Protest

19
MAY
10:29 UTC

Namibia Tactical: Civil society groups to hold protests in Windhoek during the morning hours on May 20; maintain vigilance

Please be advised

- According to an official communique released on May 17, the Civil society organization (CSO) Frack Free Namibia called for a march from Windhoek's Zoo Park to the Parliament buildings at 09:00 (local time) on May 20.
- The communique states that the march is also supported by the CSOs Women's Leadership Centre, Namibia San Council, Saving Okavango's Unique Life, and Young Feminists Movement Namibia.
- The protest is held to demonstrate against oil and gas exploration in Kavango East Region.
- Meanwhile, the pro-LGBT CSO Equal Namibia called for supporters to gather at Windhoek's Independence Museum at 08:00 on May 20. The call indicates that the participants are expected to launch a protest march but the endpoint or the route were not specified.
- The protest is held in solidarity with the LGBT community as the High Court reportedly considers two cases to recognize same-sex marriage abroad.

Assessments & Forecast

1. Protests regarding concerns over resource exploration in Kavango East Region take place intermittently with dozens of participants, demonstrating environmentalists' persistent opposition to exploration projects in the area amid the government's insistence to promote these initiatives considering their financial importance. **FORECAST:** Despite the support of several CSOs, precedent suggests that participation in the environment-related march is likely to be in the low-to-mid dozens.
2. **FORECAST:** While the destination of the pro-LGBT march is unknown, participants are likely to march towards the High Court as it hears legal cases on same-sex marriages. Given the relatively narrow agenda of the march, it will likely be attended by low-to-mid dozens. While the march is likely to transpire peacefully, tensions are liable to increase in the event of an unfavorable High Court decision.
3. Given the central locations of these protests, the security forces are poised to be heavily deployed to monitor the proceedings. In case that protesters are perceived to behave in an unruly manner, they are likely to be forcibly dispersed by the security forces using arrests and batons. Additionally, traffic disruptions can be expected in the vicinity of the protest venues during the morning hours.

Recommendations

Those operating or residing in Windhoek on May 20 are advised to maintain vigilance and allot for disruptions during the morning hours in the vicinity of the Zoo Park, Parliament Buildings, Independence Museum, and High Court premises due to the planned marches and distant potential for unrest.