



Protest



23

MAR

11:06 UTC

Turkey Tactical (UPDATE): Authorities extend ban on demonstrations in Istanbul until March 27; avoid nonessential travel to protest sites

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Current Situation:

- On March 23, the Istanbul Governor's Office announced an extension of a previously imposed ban on all protest activity in the city between March 23-27, citing the need to prevent crimes and ensure national security.
- This will include indoor and outdoor meetings, marches, setting up tents, holding sit-ins, circulating petitions, distributing leaflets, or hanging posters.
- It added that individuals or groups deemed likely to engage in such "illegal" activities will not be permitted to enter Istanbul.
- Turkey's state news agency confirmed that Istanbul Mayor Ekrem Imamoglu was imprisoned pending a trial following a court decision on March 23.
- Republican People's Party (CHP) members are currently voting in a primary party election on March 23 to endorse Imamoglu as the party's candidate for the next Presidential election.

Source: [Istanbul Governor's Office](#)

Assessments & Forecast:

1. The extension of the ban on protest activity in Istanbul comes amid continued large-scale demonstrations in the city over recent days, including instances of scuffles between protesters and police. Thousands reportedly gathered outside the Istanbul Courthouse on March 22, while Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya accused protesters in Sarachane of hurling acid toward police. He stated that 323 demonstrators were detained for breaking public order in relation to Imamoglu's case on March 22, with unrest also reported in Ankara and Izmir in recent days amid an [ongoing ban](#) on protest activity in these cities.
2. **FORECAST:** In this context, protests are likely to persist in Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir, despite the prohibitions in place. This is particularly following the imprisonment of Imamoglu pending trial which will further stoke demonstrators' ire. Footage depicting police violence against protesters is likely to similarly exacerbate tensions, elevating the likelihood of spontaneous and organized protest activity nationwide over the coming hours and days. Such gatherings will continue to garner large turnouts in the hundreds at least in Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir. Authorities are liable to implement riot dispersal measures in such cases based on the bans in place. Therefore, there is a high likelihood of both spontaneous and organized gatherings devolving into unrest, with localized scuffles between security forces and protesters likely in the coming days. Smaller gatherings are also likely to materialize in other provinces across the country.

Recommendations:

1. Those operating or residing in Istanbul on March 23-27 are advised to remain cognizant of authorities' updates regarding the prohibition of protest activities.
2. In Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir, avoid nonessential travel to protest sites over the coming days due to the elevated risk of unrest.
3. Refrain from posting or engaging with content on social media related to the ongoing protests and Imamoglu's detention due to the risk of arrest.