
BOSNIA PROTEST LEADER SEEKS ASYLUM IN AUSTRIA

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The leader of a protest movement in Bosnia that drew daily crowds for nine months said Thursday he was seeking political asylum in Austria, according to local media reports.

Davor Dragicevic, who organised the protests in the city of Banja Luka to demand explanations over the death of his son David in March 2018, told the Austrian news website Balkan Stories: "I am seeking asylum."

Dragicevic, 49, said he believed his life was in danger in Bosnia.

He added that he wanted to continue his "fight for justice" from Austria, as well as protesting against the "totalitarian system" in Bosnia's Republika Srpska region.

For months, Dragicevic and his ex-wife had accused the authorities in the Bosnian Serb-run region of "killing" their son, a charge officials have denied.

Police called his death an accident, but a prosecutor later qualified the death as murder and the case sparked a wave of protests not seen in Bosnia since 2014.

The "Justice for David" protests then gradually turned into demonstrations against the rule of Milorad Dodik, a Bosnian Serb strongman whose party won an October election in Republika Srpska.

In late December Dragicevic was briefly detained after being accused by a prosecutor of "threatening the security" of political officials.

He then fled to Austria and last month succeeded in having his son re-interred there.

In the interview on Thursday Dragicevic said communities must "fight together" for justice across ethnic lines in Bosnia, which has been composed of two entities -- Serb-run Republika Srpska and the Muslim-Croat Federation -- since the end of the 1992-1995 war.

Dragicevic, himself ethnically Serb, had joined forces in his campaign with Muriz Memić, a Bosnian Muslim man whose son also died in murky circumstances.

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