

Macedonian Human Rights Movement International

Violation of the right to assembly in Bulgaria

Macedonians in Bulgaria continuously face discrimination and intimidation when asserting their ethnic Macedonian identity and have been arrested, detained, threatened and even beaten. Their right to assembly to commemorate the death of a Macedonian hero Yane Sandanski has been violated.

Anniversary of Macedonian revolutionary Yane Sandanski's death

OMO PIRIN received a permit from the mayor of Sandanski to hold a commemoration on April 24, 2005. They proceeded to advertise the event to local Macedonians and the Macedonian Diaspora because of its historical significance. OMO PIRIN recently learned that the mayor has revoked the permit and instead gave it to the Focus News Agency, which has never before celebrated this event and is notorious for its anti-Macedonian rhetoric.

In April 2004, OMO Ilinden notified the authorities in the municipality of Sandanski that it would organize commemorative activities near the Rozhen Monastery on 18 April between 10 A.M. and 2 P.M. However, the mayor issued a permit for the event to be organized only between 10 A.M. and noon without stating any reason for this limitation. (See IHF report to the 61st Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights)

Conclusion

Macedonians in Bulgaria continuously face discrimination and intimidation when asserting their ethnic Macedonian identity. As a country that is preparing to enter the European Union, Bulgaria must respect its minorities' human rights and put an end to its state-endorsed acts of oppression.

MHRMI calls on the international community, and specifically the European Union, to apply pressure on Bulgaria to immediately recognize its large Macedonian minority and grant it the human rights that it is guaranteed by all international human rights conventions. Moreover, MHRMI calls on the European Union to make Bulgaria's accession to the European Union explicitly conditional on its recognition of its Macedonian minority.

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