



► **TRAVEL RISK INTELLIGENCE SERVICE (TRIS)**

Greece: Three dead in Athens fire during protests
05/05/2010 14:20:01

Three people have died in a blaze set by protesters in central Athens today during a protest march against government austerity measures. "We have found three dead people in the building that is on fire," a source said. The fire brigade said the bodies were found in the wreckage of a Marfin Bank branch, on the route of the march in the city centre.

Greece: Building evacuated in Athens after protesters set fire
05/05/2010 12:38:05

There are reports that a building in central Athens was set on fire by protesters and that people were evacuated. No further details are available at the moment. Protests are spreading through Athens and there are isolated incidents of violence with smaller fires being started and police firing tear gas and smaller extremist elements throwing petrol bombs. A general strike alongside the protests has brought the country to a virtual standstill with airports and ports closed and public transport almost completely closed down.

Greece: Strike begins to paralyse country
05/05/2010 06:32:15

Wednesdays planned general strike has already caused disruption as flights are grounded, trains and ferries are cancelled and public services become paralysed. All flights into and out of Greece stopped at midnight Tuesday with schools, hospitals, tax offices and the Acropolis all closing.

► **BACKGROUND**

The people of Greece are protesting in their tens of thousands in reaction to the most recently announced austerity measures. Protesters are angered by the planned spending cuts and tax rises, in return for the 110bn euro input from the EU and the IMF.

The demonstration today appeared better organised than previous events, displaying "military" purpose. However, today's deaths are bound to make the protesters consider a suspension to their activities, although it is likely there will be repercussions targeted at the anarchists, as they will be the prime suspects for this fierce level of activity.

The country is in a volatile state, so it is difficult to predict how the situation will develop, but the protesters will feel that they have succeeded in sending a message to the international community that social unrest is a serious problem for the country, and that will undermine trust in the Greek government.

► **TRAVEL & SECURITY ADVICE**

Regular strikes and demonstrations are expected throughout Greece during May. Strikes and demonstrations are sometimes called at short notice and often cause disruption to public services and transport in and out of Greece.

These activities for the most part are passive and lawful. However, protests started being less orderly when a teenager was shot and killed in an encounter with the police in December 2008.

Riot control procedures often include the use of tear gas. When there are demonstrations, visitors should be aware of and avoid places where demonstrators frequently congregate. Areas to steer clear of include the Polytechnic University, Exarchia, Omonia, and Syntagma Squares (and surrounding areas) in Athens, and Aristotle Square in Thessaloniki. University campuses are exploited as refuges by anarchists and those involved in crime and Greek police are generally prohibited from entering their premises. In January 2010, a bomb exploded at 8:00 pm near the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier on Syntagma square, a site popular with tourists until late evening.

In addition to the latest protests, domestic terrorist organisations such as Revolutionary Struggle and "Sect of Revolutionaries" have become increasingly active against both domestic and foreign targets in Greece. Recent attacks and attempted attacks have included the use of Molotov cocktails (gasoline bombs), small arms and rifle fire, and improvised explosive devices, the largest being a 100-kilo ammonium nitrate car bomb detonated at the Athens Stock Exchange.

The Greek police forces, other Greek governmental agencies, private American and Greek businesses, and the United States Embassy have been attacked in the last three years. Recent attacks have occurred with shorter warning times and have had a higher potential for indiscriminate impact.

The risk of "being in the wrong place at the wrong time" in light of the escalating violence is a concern for residents and visitors. Employees on assignment in Greece at this time should monitor local media and utilise local sources of information, such as their hotel and/or work colleagues to ensure they are kept advised on the ground level specifics.

The European Emergency Number for Police, Medical or Fire, applicable in Greece, is 112. If you have a UK mobile, calling 999 will automatically transfer you to the Greek emergency services.

Should you require further security assistance, please contact our Crisis Management Team 24/7 on + 44 (0) 20 7938 4221.