
MACEDONIA PRESIDENT VETOES ALBANIAN LANGUAGE BILL

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Macedonia's president on Wednesday vetoed a law making Albanian the country's second official language, describing the legislation as unnecessary and unconstitutional.

Macedonian lawmakers approved the bill last week in a parliamentary vote boycotted by the main opposition party.

But conservative President Gjorge Ivanov said the law would introduce a "very expensive redundancy" in state institutions "instead of building a multiethnic society through a spirit of dialogue and coexistence."

Ethnic Albanians make up about one-quarter of Macedonia's 2.1 million people. The law would allow them to use the Albanian language as well as Macedonian in all communications with official institutions.

If the measure passes a second time, the Macedonia Constitution would require the president to sign it.

The dispute over recognizing the Albanian language fueled a political crisis in Macedonia last year that kept a government from being formed for months after the December 2016 general election. The tensions came to a head in April when demonstrators stormed parliament and physically attacked lawmakers who had voted to make an ethnic Albanian politician the chamber's speaker.

Social Democratic Union of Macedonia leader Zoran Zaev eventually formed a government with ethnic Albanian parties and has been prime minister since May 31.

<https://www.usnews.com/news/world/articles/2018-01-17/macedonia-president-to-veto-albanian-language-bill>

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