

Swedish fashion giant H&M decided to close shops in central Athens Wednesday as riots against the government escalated.

- [Deadly Greek strike puts pressure on bailout plan](#)
- [Swedish stocks extend losses on Greek fear](#)

Three people were killed in a firebomb attack on a bank in central Athens on Wednesday and around 20 people were evacuated from the building, police and firefighters said.

Two women and one man died in the fire, and firefighters were looking for other victims although the fire appeared to be under control, a spokesman for firemen told AFP. The bank, a branch of the Marfin group, caught fire after hooded youths broke a window and hurled petrol bombs at the building on the sidelines of demonstrations against a government austerity drive.

Companies were advised by the government to take precautions. Hennes & Mauritz (H&M), Europe's second largest fashion retailer, closed two of its stores in Athens.

But Nils Vinge, head of investor relations at H&M, told business daily Dagens Industri that the economic crisis wouldn't have a long term impact on the company's expansion plans in the country.

"Obviously we are affected by the situation in Greece, but we are still doing fine," he said. "Our ambition is to continue expansion in Greece. Even if the market is weaker we can continue to take market share due to our strong position with good prices".

The Stockholm-based fashion retailer is said to plan to open five new stores in Greece this year. Nils Vinge declined to comment on the exact number.