



## Berisha and his supporters storm by force at the DP Headquarter: Facts and evidences from the day

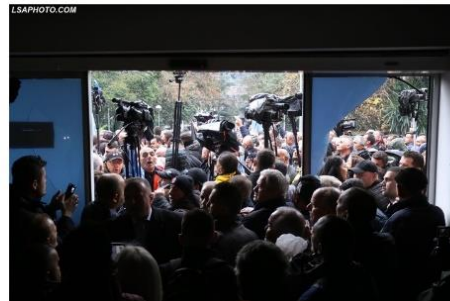
### The violent assault

On Saturday, unprecedented violence occurred in the [gathering called](#) by MP Sali Berisha against the DP institution with the aim to break inside the DP headquarter and forced removal of chairman Lulzim Basha. The protest called against the chairman of the Democratic Party, Lulzim Basha, following the decisions he had taken against former chairman Sali Berisha, declared non grata by the US for corruption and violation of democracy.

11.00 am – Just one hour before the official start of the protest called by Berisha, some of his supporters assaulted and attacked physically and verbally the DP Secretary for Local Development Mr. Roland Bejko, in the wide presence of the [media and cameras](#).

Also the DP deputy chairman MP. Enkelejd Alibeaj had been placed under [protection](#) of the National Guard after being assaulted and life threatened by individuals that gathered today in the protest called by Berisha. He reacted in a [twitter post](#) by condemning Berisha's role in this violent gathering emphasizing that he is willing to acts of violence. He reiterates that "Berisha's action is putting DP members to confront each other while he steps back front, which it shows the real face of Berisha. He is willing to harm anyone who doesn't think like him".

11.45 am – The act of violence on the DP Headquarter assault where brutal and unprecedented in Albania political history. Media reporters photographed these acts since the moment when people stormed by force in the main entrance of the DP Headquarter by smashing and destroying the door and glasses.

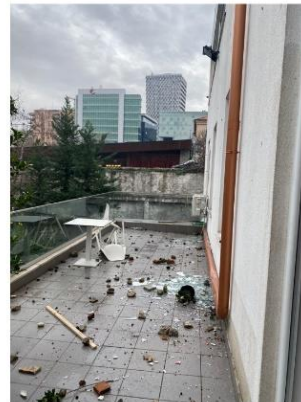




12.00 pm – Dozens of violent supporters of Berisha had moved to the other headquarter entrance attempting to destroy the door. Video [footage](#) by the media demonstrates the repeat use of tools to break in the headquarter. These violent individuals used even construction tools, such as iron bars and hammers, to open the doors to reach the upper floors of the building, where the life of dozens of people were under threat of escalation and physical assaults by these protesters if they would reach their goal to storm in the first floor of the building.



12.15 pm – Media reporters also evidenced acts of violence occurring indoor the DP Headquarter where windows were smashed, doors broken. At the same moment the DP Secretary General had convened the head of branches of the Party and following that DP Parliamentary Group and Presidency was expected to meet.





12.15 pm – Media report that Berisha’s supporters have stepped inside the ground floor of DP headquarter after destroying everything within the floor ([video](#)) – doors, offices, windows, etc. – while they are attempting to get inside the first floor of the building.



12.30 pm – Violence continued with any means and tools by those violent individuals, but such attempts weren’t just spontaneous. Rather media video footage evidenced some hand gestures of MP Sali Berisha making toward the crowd that corresponded with their attacks while attempting to break the main entrance, or when they were gathering to storm the first floor by using portable stairs, or even when they used rocks and other materials to break in to the doors of the building.



12.45 pm – Moments later, [fourth video](#) shows individuals use construction tools such as metal bars to demolish indoor doors, in their attempt to storm the first floor of the building where the life of dozens Party representatives, the chairman, including two pregnant women was under threat of being targets of violence.



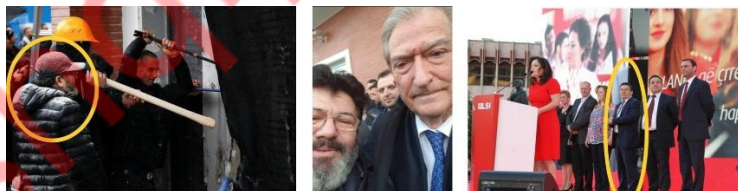




12.45 pm – All the DP officials are inside the headquarter, members of the Presidency, Parliamentary Group, the deputy chairmen's, and the chairman, including dozens of DP head of branches. While some photo evidences other dozens of people being shocked after brutal spread of tear gas that had been thrown by the supporters of Sali Berisha during their assault in the headquarter. They have been isolated inside the building due the use of force by the protesters of Sali Berisha. Among the people inside the building there were also two pregnant women in a state of difficulty, while dealing with the pressure from the violent demonstrators that where trying to break the upper floors. Today the life of all these people were in real life danger.



12.45 pm – Also [investigative media found out](#) that some of the individuals that used violence and force during the assault on the DP Headquarter today weren't at all members or activists of the DP, rather there were individuals affiliated with other political parties and in one case there was a candidate for MP running for the SP-SMI coalition by 2013.



### Who led?

While video footage evidenced by the media raise doubts over the complicity and role of Sali Berisha's in orchestrating this unprecedented violence.

The [first video](#) shows Berisha responding the media, by stating that there is no violence from his supporters while he is captured by the same media making hand gesture to gather in front of the main entrance. The video provided in depth evidence of the assaults in the main entrance, the upper floors and behind of the building.



While on [second video](#) Berisha's hand gesture calls demonstrator's attention to move ahead thus assaulting the building.



The [third video](#) shows once again Berisha directing the demonstrators to go and assault now the building from the left, where at the first floor are the balcony of the chairman Basha office.



### **The International condemnation of violence**

Immediate reaction by international partners occurred, with the first to react was the US Ambassador Mrs. Kim has condemned the events at the DP headquarters. She stated through a [twitter post](#) that "The U.S. is deeply concerned with rising tensions at the Democratic Party headquarters building and protestors' use of force. We call on protest organizers to reject violence and exercise calm. Those inciting violence or undermining the rule of law will be held accountable."

Then followed an immediate reaction came also from the EU Delegation in Tirana. In a [tweet post](#), the Delegation stated that "condemns the acts of violence that have taken place today and calls on all actors involved to exercise calm and restraint. There must be no room for violence in politics. All concerned have the responsibility to ensure that demonstrations are conducted in an orderly and peaceful manner and to guarantee the safety of all people present. Albania's EU integration path needs a solid opposition that contributes to the country's reform agenda, responding to the aspiration of the Albanian people who overwhelmingly want to see Albania into the EU."



The UK Ambassador, Alastair King-Smith condemned the violence in the DP headquarters. Through a [twitter post](#), he stated “We urge all involved to avoid violence. Any dispute should be resolved through dialogue, political and legal processes, in the interest of the Albanian people, not narrow individual interests”. The German Embassy supported the declaration from EU Delegation in Tirana. Through a [Facebook post](#), they condemned the violence in the DP headquarters.

Also the Dutch Embassy in Albania has [reiterated](#) the position declared by the EU Delegation in Tirana which condemned the unprecedented acts of violent by the protesters.

First reaction from EU Parliament with MEP David Lega who [retweeted](#) the statement of EU Delegation regarding the violence of protesters in the DP Headquarter today.

#### **Law enforcement intervention and initiation of legal proceedings**

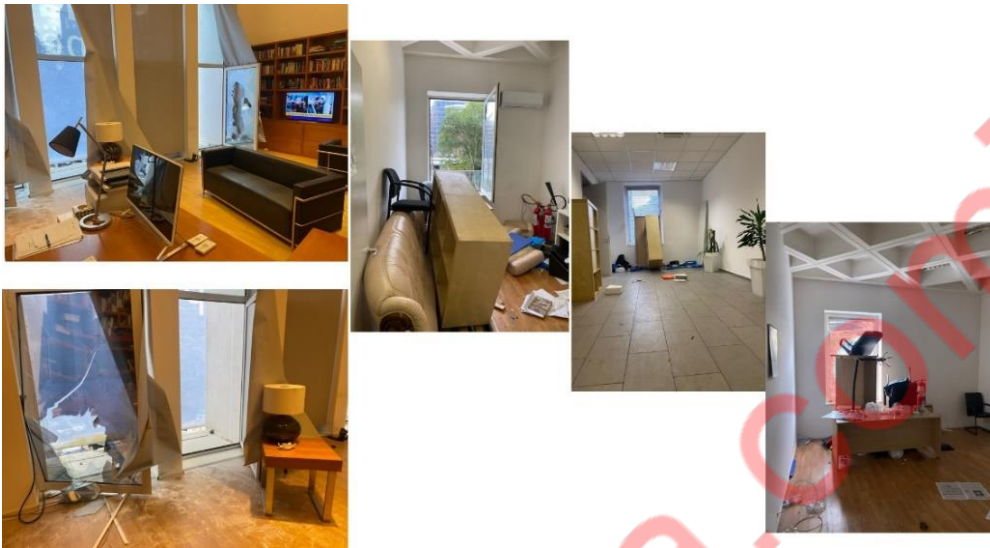
Meanwhile, at around 13.00 pm dozens of law enforcement officers entered the DP headquarter in attempt to disperse the violent individuals. Officially law enforcement declared that their intervention came after several calls received by MP inside the headquarter of DP and other citizens requesting their presence due the increased threatened reported that had received several testimonies of persons inside the DP Headquarter that had contacted police forces to engage in order to prevent further escalations of violence under their personal fear of threat. Also the DP reiterated through a media statement that bleeding must be stopped through intervention of law enforcement institutions.

Following the arrival of police officers, Berisha and his supporters diverted the gathering toward the Prime Minister office in the main city boulevard, where he reiterated in front of the journalists that won't stop until they reach to size the DP headquarter, claiming that it was the will of the members of the party.

A Prosecutor arrived at the premises and police officers declared the scene of crime status for the entire perimeter of the building including indoor. Thus a process of analyzing evidences by legal experts of the scientific department of Tirana Police started to evidence proofs of the assault and also questioned and controlled the entire offices and those individuals permanent indoor the DP Headquarter. The Police also blocked the SG of the Party while he invited the media for a communication due the unfinished procedures by the legal experts of police and the Prosecutor. At around 17.00 pm the Prosecutor and legal officers left the DP Headquarter while dozens of police officers remained within the perimeter of the premises and in the accessing road. According to the police, there have been dozens of demonstrators that had been arrested or accompanied at police station due alleged violence in the assault at the DP Headquarter.

#### **The unprecedented violence: the aftermath**

Then Mr. Basha invited the media – journalists and cameraman's – for a press conference, where he firstly made a tour of the indoor and outdoor building by showing [evidences of the brutal violence](#) and destroy from the violent demonstrators. Following that a [reportage](#) by local media ABC News shows the severe damages of the building after the assault by the supporters of Sali Berisha.



Speaking at the press conference Basha condemned what he called “Sali Berisha’s criminal organization that, with terrorist tools, tried to violently usurp the Democrats’ headquarters to be protected from his non grata designation.”

Mr. Basha stated that “Everyone today understood his plan from this vandalized headquarter. What has happened is clearer when you see that 500 or 600 people called by Berisha were criminals and armed traffickers, implementing a well-thought-out plan and executed by Sali Berisha.”

Further Mr. Basha stated that “on a tragic day like this there is unquestionably something historic. With this philosophy of destruction, violence that does not accept dissent, democratic rules, the party constitution, the real race, but continues the old trend, you vote, you count, you do everything. I want to thank from the bottom of my heart all those present here and hundreds of others who with heroic dedication made it impossible to subdue the blue headquarters to the criminal organization of Sali Berisha. They also prevented Berisha’s other objective, to have victims today, shedding the blood of Democrats.”

Later the chairman of DP Mr. Lulzim Basha described the violence occurred on Saturday, through a [video summary](#), as “ugly show of violence, where Sali Berisha sealed his last day in politics. The absolute majority of democrats abandoned him and the criminals with whom he sought to destroy the Democratic Party. Democrats today stood firm and in defense of the “House of Freedom”, as the only hope of Albanians for change.”

Following the closure of the press conference by Mr. Basha, and when DP representatives started to leave the party headquarter, police officers initiated again to stop and accompany them at police stations. Among the persons stopped by the police there have been not only DP representatives, MP’s but also media journalists.

Immediate reaction occurred by the SG of the party Mr. Bardhi who condemned this movement by the police and requested explanations why there is a second attempt to force DP representatives to be questioned and accompanied in police station after they had previously been questioned, and checked their ID and personal equipment while being present at the headquarter.



### **The international media coverage**

The DP brutal assault was broadly covered by the international media audiences. Their objective reporting emphasized over the use of violence and force by the demonstrators as supporters of Berisha after being excluded by his party following a designation as non-grata for extensive corruption by the US. Reuters International [provided](#) exclusive photo and video footages from the scenes during the assault and also provided extensive analysis over the happening.

Also Breitbart [stated](#) that “supporters of former leader Berisha stormed into the party headquarter, while Berisha called of an unstoppable revolution.”

While the Jerusalem Posts [writes](#) that “Albanian police fired teargas as protesters storm party offices. The protesters were supporters of former Albanian president and prime minister Sali Berisha, who was thrown out of the party last year after being banned from the US due to alleged corruption.”

Also ABC News [covered](#) the events of the today in the DP assault by Berisha’s supporters.

The Washington Post [writes](#) explicitly that the main opposition party has been under clashes by members, while former leader Berisha storms with violence and the party headquarter.

The Guardian [writes](#) that “Albania: police disperse protesters from opposition party HQ...Group led by former Democratic party leader Sali Berisha used iron bars and hammers to break into the building”.

Euronews [writes](#) that “Sali Berisha’s supporters break through the doors to the main entrance of the #DemocraticParty”. It also [evidenced](#) the damages occurred during the assault by the violent demonstrators.

Also Voice of America in Albanian [covered](#) the events through a report describing that “supporters of former Prime Minister Sali Berisha attacked today [Jan 8<sup>th</sup>] and severely damaged the headquarters of the Democratic Party...The windows on the ground floor were also opened forcefully by breaking the glasses....The protest called against the chairman of the Democratic Party, Lulzim Basha, following the decisions he had taken against former chairman Sali Berisha, declared non grata by the US for corruption and violation of democracy. The protest immediately became violent, as the police intervened to restore security, as the protesters had been able to penetrate inside the building. Mr. Berisha, for his part, spoke of "a criminal intervention" by the police, later stating that what happened "is only the first page of an unstoppable movement.”