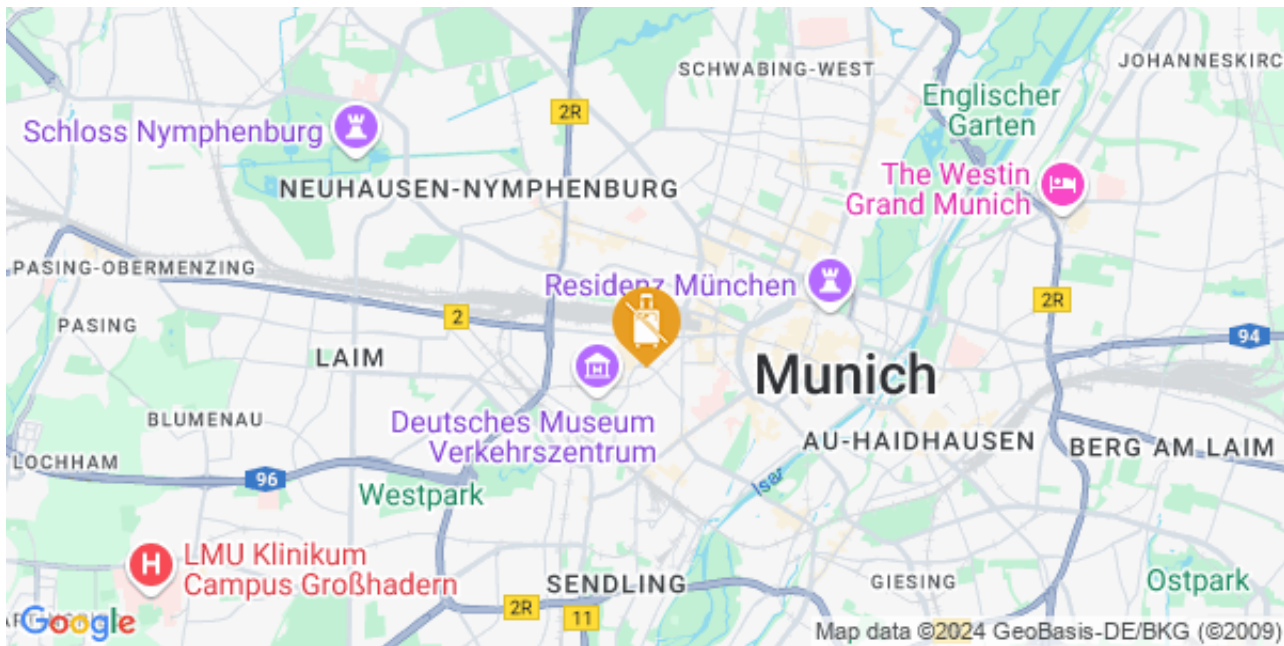




Travel



19

SEP

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Germany Tactical: Oktoberfest scheduled to be held in Munich from September 21 to October 6; maintain heightened vigilance

Current Situation

- The 189th Oktoberfest is scheduled to take place at Theresienwiese in Munich from September 21 to October 6. The festival will start from 09:00 (local time) on weekends and 10:00 on weekdays. The opening ceremony, where the first keg will be tapped, is set to occur at 12:00 on September 21.
- Heightened security measures have been announced due to the [recent terrorist attack at the Nazi Documentation Center and the Israeli Consulate General on September 5](#). However, authorities have announced that there is no specific threat related to Oktoberfest as of September 19.
- Around 600 police officers will be deployed on Theresienwiese grounds throughout the festival, supported by 1,200 to 1,500 security stewards employed by the city. Additionally, officers from Italy will be present, especially during the two weekends when many Italian visitors are expected.
- The festival will be secured with 40 handheld metal detectors distributed across various entry points. Security personnel will conduct random and suspicious checks using hand-held metal detectors.
- Video surveillance will be carried out by over 50 cameras covering nearly all areas of the festival grounds.
- A no-fly zone with a radius of 5.5 km has been established over Theresienwiese, prohibiting all types of aircraft, including unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs). The zone will be monitored by police

helicopters.

- Bomb-sniffing dogs will search the beer tents daily before opening them to the public.
- The festival grounds will be fenced off, and security services will check all visitors at the entrances. A ban on knives and other dangerous objects will be strictly enforced. Knives with traditional handles, hammers, and screwdrivers are included in the ban.
- Backpacks and bags larger than three liters in volume or 20 cm x 15 cm x 10 cm in size are prohibited. Small handbags are permitted after inspection and will be marked with a “security check band.”
- No strollers are allowed on the festival grounds after 18:00. On Saturdays and German Unity Day on October 3, strollers are banned all day. Stroller parking is available at designated areas near the festival.
- Glass bottles and any beverages in glass containers are banned from the festival grounds, and the consumption of cannabis is prohibited.
- Traffic restrictions will be in place throughout the festival, including road closures and parking bans around Theresienwiese grounds. The closed-off area will include the streets of Lindwurmstrasse, Herzog-Heinrich-Strasse, Paul-Heyse-Strasse, Schwanthalerstrasse, Schiessstattstrasse, Heimeranstrasse, Ganghoferstrasse, Hans-Fischer-Strasse, and Poccistrasse. Bavariaring and Theresienhohe will also be closed to vehicles, while smaller streets connected to these areas will be blocked off. Bollards and concrete barriers will be set up to prevent vehicle access. Detailed information about the traffic restrictions can be found [here](#) (In German).
- Public transportation schedules will be adjusted to accommodate the large crowds. E-scooter and car parking will be prohibited around Theresienwiese, and random alcohol and cannabis checks will be conducted on drivers. No-lending and no-parking zones will also be set up, effective from 17:00 until 06:00 daily, in the extended perimeter around the Outer Ring Road, including areas such as Hackerbruecke, Hauptbahnhof, Karlsplatz/Stachus, Sendlinger Tor, Kapuzinerplatz, Lindwurmstrasse, Pfeuferstrasse, and Ganghoferstrasse. Additionally further details on restrictions for E-scooters can be found [here](#) (in German).
- The “Safe Oktoberfest for Girls and Women” campaign will be active again this year, offering a “Safe Space” at the festival where women and girls who feel unsafe can seek assistance. The Safe Space is located in the service center behind the Schottenhamel tent.
- The Wiesn guard, staffed by Munich police, will be operational 24/7 from a service center located near the Bavaria statue.

Source: [Munich Police official website](#)

Assessments & Forecast

1. Based on past years, daily attendance is likely to range from the high-tens-of-thousands up to hundreds-of-thousands. Overall, more than seven million visitors are likely to visit throughout the sixteen days.
2. While the festival events are expected to transpire mostly peacefully, the presence of intoxicated individuals during Oktoberfest increases the risk of unrest, as those under the influence are more likely to engage in altercations. Such unrest is likely to manifest in the form of brawls between festivalgoers and police. Individuals are liable to throw objects or enter fistfights.
3. Additionally, there is an increased risk of petty crimes, particularly pickpocketing, due to the large crowds. This is evidenced by 1,093 criminal incidents reported in the 2023 Oktoberfest, where police were called out 1,854 times, averaging 103 calls per day. As such, criminal elements are liable to target busy areas to commit opportunistic crimes. There is also a credible risk of sexual assault in busy areas at night and in drinking or party areas.
4. **FORECAST:** Furthermore, given the timing of Oktoberfest being close to the start of the Israel-Hamas conflict on October 7, there is an increased likelihood of pro-Palestinian protests taking place around the festival. Pro-Palestinian groups are likely to organize demonstrations in Munich and other major cities, particularly in response to Germany’s position on the conflict and its perceived support for Israel. Such protests may also target sponsors or businesses associated with

Oktoberfest that are perceived to have ties with Israel.

5. **FORECAST:** These protests could draw turnouts in the low hundreds to mid hundreds of participants and are expected to take place in central public areas, such as major squares and roads in Munich, and near Theresienwiese. While authorities are unlikely to permit demonstrations directly at the festival grounds, protesters may engage in disruptive tactics such as road blockades and sit-ins, with banners or flags over the festival area. There is also a possibility of protesters attempting to disrupt festival events or vandalize advertisements linked to sponsors. Such actions could lead to temporary disruptions at the event and arrests.
6. **FORECAST:** Separately, although authorities have not reported any specific threats related to Oktoberfest, the elevated threat of Islamist terrorism in Germany raises the risk of potential attacks targeting the event. The symbolic significance of Oktoberfest, large crowds, and extensive media coverage makes it a likely target for Islamist terrorists. Islamist terrorist organizations, including the Islamic State (IS), are liable to disseminate propaganda centering on Oktoberfest, including calls for attacks. This was also seen ahead of the 2024 UEFA European Football Championship (Euro 2024), when the Islamic State Khorasan Province's (ISKP) propaganda magazine 'Voice of Khorasan' released propaganda posters on May 9 calling for terror attacks at football matches in Berlin, Dortmund, and Munich.
7. **FORECAST:** While the risk of large-scale, multi-actor attacks is limited due to extensive counter-terrorism operations, coupled with lower capabilities of groups like IS in the EU, such calls for attacks could incite self-radicalized lone actors to carry out attacks. Indeed, lone actors continue to pose the most significant threat, with recent successful attacks in Germany and neighboring countries (including Belgium, France, and Switzerland) carried out by lone actors – both influenced by and affiliated with IS. This was seen in the May 31 stabbing attack in Mannheim, the August 23 mass stabbing attack in Solingen, and the aforementioned shooting attack in Munich.
8. **FORECAST:** While these actors may consider using explosives or firearms, they are more likely to employ rudimentary attack tactics like stabbings or vehicle ramming, which require less planning and are harder for authorities to foil. While extensive security measures around the festival are expected to reduce the likelihood of successful attacks, areas with high foot traffic, such as public transportation hubs and tourist spots remain potential targets.
9. In response to the abovementioned risks, security measures are expected to remain heightened nationwide. Additionally, increased security presence is likely at major transportation hubs in Munich. Authorities are also likely to implement evacuation orders and even localized lockdown measures if faced with a security alert, with a lower threshold.
10. Significant disruptions to pedestrian and vehicular traffic are anticipated in the vicinity of festival events throughout the event.

Recommendations

1. Those operating or residing in Munich on September 21-October 6 are advised to maintain heightened vigilance in the vicinity of Oktoberfest festival locations due to the aforementioned threats.
2. Maintain heightened vigilance in the vicinity of large public gatherings due to the elevated threat of Islamist terrorism.
3. Alert authorities immediately upon witnessing suspicious items or behavior.
4. If a potential stabbing, shooting, explosion, or similar incident manifests, leave the area immediately if possible, or take shelter at a secure location.
5. Public, private, and third-sector organizations are advised to increase their awareness of threats on social media through the use of threat monitoring services. Increased awareness of an organization's political footprint and perceptions from online fringe groups can help uncover potential violent actors and plots before they occur.
6. Allot for significant disruptions to travel due to the associated traffic restrictions in Munich throughout Oktoberfest.
7. For further questions and risk assessments, please contact intel@max-security.com

