

PHOTO ESSAY

Bulgarian Protesters Take Down Their Government



Kristen Ghodsee



Editor's note: Kristen Ghodsee, contributing editor for both the SHA and Soyuz Network columns in Anthropology News, was in Bulgaria as the president was getting ready to dissolve parliament and uncertainty loomed as to who was going to be in charge of the country. She photographed a protest and shares her images here.

All photos courtesy Kristen Ghodsee



Large public protests across Bulgaria forced the resignation of the entire government on February 20, 2013 after clashes with the police. On March 12, the Bulgarian president will appoint a caretaker government until snap elections can be held on May 12. The protestors are demanding changes to the constitution so that Bulgaria can become a "partyless" democracy.



Many protesters want the politicians who have ruled their country since 1989 to go on trial for corruption and theft of state funds. People are fed up with all of Bulgaria's established political parties, and are trying to abolish the current system of proportional representation in the country's parliament.



"Bulgaria wants: morality, nature, solidarity!"



"Stop the demographic catastrophe and genocide in Bulgaria." Bulgaria has one of the lowest birthrates in Europe. Its population has been shrinking steadily for the last 25 years, due in part to the ongoing economic uncertainty that followed the collapse of communism in 1989.



"We won't pay monopolistic prices." The protests began when Bulgarians got their winter electricity bills in February. One Austrian and two Czech firms control electricity distribution in Bulgaria. They have divided Bulgaria into three regions over which they each have a monopoly. Protesters are demanding re-nationalization of all utilities.



"A future for the young people." Youth unemployment rates are high and many young Bulgarians flee their country to work in Western Europe. Although it joined the European Union in 2007, wages in Bulgaria are lower than in any other member state.



This protester asked the crowd to go to the Central Train Station in Sofia to protest the privatization of parts of the Bulgaria State Railways.



A father and son at the March 10th protest. The Minister of Interior outraged the public by asserting that about half of the protesters were drug dealers and criminals.



A Protester wearing the colors of the Bulgarian flag.

Kristen Ghodsee is the director and John S Osterweis associate professor in gender and women's studies at Bowdoin College. She is also a contributing editor for the AN columns of the Soyuz Network and the Society for Humanistic Anthropology.

[f Share](#) 86 [f Like](#) 32 [t Tweet](#) 23 [Email](#) 17 [Share](#) 194

This entry was posted in [Featured Posts](#), [Knowledge Exchange](#), [March](#) and tagged [Photo Essay](#). Bookmark the [permalink](#). [Post a comment](#) or leave a [trackback](#): [Trackback URL](#).