The 2016 Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games will take place in Rio de Janeiro from 5-21 August and 7-18 September, respectively. The timing of the events coincides with a complex political, economic and security environment in Brazil, which will have a number of repercussions for Rio de Janeiro’s environment and international travellers to the Olympics. G4S Risk Consulting assesses these risks and offers a series of mitigation recommendations.

Location

The Rio 2016 Olympics, the first in South America, will take place in 37 venues, 32 of which are located in Rio and five in the football co-host cities of Belo Horizonte, Brasilia, Manaus, Salvador and Sao Paulo. In total, the 2016 programme includes 28 sports, 41 disciplines and a total of 306 events.

Rio de Janeiro, the capital of Rio de Janeiro state, is the second-largest city in Brazil, with a population of approximately 6.5 million inhabitants. The city has experience hosting large-scale events as it is the headquarters of the annual Rio Carnival festival and it was also a host city during the 2014 FIFA World Cup, with the final match taking place at the Maracanã Stadium.

The Olympic events will take place mainly in four areas of the city - Deodoro, Maracanã, Copacabana and Barra, where the Olympic Park is located. The Olympic Village has been built in the Barra da Tijuca neighbourhood in the west of the city. The largest venue is the Jornalista Mário Filho Stadium – better known as the Maracanã Stadium – which has a capacity of 90,000 spectators, and will host the opening and closing ceremonies.
Political and Economic Crisis and the Rio 2016 Olympics

The Rio 2016 Olympics have increased Brazil’s international exposure, highlighting the country’s current instability resulting from an ongoing political crisis. On 12 May, the Senate temporarily suspended President Dilma Rousseff for up to 180 days, during which she will face an impeachment trial over accusations that she manipulated the state budget during her re-election campaign in 2014. Acting President Michel Temer is accused of having plotted against Rousseff and society is increasingly polarised regarding its support or opposition to Rousseff.

The current political chaos has raised concerns over the planning for the Olympics. After Temer took power, he named an entirely new cabinet, appointing Leonardo Picciani as sports minister – the third official to hold the title in just two months. The economy’s poor performance has also been a source of scepticism regarding the summer games. While Brazil still has not been able to recover from the excessive spending during the 2014 FIFA World Cup, the financial cost of hosting the Olympics raises the prospects for deep, long-term economic recession, with 57 percent of the budget allocated to the Olympics coming from the public sector.

The construction and refurbishment of sporting venues have suffered delays mainly as a result of mismanagement. This has forced private and public construction companies to implement at least three working shifts to finish their projects in time for the Games, triggering discontent among construction workers’ unions. In context, the organising committee’s call for volunteers to participate in the events has failed to attract many Brazilians as the public is distracted by the current austerity measures and the political crisis.

Relevant threats in Rio for travellers

Crime

Crime rates in Rio de Janeiro are high. Petty crime such as street robbery, mugging and pickpocketing are an everyday occurrence in busy tourist areas and pose the main threat to travellers. The perceived wealth of foreign travellers makes them an attractive target for criminals. Areas at particular risk include two of the city’s main roads, Avenida Rio Branco and Avenida das Americas, as well as Ipanema and Copacabana beaches. However, criminal activity continues to occur in other areas of the city as well, especially near ATM machines. Zona Sul and Zona Oeste, where the majority of Olympic venues are situated, are considered to be relatively safer regions of the city, housing several wealthier neighbourhoods, including Jacarepaguá, where the Olympic village is located. In the event of being threatened by an offender, personnel should not resist and concede to criminal demands as previous incidents of resistance have resulted in murder.

Criminal gangs operating in Rio frequently recruit young children, who often seek to distract the victim and can quickly resort to violence. As the current economic crisis worsens, the number of incidents of daylight muggings in Rio de Janeiro continues to increase. The risk of violent crime is high and more prevalent in the city’s favelas, some 800 urban slums or shanty towns which...
house more than three million people. Sexual violence against women is a major concern and there are a large number of cases of gang rape, although many incidents are not reported to authorities amid fears of violent reprisal. The favelas are found all across the city. Many of the Olympic venues are surrounded by or are in the vicinity of favelas, including Vila Autodromo, where a section of the favela has been demolished to make way for the Olympic Park and Village.

Authorities have implemented pacification programmes in an attempt to take back control of the favelas from local gangs and to make the streets safer for residents. Pacifying Police Units (UPP) have been deployed to favelas across the city and are considered to have been crucial in the reduction in crime rates in several areas, including Babilônia and Chapéu-Mangueira, adjacent favelas located in the city’ South Zone near Leme and Copacabana. However, incidents of violent crime continue to be a daily occurrence even in “pacified” favelas. Although several tour companies hold organised tours of the favelas, since early 2016, several foreign governments have warned travellers not to visit any favelas in the city, as the risk of becoming a victim of crime is high.

According to official data, there has been a recent increase in the number of violent deaths and robberies in Rio de Janeiro, which has reached an average of 428 killings per month so far in 2016. On 1 July, German TV broadcasters ZDF and ARD reported that a criminal gang stole their equipment using violence in Rio, a representative example of the threats travellers and locals face in Rio despite a strong police presence.

Road crime is also a significant risk for travellers in Rio. Shootings and carjackings are common on the Linha Vermelha expressway that links the Rio de Janeiro–Galeão International Airport (GIS) to the south of the city. Opportunistic petty crime and sexual violence on public transport is likely to pose a high risk for travellers in the city, while there is a large presence of illegal taxis, which often operate in conjunction with criminal gangs and target foreign nationals.

*Personnel are advised to keep a low profile to avoid being a target of crime. Wearing visibly attractive accessories is not recommended and foreigners are not advised to walk alone at any time. Valuable objects and official documents, including passports and identification cards, must be kept in a locked, safe space at all times.*

**Civil Unrest**

The risk of disruptive, large-scale protests affecting the Rio 2016 Olympics is deemed to be high. Protests take place regularly, often without warning, in Rio de Janeiro, and incidents of violence and injuries are not uncommon. Over the past several months, rival protests in support of and against the Rousseff administration have taken place across the country, with Rio being one of the epicentres. Since Rousseff’s suspension in May, supporters of her Workers’ Party have vowed to continue taking to the streets to demand her reinstatement, threatening to cause chaos during the Olympic and Paralympic Games. In a similar vein to the protests ahead of and during the 2014 FIFA World Cup and the 2013 Confederations Cup, protesters may resort to throwing missiles at police and buildings, with a strong likelihood of clashes between demonstrators and riot police.

There is a high risk of protests motivated by disgruntled residents and anarchist groups opposing the cost of the games, and the thousands of forced evictions which have occurred to make way for the construction of Olympic facilities. Throughout the 2014 football tournament, small-scale protests were regularly held in the vicinity of the Maracanã stadium. However, the strong
presence of security personnel at all of the Olympic venues is expected to successfully prevent the protests from escalating. Protests by taxi drivers against the app-based car service Uber are also highly likely, as the Olympic Games are expected to lead to an increase in the use of the service, triggering grievance among taxi drivers who have previously demanded the government ban the service.

Strike action in Rio often takes place at short notice. Transport workers have used high-profile events in the city to threaten labour action to demand higher wages from the government. Although local authorities are expected to implement contingency plans to prevent strikes from affecting mobility and security, any strikes have the potential to cause either localised or widespread disruption. Visitors should avoid large gatherings as protests have the potential to become confrontational without warning.

Kidnapping

Kidnapping is considered a major threat for travellers to the 2016 Rio Olympics. In particular, cases of “express” kidnapping, where criminals abduct a victim for a short period of time in order to withdraw as much money as possible from ATM machines, are common, as they do not require sophisticated logistics. Kidnap incidents take place both during the day and at night and are most frequently perpetrated by inexperienced criminal gangs, increasing the likelihood of violence and murder. Kidnapping gangs often choose their victims based on opportunity, rather than long-term targeting, making travellers and local residents vulnerable to becoming victims if they are perceived as having wealth. Given the high number of foreign citizens expected to arrive in Rio for the Olympics, kidnapping rings are anticipated to operate near tourist attractions. On 23 July, New Zealander jiu-jitsu athlete Jason Lee was a victim of express kidnapping in Rio. Although Lee is not participating in the Games, the incident has highlighted concerns by international delegations travelling to Brazil for the event. The risk of being targeted is higher in and around shanty towns and lonely areas of the city beyond the Olympic venues.

Ransom and payment policies in case of financial demands are dependent on the victims’ nationality or their employer. As with crime prevention, the most important factor to avoid being targeted as a kidnap victim is to maintain a low profile at all times. Awareness of the operating environment and constant communication between the personnel is relevant in order to identify any irregularities that could lead to a kidnapping situation.

Environment and Health

International media attention has focused on the spread of the mosquito-borne Zika virus, with the outbreak detected in Brazil in early 2015. Although the risk is likely to prove less critical than initially feared for the majority of the population, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says there is enough evidence of the link between the disease and microcephaly cases as a result of women contracting the infection during pregnancy. However, there is a lower incidence of mosquitoes in Rio de Janeiro in the dry month of August and it is far
removed from the epicentre of the outbreak in north-eastern Brazil. Despite calls by scientists to postpone the Olympic Games amid fears that foreign travellers have the potential of contracting the disease and speeding up the global spread, both the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Olympic Committee (IOC) have insisted that the games will go on as scheduled.

However, the WHO has recommended pregnant women avoid travelling to affected countries and is currently conducting a risk assessment of the Games amid increasing international pressure from the scientific community. Several international athletes have declined to participate, or are considering not participating, in the Games due to Zika. However, these concerns are likely overblown due to the timing of the event and mitigation measures already in place. The Olympic venues have been treated with insecticide and other measures have been taken to prevent mosquito breeding. Similar fears over dengue fever infections during the 2014 FIFA World Cup failed to materialise, with just three foreign tourists contracting the virus, all in Belo Horizonte, out of an estimated one million tourists who travelled to Brazil for the event.

Other mosquito-borne diseases, such as malaria, yellow fever and chikungunya, are present in Brazil but are not considered to present a major risk to travellers to Rio de Janeiro in the winter months of August and September. Though the government has provided reassurance that it has implemented measures to prevent a virus epidemic, in June, WHO’s emergency committee met to re-assess its advice to the IOC, concluding that there should be no general restrictions on travel to territories with Zika virus transmission, including the areas that will host the Olympics.

Due to the mostly tropical climate in Rio de Janeiro, food- and water-related infectious diseases is one of the most common medical risks that could affect travellers to the Olympics. Typhoid and other intestinal diseases can be acquired through contaminated food or water; some types of fish may contain poisonous biotoxins even when cooked. The climate conditions in Rio imply a high risk of sunstroke, particularly when spending a prolonged time outdoors as it is the case of spectators at the Sambadromo, Beach Volleyball Arena and the Fort Copacabana.

Personnel are advised to exercise caution around food and drink consumption, including ensuring food has been thoroughly cooked and avoiding drinking tap water. Personnel are advised to protect themselves against insect bites. If travelling outside of Rio de Janeiro, particularly to football events in Manaus, the yellow fever vaccine is recommended, as well as carrying antimalarial tablets.

Infrastructure

Public transport in Rio de Janeiro consists of the metro system, which has two lines and serves much of the city centre, including Copacabana and Ipanema beaches, where several of the Olympic and Paralympic events will take place. Metro Line 4, extending the service west to the Barra da Tijuca, suffered severe construction delays and the cost has been some 21 times more the original budget of USD 122 million, with USD 2.65 billion already spent in order to meet the early August deadline for completion.

In April 2016, part of the Ciclovia Tim Maia elevated cycleway, constructed on Rio’s Niemayer Avenue for the Rio Olympics, collapsed, killing two people. Independent engineers assessing the accident concluded that the cycleway had several construction failures, raising concern over the safety standards at other recently-built venues, which may present deficiencies as a result of having been built rapidly.

Driving conditions vary throughout the country, but are generally poor in comparison with the standard in developed countries. Inter-city roads in Brazil, including in Rio de Janeiro, are regarded to
be highly due to high traffic volumes, unlicensed motorists and high levels of drink-driving. Due to the city’s irregular topography, many motorways are paved along cliffs, raising the likelihood of derailments. Poor road conditions also pose a major risk in Sao Paulo, Belo Horizonte, Brasilia, Manaus and Salvador, where many spectators are expected to travel by car or bus to attend football events. Road conditions in Manaus, a particularly remote location in the Amazon region, are poorer than the national average. Although authorities have declared three public holidays on 5, 18 and 22 August in an attempt to ease traffic congestion throughout the city, traffic surrounding Olympic venues is expected to be heavy throughout the months of August and September.

Mobile phones are expected to have limited service at the Olympic venues given the high volume of signal traffic. Organisers have implemented radio jamming technology in the event of a security threat. Power outages are common in Rio de Janeiro; although most venues are equipped with their own power generators, there is a risk of intermittent power outages that could affect non-event areas.

**Terrorism**

The large number of visitors and the significant media attention focused on the city during the Olympic Games makes Rio de Janeiro an attractive target for terrorism. Although Brazil is not an active participant in any international conflict, the presence of Olympic teams, spectators and sponsors from target countries, including but not restricted to France, the US, UK, Russia and Israel, increases the threat from terrorism and Islamist militancy in particular.

In late July, authorities arrested 12 suspects across three different states, accusing them of planning a terrorist attack during the Games. The subsequent investigations revealed that the suspects were part of an amateur cell without evident links to an international terrorist organisation. All the detainees are recently radicalised Brazilian nationals who pledged allegiance to Islamic State (IS) on the internet, but never had direct contact with the group. Although there are no details regarding the type of attack the cell was planning, police conclude that the suspects’ plans were not organised or funded by any larger group.

In November 2015, a member of Islamist militant group Islamic State (IS) directly threatened Brazil with a statement made on social media site Twitter. Two days before the July arrests, Brazil’s intelligence agency launched investigations into a suspected Brazilian Islamist group calling itself “Ansar al-Khilafah Brazil” (“Soldiers of the Caliphate Brazil”), although there is no evidence of this being an organised group. However, there are no indications of an official IS organisational structure present in Brazil, with the threat from “lone wolves” operating independently remaining the greatest concern. Following the attacks in Paris in November 2015, Brussels in March 2016 and Nice in July 2016, Brazilian authorities have increased the number of security personnel to 85,000, double the number deployed in the London 2012 Olympic Games. An anti-terrorism coordination centre has also been set up in Rio de Janeiro, which will work closely with security centres in Barra da Tijuca the Maracanã stadium, Deodoro and Copacabana. However, critics highlight that the event’s organisers have failed to implement safety measures to identify the entry by suspected terrorists into the country. The porous tri-border area between Brazil, Paraguay and Argentina has long been an area of concern due to the presence of international organised crime syndicates. Despite the threat of an Islamist extremist attack, and recent evidence that there are domestic nationals currently in Brazil who have an affinity with IS and other Islamist groups, there is no tangible evidence to suggest an attack is imminent.

**Ticket touts**

In Brazil it is illegal to resell tickets for higher than face value. In April 2016, Brazilian authorities launched a nationwide police operation aimed at targeting groups attempting to resell tickets at an increased price on social media. Legitimate tickets can only be bought through authorised ticket resellers from participating countries. Travellers and spectators must be aware that tickets being sold on other websites and social media in Brazil are unauthorised.
Venue security

Security for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games will be extremely high. The initial cost of USD 195 million is expected to be surpassed when the Games actually begin. The challenge is significant with a number of venues to protect within the city, involving some 85,000 security personnel. Authorities are also expected to liaise with US and European security counterparts to share relevant information. This liaison is likely to be controlled from dedicated command and control centres in the centre of Rio de Janeiro. These centres will receive and monitor images from thousands of CCTV cameras installed across the city and at the Olympic venues. Military personnel, who form part of the security profile, will man the venues, using x-ray machines and airport-style metal detectors to ensure robust access control.

While the opening and closing ceremonies are perceived as critical events for security organisers, security throughout the Olympics is expected to follow a similar format of previous Games. Organisers say security for host cities for the Olympic football, which include Sao Paulo, Brasilia, Salvador, Belo Horizonte and Manaus, will be the same model as during the World Cup in 2014. This will see enhanced physical security around the stadiums, introducing no-go zones and frequent security checks, especially for the Maracanã Stadium in Rio de Janeiro, where a 'ring of steel' tactic is likely, with a two- or three-tier perimeter security infrastructure. Visitors should expect to be screened, searched and pass through metal detectors several times before being able to access the venue. While details are likely to change ahead of the Games, visitors should anticipate potentially significant delays and congestion at Olympic venues.

Advisory

Travel

- Travel plans should account for potential delays, cancelled services and congestion at border entry points, key travel hubs and at domestic airports.
- Visitors should ensure all documentation - passport and necessary visas, are up-to-date and readily available. Frequent passport and identity checks should be anticipated both when entering the country and during routine stop checks, particularly near the Olympic venues.
- Visitors are advised to register with their embassy or diplomatic office upon arrival. Immigration controls when entering Brazil may take longer than usual during the Olympics, resulting in subsequent travel delays.
- Alternative routes should be planned in the event of road closures, security restrictions or other disruptions, particularly protests concerning the ongoing political crisis and possible impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff.

Security

- Attendees should monitor official announcements concerning security advice and heightening security measures in host cities and ensure contingency measures regarding travel, movement and in the worst case scenario, evacuation, are in place.
- For corporate travellers, an incident response plan should be drawn up, with attendees aware of emergency contact details, the location of emergency meeting places in the event of separation and means of communication.
G4S Risk Consulting

- **G4S Risk Consulting** has an extensive portfolio of services across a wide range of industries and sectors. We pride ourselves on having a wealth of experience and expertise among our consultant team.

- Our core service portfolio consists of security risk management; risk analysis; compliance & investigations; training & capacity building; cyber and digital risk.

- We have recently expanded our service lines to also offer travel risk management; remote site support services; CBRN risk advisory; fraud & investigations and we continue to build upon our offering by growing our expert team of consultants.

- The **Global Intelligence System** (GIS) is an online monitoring system providing geopolitical intelligence on current and future threats to corporate security, travel and business continuity. GIS uses a quantitative risk rating model and qualitative analysis to assess the threat level in 220 countries and territories.

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