

# WorldWatch Headlines: February 2019

Welcome to our latest compilation of WorldWatch Headlines, taken from the most recently published Country Insight Snapshot reports. These headlines highlight the key development our analysts identified for each country when they updated the report.

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## Africa

<b>Algeria</b>	The army supports President Bouteflika's continued rule.
<b>Angola</b>	The IMF approves a large extended credit facility for Angola.
<b>Botswana</b>	The ruling party could be weakened ahead of this year's elections.
<b>Cameroon</b>	President Biya reshapes the executive to help tackle the Anglophone crisis.
<b>Congo, D.R.</b>	The constitutional court upholds December's contested election result.
<b>Cote d'Ivoire</b>	The regional bank maintains the steady interest rate.
<b>Ethiopia</b>	The World Bank increases lending to the country.
<b>Gabon</b>	Political uncertainty is high as the president remains hospitalised by a mystery illness.
<b>Ghana</b>	Growth slows due to headwinds in the financial services sector.
<b>Kenya</b>	The country has fully commissioned the largest wind farm in Africa.
<b>Libya</b>	The failed Palermo summit perpetuates Libya's state of insecurity.
<b>Malawi</b>	An IMF review is broadly favourable.
<b>Mauritius</b>	A trade deal with India is expected early in 2019.
<b>Morocco</b>	The IMF renews its precautionary credit line.
<b>Mozambique</b>	Mozambique is ranked among the world's worst in terms of global competitiveness.
<b>Namibia</b>	The economy is mired in recession, with fiscal consolidation curtailing growth.
<b>Nigeria</b>	Presidential and legislative elections could create instability.
<b>Senegal</b>	The country successfully meets most targets under an IMF programme.
<b>Sierra Leone</b>	The IMF praises Sierra Leone's fiscal policy.
<b>South Africa</b>	The country has built up a comfortable buffer of FX reserves.
<b>Sudan</b>	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Sudan amid violent country-wide protests.
<b>Tanzania</b>	The business operating environment disappoints.
<b>Tunisia</b>	The economic outlook remains mixed, despite accelerating growth.
<b>Uganda</b>	An Ebola vaccination programme is implemented along the DRC border.
<b>Zambia</b>	The 2019 budget highlights the financial constraints facing the government.
<b>Zimbabwe</b>	Shortages of goods and liquidity spark a sharp rise in inflation.

## Asia Pacific

<b>Afghanistan</b>	The final results from October's parliamentary election have been delayed.
<b>Australia</b>	Growth slows as household consumption falters.
<b>Bangladesh</b>	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for Bangladesh as prospects improve after the election.
<b>Cambodia</b>	Headwinds threaten the export-oriented garments sector.
<b>China</b>	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades China's country risk rating as signals of economic difficulties increase.
<b>Fiji</b>	The ruling party's election victory implies broad policy continuity.
<b>Hong Kong (S.A.R)</b>	Trade slows sharply, including a decline in exports.
<b>India</b>	Lower oil prices help the rupee but will not accelerate the economy.

<b>Indonesia</b>	The growth outlook deteriorates as interest rate changes bite.
<b>Japan</b>	Domestic conditions will support growth into 2020 but China is a wild card.
<b>Korea (South)</b>	Trade uncertainty and faltering employment overshadow the outlook.
<b>Malaysia</b>	The country has a new king following a carefully-managed succession.
<b>Myanmar</b>	The EU is considering withdrawing Myanmar from its tariff-free market-access arrangement.
<b>Nepal</b>	Recent signals indicate an expanded trade relationship with the US.
<b>New Zealand</b>	Higher minimum wages will support consumption growth.
<b>Pakistan</b>	The currency is set to slide as difficulties increase.
<b>Papua New Guinea</b>	The economy should get a boost from the recent regional summit meeting.
<b>Philippines</b>	Aggressive rate hikes are slowing overall growth.
<b>Singapore</b>	The EU-Singapore free-trade agreement will come into effect by mid-2019.
<b>Sri Lanka</b>	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Sri Lanka as the political crisis threatens to spread.
<b>Taiwan</b>	Local election results deal the ruling party a damaging blow.
<b>Thailand</b>	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Thailand as economic prospects weaken.
<b>Vietnam</b>	Plans to lift company ownership limits are unveiled.

## Eastern Europe

<b>Albania</b>	The political environment outlook deteriorates rapidly due to the outbreak of demonstrations.
<b>Azerbaijan</b>	The business environment improves but serious problems remain.
<b>Belarus</b>	The IMF acknowledges the economy's strong recovery.
<b>Bosnia &amp; Herzegovina</b>	The attempts to integrate the country into the EU and NATO stall.
<b>Bulgaria</b>	The economy continues to lose pace.
<b>Croatia</b>	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Croatia as economic growth slows.
<b>Czech Republic</b>	Government stability is at risk as the prime minister comes under fire.
<b>Estonia</b>	Economic acceleration to fade as export prospects dim.
<b>Georgia</b>	The presidential election's first-round vote proves inconclusive.
<b>Hungary</b>	A wave of strikes and demonstrations hits major cities.
<b>Kazakhstan</b>	The short-term outlook remains stable despite recent oil price deflation.
<b>Kyrgyz Republic</b>	The supply environment outlook improves.
<b>Latvia</b>	Coalition talks to form a new government are proving difficult.
<b>Lithuania</b>	Three ministers are dismissed amid ongoing teachers' protests.
<b>Macedonia</b>	Parliament agrees to change Macedonia's name, despite the earlier referendum result.
<b>Poland</b>	The assassination of the mayor of Gdansk damages the political outlook.
<b>Romania</b>	The government imposes punitive measures on foreign investors.
<b>Russian Federation</b>	The Nord Stream 2 project reaches a critical stage.
<b>Serbia</b>	Kosovo imposes a 100% tariff on Serbian imports.
<b>Slovak Republic</b>	New reforms aim to simplify the start-up of new businesses.
<b>Slovenia</b>	The country remains vulnerable to any new external economic shock.
<b>Tajikistan</b>	Doing business in Tajikistan remains challenging.
<b>Turkmenistan</b>	The IMF acknowledges that growth is stable.
<b>Ukraine</b>	Political risk rises as martial law is declared amid the ongoing Russian conflict.
<b>Uzbekistan</b>	Strong demand for imports could indicate that the economy will overheat.

## Middle East

<b>Bahrain</b>	A cabinet reshuffle installs new finance and defence ministers.
<b>Egypt</b>	Doubts surface over the final phase of IMF reforms.
<b>Iran</b>	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Iran's country risk rating as US sanctions bite.
<b>Iraq</b>	Parliament approves a new government, but with eight posts unfilled.
<b>Israel</b>	Prime Minister Netanyahu calls an early general election.
<b>Jordan</b>	Growth is still very weak, ensuring risks remain elevated.
<b>Kuwait</b>	Kuwait is cutting its oil output in 2019.
<b>Lebanon</b>	Political risk remains elevated as a new government has yet to be formed.
<b>Oman</b>	A second rating agency cuts Omani debt to junk status.
<b>Qatar</b>	A major ministerial reshuffle should improve the business environment.
<b>Saudi Arabia</b>	The economy continues to grow - albeit weakly.
<b>Syria</b>	Loyalist groups grow vocal against government corruption.
<b>UAE</b>	Dubai's 2019 budget plans for marginal spending increases.
<b>Yemen</b>	The UN pushes for control of Hodeidah ahead of December's peace talks.

## The Americas

<b>Argentina</b>	Political tension is set to rise due to the upcoming elections.
<b>Bolivia</b>	A ruling which upholds Morales' fourth presidential bid stirs tensions.
<b>Brazil</b>	The new government's mixed policy messages heighten investor concerns.
<b>Canada</b>	The export-diversification strategy for mineral fuels faces challenges.
<b>Chile</b>	Policies on both migration and the indigenous Mapuche people raise concerns.
<b>Colombia</b>	President Duque's honeymoon period is short-lived.
<b>Costa Rica</b>	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades Costa Rica's country risk rating due to increased pressure on the currency.
<b>Cuba</b>	The US considers activating a law that further restricts foreign investment in Cuba.
<b>Dominican Republic</b>	Real GDP growth accelerates again.
<b>Ecuador</b>	Real GDP growth is up slightly in Q3.
<b>El Salvador</b>	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades its rating outlook for El Salvador as the 2019 budget is approved.
<b>Guatemala</b>	Dun & Bradstreet downgrades its rating outlook for Guatemala as the political crisis deepens.
<b>Honduras</b>	Complex forces cast a shadow over the near-term economic outlook.
<b>Jamaica</b>	The tourism sector continues to thrive despite recent security concerns.
<b>Mexico</b>	Fuel shortages hit business continuity and constrain economic activity.
<b>Nicaragua</b>	The socio-political crisis prompts a deep recession.
<b>Panama</b>	An increase in fiscal spending will aid economic growth.
<b>Paraguay</b>	Tensions within the ruling party cause serious political hurdles.
<b>Peru</b>	The opposition leader is placed in preventive detention.
<b>Trinidad &amp; Tobago</b>	The natural gas sector is set to provide growth momentum in 2019.
<b>USA</b>	The partial government shutdown highlights the growing dysfunction between the major political parties.
<b>Uruguay</b>	Economic growth continues to stutter.
<b>Venezuela</b>	The ruling party consolidates its power as the president begins a second term.

## Western Europe

<b>Austria</b>	The government is planning a tax on digital advertising.
<b>Belgium</b>	The political environment outlook weakens.
<b>Cyprus</b>	Cyprus joins a newly-formed regional gas forum.
<b>Denmark</b>	Economic growth will slow due to a European downturn.

<b>Finland</b>	Growth projection softens as external headwinds pick up.
<b>France</b>	Continuing protests jeopardise prospects of reform.
<b>Germany</b>	Economic gloom persists as new export orders drop.
<b>Greece</b>	The Macedonia name deal undermines political stability.
<b>Iceland</b>	Dun & Bradstreet upgrades Iceland's country risk rating again amid ongoing economic improvements.
<b>Ireland</b>	The economy slows as the external environment deteriorates.
<b>Italy</b>	The government agrees to reduce the budget deficit target for 2019.
<b>Luxembourg</b>	Economic growth is set to slow.
<b>Malta</b>	The economy grew by a massive 7.5% y/y in Q3.
<b>Netherlands</b>	Consumer demand will remain solid despite softening confidence.
<b>Norway</b>	The booming onshore economy will buoy up growth in 2019.
<b>Portugal</b>	Growth dips but fiscal accounts strengthen.
<b>Spain</b>	The GDP forecasts for 2018 and 2019 are revised downwards.
<b>Sweden</b>	The formation of a minority administration ends protracted political uncertainty.
<b>Switzerland</b>	A new agreement with the EU could be delayed until 2020.
<b>Turkey</b>	The lira crisis affects the real economy as GDP contracts.
<b>United Kingdom</b>	The prime minister's Brexit plan suffers a heavy defeat in parliament.