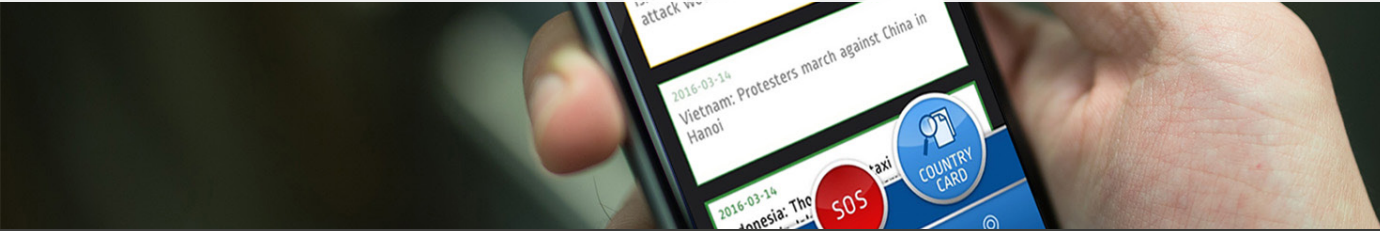


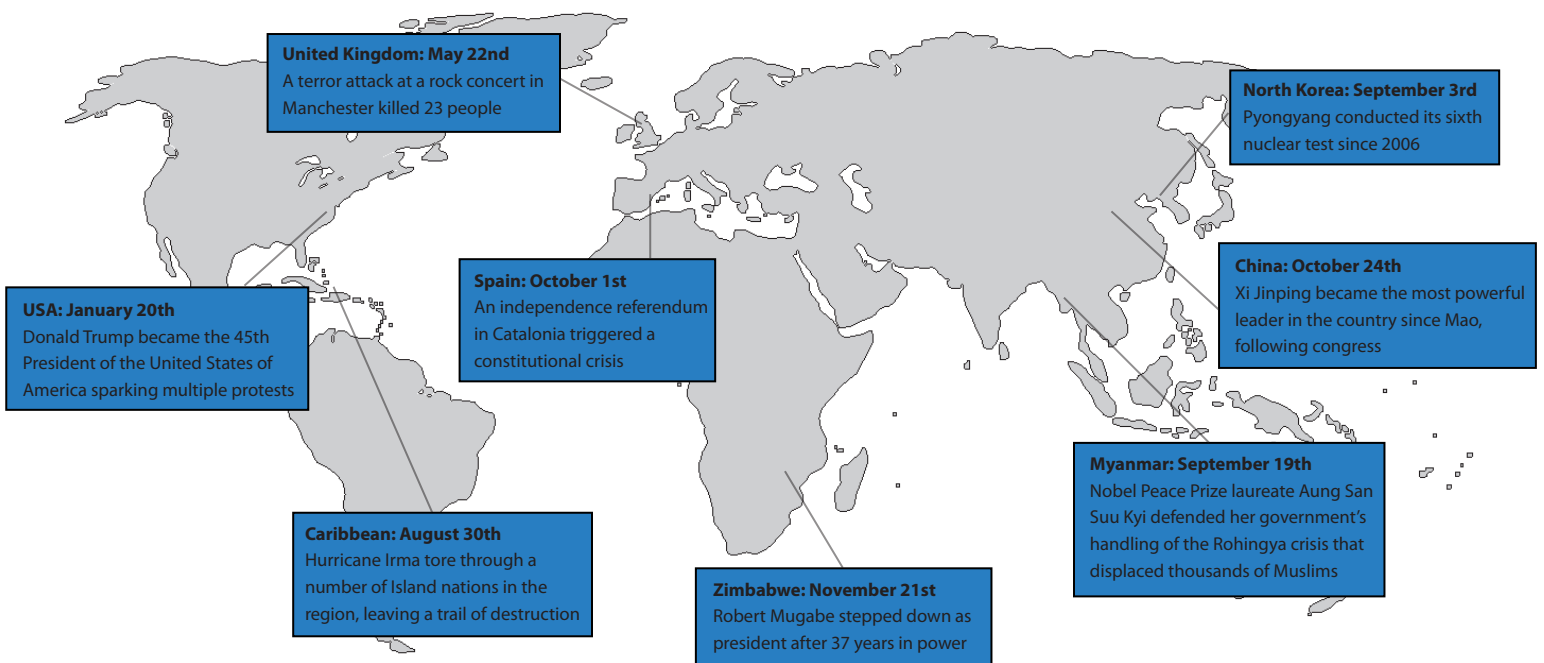
# SAFEY Emergency System - Year in Review

## 30 Events that defined the safety and security discussion of 2017



### Summary

As we approach the end of 2017, SAFEY looks back at the past year and counts down the 30 events that dominated the global headlines as well as sparked political, economic and social discussions. While the inauguration of Donald Trump as the US president ushered in a period of uncertainty, China continued to push the idea of globalization under the leadership of Xi Jinping who managed to cement his power in the world's second largest economy. The Islamic State (ISIS), on the other hand, launched several daring attacks in Europe just as its territories in the Middle East shrunk day by day. Major natural disasters were also another key underscore of the year with some of them partially attributed to climate change. In this year-end special, SAFEY picked 30 events, outlined in seven categories as events that defined safety and security in 2017 and its impact on international education and study abroad.



## Terrorism

### **United Kingdom: Deadly terror attacks in London and Manchester**

The year saw at least five major terror incidents across the country with three of them utilizing the increasingly common vehicle-ramming style of attack. The attacks targeted London and Manchester where popular locations such as the Westminster Bridge, Borough Market, the London Underground network, Finsbury Park and Manchester Arena were hit. The Manchester attack was also the worst terror incident in UK since the 7/7 bombings.

### **Sweden: Vehicular attack in Stockholm**

A vehicular attack also occurred in the Swedish capital of Stockholm on 7 April. The attack occurred in Drottninggatan area where shoppers converged and left at least five people dead, as well as 14 others, wounded. A day of mourning was declared to remember the victims on 9 April.

### **Spain: Coordinated terror attack hits summer holidaymakers in Barcelona**

A coordinated terror attack also rocked Barcelona in August 2017 and once again, it involved the usage of a vehicle to maximise the number of civilian casualties. The attack first occurred in the crowded La Rambla area where it left 13 people dead and 130 others wounded. Hours later, another attack occurred in Cambrils where all five terrorists from the previous attack's cell were killed by police.

### **United States: New York attacks reignite memories of 9/11**

Across the Atlantic, an attack was also reported in New York City when an ISIS-inspired man mowed down several cyclists on a bike lane in Lower Manhattan. The incident in October left at least eight people dead and 11 others wounded. Two months later in December, an attempted bombing on the New York's subway system by a Bangladeshi man was also foiled by the police. The incident near the busy Port Authority Bus Terminal however only left three people with minor injuries.

### **Egypt: Mosque attack in Sinai underscores growing threat by Islamists**

In November 2017, a major bomb and gun attack took place in the restive Sinai Peninsula, killing at least 31 people and wounding more than 122 others. The attack at a mosque in the village of Al-Rawda, east Bir-al-Bed was the deadliest attack in the modern history of Egypt. An affiliate of the Islamic State (ISIS) group, Wilayat Sinai was thought to have been responsible for the attack.

### **Somalia: Mogadishu bombing fuels instability in fragile nation**

The threat of insurgency in the country reached a new height in October 2017 when a massive bomb blast caused by a truck explosion rocked Mogadishu's Hodan district. The bombing left at least 500 casualties and it also surpassed the 2011 Mogadishu bombing to become the deadliest attack in the country's history.

### **Iran: Militants launch attacks in Tehran**

A major terror attack took place in Tehran in June when suspected ISIS militants targeted the Iranian Parliament building and the Mausoleum of Ruhollah Khomeini. The attacks that caused 23 casualties was eventually repelled by security forces. Although ISIS admitted responsibility, some Iranian officials accused Saudi Arabia as the mastermind of the attack, deepening the mistrust between the regional rivals.

## Environment

### **Mexico: Earthquake rattles states of Chiapas, Puebla and Morelos**

The country was rocked by two earthquakes in less than ten days in September with one occurring in the southern state of Chiapas and in another in the central region near Puebla and Morelos. Both quakes with a higher than 7.0 magnitude wreaked havoc and left at least 480 deaths and a trail of destruction. The adversity also revealed the positive side of Mexico when the entire nation came together to support those in needs through various means.

### **Indonesia: Air travel chaos in Bali as volcano erupts**

The holiday season in Bali was thrown into chaos when the Mount Agung volcano erupted in late November. The eruption caused hundreds of flights to be cancelled, upsetting thousands of travelers on the island paradise.

### **Asia: Typhoon wreaks havoc in Asia**

The year's typhoon season caused severe property damage in a number of countries including China, Japan, Hong Kong, Macao, the Philippines as well as Vietnam. The stronger typhoons or tropical storms included Hato, Pakhar, Mawar, Khanun as well as Saola in which they also left many casualties along their paths.

### **Caribbean and United States: Deadly hurricanes rip through Leeward Islands and eastern US**

In the Americas, dozens of countries also bear the brunt of two major hurricanes namely Irma and Jose between August and September. Countries that suffered the most included Cape Verde, Puerto Rico, Turks and Caicos, parts of eastern United States especially Florida as well as many smaller countries located in the Leeward Islands region (Barbuda, Saint-Martin, Virgin Islands and Saint Barthélemy).

### **Southern Europe and United States: Wildfires rage through Mediterranean and California**

The summer of 2017 also witnessed major wildfires erupting in Portugal and Spain as well as California in the United States. In Portugal, a wildfire that broke out in Pedrógão Grande left at least 47 people dead as they got trapped on a highway and had nowhere to escape. Similar situation was also reported in California where two massive wildfires in October and December forced thousands to evacuate their homes.

### **Global: Trump pulls US out of Paris climate agreement**

President Donald Trump pulled the United States out of the Paris climate agreement in June, fulfilling one of his key campaign promises. Despite strong concerns and opposition, Trump said the agreement was unfair while the withdrawal also meant an end to Obama-era carbon reduction targets.

## Political Changes

### **United States: Donald Trump sworn in as 45th President of the US**

Donald J. Trump officially sworn in as the 45th President of the United States in January after winning one of the most divided elections in the country's history. Upon swearing in, his administration also continued to be dogged with scandals as well as departures of high-profile personnel including his Chief Strategist Steve Bannon, National Security Adviser Michael Flynn, Chief of Staff Reince Priebus and Press Secretary Sean Spicer among others. His administration was also forced to defend accusation of colluding with Russia during the election.

### **Zimbabwe: Mugabe steps down after 37-year in power**

After ruling the country for 37 years, Zimbabwean President Robert Mugabe eventually bowed out following what appeared to be a coup by the military. Once regarded as the lion of Africa, Mugabe's swift departure was marked with jubilations on the streets by people who had long suffered from his iron-fisted rule.

### **China: Xi Jinping confirmed as most powerful leader seen in decades**

Dubbed the most powerful leader in China since Mao, Xi Jinping returned as the head of the Communist Party of China for a second term following the 19th Congress in Beijing. Xi's return was hardly surprising though his meteoric rise was confirmed when his thoughts were enshrined in the constitution of the Communist Party, further cementing his grip on the second largest economy of the world.

### **Spain: Catalan independence sparks constitutional crisis**

The country was plunged into a deep constitutional crisis in late October when the autonomous Catalan region proceeded with an independence referendum despite firm opposition by the central government in Madrid. The referendum resulted in a divided country and eventually forced the leader of the independence movement, Carles Puigdemont to flee to Belgium. Street protests also erupted in major Catalan cities such as Barcelona and Girona following the referendum controversy.

### **France: Centrist Macron emerged victorious amid rise of far-right populists in Europe**

Emmanuel Macron, the pro-EU centrist candidate claimed after beating his closest rival, the far-right, Marine Le Pen in the French presidential election in May. His victory provided a brief respite for Europeans amidst the resurgence of far-right movements in recent years. His En Marche movement also drove the two biggest parties, the Socialists and Republicans out of the Elysee Palace for the first time.

### **United Kingdom: Theresa May narrowly survives snap election as Brexit talks begin**

A hung parliament was declared in June as the Conservative Party under the leadership of Prime Minister Theresa May failed to cling a majority at the snap general election. Although May managed to secure a deal with the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), her government struggled to pass several legislations including the one on Brexit amidst surge in Labor support as well as rebellious Tory MPs.

## Crime

### **United States: Gun debate continues amid deadly shootings**

The shooting tragedy in Las Vegas on 1 October also dominated global headlines when it topped the list of worst mass shootings in the country's history. The tragedy that occurred at a music festival left at least 58 people dead including the gunman Stephen Paddock. The motive of the shooter however continued to remain a mystery. More than a month later, another shooting took place at a church in Sutherlands Springs of Texas, killing at least 26 people including the perpetrator.

## International Relations and Diplomacy

### **North Korea: Defiant Pyongyang accelerates nuclear program despite firm US opposition**

Tension in the Korean Peninsula continued to be on the rise throughout the year as Pyongyang conducted its sixth nuclear test since 2006, drawing global condemnations particularly by US President Donald Trump. On top of the nuclear test, North Korea also tested several intercontinental ballistic missiles that it claimed can reach anywhere in the US. The Trump administration insisted that all options are on the table to denuclearize the regime and had even resorted to label Kim Jong-un, the "Little Rocket Man".

### **Israel/Palestinian Territories: Trump's recognition of Jerusalem triggers global outcry**

The longstanding Middle East issue took a twist in November 2017 when US President Donald Trump formally recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. The announcement that was part of his campaign promises sparked global condemnations and protests particularly in the Muslim world such as the West Bank, Gaza, Turkey, Jordan, Malaysia, Indonesia as well as Algeria among others.

### **Qatar: Proxy conflict sparks Gulf diplomatic crisis**

Qatar was isolated from several Gulf states in June amidst heightening tension with Saudi Arabia. States that cut ties with Qatar include Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Comoros, Chad, Maldives as well as Yemen over allegations that the country supported extremism and terrorism. Travel and trade bans were among measures being taken to isolate the country.

## Civil Unrest

### **Venezuela: Embattled Maduro moves on despite street protests**

Venezuela continued to be hit by street protests throughout much of mid-2017 amidst the controversies surrounding President Nicolas Maduro. By squeezing the opposition through various means including the Supreme Court, street protests erupted in major cities across the country including Caracas, eventually resulting in clashes that left hundreds of casualties.

### **Germany: Protests, riots mar G20 summit in Hamburg**

The G20 summit in Chancellor Angela Merkel's hometown of Hamburg in July was marred by street protests and riots. The summit in August saw activists and groups of various causes converging in the city, resulting in clashes with the police.

### **Kenya: Election disputes trigger nationwide protests**

Violence rocked the streets of Kenya in August following a disputed presidential election. The first round of voting that gave victory to incumbent leader Uhuru Kenyatta was later declared null and a second round was called. Kenyatta however won the election again and sworn in as president in late November.

## Civil War and Insurgency

### **Yemen: Conflict deepens as former president slain**

The ongoing civil war in Yemen plunged into deeper uncertainties in December when former President Ali Abdullah Saleh was killed by Houthis, a group he once supported. Saleh was killed near Sana'a after he declared his intention to begin dialogue with the Saudi-backed coalition based in Aden.

### **Iraq: Kurdish independence referendum sparks intense battle in Kirkuk**

An intense battle took place between the central government forces from Baghdad and Kurdish Peshmerga fighters following a controversial referendum that saw oil-rich Kirkuk be included as part of a new independent state. The battle resulted in the victory for Iraqi forces and withdrawal of Peshmerga forces from Kirkuk.

### **Syria: IS significantly weakened as Russia begins withdrawing troops**

The Islamic State saw its influence in Syria dwindled amidst continuous operation by government, opposition and foreign forces in various parts of the country including Raqqa. Russian President Vladimir Putin who paid a visit to Syria in late November said Moscow's mission to stem the growth of international terrorism was a success and will begin partial troops withdrawal. His announcement came despite stalled talks in Geneva over the ongoing conflict.

### **Myanmar: Crackdown on insurgents raises genocide concerns in Rakhine**

The administration of Nobel Laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi received barrage of criticisms in August following a military operation in Rakhine state that forced thousands of Rohingya Muslims to be displaced. Although Suu Kyi vehemently denied the accusation and insisted that it was a security operation, the international community begged to differ and noted "elements of genocide" in it.

## About SAFEY Emergency System

SAFEY Emergency System, [www.safeyglobal.com](http://www.safeyglobal.com), is a mobile-based warning, communication, SOS, & location system that allows administrators to be proactive in protecting and communicating with their study abroad students and faculty.

The SAFEY system helps study abroad administrators and program providers with innovative and indispensable risk management tools to improve student health & safety.

