



Protest



19

FEB

17:37 UTC

Slovakia Tactical: Anti-government protests to take place nationwide, including in Bratislava, on February 21; maintain heightened vigilance

Current Situation

- On February 21, an anti-government protest organized by two civil society organizations, “Peace for Ukraine” and “For a Decent Slovakia”, will be held at Namestie Slobody in Bratislava from 17:00 (local time).
- The protest is being held under the banner “Slovakia is Europe”. It is being held in commemoration of the seventh anniversary of the murder of investigative journalist Jan Kuciak and his wife on February 21, 2018, and to denounce alleged government ties to their deaths. The protest is also being held to denounce Prime Minister Robert Fico’s policies and ties to Russia.

Source: [Facebook](#)

- Protests will also be held in some 50 cities nationwide on the same day, including in Banska Bystrica, Kosice, Nitra, Trencin, Trnava, Zilina, and Zvolen.

Source: [Facebook](#)

- In recent week, multiple large-scale anti-government protests have been recorded nationwide in Slovakia, particularly in Bratislava. On January 24, reports indicate that at least 40,000 rallied in Bratislava, while an estimated 100,000 protested in 20 other cities to denounce PM Fico's close ties to Russia.



Assessments & Forecast

1. Based on precedent and the mobilizational capacity of the organizers, the protest in Bratislava is likely to garner a turnout ranging in the low to mid-tens of thousands. Other protests are likely to see turnouts ranging from the high hundreds to mid-thousands each.
2. While previous protests by these organizers have transpired largely peacefully, given heightened anti-government sentiments and expected higher turnouts, the demonstrations carry the risk of unrest in the form of localized clashes between protesters and the police.
3. As such, a bolstered security presence is likely to be deployed in the vicinity of Namestie Slobody and other slated protest locations. In the event of escalating unrest, authorities are liable to use forcible crowd dispersal methods, including conducting arrests.
4. Significant disruptions to pedestrian and vehicular movement are anticipated in the vicinity of the protest locations from the evening hours onwards. Authorities are also likely to implement road closures and traffic diversions, particularly in the vicinity of government buildings, near the protest

locations.

Recommendations

1. Those operating or residing in Bratislava on February 21 are advised to maintain heightened vigilance in the vicinity of Namestie Slobody due to the potential for unrest during the slated protest during evening hours. Maintain heightened vigilance near the anti-government protests in other cities as well.
2. Allot for significant disruptions to travel near the protest locations during the slated protests.