
MACEDONIA'S PROSECUTOR FILES CHARGES AGAINST 94 IN WIRETAPPING SCANDAL

-

30.06.2017

Reuters (29 June 2017)

Macedonia's special prosecutor filed charges on Thursday against 94 people, including former high government officials, over their involvement in alleged crimes revealed in tapes that emerged during a surveillance scandal that brought a government down.

Macedonia was thrown into political turmoil in 2015, when opposition parties accused former Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski and his counter-intelligence chief of orchestrating the wiretapping of more than 20,000 people.

The crisis prompted the EU to broker an agreement in which parties agreed to hold early elections and establish the office of the special prosecutor to investigate the content of the wiretaps.

On Thursday Special Prosecutor Katica Janeva told reporters that her office had filed charges against 94 people and seven legal entities in 17 cases, the state-run MIA news agency reported.

"These cases are all clearly related to abuse of institutional capacities, by both individuals and organized groups, abuse of office and also violation of public procurement procedure," the agency quoted Janeva as saying.

She said the evidence would be presented to a court which would then decide on filing indictments.

Janeva said she was considering asking for the detention of 18 people including a party leader, but gave no names. Macedonian media said Gruevski and his former interior minister Gordana Jankulovska were among the 18.

"This is a political process aimed at destroying the VMRO-DPMNE officials," MIA quoted Gruevski as telling a news conference on Thursday, referring to his party.

Gruevski stepped down last year as part of the EU-brokered agreement to allow early elections to take place.

Following December elections, his rival Zoran Zaev's Social Democrats entered a coalition with ethnic Albanian parties to form a government.

Nationalists including VMRO-DPMNE say the coalition deal threatens the sovereignty of Macedonia and allege it could lead to division along ethnic lines if more autonomy is given to ethnic Albanians, who make up a third of the population.

Macedonia's accession into the EU and NATO has been blocked over a name dispute with Greece,

which has a northern province called Macedonia and regards Skopje's use of the name as a territorial grab.

(Reporting by Ivana Sekularac; editing by Andrew Roche)

<http://www.reuters.com/article/us-macedonia-prosecutor-idUSKBN19K2KQ?il=0>

Kaynak/Source: