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Montenegro and Macedonia recognize Kosovo

KosovoCompromise Staff

The governments of Montenegro and Macedonia have recognized Kosovo's unilateral secession, following months of intensive pressure by the US government.

The move has sparked strong opposition from the Montenegrin opposition – which has said it would recognize it – as well as by Belgrade, which has immediately declared Podgorica's and Skopje's ambassadors to Serbia “persona non-grata”.

It is a third so-called “planned package” of recognition orchestrated by Washington.

The first was the pressure on Canada and Japan in mid-March to recognize Kosovo in order to isolate Russia in the G8 and the second was the pressure on Croatia, Hungary and Bulgaria to recognize Kosovo in coordination and on the same day as first neighbouring countries to do so.

In a joint statement, the Montenegrin and Macedonia governments have said that decision to recognize Kosovo independence had been reached after it had been assessed that all the efforts of the international community that a solution be found to Kosovo status in negotiations between Belgrade and Pristina have proved as fruitless.

Montenegro and Macedonia, the statement added, are committed to lasting stability, peace, security and progress of all the countries in the region, with a clear European and Euro-Atlantic perspective.

The opposition in Montenegro rejected the move.

"It is true that the Montenegrin government has the right to make decisions but in the case of recognition of Kosovo's independence, the opposition will never accept it and neither will the majority of Montenegrin citizens," opposition leader Andrija Mandic said.

He said that the opposition would organise large-scale protests, demand a referendum on the issue and until then boycott all state institutions.

In Belgrade, Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic said the country decided to deny hospitality to the ambassador of Montenegro in Belgrade Anka Vojvodic.

"The Serbian government has adopted the decision to inform Podgorica that the presence of its official representative in Belgrade is no longer desirable," Jeremic said in a statement.



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"This is a step envisaged under the Action Plan of the Serbian government. We believe that this move presents an adequate measure since the regional countries are especially responsible for the preservation of peace and stability in the Balkans," Jeremic said.

Montenegro's "decision was made under pressure from those whose ideas and views on the Kosovo problem were defeated during the voting in the General Assembly. Since this pressure tipped the scales in Montenegro's decision-making, we have decided to take such a step," Jeremic said.

"We must demonstrate firmness and resolve in the defense of our territorial integrity and sovereignty, and after the voting in the UN General Assembly we will act with determination in reaction to any threat to our territorial integrity," the Serbian foreign minister said.