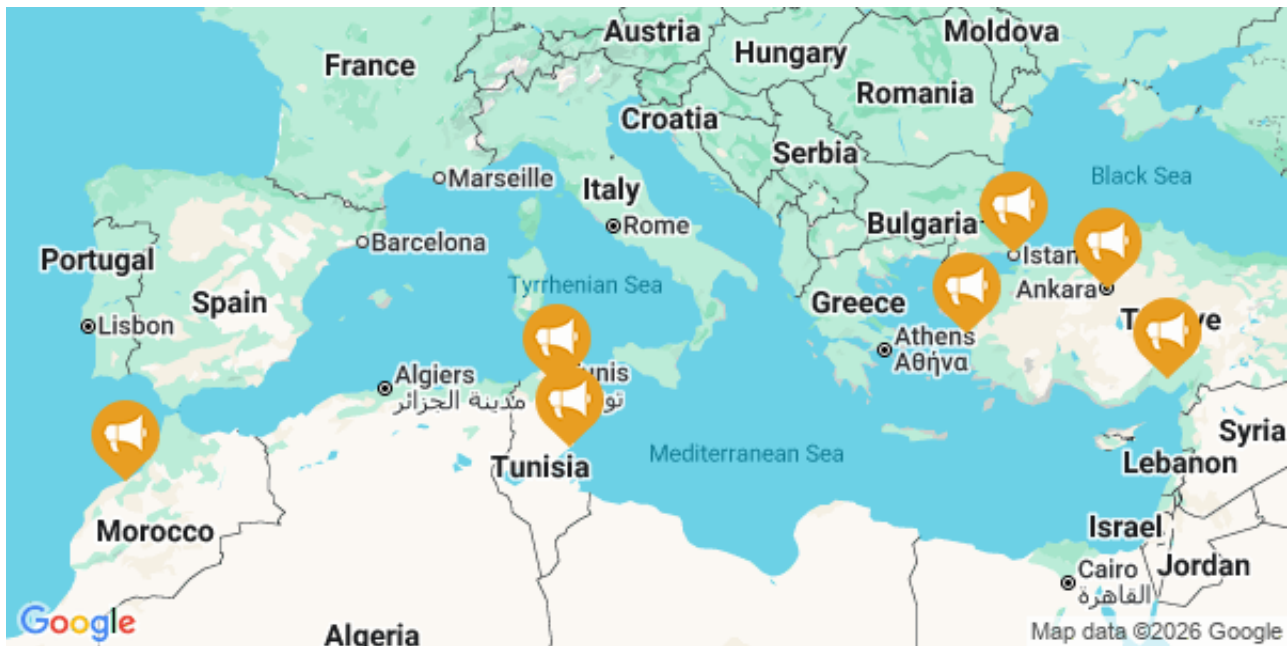


## Protest



29

APR

10:29 UTC

## MENA Tactical: Labor-day demonstrations, gatherings to be held regionwide on May 1; maintain heightened vigilance

### Current Situation:

#### Public Holidays:

- On May 1, International Workers' Day, also called Labor Day or May Day, is observed to commemorate the global labor movement.
- **Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey** will observe Labor Day on May 1. All public and government institutions will stay closed. Closures of banks, schools and private businesses are also likely.
- In **Bahrain**, ministries and public institutions will remain closed on 1 May in observance of Labor Day, with a compensatory holiday on 3 May, as the official date falls on a Friday.
- In **Egypt**, May 7 will be an official paid Labor Day holiday for public and private sector workers, instead of on May 1 since it falls on a Friday, the weekly rest day.
- In **Jordan**, Prime Minister Jaafar Hassan declared April 30 a public holiday for ministries and public institutions to mark Labor Day.
- In **Lebanon**, all public administrations, public institutions, and municipalities will be closed on May 1 to mark Labor Day.
- In **Turkey**, public institutions, schools and universities will reportedly be closed on May 1.

## Protests:

- In **Morocco**, the Moroccan Labor Union (UMT) has called on workers to join Labor Day marches on 1 May 1 at 08:00 (local time) from UMT headquarters across various cities, including **Casablanca** and other regions in Morocco. The Democratic Federation of Labour (FDT) called on healthcare workers to join May Day marches across various regions on May 1. Additionally, the Democratic Confederation of Labour (CDT) called on workers to mark May Day by demanding a new social contract addressing perceived high living costs, unemployment, corruption, and social inequality.
- In Morocco, the “National Coordination for the Education Sector” in Casablanca has called on the teachers and various educators to join May Day protest marches across the country.
- In **Tunisia**, the General Labour Union (UGTT) has called for a rally in front of its headquarters on 29 Rue Mohammad Ali in **Tunis** from 09:30 (local time) on May 1. Additionally, the UGTT in Sfax called on workers to join a May Day march on May 1 at 09:00 in front of the Regional Labour Union headquarters in **Sfax**.
- In **Turkey**, the Communist Party of Turkey (TKP) has called on supporters to May Day rallies on May 1 in **Adana’s Iller Bank intersection** at 12:30 (local time), and **Ankara’s Anit Park, Istanbul’s Kartal Square/Taksim Square**, and **Izmir’s Bostanli Democracy Square** at 15:00. Additionally, the “Tez-Koop-is Union” called on its members to gather for the May Day rally outside its headquarters in **Ankara** on May 1 at 11:00 and will then march towards **Tandogan**.

Source: [TKP](#)

## Assessments & Forecast:

1. International Workers’ Day is observed annually across multiple countries in the Middle East and

North Africa to commemorate the global labor movement and is often marked by protests calling for improved labor rights.

2. In **Morocco**, several labor unions, including those representing the [education](#) and healthcare sectors, have staged protests in recent months over unresolved socio-economic grievances. These include demands for higher wages, improved working conditions, and greater protection of labor rights. Against this backdrop, Moroccan unions are likely to use May Day as a key platform to consolidate their demands and draw attention to persistent and broader grievances, including rising living costs and perceived stalled reform efforts, while calling for tangible reforms.
3. **FORECAST:** Based on precedent and rising public dissatisfaction with government performance, the May 1 protest calls across the country, particularly in major cities such as Rabat, Casablanca, and Marrakech, are likely to attract turnout in the high hundreds to low thousands. Consequently, security presence is expected to be heightened around key government sites, including the Parliament in Rabat. Protest activities are likely to result in localized traffic disruptions. These gatherings are expected to remain largely peaceful. However, although the likelihood is low, security forces may deploy riot control measures in response to any instances of unruly behavior by protesters.
4. In **Tunisia**, major labor organizations, particularly the UGTT, have historically organized frequent demonstrations advocating for improved wages and working conditions across multiple sectors. However, the frequency of such protest calls has declined in recent months amid heightened government pressure and increased crackdowns on opposition and union activities. Despite this, the UGTT retains significant mobilization capacity, and May Day protests are likely to serve as a platform to reassert labor-related demands. Additionally, tensions have increased between the UGTT and the Tunisian government in recent months, which may prompt increased participation given that labor-related protests remain a viable platform to express anti-government sentiment.
5. **FORECAST:** Given the union's organizational strength, protests in Tunis are likely to attract turnout in at least the mid-to-high hundreds. Security presence is expected to be reinforced around protest locations in Tunis, as well as in Sfax. While the demonstrations are likely to remain largely peaceful, security forces may deploy riot control measures if protesters are perceived to be acting in an unruly manner.
6. In **Turkey**, Labour Day is typically marked by large-scale rallies and demonstrations organized by trade unions such as the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions (DISK), Confederation of Public Employees' Trade Unions (KESK), and Confederation of Turkish Trade Unions (TURK-IS) nationwide, including in Ankara, Istanbul, and Izmir. On April 28, nearly 40 individuals, including journalists, trade unionists, and opposition figures, were reportedly arrested in Istanbul ahead of the May 1 celebrations. This aligns with a recurring pattern observed in recent years and suggests continued efforts by authorities to preemptively curb protest activity and deter large-scale mobilization.
7. **FORECAST:** Based on precedent, demonstrations and rallies are likely to be recorded across major cities. However, Istanbul will likely remain the primary flashpoint, particularly around **Taksim Square** and **Kadikoy Square**. The preemptive arrests on April 28 further underscore the city's prominence as the focal point of anticipated unrest.
8. **FORECAST:** Taksim Square, where protests have been banned since 2013, is expected to see a heavy deployment of security personnel to prevent gatherings, increasing the likelihood of clashes with protesters. Authorities will conduct arrests and employ riot-dispersal measures if demonstrations are deemed unruly. This is consistent with developments in 2025, when over 400 individuals were detained in Istanbul during May 1 demonstrations, most of whom were taken into custody near the Taksim Square. Significant traffic disruptions are expected near protest hotspots in Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir throughout May 1. Additionally, temporary suspensions of metro, bus, and other public transportation services are likely in the lead-up to and through May 1.
9. **FORECAST:** Additional ad-hoc gatherings can potentially materialize across the region. Most of these demonstrations are expected to remain peaceful and are unlikely to cause major traffic disruptions in the respective countries.

## Recommendations:

1. Those operating or residing in the MENA on May 1 are advised to maintain heightened vigilance and allot for travel disruptions in the vicinity of the aforementioned locations in Morocco, Turkey and Tunisia due to the slated demonstrations and potential for unrest as well as heightened security and potential road closures in the vicinity of protests.
2. Remain vigilant in areas surrounding government buildings, as these locations may be potential targets for protests.
3. Additionally, it is advised to plan and reconfirm itineraries ahead of May 1 given that government offices and places of business will likely be closed or working limited hours.