

Thousands Rally Against Government Corruption in Romania



Bucharest, November 5 (RHC)-- Thousands of people have attended a rally in the Romanian capital Bucharest demanding early elections and eliminating government corruption.

Nearly 15,000 protesters gathered in the University Square in central Bucharest on Wednesday evening and thousands more filled the streets of other cities across the country hours after Prime Minister Victor Ponta, mired in a corruption scandal, stepped down in a surprise move over a deadly nightclub fire.

Demonstrators said that the government's resignation should be just the first step in eliminating widespread corruption in the public administration.

This is the second consecutive anti-grommet demonstration that was held in the country. On Tuesday evening, about 20,000 people attended a rally in the capital.

In an address that was broadcast from the Romanian state television, Ponta said to his nation that he hoped his government's resignation would "satisfy the people who came out in the streets," adding that he would stay on until a new government was in place.

President Klaus Iohannis also said on Tuesday that "someone has to take political responsibility. The next step is for politicians, who cannot ignore this sentiment of revolt."

Late on Friday, a nightclub in the capital caught fire when some fireworks were set off inside the building, setting the club's foam decor ablaze, killing 32 people and wounding over 180 others.

Around 400 people, including children, were in the club at the time of the incident and the single exit was overwhelmed in the panic caused by the raging fire.

The tragic case sparked a public outrage, particularly in the capital, that led to the arrest of the three owners of the club. They have been accused of letting the club become heavily overcrowded knowing that the building lacked the required emergency exits.

The outrage, however, did not cease and protesters now call for reforms in a country where they believe safety is compromised because of corruption.

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