
PROTESTS SPREAD TO NORTH OF MONTENEGRO

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Balkan Insight, 6 February 2012 NGOs, trade unions and workers from the north of Montenegro will stage a demonstration on February 10 in Bijelo Polje to protest over privatisations and rising energy prices. Milena, Milosevic The announcement of new protests came only days after a protest in Podgorica, the capital, was scheduled for February 18. It follows a demonstration on January 21 in Podgorica at which thousands expressed anger over electricity price hikes. [] protest in Podgorica was a stimulus for us. It removed fear among the people, A Almer Mekic, head of the NGO Euromost and one of the organisers of the protest in Bijelo Polje, told Balkan Insight. Northerners are demanding that the state prosecutor investigate all privatizations in the region. They are also concerned about energy prices, which they call [] of the people through electricity bills a [] The protest organising committee invited representatives of the NGO MANS, the Free Trade Unions and the Students Union, who are organising protests in Podgorica, to join them in Bijelo Polje. [] doing so, they will demonstrate that we are equal with the people and workers from the south. In return, they can expect our mass arrival in Podgorica, A says a statement from the committee. The protests were scheduled after negotiations between civil society and the Prime Minister Igor Luksic about the increase in electricity prices failed. Luksic rejected the demand of civil society representatives to seek resignations from officials of the Regulatory Agency for Energy and cancel the decision to raise electricity prices. Higher energy prices have hit hard in the north of the country, which lags behind the rest of Montenegro in terms of economic development and standards of living. Many factories in the region have been closed, forcing people to migrate to the south. Though it comprises more than 50 per cent of Montenegro's territory, the northern region is home to less than 30 per cent of the population.

Kaynak/Source: