
VUCIC SLAMS MONTENEGRO FOR BARRING SERBIAN PUBLIC FIGURES

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After media reported on Thursday that Montenegrin police have barred four Serbian cultural, academic and legal figures from entering the country, Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic condemned the decision and vowed to respond.

Serbia must respond. This is something I was shocked about, because we forbade entry to criminals... while someone else [Montenegro] banned different opinions, Vucic told Prva television.

He added that the Serbian government has received confirmation from Montenegro that four Serbian citizens were barred from entering because they are considered a threat to security.

Vucic added that he will ask for an official explanation from Montenegrin President Milo Djukanovic.

BIRN contacted the Montenegrin Police and Interior Ministry for confirmation that the four Serbians were barred but didnt receive a reply by the time of publication.

Montenegrin newspaper Dan reported on Thursday morning that writer Matija Beckovic, historians Cedomir Antic and Aleksandar Rakovic and lawyer Dejan Mirovic were prevented from entering the country.

Rakovic described the decision as the choking of freedom of speech and academic and scientific thoughts by the authorities in Podgorica, Montenegrin website in4s reported on Friday.

Beckovic told Serbian media that he only found out about the decision from the press.

According to the report published by Dan, the four Serbians had been announced as speakers at an event marking the centenary of the 1918 Podgorica Assembly, at which it was decided to unite the old kingdom of Montenegro to the Kingdom of Serbia. The formation of Yugoslavia followed.

The union lasted for the best part of a century, but in 2006 Montenegro split from Serbia, following an independence referendum.

The celebration of the centenary of the unification of Serbia and Montenegro has already troubled diplomatic relations between Serbia and Montenegro.

The Montenegrin government has insisted that the Podgorica Assembly led to the disappearance of Montenegro as a state.

It condemned all proposed celebrations of the centenary which it said dishonoured the memories

of all those in Montenegro who were killed during the [Yugoslav] dictatorship, which began at the Podgorica Assembly.

On October 26, local authorities in the Montenegrin town of Pljevlja banned one such event, saying it contradicted the state tradition of Montenegro.

The decision was condemned by senior Serbian officials, including President Vucic, who said the decision prohibits people in Montenegro from thinking differently and having a different view of the past.

<http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/serbian-officials-condemn-montenegrin-entry-denial-decision-11-01-2018>

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