

Albanians vote for parliament amid threats, violence

Citizens urged to stay off streets after voting; police anticipate more violence once results become known

TIRANA, Albania (AP) — Gunfire rippled through the capital Sunday night after Socialists claimed victory in Albania's parliamentary elections. But official results weren't expected until Monday and their Democratic rivals contested the claim.

The elections — marred by shootings around the country and by gunmen menacing voters, burning ballots and pressuring polling officials — were aimed at steering Albania toward recovery after months of chaos.

Albanians overcame fears of mayhem and ventured to the polls, taking a key step in re-establishing order. One party official was killed in a voting-related attack.

The election was aimed at restoring

calm in a country controlled in places by armed groups.

Protests over failed investment schemes exploded in the spring into armed insurrection across the country — much of it aimed against Berisha. Albanians looted hundreds of thousands of guns from government armories; more than 1,500 people have been killed since March.

Voters were nervous that violence could erupt any time — especially as polling stations closed and reports about unofficial election results began to dribble out.

"We are very grateful that you are here, but we will have nightmares until the results are known," Tirana voter Rufe Disha told Catherine Lalumiere, head of the 500 election ob-

servers dispatched by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Anticipating bloodshed once results become known, police patrolled the capital's streets in armored personnel carriers. Security forces were on alert.

Plain-clothes agents gathered outside President Sali Berisha's office. "Maybe they are preparing for their last breath," Socialist Party spokesperson Kastriot Islami said.

Crowds several hundred-strong were gathered outside the Socialist and Democratic Party headquarters.

Socialist leader Fatos Nano told reporters late Sunday night that his party had won control of the 155-seat unicameral parliament. He said his estimates were based

on the reports of Socialist members of local electoral commissions.

"We will control two-thirds of the parliament for sure," Nano said. "It is significant, because of this Albania has definitely shut off a critical past."

A Democratic Party spokesperson said that it was impossible for the Socialists to be making such claims, since results have not been announced and its own early information indicated several run-off elections would be needed.

Unusually heavy gunfire rippled through Tirana as radio stations issued conflicting election results.

The sometimes violent rivalry between Berisha's Democrats and the Socialist-led

opposition has consumed the country and added to the overall chaos. Berisha and his main political rivals agreed on the election rules and date only a month ago.

Most polling stations closed at 6 p.m., though some stayed open later. First results were expected Monday.

Seven hundred foreign observers were monitoring the vote, protected by a 7,000-member Italian-led multinational force that arrived here 2 1/2 months ago.

"So far, there have been no serious reports from our patrols," said from spokesperson, Col. Giovanni Bernardi.

But around this Balkan nation of 3.2 million people, Europe's poorest country, reports of violence and voter intimidation abounded.

Girl killed in crowd at German concert

DUESSELDORF, Germany (AP) — A crowd of 60,000 pushed toward the stage during a punk rock concert, crushing a 16-year-old girl to death in front and injuring 300 others.

At least 30 people remained hospitalized Sunday with bruises and broken bones after the late-night concert, police said.

The girl who was killed had traveled to the concert with her mother and brother from the Dutch town of Kerkrade, about 40 miles away, said fire department spokesperson Hans-Juergen Leineweber. Her name was not released.

She was among dozens of injured passed to the sidelines to rescue workers at Duesseldorf's soccer stadium.

About 20 minutes into the concert — by German band Toten Hosen — the crowd began pushing so hard toward the stage that the band stopped playing and the lead singer pleaded with his fans to back away.

Water was sprayed on the front rows and the floodlights at the stadium were turned on to better treat the injured, Leineweber said. About 400 rescue workers and 15 emergency doctors were called in to help.

The spokesperson said the band offered to quit playing. But concert organizers said they feared more problems if the performance was stopped.

Dozens abandon volcano-stricken Caribbean island

SALEM, Montserrat (AP) — With hugs and handshakes, dozens of people said farewell to loved ones Sunday when a hastily arranged ferry service reconnected volcano-stricken Montserrat to the rest of the world.

The Caribbean island had been virtually cut off since Wednesday, when the Soufriere Hills volcano erupted with avalanches of fiery debris that killed at least nine people and forced Montserrat's lone airstrip and main pier to close. The victims were the first fatalities of the volcano, which became active two years ago.

Men, women and children piled their belongings into two ships at Carr's Bay for the two-hour journey to Antigua.

Many had been trapped on this British colony during visits. Others were leaving for good.

"It's hard to start a new life, to start everything fresh," said Ellen Peters, whose family was fleeing the island. A teddy bear sat atop her suitcases piled on the pier.

Montserrat's population of 11,000 had already dwindled to 6,000 since the volcano became active in 1995. With the eruption, the volcano has nearly halved the area where people can live safely on this 7-by-11 mile island.

Hundreds of people had already taken advantage of a British government program to help

them resettle in Britain. Others decided to stay.

"I would love to leave but I can't. I got to get myself set up first," said George Ryan, who was seeing off relatives at the pier.

“It's hard to start a new life, to start everything fresh.”

Ellen Peters
Montserrat resident

Beyond, the British destroyer HMS Liverpool lay at anchor, its crew assisting in recovery efforts. Foreign Office Minister Baroness Symons was to arrive on the island Sunday evening to meet with local and British officials.

Sailors were ready, if needed, to erect shelters for some of the 1,000 to 1,500 people displaced by Wednesday's eruption. About 780 people have lived in temporary housing for more than a year.

A helicopter from the Liverpool and choppers from Barbados, Trinidad and the Montserrat Volcano Observatory searched for 19 people

still missing Sunday. More than 50 people had been pulled to safety in harnesses flung from the helicopters because the ground was too hot to land.

For the first time since Wednesday, rescuers conducted a house-to-house search in three villages during the 3,000-foot volcano. In other areas, volcanic ash up to 15 feet deep was still too hot to approach.

Entire villages were wiped out by the mix of rock, ash and gas.

The deaths occurred in an area declared off limits more than a year ago. Dozens of people however, returned to tend to farm plots and animals. Some had simply tired of living in overcrowded shelters in churches and schools.

"You've got to take chances," said Peter Hogan, one of the lucky ones. Hogan, 50, was tending his plot in Brambles Village when an avalanche raced down the slope, igniting homes and scraping the earth clear.

"I have nothing but the clothes I got on," he said. Authorities have struggled to keep up with blows dealt by the unpredictable mountain. An ash flow on Saturday ignited vegetation near a new hospital in the southern capital, Plymouth, evacuated in 1996. Further flows could engulf the town, where the rice mill, main pier and gasoline storage tanks are located.

HOUSING

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Although taller dorms would provide more beds, buildings over four stories require an elevator, an expensive addition to the cost of constructing a building, Sasse said.

"The primary reason [elevators are not used] is purely financial," Sasse said. "A smaller dorm also allows for a greater sense of community among residents."

Eric Williams, RHA president and a senior biomedical science major, said he is familiar with complaints from on-campus students.

"One thing I've heard a lot is that there are no kitchens available," Williams said.

Alyson Brubaker, a senior agricul-

tural economics major, lived on campus for three years and was president of her dorm. Brubaker currently is living off campus.

"I liked living on campus because of the people, but I like conveniences like having a kitchen off campus," Brubaker said.

Plans are being made for apartment-style halls, which will have kitchen areas.

Sasse said students also protest not being allowed to have more than two major appliances in a dorm room.

"The electrical systems in our residence halls are unable to handle several appliances from each room," Sasse said. "There would be constant blackouts of power if every student could have as many appliances as they wished."

Appliances such as toaster ovens

and hot plates are prohibited for safety reasons, he said.

Students in balcony-style residence halls are unable to move their furniture, which Williams said they also complain about. Balcony halls are scheduled to undergo complete renovations, including replacement of the dorms' immovable furniture.

Although students have complaints about on-campus housing, they find many positive aspects of on-campus living.

"Everyone I have talked to [who moved off campus after living on campus] said they missed two things," Williams said.

First, they miss the convenience. Students like being able to get up five minutes before a class and still make it on time. Second, they miss the social aspect."

heard the sound of precious air being sucked away.

It took the men at least eight minutes — possibly as long as 20 minutes — to disconnect power cables and cut research-data lines running between the ruptured Spektr lab module and the rest of the station, and to seal the hatch. Because Mir's newest, most-used solar panels are located on Spektr, the station immediately was reduced to half-power.

Cosmonaut Alexander Lazutkin said despite all his preflight training, nothing could have prepared him for such an emergency. He said his brain went into automatic mode and he did what he had to do without stopping to think.

After four days of recharging Mir's remaining solar batteries, the crew finally managed to turn on five or six gyroscopes, which had been shut down after the accident because of insufficient power. The automatic gyroscopes are the preferred way to steer the station because they use hardly any fuel.

Mixed emotions mark Hong Kong exchange

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong headed into its last day as a British colony Monday with China pledging to preserve its autonomy, Britain offering some royal pomp and rival camps gearing up for marathon celebrations and protest rallies.

"The mood is expectant, it is excited, it is a lot of conflicting emotions," said U.S. Consul General Richard Boucher Monday morning as the city made final preparations for the gala of festivities that will mark the end of 156 years of colonial rule at midnight.

Dozens of top foreign officials are in town, setting off a flurry of diplomatic activity, including early-morning talks between Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook.

China, which regards the return of its territory with pride, was staging celebrations of its own.

Chinese streamed by the tens of thousands to Beijing's Tiananmen Square to take pictures of a huge sign saying "Celebrate the Return of Hong Kong" or to view the clock counting the seconds until midnight tonight.

Leaving Beijing for Hong Kong, President Jiang Zemin renewed China's vow to preserve the freedoms and capitalist vigor that have made Hong Kong an economic powerhouse.

"We will firmly ... safeguard the Hong Kong residents' rights and freedoms in accordance with the law," China's official news agency, Xinhua, quoted

Jiang as saying before he departed. Jiang was arriving later Monday, the first Communist Chinese president ever to visit Hong Kong.

“We will firmly ... safeguard the Hong Kong residents' rights and freedoms in accordance with the law.”

Jiang Zemin
China president

Last hurrahs were the order of the day for the departing colonial government.

Chris Patten, the last British governor, was to depart Government House for the last time Monday afternoon after saying goodbye to the staff and bringing down the Union Jack.

Six hours after the handover, China is bringing in 4,000 troops by ships, helicopters and armored vehicles. Britain has protested, saying armored personnel carriers in urban areas will alarm people.

MIR

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In case they did not already know, the men were told by a TV reporter that they had become the most popular guys in the world.

"I wish it hadn't been that way," Tsiibliyev responded.

The director of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration's shuttle-Mir program, Frank Culbertson, was heartened by the animated conversation.

"That's a good sign that they feel like things are getting more under control," Culbertson said. "Basically, what you have is a slowly increasing level of comfort on board and on the ground that things are returning to more normal operations."

Mir's aluminum hull was pierced when a cargo ship slammed into the station on Wednesday. The impact was so great that the crew felt and heard the bang, and then

HOTEL

Continued from Page 1

Hobbs said this is unfair to hotels like the Hilton, which must pay for its conference center at all times.

"The city's response is that we could use the conference center too, but our own conference center is not

used much of the time," Hobbs said.

Hobbs said the city has not researched the market to see if there is a need for a hotel/conference center in the Northgate area.

"They have not done a feasibility study on hotel or convention rent," Hobbs said. "This includes size, correct spot, need and traffic study. I've always be-

lieved let the market dictate what is built."

The Hotel/Motel Association submitted the petition to the city June 11, but it was rejected because it did not have printed voter registration numbers.

The Hotel/Motel Association plans to submit another petition this week.

WHAT'S IT LIKE AT THE PLASMA CENTER?

To the staff of the Plasma Center,

I would like to start by saying thank you to each and every employee for making the past three years enjoyable in a professional, efficient and courteous environment. As a donor since 1993, I have been more than satisfied with every aspect of your operation, which allows myself and others to contribute what we can to community service, all the while being serviced by diligent, but relaxed, workers. Everyone at the Plasma Center, from those behind the front counter to the phlebotomists to the supervisors, have made great efforts to insure that each donor feels hygienically safe, as well as keeping the atmosphere light.

Like most, I started coming to the Plasma Center for monetary reasons, but I soon developed acquaintances that appealed to me almost as much as the original need for money, enabling me to look forward to each donation, not only for my wallet's sake but also

to see my friends. Like I commented to someone recently, talking to people at the Plasma Center was like getting mail from a far-off friend that you don't get to do much with, but who you can talk to as often as you write. For those acquaintances and for your continual services. I would like to thank all of those I've come to know and appreciate over the past three years - Emily, and Tracy, Heath, and Marty, Ada and Josie, etc... more I can't remember or those who have gone on to better things.

So, as I graduate from this great University, I bid you all a fond farewell and strong commendations on such a successful blend of quality medical practice and friendly service. Thank you all and have a great summer. Thanks, C.F.

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