

## Summary

Nigeria is bracing itself for a ten day nationwide “#EndBadGovernance” protest planned to start on 1 August. Activists are decrying the sky-high inflation and cost of living and demanding economic and political reform. Protests and counter-protests have already started on July 29 in Suleja and Lagos. The government is using all means possible to prevent the protests. It is expected that authorities will resort to violent crackdowns, as they did in the past, very likely resulting in rising tensions and fostering further unrest and potential for violent clashes.

### Recent events and developments

Nationwide protests in Nigeria are planned from August 1 to the 10. Nigerians have been mobilizing on social media in response to a cost-of-living crisis and record inflation “#EndBadGovernance” has been widely adapted as a slogan. In one of the fliers shared on social media, the protesters demand an end to anti-people policies, overtaxing, and electoral fraud, followed by a list of 12 other demands including the restoration of affordable electricity tariffs, transparency and accountability in governance, the reduction of public officials’ salaries, electoral reforms, and the declaration of a state of emergency on inflation. Activists seem to have been inspired by other youth-led protests that have taken place elsewhere in Africa, such as the recent ones in Kenya and Uganda. The government has been reaching out to traditional and religious leaders in an attempt to prevent the protests from happening. Nonetheless, hundreds of protesters have already gathered in Suleja, close to the capital Abuja, on July 29. This was met by counter-protests in parts of Lagos. According to local reports the highway leading to Abuja has been blocked by soldiers. Protesters have blocked Kaduna Road, linking Kaduna to Abuja. The State Security Services and the Nigerian Army have issued stern warnings against the upcoming protests, making it clear they intend to intervene. Instances of people being arrested for promoting the protests have reportedly taken place in Kano, Kaduna and Sokoto.

### Impact assessment

Despite the authorities’ efforts to dissuade people from attending them, organizers seem determined to go through with the planned protests, as evidenced by the July 29 demonstrations. Large crowds are especially likely to gather on major roads near universities and government buildings, leading to roadblocks similar to the one reported on Kaduna Road. It is almost certain that the biggest protests will take place in major cities like Abuja, Kano, as well as Lagos, where counter-protests have already started. Activists have urged those based around Enugu, Lagos, Kano, Abuja, and Kaduna to block all roads leading to the cities and airports on the first day of protest. Roadblocks, checkpoints, traffic congestion, and violent physical confrontations can all be expected. Communication could also be affected. In the last few days, telecommunication companies have disconnected over 100,000 lines. Some have interpreted this as a means to hinder the demonstration and limit the reach of protesters. Clashes with police are almost certain as they are known to use force to suppress riots, as seen in the 2020 protests which resulted in several deaths. Counter-protests such as the ones in Lagos are highly likely to provoke violent altercations. Although foreign nationals are not at risk of being specifically targeted, there is a risk of getting caught up in a violent incident or demonstration or in civil disturbances. The protests have the potential to lead to shutdowns and disruptions in major sectors including transportation, logistics, financial services, hospitality, and aviation.

### Advice from Forth Global

- Ensure that all employees travelling to Nigeria receive a three-day HEAT training prior to deployment.
- Avoids crowds and demonstrations.
- Monitor local media for updates.
- Ensure that employees have reliable means of communication available.
- Cooperate with local authorities and be prepared to go through checks and present identification.

### Customized advice

Please contact us for specific advice:

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