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## **OPPOSITION PARTIES IN ALBANIA FORM AN ALLIANCE, ANNOUNCE BOYCOTT OF LOCAL ELECTIONS**

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Democratic Party of Albania signed an agreement creating an opposition coalition with seven other parties, including the Socialist Movement for Integration. Among ten articles of the document, prominent place belongs to the boycott of local elections on 30 June, Albanian Daily News reported.

The signatories pledged not to participate in future elections until conditions for their free and fair conduct are met. According to the third article of the agreement, the only way for that to happen is creating a transitional government with a special mandate.

The current Socialist-lead government is planning to go through with the elections anyway, and in this it is supported by the international community.

On 19 April, Deputy Ambassador of the United States in Tirana, Leyla Moses-Ones, urged anybody who intends to run to register in the local elections, reiterating the position of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Palmer who called on opposition parties to return to the state institutions.

The deadline for registering for the elections expires today, and 43 political organisations have so far expressed interest to run.

In the meantime, regular anti-government protests that have been taking place for more than two months will be moved to the main roads of the capital, with the aim of blocking them, Tirana Times announced.

The next country-wide protest is scheduled for 11 May, Democratic Party leader Lulzim Basha stated.

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