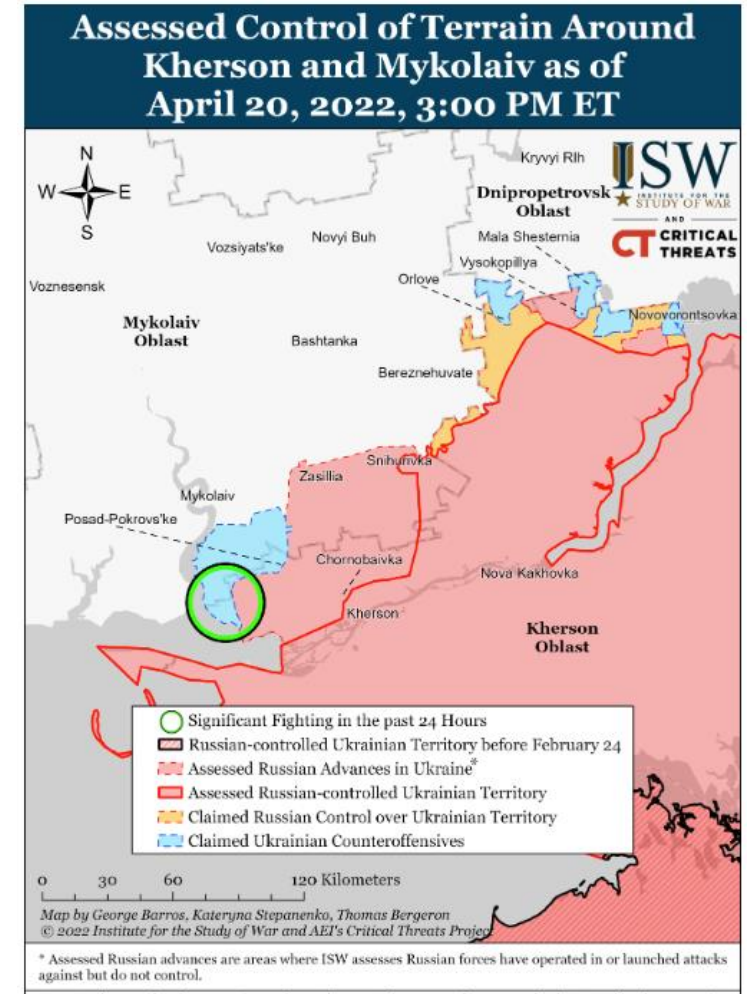
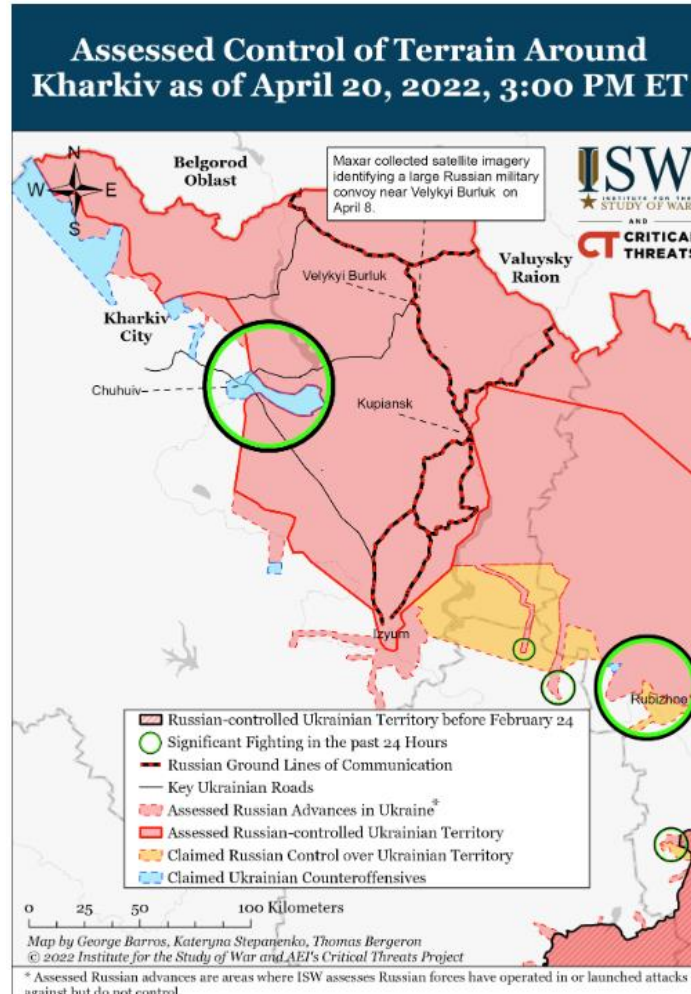
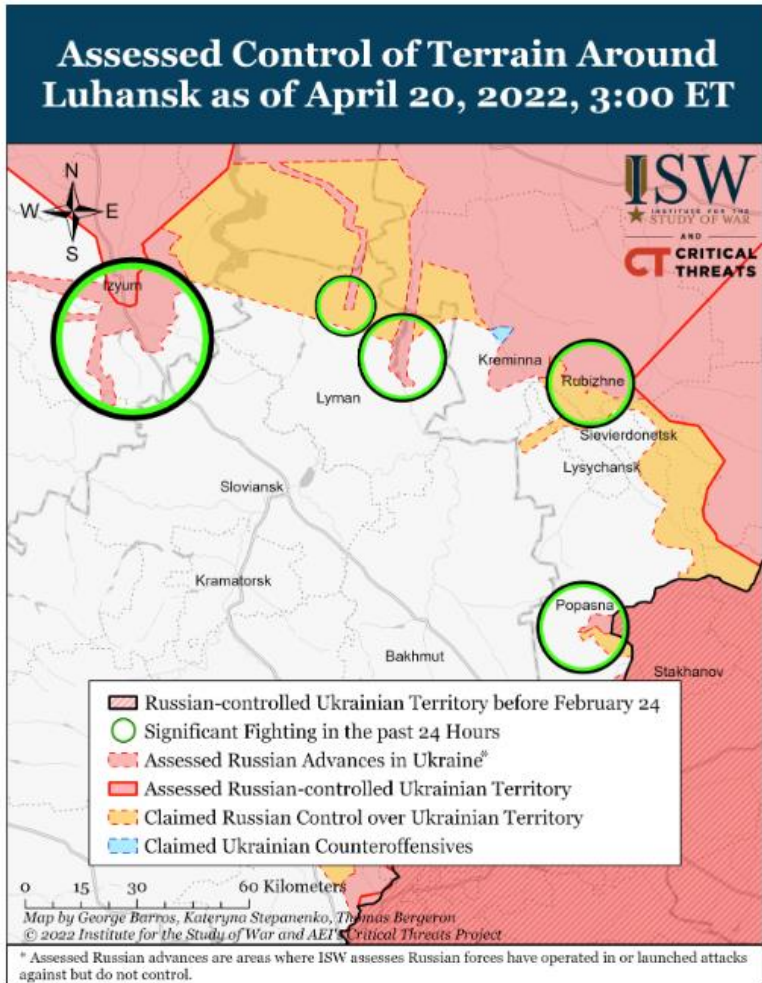
## Battlefield Developments

Russian president Vladimir Putin on Thursday hailed the “liberation” of the key Ukrainian port city of Mariupol after a brutal two-month battle, claiming a major success for his invasion of the country. Putin ordered the Russian military to cancel



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# Ukraine War Update: Mariupol Evacuation, G7 Financial Aid, Russia's Victory Day Parade



Source: [Institute for the Study of War](https://www.instituteforthe studyofwar.org/)

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plans to storm the Azovstal plant, imposing a siege to starve the fighters and remaining 1,000 civilians out.

Ukraine has proposed talks with Moscow over evacuating troops and civilians from Mariupol.

British military intelligence assessed Moscow could be pushing harder with its offensive in Donbas in an effort to make gains ahead of Russia's Victory Day, held annually on May 9. The Russian military was advancing from staging areas elsewhere in Donbas to the city of Kramatorsk, an important Ukrainian military hub located in northern Donetsk province. The city with a population of 160,000 has been under persistent fire from rockets. The UK's Defense Ministry said there is a high level of Russian air activity as Moscow provides close air support to its eastern offensive. The aim is to destroy Ukrainian air defense capabilities.

Regional governor Serhiy Haidai said that 80 percent of the Luhansk region was now under Russian control. Before Russia launched its invasion of Ukraine, the Ukrainian government controlled 60 percent of the Luhansk region, while the rest was in the hands of separatist forces. The governor urged all residents to leave.

Ukraine's General Staff said in its Wednesday briefings that Russian forces had tried to attack the Ukrainian-controlled part of Donbas from the north and northwest, with artillery barrages followed by probes of weak points in Ukrainian defenses all along the front line. Russian forces are regrouping ahead of a renewed push toward the town of Lyman, northeast of Slovyansk, one of the main cities in Ukrainian-held Donbas. Ukrainian forces led a counterattack southeast of the city of Kharkiv, in an effort to disrupt Russian supply lines and cut off the forces that massed for the main thrust of the offensive in the town of Izyum. Ukrainian forces have also destroyed a dam on the Oskol river, leading to flooding in the area and making roads and fields impassable to Russian armor—a tactic that Ukrainian defenders successfully deployed northwest of the capital, Kyiv, in March.

## *Humanitarian Developments*

Only four buses carrying evacuees from Mariupol were able to depart the besieged city. Ukrainian authorities plan to try again today to bring more women, children and the elderly out.

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## *Economic Developments*

Ukraine likely needs \$5 billion a month in financial assistance to keep its economy operating, per IMF Managing Director Georgieva.

The Japanese parliament has voted to remove Moscow from a list of "*most favored nations*" for trade. This means that Tokyo can significantly increase tariffs on Russian goods, following the lead of the other G7 nations.

A member of the US Congress has urged the Biden administration to place travel bans on senior British lawyers that acted for wealthy Russian clients against investigative journalists.

Binance, the world's largest cryptocurrency exchange, is deactivating the accounts of its major clients in Russia, cutting back its services in the country in line with EU sanctions.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has ordered a review of Moscow's position within the World Trade Organization, looking to counter "*illegal*" sanctions imposed over its military operation in Ukraine. He said the review must be completed by June 1 but gave no details about who would carry it out and what it would entail.

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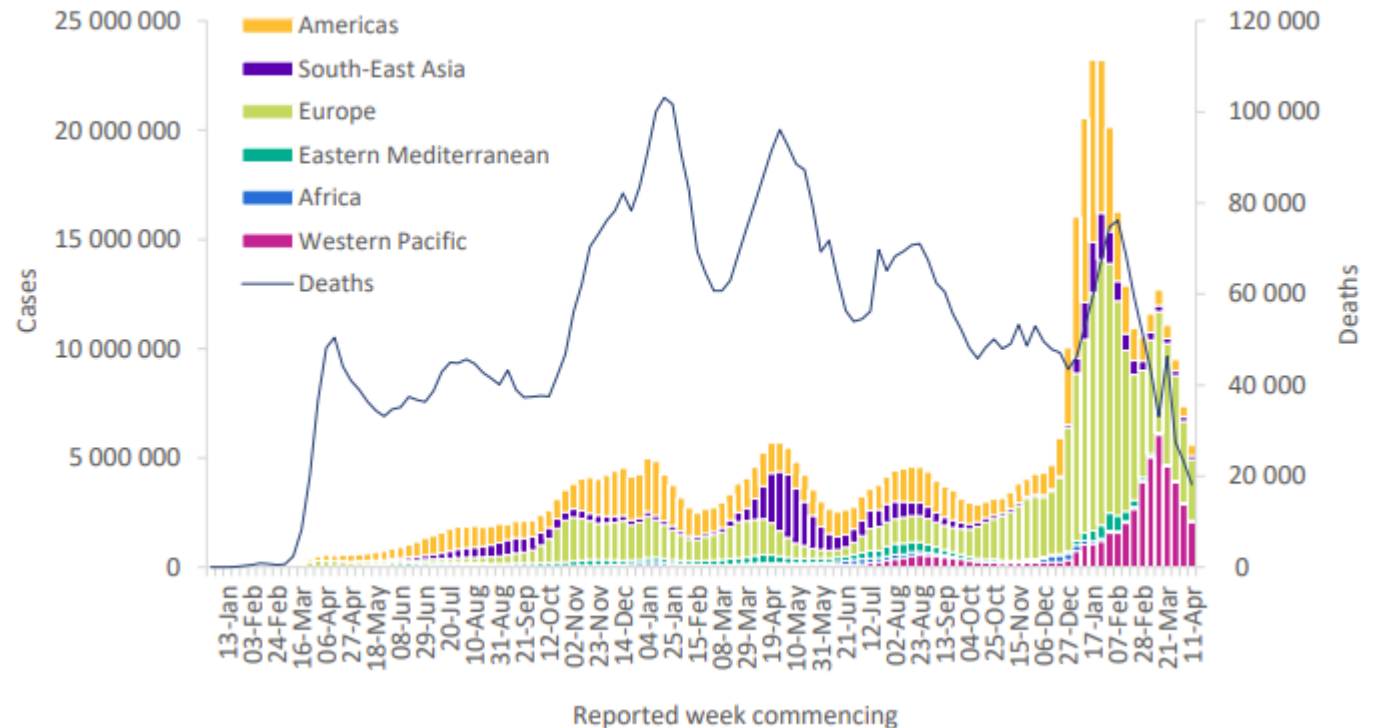
# Coronavirus Condition Updates

As of 5:50 pm CEST on April 20, 2022

# Coronavirus Snapshot

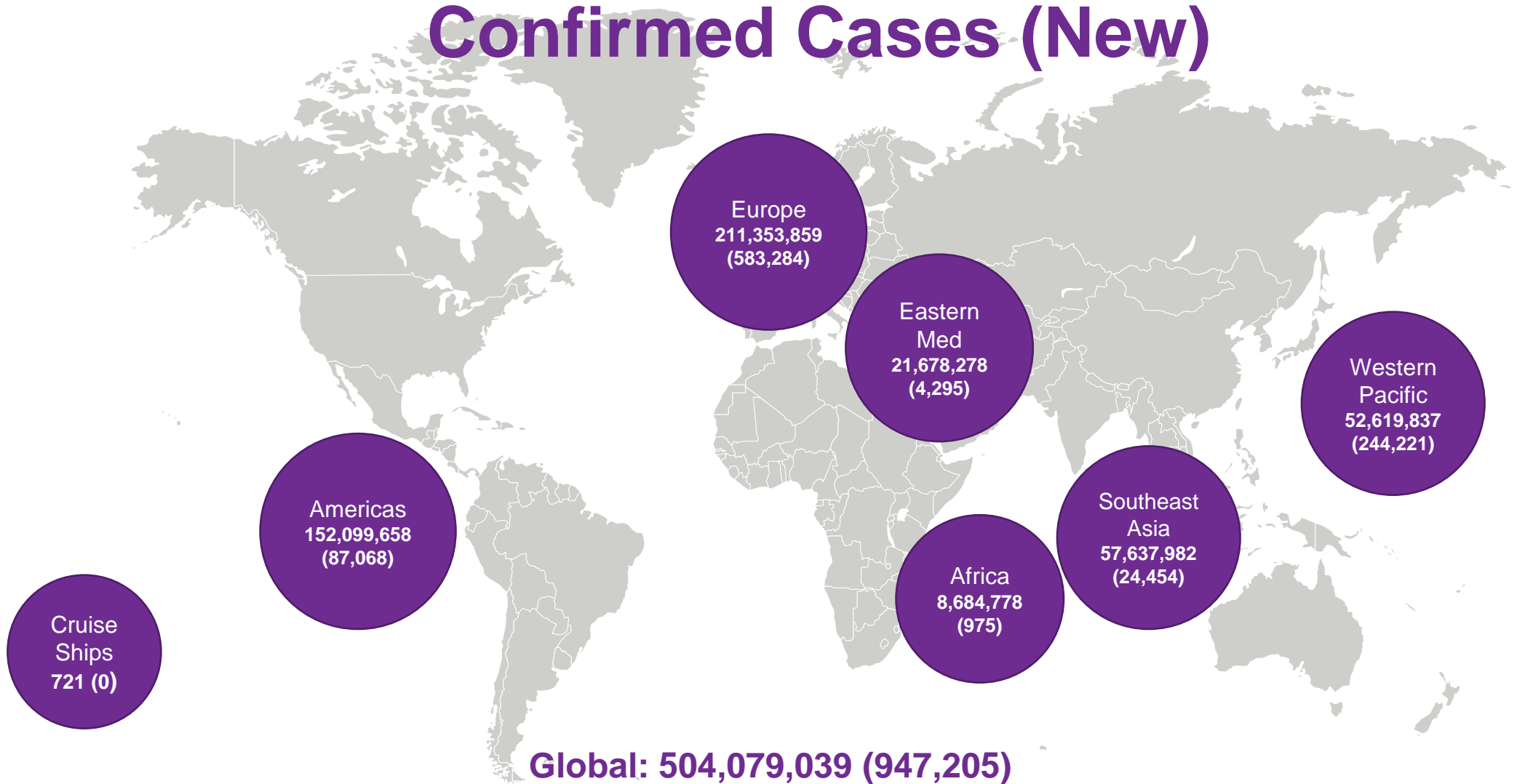
Globally, the number of new COVID-19 cases and deaths has continued to decline since the end of March 2022. During the week of 11 through 17 April 2022, over 5 million cases and over 18,000 deaths were reported across the six WHO regions, a 24 percent and 12 percent decrease respectively, as compared to the previous week.

Figure 1. COVID-19 cases reported weekly by WHO Region, and global deaths, as of 17 April 2022\*\*



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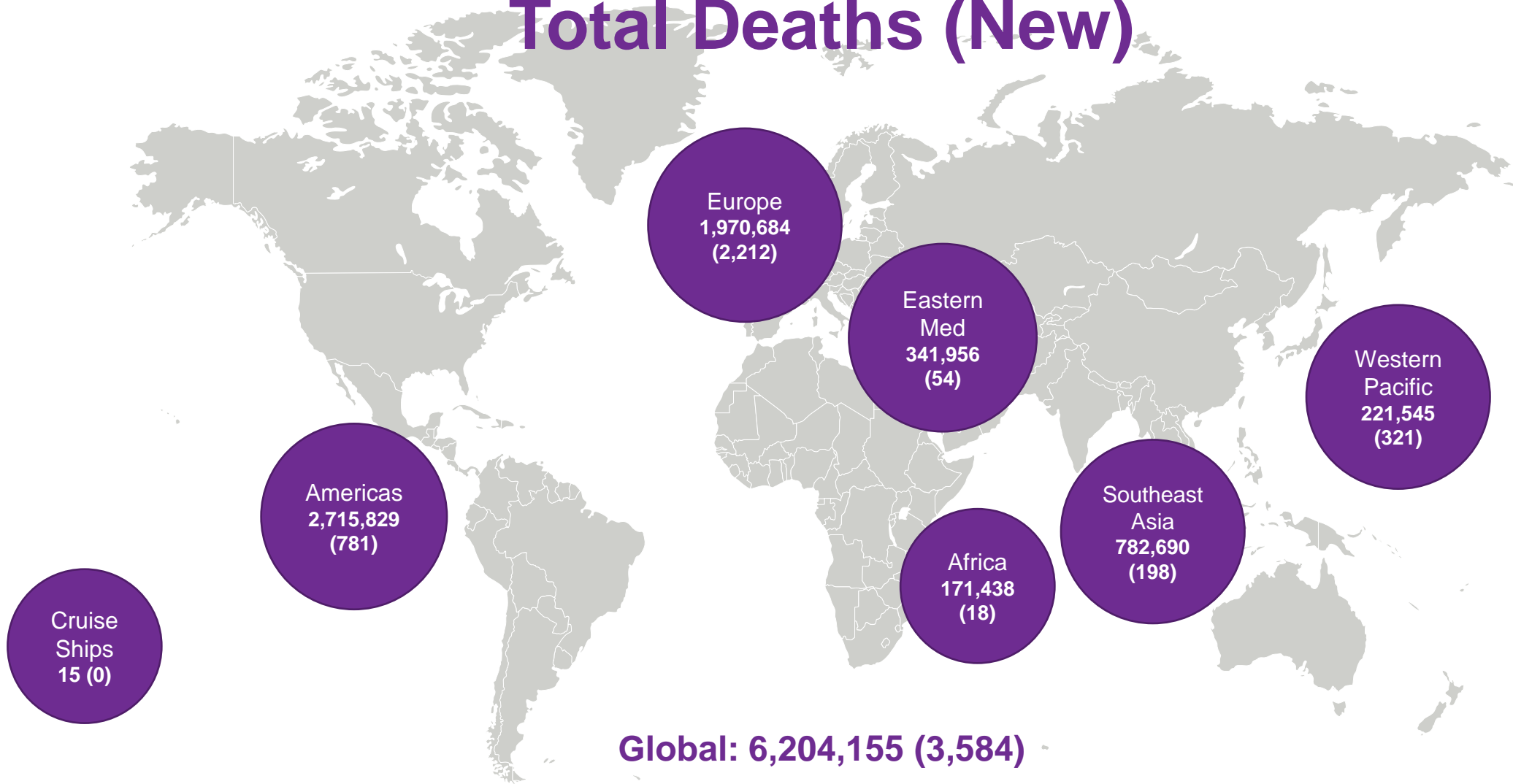
# Confirmed Cases (New)



Reflects data as of 5:40 pm CEST on April 19, 2022.  
Data Source: World Health Organization

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# Total Deaths (New)



Reflects data as of 5:40 pm CEST on April 19, 2022.  
Data Source: World Health Organization

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# Contacts

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*This summary is based on reports sourced from among the 75 countries in which Dentons currently serves clients as well as from firms in other locations, some of which will formally join Dentons later in 2020. We are pleased to share this complimentary summary and contemporaneous assessment, with the caveat that developments are changing rapidly. This is not legal advice, and you should not act or refrain from acting based solely on its contents. We urge you to consult with counsel regarding your particular circumstances.*

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