

Beat: Arts

Montenegro to deploy 2,000 officers to safeguard 2nd gay parade

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USPA News - Police in the tiny European country of Montenegro will deploy more than 2,000 officers to prevent violence at the nation's second-ever gay parade, just months after the first parade was marred by violence from anti-gay protesters. Interior Minister Rasko Konjevic, speaking after a Cabinet meeting on Thursday, said the government has instructed the Interior Ministry and the police forces to take all possible steps to ensure the nation's second gay parade takes place without incident.

He also urged Montenegrin citizens to "show tolerance and respect" for differences. The Montenegrin capital of Podgorica will host the second Pride Parade, organised by Queer Montenegro, on Sunday. It comes less than three months after the nation's first-ever gay parade in the seaside resort of Budva was disrupted by around 500 anti-gay protesters who shouted "Kill the gays!", threw objects such as bottles, chairs, rocks, and smoke bombs, and clashed with police officers. Konjevic said the government had instructed the Interior Ministry and police to exercise their constitutional responsibilities and ensure the safety of parade participants and other citizens. He said around 2,000 police officers will be deployed to ensure the event takes place without incident. The minister further warned that police will take "firm action" against those who violate the law and compromise the safety of people attending Sunday's Pride Parade, which has received strong support from political leaders as the Balkan country seeks to advance its admission to the European Union (EU). But despite the political support for the pride parades, gay people remain largely invisible in the highly patriarchal society where there is no formal recognition of same-sex relationships and gay marriage is banned by the constitution. Recent surveys showed that an estimated 70 percent of all Montenegrins still consider homosexuality to be an illness.

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