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## United States

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➔ **United States (Internal)** As COVID-19 health crisis worsened and economic downturn deepened, political climate grew increasingly tense ahead of 3 Nov presidential election. Amid tight race between Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and incumbent President Donald Trump, Texas Governor Greg Abbott 1 Oct restricted early voting ballot boxes to one per county; civil and voting rights groups subsequently launched lawsuits as they saw potential to affect vote tallies in this and other similar moves in states with few polling stations; Texas Supreme Court 28 Oct upheld Abbott's order. Authorities 8 Oct arrested and charged 13 right-wing militiamen plotting abduction of Gretchen Whitmer and Ralph Northam, Democratic governors of Michigan and Virginia states, respectively; another man 16 Oct arrested. Brawl between Trump supporters and opponents 26 Oct erupted prompting 11 arrests in New York City; at least one injured. Senate 26 Oct confirmed Amy Coney Barrett to fill Supreme Court vacancy; Barrett's appointment – seen as controversial due to nature and speed of her nomination close to election – would give conservatives potential 6-3 majority on election-related cases; Trump 23 Sept said he expected election to end up in Supreme Court, while Barrett 9 Sept refused to commit to recusing herself from election-related decisions. Meanwhile, COVID-19 spread continued with total 8.8 mn infections and 227,000 deaths as of late Oct. Health crisis featured heavily in electoral campaign throughout month: Trump claimed COVID-19, which he contracted 2-5 Oct, does not warrant lockdowns or other significant restrictions on activity, while Biden argued Trump had mismanaged pandemic. National polls 30 Oct showed large lead for Biden, but margins narrower in highly-contested states likely to determine outcome of election. With need to count unprecedented number of mail-in ballots, some polling aggregators throughout month expressed concerns that tight race means winner may not be known immediately after 3 Nov, which could prompt both Biden and Trump to claim victory and supporters to reject other side's claim, thus raising risk of violence. Congress 29 Oct failed to agree on economic relief package amid 7.9% unemployment.