
HUNGARY: 15,000 TAKE TO STREETS IN 4TH DAY OF PROTESTS

- 17.12.2018

Deutsche Welle (14 Aralık 2018)

Smoke grenades and tear gas filled the air in Budapest as thousands rallied against a new "slave law" passed last week. Demonstrators are seeking an end to Prime Minister Viktor Orban's creeping authoritarianism.

More than 15,000 people filled the streets of Budapest on Sunday night in the fourth and largest protest in a week against the right-wing nationalist government of Prime Minister Viktor Orban.

Hungarians are demonstrating against what they call the government's new "slave law" that allows employers to demand hundreds of hours of overtime a year.

Protesters braved below-freezing temperatures, chanting "Orban, get lost!" as they marched toward Hungary's public television headquarters. They had been hoping to read a declaration on air, but were not permitted to do so.

Hungarian radicalism on the rise

The demonstrators proceeded to hurl smoke grenades, prompting the police to retaliate with tear gas. "All I want for Xmas is democracy," read one banner.

The protests, the first since Orban came to power in 2010 to bring together all opposition parties, from greens to the far right, have been the most violent in Hungary in more than 10 years. Dozens of people have been arrested and several police officers have been injured.

Orban blames Soros, again

On Thursday, Hungary's parliament passed a bill that allows employers to demand between 250 to 400 hours of overtime a year, and permits them to delay payment by up to three years.

The government has argued that the law helps businesses who are short of labor and will benefit workers who want the extra pay.

Pro-government media has depicted the demonstrations as yet another machination of the

Hungarian-born US billionaire George Soros, who has often been used by Orban as scapegoat.

On Saturday, Orban's ruling party Fidesz said "criminals" were behind the "street riots."

For many Hungarians, the protests are not only about the new labor law, but also about what they view as Orban's creeping authoritarianism.

Kaynak/Source: