

MONGOLIA SECURITY ANALYSIS REPORT

AI-Assisted Open Source Intelligence Assessment

Analysis Period: November 02, 2026 - November 09, 2026

This report was produced using open-source intelligence analysis. The assessment is grounded in publicly available reporting and should be cross-referenced with primary sources. RSS feed articles are listed in the annex for reference.

Security Analysis Report: Mongolia (November 02, 2026 - November 09, 2026)

Executive Summary

During the period of November 02 to November 09, 2026, direct news coverage for Mongolia was limited, however, recent developments in late October and earlier in 2026 highlight Mongolia's ongoing efforts to balance its "third neighbor" foreign policy amidst complex geopolitical pressures. Cybersecurity remains a significant concern, with the government actively combating online fraud and enhancing its cyber defense capabilities following a surge in cybercrime. Diplomatic engagements with major powers like China, Russia, the United States, and the European Union continue to focus on economic diversification, critical minerals, and security cooperation, underscoring Mongolia's strategic importance. Military exercises with regional partners demonstrate a commitment to international peacekeeping and interoperability, while border security measures are being strengthened to counter illicit activities. Overall, Mongolia's security posture is characterized by a proactive approach to cyber threats and a delicate diplomatic balancing act to maintain sovereignty and economic stability.

Key Security Developments

- Cybercrime and Online Fraud Surge

Mongolia's Cybersecurity Council, chaired by Prime Minister Uchral Nyam-Osor, held a regular meeting on October 23, 2026, to address a significant increase in online fraud and cybercrime. Cybercrime accounted for 32% of all recorded crimes in Mongolia in 2026, up from 19% in 2021, with over 11,440 cases recorded in the first nine months of 2026. Losses from cybercrime reached MNT 28 billion by October 2026. In response, the government launched the website www.zalilan.113.mn to help the public recognize and prevent online fraud. This initiative reflects a national effort to reform and strengthen the system for combating cybercrime, including adopting international best practices for coordinated responses.

- Border Crossing Restrictions with Russia

The Federal Customs Service (FCS) of Russia announced temporary suspensions of vehicle and individual crossings at several border checkpoints with Mongolia in November 2026 due to National Unity Day in Russia and national holidays in Mongolia. Specifically, restrictions were in effect on November 4, 2026, at the Khandagayty, Tsagan-Tolgoi, and Shara-Sur bilateral automobile checkpoints in the Republic of Tuva. Further restrictions are planned for November 10 and 26, 2026. This impacts cross-border movement and trade, particularly for carriers and individuals planning international shipments.

- Deepening EU Relations and Visa Facilitation Efforts

A delegation from the European Parliament visited Mongolia from May 26 to 30, 2026, for the 18th EU–Mongolia Inter-Parliamentary Meeting in Ulaanbaatar. During the visit, discussions focused on strengthening the strategic partnership, with Mongolian Deputy Speaker J. Bat-Erdene expressing strong interest in a visa facilitation agreement with the EU, a request formally submitted by the European Parliament to the European Commission and Council. This highlights Mongolia's commitment to broadening its international partnerships and reducing reliance on its immediate neighbors.

- Mongolia-Germany Diplomatic Summit

Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khürelsükh conducted an official state visit to Berlin on October 20-21, 2026, at the invitation of German Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier. This visit, marking the most significant bilateral engagement in over a decade, focused on expanding joint clean industrial initiatives, securing development agreements, and initiating negotiations for a social security agreement. The summit underscores Mongolia's "Third Neighbor" policy, aiming to diversify economic cooperation and maintain neutrality amidst great-power competition.

- Enhanced Border Security Measures

In 2026, Mongolia's Passenger Information Unit (PIU), supported by the United Nations, significantly strengthened its capacity to prevent cross-border criminal activity. As of August 10, 2026, the PIU identified a range of serious crimes, including suspected smuggling, drug trafficking, money laundering, and terrorist financing. Authorities reported detecting attempted illegal cross-border smuggling cases valued at approximately MNT 700 billion (around USD 200 million) and identified around USD 10 million in undeclared cash.

- Joint Military Exercise "Nomadic Elephant 2026" with India

The 18th edition of the India-Mongolia joint military exercise, "Nomadic Elephant 2026," took place from September 21 to October 3, 2026, at the Foreign Training Node in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand, India. The exercise involved 45 personnel from each side and focused on enhancing joint operational capabilities for counter-insurgency operations in semi-urban and mountainous terrain under a United

Nations mandate. Training included tactical drills, airborne operations, and cybersecurity training, reinforcing bilateral defense cooperation.

- Russia-Mongolia Military Partnership Plan

On September 29, 2026, the Russian Ministry of Defense announced the signing of a Russian-Mongolian strategic partnership plan in the military sphere for the years 2027–2031. This agreement, reached during talks between Russian Deputy Defense Minister Vasily Osmakov and Mongolian defense leadership, aims to strengthen military cooperation across various levels, including general staffs, border military districts, and military institutions. Preparations are also underway for the joint military exercise "Selenge-2026".

- China-Russia-Mongolia Joint Border Defense Exercise

Border defense forces from China, Russia, and Mongolia held their second joint exercise, "Border Defense Cooperation 2026," in early September 2026. The exercise focused on preventing and combating espionage and sabotage activities in border areas, including joint planning, search, coordinated attacks, and arrests. This initiative aims to strengthen strategic mutual trust and jointly protect security and stability in the border regions.

- Mongolia's Role in UN Peacekeeping

As of 2024, Mongolia ranked as the 8th largest contributor to United Nations peacekeeping operations, having sent over 22,000 troops between 2002 and 2024. This commitment continued in 2026, with the annual Khaan Quest multinational military exercise, co-sponsored by U.S. Indo-Pacific Command, also taking place in July 2026. President Khurelsukh Ukhnaa reiterated Mongolia's vision of "Pax Globalica" and its commitment to global peace at the UN General Assembly in September 2026.

- US-Mongolia Strategic Partnership and Defense Cooperation

The United States and Mongolia held their annual Bilateral Defense Framework (BDF) on September 8, 2026, where they identified a roadmap for increasing Mongolia's defense spending over the next five years. Discussions also covered enhancing the Mongolian Armed Forces' capabilities, expanding combined military exercises, and strengthening Mongolia's defense industrial base. This engagement reinforces Mongolia's "Strategic Third Neighbor Partnership" with the United States.

Cyber Threat Landscape

Mongolia continues to face a significant and evolving cyber threat landscape, characterized by both state-sponsored and criminal actors. The Cybersecurity Council of Mongolia reported a substantial increase in cybercrime, accounting for 32% of all recorded crimes in the first nine months of 2026, up from 19% in 2021. Online fraud

alone caused losses of MNT 28 billion by October 2026. In response, the government launched a dedicated website, www.zalilan.113.mn, on October 23, 2026, to educate the public on preventing online fraud and to centralize efforts against cybercrime.

State-sponsored actors remain a persistent threat. A China-aligned threat actor, identified by ESET researchers as GopherWhisper, was reported in April 2026 to have targeted a Mongolian government entity. This group, active since at least November 2023, utilized popular communication platforms like Discord, Slack, and Microsoft 365 Outlook for covert command-and-control and data exfiltration. The malware, dubbed LaxGopher, was deployed on approximately a dozen systems within the government institution, with potential impact on dozens more victims. This aligns with known threat actors targeting Mongolia, such as Earth Lusca, APT21, Curious Gorge, and Vicious Panda, all of which are China-linked. Additionally, Russia-linked APT28 (also known as Midnight Blizzard or APT29) was found by Google researchers in 2023 and 2024 to be exploiting Mongolian government websites for watering hole attacks, infecting devices with surveillanceware.

The Mongolian government is actively working to enhance its cyber policy and response. Following the approval of the National Cyber Attack Defense Plan and the Protocol for Information Sharing and Cooperation, all 11 sub-regulations accompanying the 2021 Law on Cybersecurity have been enacted. Mongolia has also improved its standing in the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2024, ascending to Tier 3 (Evolving) and climbing 17 places compared to 2021, with its legal and organizational metrics now exceeding the Asian regional average. This demonstrates a commitment to a proactive, threat intelligence-based approach to cybersecurity, moving beyond reactive responses.

Geopolitical Impact and Regional Dynamics

Mongolia's recent security and diplomatic developments underscore its delicate "third neighbor" foreign policy, aimed at balancing relations with its powerful neighbors, China and Russia, while strengthening ties with democratic partners like the United States, the European Union, India, and others. The Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit in Bishkek on August 31, 2026, saw Chinese President Xi Jinping and Mongolian President Ukhnaagiin Khurelsukh pledge to deepen strategic mutual trust and expand cooperation in traditional and emerging sectors, including green minerals, AI, and the digital economy. This highlights China's significant economic influence, with China accounting for 89% of Mongolian exports in 2025.

Simultaneously, Mongolia is strengthening its defense ties with Russia, evidenced by the signing of a strategic military partnership plan for 2027–2031 on September 29, 2026, and preparations for the "Selenge-2026" joint military exercise. This dual

engagement with its immediate neighbors is crucial for Mongolia's energy security, as Russia supplied over 94% of its petroleum imports in 2025, and for transit fees from potential projects like the stalled Power of Siberia 2 pipeline. However, the pipeline also presents a geopolitical flashpoint, with critics warning of increased dependency.

The "third neighbor" policy is actively pursued through engagements with the United States, which elevated its relationship with Mongolia to a strategic partnership in 2019. The U.S.-Mongolia Bilateral Defense Framework on September 8, 2026, outlined a roadmap for increasing Mongolia's defense spending and enhancing military capabilities. Similarly, joint military exercises like "Nomadic Elephant 2026" with India and participation in Turkish exercises like "Anadolu" and "EFES" demonstrate Mongolia's commitment to multilateral security cooperation and interoperability. These diverse engagements are vital for Mongolia to maintain its sovereignty and diversify its economic and security partnerships, positioning itself as a neutral player in international affairs and a contributor to global peacekeeping.

EU Relations and Implications

Mongolia's relations with the European Union continued to develop positively, with a focus on strengthening the strategic partnership. A significant event was the EU Parliament Delegation visit to Ulaanbaatar from May 26 to 30, 2026, for the 18th EU–Mongolia Inter-Parliamentary Meeting. During this meeting, Mongolian MPs raised issues concerning cybersecurity cooperation, data protection, and tackling online disinformation, aligning with the EU's interests in digital security. The European Parliament formally requested the initiation of a visa facilitation agreement with Mongolia, modeled on the framework with Kazakhstan, indicating a desire for deeper people-to-people ties.

Economically, trade between the EU and Mongolia totals approximately $1 billion, with 91% being EU imports. Mongolia's participation in the EU's GSP+ trade scheme and discussions on a Geographical Indications Agreement further highlight efforts to enhance trade and economic diversification. The visit of Mongolian President Khürelsükh to Germany on October 20-21, 2026, further solidified European ties, focusing on clean industrial initiatives and development agreements, and underscoring the EU's role as a crucial "third neighbor" for Mongolia's economic security and diversification away from its immediate neighbors. The EU's Global Gateway ambitions are poised to support Mongolia's economic diversification and global connectivity, particularly in critical raw materials and energy mix. The ongoing cyber threats and the government's efforts to combat online fraud and enhance cyber resilience are directly relevant to EU interests, especially given the EU's own focus on digital cooperation and security. Strengthening Mongolia's cybersecurity infrastructure and policy would safeguard EU-funded cooperation projects in sectors

like trade, development, climate, and governance, which are part of the EU's existing cooperation framework with Mongolia.

Military and Defense Analysis

Mongolia's military and defense posture in 2026 reflects a strategy centered on enhancing capabilities through international cooperation and maintaining its role as a significant contributor to global peacekeeping. The nation's armed forces actively participate in multinational exercises, such as Khaan Quest 2026, which concluded on July 3, 2026, near Ulaanbaatar. This U.S. Army Pacific co-sponsored exercise involved 1,300 troops from 18 nations, focusing on peacekeeping operations and interoperability. Similarly, the "Nomadic Elephant 2026" joint military exercise with India, held from September 21 to October 3, 2026, in India, concentrated on counter-insurgency operations under a UN mandate, including training in modern combat technologies like drones and cybersecurity. Mongolian servicemen also regularly participated in Turkish military exercises "Anadolu" and "EFES" in September 2026, further promoting operational compatibility.

Defense spending trends indicate a planned increase, as outlined in the U.S.-Mongolia Bilateral Defense Framework (BDF) on September 8, 2026. This framework identified a structured roadmap for increasing Mongolia's defense spending over the next five years, aligning U.S. security cooperation assistance with Mongolia's defense requirements. This suggests a commitment to modernization programs, likely focusing on areas that enhance peacekeeping capabilities and border defense. The signing of a Russian-Mongolian strategic partnership plan in the military sphere for 2027–2031 on September 29, 2026, also points to continued cooperation with Russia, including preparations for the "Selenge-2026" joint military exercise. Furthermore, the "Border Defense Cooperation 2026" exercise with China and Russia in early September 2026 highlights a focus on preventing espionage and sabotage in border regions. While specific defense acquisitions were not widely reported for this period, a military grant from China on July 7, 2026, indicates ongoing support and influence in Mongolia's defense sector. Overall, Mongolia's force posture is characterized by a pragmatic approach, leveraging international partnerships to build a professional, interoperable, and well-equipped military capable of contributing to regional and global security.

Outlook and Forecast

Short-term trends (1-3 months): In the immediate future, Mongolia will likely continue its proactive stance on cybersecurity, with the recently launched anti-fraud website

(www.zalilan.113.mn) and ongoing efforts to implement international best practices for cybercrime response. Diplomatic engagements will remain a priority, particularly as Mongolia navigates its "third neighbor" policy. The temporary border crossing restrictions with Russia in November 2026 will necessitate careful management to minimize economic disruption. We can expect continued dialogues with the EU regarding visa facilitation and trade, building on the momentum from the May 2026 parliamentary meeting and the October 2026 German summit. Military cooperation with Russia is set to deepen with the implementation of the 2027-2031 strategic partnership plan, potentially leading to more joint exercises.

Critical flashpoints and risk areas: Mongolia's economic dependency on its immediate neighbors, particularly China for exports and Russia for fuel, remains a critical vulnerability. Any significant geopolitical shifts or trade disruptions involving these two powers could have substantial economic and security implications for Mongolia. The stalled Power of Siberia 2 pipeline project, while offering potential transit fees, also poses a risk of increased dependency. Cybersecurity threats, both from state-sponsored actors like GopherWhisper (China-linked) and APT29 (Russia-linked) and from organized cybercrime, will continue to be a persistent challenge, requiring continuous investment in defense and public awareness. Border security, despite recent improvements by the PIU, remains a sensitive area given the vast and sometimes porous borders, and the ongoing threat of smuggling and illicit activities.

Indicators to monitor: Key indicators to monitor include the frequency and sophistication of cyberattacks reported by the Mongolian Cybersecurity Council, particularly targeting government entities or critical infrastructure. Progress on the EU visa facilitation agreement and any new trade or investment deals with "third neighbors" will signal the effectiveness of Mongolia's diversification strategy. Developments regarding the Power of Siberia 2 pipeline and any changes in trade or energy supply agreements with China and Russia should be closely watched. Furthermore, the nature and scale of upcoming military exercises with any of its partners (US, Russia, China, India, Turkey) will provide insights into its evolving defense posture and strategic alignments.

Strategic recommendations: Mongolia should continue to prioritize economic diversification, actively seeking investment and trade opportunities with its "third neighbors" to reduce over-reliance on China and Russia. Strengthening cybersecurity capabilities through international partnerships, intelligence sharing, and continuous training is paramount to counter both state-sponsored espionage and criminal activities. Investing in critical infrastructure protection and developing a robust national cyber resilience framework will be crucial. Diplomatically, Mongolia should maintain its balanced foreign policy, leveraging its strategic location to foster cooperation rather than becoming a pawn in great-power competition. Enhancing border security technologies and inter-agency cooperation will help mitigate

smuggling and transnational crime. Finally, continued participation in UN peacekeeping operations and multilateral military exercises will reinforce its image as a responsible international actor and enhance its military professionalism.

Structured Assessment

json

{

"threat_level": "Elevated",

"hotspots": [

{

"label": "Ulaanbaatar",

"detail": "Center for government, economic activity, and a primary target for cybercrime and potential state-sponsored cyber espionage.",

"lat": 47.9188,

"lng": 106.9175,

"intensity": 3

},

{

"label": "Mongolia-Russia Border",

"detail": "Area of joint border defense exercises and temporary crossing restrictions, indicating ongoing security and logistical management.",

"lat": 50.5,

"lng": 95.0,

"intensity": 2

},

{

"label": "Mongolia-China Border",

"detail": "Critical for trade and mineral exports, also a focus for joint border defense exercises and potential economic leverage.",

"lat": 43.5,

"lng": 108.0,

"intensity": 2

},

{

"label": "Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand, India",

"detail": "Location of the 'Nomadic Elephant 2026' joint military exercise with India, enhancing counter-insurgency capabilities.",

"lat": 29.5833,

"lng": 80.2167,

"intensity": 1

},

{

"label": "Five Hills Training Facility (near Ulaanbaatar)",

"detail": "Site of the Khaan Quest 2026 multinational peacekeeping exercise, demonstrating international military cooperation.",

"lat": 47.88,

"lng": 107.0,

"intensity": 1

}

]

}

```
```