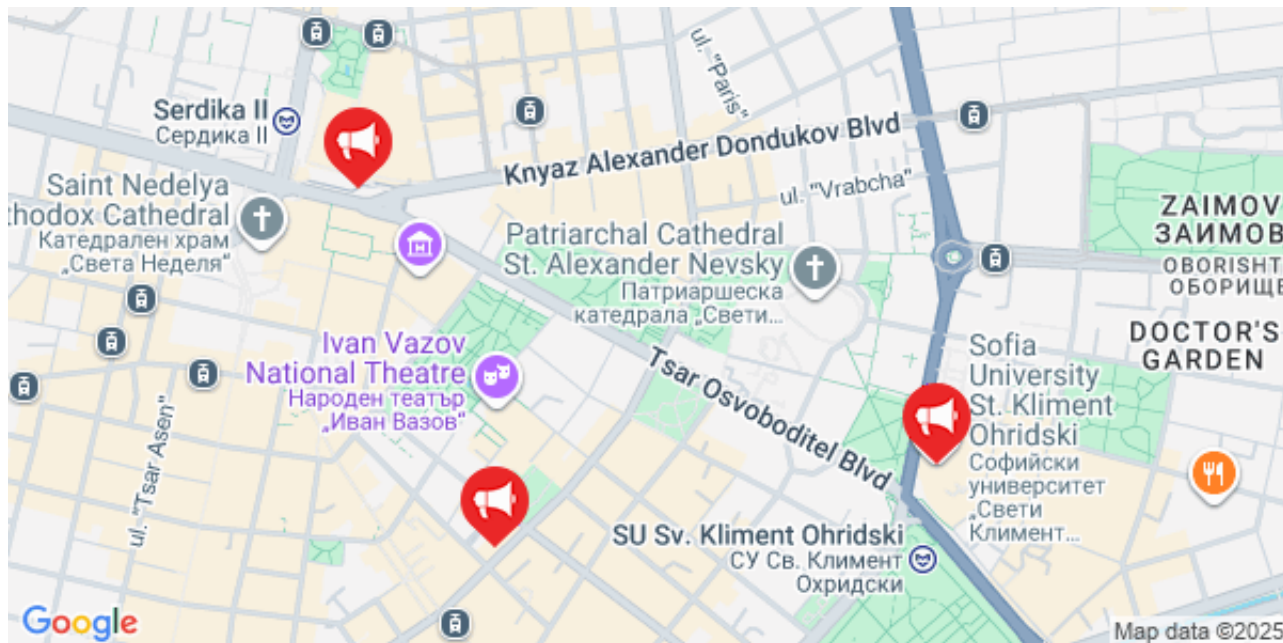


Protest



10

DEC
7:52 UTC

Bulgaria Tactical (UPDATE): Student-led protest marches slated in Sofia from 15:00 (local time) on December 10; avoid nonessential travel

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Current Situation

- On December 10, three student groups, organized by the newly created “Students Against the Mafia” Union, will hold protest marches in Sofia before joining the main anti-government protest at Independence Square at 18:00 (local time).
- The first group will gather in front of the National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts, located on Georgi S. Rakovski Street, at 15:00. After the initial gathering, demonstrators will proceed towards Independence Square around 17:45.

- The second and third groups will gather at Sofia University St. Kliment Ohridski, located at 15 Tsar Osvoboditel Boulevard, and will proceed toward Independence Square at 18:00.
- Authorities announced the introduction of 19 checkpoints during the protest to “filter the flow of people.” Protest organizers will also deploy 150 stewards to maintain order.
- A stage will be set up in Atanas Burov Square close to Independence Square, in front of the Presidential Palace. Screens will also be installed in front of the National Assembly and along Dondukov Boulevard.



Source: [Dunav Most](#)

Assessments & Forecast

1. Given the heightened sentiments surrounding the protest issue, the student-led protest marches are expected to draw a turnout in the low thousands, with the participation expected to increase later in the evening.
2. The student marches are also indicative of higher attendance at the main anti-government protest at Independence Square, which is expected to attract low to mid tens of thousands of demonstrators. Protests are also expected in other cities on December 10, including Burgas, Plovdiv, and Varna. Such protests will likely attract turnouts ranging from the low hundreds to high thousands.

3. Given the heightened anti-government sentiment, as evidenced by the large-scale protests against the 2026 budget in Sofia on November 26 and December 1, the protest carries an elevated risk of unrest. There is an elevated risk of radical elements within the protest engaging in clashes with security forces, including throwing projectiles, vandalism, and road blockades, especially near government buildings and ruling party offices.
4. The risk will further increase if the protest attracts counterprotests from pro-government groups. Such counterprotests are likely, given that the centrist Movement for Rights and Freedoms – New Beginning (DPS-NN) party organized pro-government protests in 20 cities nationwide on December 9.
5. As such, a bolstered security presence is expected along the march routes. Given the precedent of unrest and the heightened security measures, authorities are expected to maintain a low threshold for intervention. In the event of unrest or breach of security cordons, the authorities will likely deploy forcible crowd dispersal methods like mass arrests and tear gas.
6. Significant disruptions to pedestrian and vehicular traffic are expected in the vicinity of the march routes from the afternoon hours onwards.

Recommendations

1. Those operating or residing in Bulgaria, including Sofia, on December 10 are advised to avoid nonessential travel in the vicinity of planned or spontaneous anti-government protests due to the elevated risk for unrest.
2. Allot for disruptions to travel in urban centers nationwide due to anti-government protests.