

Beat: News

Albania Faces Backlash Over €4 Million Public Funding for Kanye West Concert

Kanye Concert Triggers Political Storm

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USPA NEWS - TIRANA, Albania — The Albanian government's decision to allocate €4 million in public funds to support a Kanye West concert has sparked fierce political debate and public criticism in one of Europe's poorest countries. The funding, approved shortly before the July 11 concert in Tirana, has become a new focal point in the broader controversy surrounding Prime Minister Edi Rama's administration.

Opposition parties, civil society groups, and many citizens have questioned the government's priorities, arguing that taxpayers' money should have been directed toward healthcare, education, infrastructure, or other pressing social needs rather than subsidizing a major entertainment event. Critics also objected to the use of public funds to support a performance by Kanye West, whose recent controversies have led to canceled events and restrictions in several European countries.

The controversy has also fueled political accusations that the concert serves to strengthen Prime Minister Rama's international image and public profile, with opponents alleging that the event indirectly benefits the promotion of his personal projects and publications.

The government has rejected such criticism, insisting that the investment was made solely to protect Albania's international reputation and maximize economic benefits from tourism.

Prime Minister Rama defended the decision, stating that government intervention was necessary to prevent the concert from being canceled after thousands of foreign visitors had already purchased tickets. According to the government, the event is expected to attract approximately 25,000 international visitors and generate as much as €100 million in tourism-related economic activity through hotels, restaurants, transportation, and local businesses.

Despite those projections, public reaction has remained deeply divided. Demonstrations in Tirana have intensified in recent days, with critics describing the subsidy as an example of misplaced government priorities at a time when many Albanians continue to face significant economic challenges.

The controversy has become one of the most debated political issues in Albania this summer, highlighting the growing tension between government spending priorities, public accountability, and the country's efforts to promote itself as an international destination for major cultural events.

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