

# Finance Report – Impact of Oil Price Volatility on Emerging Market Currencies

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## Introduction

Global oil price volatility remains a defining risk factor for emerging market (EM) economies. Sharp swings in crude oil prices influence inflation, current account balances, fiscal sustainability, and ultimately currency stability. This report analyzes the implications of oil price fluctuations on EM currencies, highlighting key transmission channels, recent market patterns, and strategic considerations for investors and policymakers.

## Key Drivers of Oil Price–Currency Linkages

- **Trade Balance Effects:** Net oil importers face worsening current account deficits when oil prices rise, exerting downward pressure on their currencies.
- **Inflationary Pressures:** Higher oil prices raise input and transportation costs, stoking inflation and weakening monetary stability.
- **Fiscal Vulnerabilities:** Oil subsidies, common in EMs, strain public finances when crude prices spike, increasing sovereign risk.
- **Capital Flows:** Rising oil prices often strengthen petrocurrencies (e.g., RUB, BRL) while weakening oil importers (e.g., INR, TRY).
- **Global Risk Sentiment:** Oil price shocks amplify EM currency volatility through investor flight-to-safety into USD-denominated assets.

## Recent Market Trends (2018–2025)

- Between 2018–2020, oil prices collapsed by over 40% during the pandemic, prompting currency gains for oil importers (e.g., INR, CNY) but heavy losses for exporters (e.g., RUB, MXN).
- From 2021–2022, due to supply chain disruptions and the Russia–Ukraine conflict, driving sharp depreciation in oil-importing EM currencies.

- As of mid-2025, oil prices surged above \$100 per barrel and remain volatile in the \$75–90 range, sustaining FX pressures on India, Turkey, and South Africa, while supporting exporters like Brazil and Nigeria.

### **Implications for Stakeholders**

- **For Policymakers:** Exchange rate management requires complementary measures such as targeted subsidies, FX interventions, and inflation targeting.
- **For Investors:** EM currencies remain highly sensitive to oil shocks, requiring diversification and hedging strategies.
- **For Corporates:** Import-dependent firms face margin pressures and must adopt energy hedging and efficiency measures.

### **Outlook (2025–2030)**

Oil price volatility is expected to persist given geopolitical risks, OPEC+ decisions, and the energy transition. **EM currencies are projected to remain 15–20% more volatile relative to advanced economies through 2030.** Importers like India and Turkey face depreciation risks unless they diversify energy sources, while exporters such as Brazil and Nigeria may benefit but remain exposed to fiscal procyclicality.

### **Conclusion**

Oil price volatility remains a structural driver of EM currency performance. Policymakers and investors must prepare for heightened FX fluctuations as global energy markets adjust to geopolitical uncertainty and decarbonization. Strategic hedging, fiscal prudence, and diversification will be critical in managing risks and leveraging opportunities in the coming decade.

### **References**

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