Protest

16
FEB
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Georgia Tactical: Anti-government protests slated across Tbilisi from 14:00 (local time) on February 16; avoid vicinity of rallies

Current Situation:

- Activists are slated to hold a protest at the Ministry of Education in Tbilisi at 14:00 (local time) on February 16, against the government's education-related reforms.
- Another protest is slated in front of Parliament in Tbilisi at 20:00 on the day.
- These protests will mark the 446th day of continuous demonstration against the ruling Georgian Dream (GD) party and its alleged anti-democratic policies.

Source: [Facebook]

Assessments & Forecast:

1. Participation in the protest at the Ministry of Education is likely to range in the high dozens-to-low hundreds, while the turnout near Parliament is likely to reach the mid-hundreds, based on estimates from previous such gatherings. Heightened security measures are expected in the vicinity of the protest areas as part of the standard security protocol. These will include the deployment of additional police personnel and the setting up of barricades around the protest sites to monitor the crowd.
2. There remains a high risk of clashes between protesters and the police, due to the sustained low tolerance policy of the authorities towards anti-GD protests. Should participants engage in disruptive behaviors by breaching security protocols and blocking major roads, the police will respond with forcible dispersal measures such as administrative detentions and forced removal of protesters from protest sites. If the situation escalates or if the protesters use pyrotechnics, the authorities are likely to deploy tear gas and water cannons to quell the unrest. Significant disruptions to pedestrian and vehicular travel are anticipated in the vicinity of the aforementioned locations on February 16 due to the expected turnout and related security measures.

Recommendations:

Those operating or residing in Tbilisi on February 16 are advised to avoid the vicinity of the aforementioned locations due to the slated protests and associated high risk of clashes while allotting for travel disruptions.