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## **THOUSANDS MARCH IN MONTENEGRO TO END PRESIDENT'S 30-YEAR RULE IN THIRD PROTEST THIS MONTH**

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More than 10,000 people marched on Saturday through Montenegro's capital, Podgorica, to call for the end of Montenegrin President Milo Đukanović's 30-year long rule.

It was the third protest in a month calling for Đukanović's resignation. The February 23 march was also aimed at state broadcaster Radio Televizija Crne Gore: protesters met up in front of the broadcaster's HQ building in Podgorica to make as much noise as possible on 7.30pm, the start time of the channel's main daily news program.

Montenegrins have been protesting since February 2, on the initiative of a grassroot group called Odupri se - 97000("Resist - 97000"), composed of more than 30 activists and citizens with no clear political affiliation. The former vice president of the Montenegrin parliament Džemal Perović is one of the group's notable figures, among intellectuals, lawyers, academics and journalists.

Their main demands are the resignations of president Đukanović, his Prime minister Duško Marković, the Supreme State Prosecutor Ivica Stanković, and the Montenegrin chief prosecutor for organized crime, Milivoje Katnić. The group has received the support of the Montenegrin political opposition.

The state broadcaster, the Odupri se - 97000 group said on Facebook, is "not a public service but party propaganda", that has "desinformed" Montenegro for 30 years.

Montenegrin protesters marched despite bad weather and strong winds of up to 100 km/hr, which caused damage to electricity network and houses around the country. "Wind gusts were reaching 50 knots while thousands of people were chanting for the freedom of governmental institutions, and for the end of the thirty yearlong rule of President Milo Đukanović and his clique", Odupri se - 97000 said in a press release.

The 10,000 people who took the streets of Podgorica on Saturday represent a significant portion of Montenegro's total population of around 610,000.

The movement has already scheduled its next protest for March 2 and is drafting requests to be presented to the government, Odupri se - 97000 has announced.

Milo Đukanović's rule is the longest among EU leaders. He has been in power in Montenegro for three decades, serving as prime minister from 1991 to 1998, as President from 1998 to 2002, as prime minister again in various governments between 2003 and 2016, before being re-elected

president in May 2018. He is also the president of the Democratic Party of Socialists of Montenegro. He led the country to independence from Serbia in 2006 and his rule has largely gone unchallenged.

<https://www.euronews.com/2019/02/24/thousands-march-in-montenegro-to-end-president-s-30-year-rule-in-third-protest-this-month>

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