

Belgrade After Milosevic

Author: [IWPR](#)

Belgraders are calling for Milosevic and his cronies to be punished for their crimes

Over a week after the revolution that ended Milosevic's dictatorship, ordinary people from all over Serbia are still visiting the federal parliament, where the key confrontations took place.

The scene outside the assembly speaks of the people's anger -- broken windows, the wreckage of police cars, pages from official documents strewn over the pavements.

"When the police used tear against us, people became enraged - there were mothers and children there," said Biljana, a student. "I thought I was going to die, I could not breathe and a week later I am still suffering."

Milosevic's downfall is the main topic of conversation on the streets. "I want Milosevic to be hanged in the centre of Belgrade," said an angry cleaner from a primary school near the parliament building, "People went hungry while his police earned ten times more than me. He and his circle had everything. It was a disaster for this country."

"I would like to see him in prison, I would personally feel safer," said Mira, a teacher. "However, I am aware that this is not possible at the moment. If he goes, the whole pyramid under him would crumble and this could create chaos and unrest here. Eventually, he'll end up in prison."

The hero of the revolution is Ljubisav Djokic, nicknamed Jo, an unemployed construction worker with a spinal deformity who drove his bulldozer up to the federal parliament.

"I have been protesting for ten years. I used to go to all the rallies. I would get beaten, swallow lots of teargas and then come back home without achieving anything," he said. "I thought hard this time and decided that I would be more successful if I took my bulldozer with me."

"The police fired bullets at me, I protected myself by raising my bucket. In the end, my bulldozer forced open the door of the state television building and I shouted to the protesters that the TV is free and everyone rushed in," he said, pointing to the bullet holes in his cabin. "I don't know how I survived, God must have looked after me."

Directors of state companies, loyal to Milosevic's Socialist Party of Serbia, SPS and its allies, are resigning from their posts and new crisis management teams are taking their place. Fresh young faces now appear on Serbian state television news. "This resembles the French Revolution without the guillotine," said a local journalist.

Milan, an economist, said, "People are exhausted. They've had enough of protests and marches. They just want to get rid of Milosevic's people and start all over again. That's why there's been such a swift purge of the companies."

Milka, a pensioner and supporter of Milosevic, is still convinced he is not going to be tried, "We don't recognize The Hague in this country. Milosevic was only fighting for the good of the Serbian people. They

did not manage to catch Karadzic let alone Milosevic, who is, I am sure, well guarded."

Milosevic is gone, but many of his henchmen are staying put. Parties loyal to the former president still hold a majority in the Serbian parliament and it remains to be seen whether the republican government will agree to new parliamentary elections.

Federal Minister of Defence General Ojdanic, a staunch Milosevic ally who has been indicted for war crimes by The Hague tribunal, has warned Serbs that their "country is in great danger of disappearing". But his message has fallen on deaf ears.

Students from the Otpor (Resistance) movement gathered the other day to demand that draconian legislation stifling dissent in country's universities is abolished. "No one will beat students ever again," they said, before marching via the Serbian parliament to Dedinje, the smart suburb where Milosevic still lives.

The students were stopped by a police cordon about 200 metres from Milosevic's villa. They parked two trucks carrying loudspeakers and started dancing to techno music. Young and old joined in, whistling and cheering. No protester had ever got so close to the deposed dictator.

"Our message to him is: this is our city and not his - we can go wherever we want," bellowed an activist.

Dragana Nikolic is a regular IWPR contributor

Location: Serbia

Focus: Balkans: Regional Reporting & Sustainable
Training

Source URL: <https://iwpr.net/global-voices/belgrade-after-milosevic>