

Far-right extremists march in Bulgaria despite international condemnation



Sofia, Feb 19 (RHC)-- Despite international and domestic condemnation, hundreds of far-right extremists have taken part in a march honoring a pro-Nazi general in Bulgaria.

The march, held in the Bulgarian capital Sofia on Saturday, included a torchlight procession by black-clad people holding torches and the laying of wreaths at the former home of General Hristo Lukov, a leader of the pro-Nazi Union of Bulgarian Legions in the 1930s and 1940s.

Members of several far-right groups from other European countries, such as Germany, Sweden, Hungary and Estonia also took part in the march, describing Lukov as a "Bulgarian war hero."

The procession was initially banned by the city's municipality, but a court overturned its blocking to the dismay of Sofia's Mayor Yordanka Fandukova, who said that the ceremony "has no place in our city."

The Bulgarian government had called for the march's suspension, and an international petition against it had gathered over than 178,000 signatures.

Several hours before the pro-Nazi march, a counter-protest was held in central Sofia, in which participants called for "No Nazis on the streets." The U.S. embassy in Sofia also released a statement announcing that it was "saddened and troubled to see the display of intolerance represented by the Lukov March." "General Hristo Lukov was a Nazi supporter who promoted hate and injustice, and is not someone deserving of veneration," it added.

During the march one of its organizers told reporters: "There is no power in the world that could prohibit us from honoring a hero, a warrior and a statesman, as undoubtedly General Lukov is."

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