

# Intelligence brief | 7 November 2013

Internal security risk assessment for Greece, autumn 2013

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## Political violence risk: High

The deteriorating economic situation in Greece has been accompanied by an increase in political violence in the country. According to data from the Greek police, there were 527 arson and bomb attacks in 2012 and 254 in the first six months of 2013. These numbers compare with 542 arson and bomb attacks over the 12 year period from 1974 to 1986 when Greece had a reputation for widespread violence by left-wing militants.

Anarchist groups have claimed responsibility for these attacks. These groups include the Lovers of Lawlessness, Wild Freedom, Instigators of Social Explosion, Gangs of Consciousness, Lonely Wolf, the Untouchable Cell of Revenge, Untamed Desires, which was behind a parcel bomb sent in July 2013 to an association representing prosecutors, and the most prominent of all the Conspiracy of Fire Cells, which is accused by police of carrying out 150 criminal acts since 2009.

More recently, on 26 September 2013, there were attacks at government offices in the Athens neighbourhood of Kifisia. As with the other attacks, this caused property damage but no casualties. Responsibility was claimed by the Forces of the Revolutionary Arch. Then in an announcement on 11 October 2013, the Revolutionary Struggle called for an armed struggle against the current government, which it accused of not taking any actions against the far-right Golden Dawn (Chryssi Avgi) party before the murder of the anti-fascist rapper Pavlos Fyssas on 18 September 2013. This is because, they claim, the government wants to cooperate with the neo-Nazi party. More recently two Golden Dawn members were killed and a third seriously injured in a drive-by shooting outside the party's offices in Athens on 1 November. Police suspect an anarchist organisation is responsible, though no suspects have been announced.

These anarchist groups have comparable organisational structures and carry out attacks that are similar in nature. Bomb attacks typically contain small amounts of explosives packed into pressure cookers or similar containers. Generally, they employ easily obtainable items such as jerry cans, camping gas canisters and time bombs built using instructions found on the internet. Attacks have consistently targeted government buildings and branches of multinational and Greek companies. These attacks have resulted in property damage but no fatalities.



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What is noteworthy about these groups and what makes their attacks highly likely to continue is the lack of any effective police strategy to dismantle them. Due to their decentralised organisational structure, which lacks any central command with formal or informal leaders, there is no key authority that can be brought down together with the rest of the organisation.

Taking into account the frequency of attacks, announcements for future attacks and the lack of any strategic police response, the likelihood that there will be future attacks using homemade bombs against government and corporate premises is assessed as *very high*. Taking into account the similarity between current and past attacks, the impact of such attacks (which are likely to result in property damage but few if any casualties) is assessed as *medium*. Overall, the political violence risk rating for Greece is therefore currently assessed as *high*.

## **Civil unrest risk: Medium**

Greece has experienced a wave of protests in the last five years, including four general strikes and demonstrations against the measures prescribed by international lenders (known as the 'memorandum'). Memorandum reforms in education have led to occupations in hundreds of schools, which are being met with police arrests and prosecutions. The memorandum's mobility reserve scheme, whereby 25,000 public sector workers are moved into a strategic reserve on reduced pay, has provoked protests by workers in the healthcare and education sector. The country's eight major universities have closed and the federation of administrative employees of Greek universities has been on strike for eight consecutive weeks. A general strike was held on 6 November by the Civil Servants' Confederation (ADEDY) and the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE), which was organised with the Greek Primary Teacher Federation (DOE) and the Greek Federation of Secondary School Teachers (OLME).

Protests have focused on the public sector and have been sporadic, uncoordinated and ineffective. There have been some efforts at coordination. For example, during the 2013 summer, OLME managed to create what it calls 'committees for the protection of public education' consisting of teachers, students and parents in schools throughout the country. But, in general, efforts at coordination have been isolated and intermittent. Despite the initial opposition, general strikes and uncoordinated protests, austerity measures prescribed by the memorandum have in the end been implemented.

Recent mobilisations by farmers in Crete could spur instability in the fragile government because a proposed tax on farm properties has divided government lawmakers. However, farmers are one of the last remaining bastions of support for the government and the tax is expected to be dropped.

Ongoing opposition to the memorandum and the government's austerity measures means that the likelihood of future civil unrest is assessed as *high*. However, the uncoordinated nature of the opposition and the inability of past protests to bring about a shift in government policy or spur further mobilisation in wider society, means that the impact of civil unrest is assessed as *low*. Overall, the civil unrest risk rating for Greece is therefore currently assessed as *medium*.

## Crime risk: High

According to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Greece has among the lowest assault, murder and kidnapping rates in the world. However, there has been a sharp increase in the incidences of certain other categories of crime since the first austerity measures were implemented in mid-2009, namely burglaries, robberies and theft. A classified police report leaked to the press revealed that the 2009 crime figures represented a 42.6% increase in armed robberies, an 85% increase in thefts and a 100% increase in robberies in supermarkets and grocery stores compared to the previous year. An estimated 216 burglaries were committed on a daily basis throughout the country in 2009. This contrasts sharply with the 80 robberies per annum recorded back in 1980.

Crimes such as street muggings and bank hold-ups have increased 50% since 2011 according to August 2012 data from the Greek police. Other crimes which have seen a marked increase include child pornography, cyber crimes and thefts from vehicles. Counterfeit crime is also an issue, with European Commission data ranking Greece as the second highest EU source of counterfeit goods confiscated in the European market.

Petty crime is concentrated in the urban centres of Athens, Thessaloniki and Patras and especially in poor immigrant areas, such as Metaxourgeo and St Panteleimon in Athens. Drug-related crime is found during night hours in the large squares of these cities, such as Syntagma and Omonea in Athens. Another form of petty crime which has seen a sharp rise is pickpocketing in the Athens metro. Cuts in the police budget have meant a drastic reduction in resources needed to combat the problem, whilst the crime emanating from neighbourhoods with large immigrant populations, coupled with the state's inability to deal with the problem, has led to a rise in support for Golden Dawn in the urban areas of the country.

To conclude, the combination of lack of resources due to cuts required by the memorandum and the sharp rise in petty crime since 2009, means that the likelihood of high crime levels is assessed as *very high*. The impact of crime on Greek society is assessed as *medium*, as this rise is predominantly related to relatively petty crimes, though Greece may experience a rise in race-related crimes. Overall, the crime risk rating for Greece is therefore currently assessed as *high*.

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