

Security Advice - Civil Unrest

Tips for reducing your vulnerability in the event of civil unrest.

REDUCING YOUR VULNERABILITY IN CIVIL UNREST

Civil unrest can range in form from small, organized rallies to large-scale demonstrations and rioting. The most effective way to reduce your vulnerability is to monitor the environment for calls to action and avoid areas where people have gathered to grieve sociopolitical or labor issues.

Maintain a low profile by dressing conservatively while avoiding demonstration areas or any discussion of the issues at hand. Even peaceful rallies can spur violence or be met with an aggressive security response.

Bystanders may be arrested or harmed by security forces using water cannon, tear gas, rubber bullets or other crowd control measures.

Should you find yourself caught up in civil unrest, consider the following:

- During violent or potentially violent unrest, avoid police stations (unless seeking aid), government buildings (including embassies), fast food restaurants, and banks. These establishments are often targeted.
- If violence erupts or is imminent, leave the area as immediately. If you cannot leave the area, seek shelter in large, public buildings such as hotels, churches, hospitals, or museums. Wait until the crowds have dissipated and any security response has subsided before going back outside.
- If you know of an event ahead of time, plan routes that avoid affected areas. Road closures and traffic delays are possible. Give yourself extra time to travel.
- If curfews are imposed, strictly observe regulations, and monitor media for immediate updates to the situation.
- Tensions run high during labor strikes. Many businesses close during general strikes, and public transportation does not run. Rogue taxis and buses may offer service but should be avoided, as they could be targeted for violence. Maintain a low profile and avoid using any form of public transit. Use hotel taxis or private car services.
- Plan ahead. Where there is the potential for long-term civil unrest, ensure you have adequate cash (banks may close) and a supply of water, food, medicine and other essential resources.
- Severe civil unrest can significantly disrupt businesses, industries, and services. If you must travel during unrest, confirm all meetings and reservations prior to departure. Ensure the hotel/business is open, services will be available, and transportation services will be running.