
'BALKAN SPRING' PROTESTS WILL REACH KOSOVO, KURTI PREDICTS

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The leader of the Kosovo opposition Vetevendosje [Self-Determination] Movement, Albin Kurti, says Kosovo can expect the same push on the streets for political change this spring that neighbouring countries have seen, and where big anti-government protests have been taking place.

In Kosovo, as well as in neighbouring countries, a spring of political change can be expected, Kurti told BIRN. People are tired of autocratic leaders and oligarchs that control and dominate the fate of society and the economy, he added.

Albania, Serbia and Montenegro have all recently seen mass protests aimed at overthrowing their corrupt governments, the organisers of these protests say.

Vetevendosje declared on April 4 that it will organise meetings with citizens all around Kosovo to mobilise them for protests. It also warned it may use a no-confidence motion to try to overthrow the government.

Kurti added: After the failure that followed the project for a territorial exchange with Serbia, the President [Hashim Thaci] who still carries this idea, and the Prime Minister [Ramush Haradinaj] who opposes it only declaratively, must go.

Ardian Kasrati, professor of political science at the University of Prishtina, told BIRN that even if governments in the region are toppled, the current opposition parties might not be much of an improvement.

There could be a Balkan Spring of its kind, if we refer to a change of political power through massive protests, Kasrati said.

But the collapse of current corrupt governments does not necessarily guarantee the establishment of meaningful democracies, if the current opposition structures come to power, he cautioned.

He said that Vetevendosje had chosen this particular moment to push for mass protests, to prevent President Thaci from signing any agreement with Serbia, because that could potentially extend his political career over his political opponents.

He believes the situation is similar in Serbia, where anti-government protesters have been rallying for months, demanding the resignation of President Aleksandar Vucic and his governing Progressive Party.

In addition to their formal anti-corruption agenda, the opposition [in Serbia] fears that if Vucic reaches any agreement with Kosovo, which confirms and accelerates Serbias Euro-integration process, he will be re-legitimised as Serbias strongman for a longer period of time, Kastrati said.

Albania, Serbia and Montenegro have all been experiencing months of anti-government protests, which some have dubbed a Balkan Spring.

Demonstrations in Albania and Serbia have turned violent on occasions, marked by clashes with police.

<https://balkaninsight.com/2019/04/11/balkan-spring-protests-will-reach-kosovo-kurti-predicts/>

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