

Regional Overview: Europe 5-11 January 2020

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Last week, demonstrations over a wide range of issues returned to levels seen prior to the calm holiday period in the Balkans, Southeastern Europe and parts of Eastern Europe. In Ukraine and Russia, the number of demonstration events remained low as the holiday period there extended into last week.

Protests in **Montenegro**, over the new Religious Freedom Law that went into force last week, were held for the third consecutive week. The Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro announced it will continue to hold demonstrations twice a week, until the law is withdrawn ([Balkan Insight, 8 January 2020](#)). The Serbian Orthodox Church claims to be specifically targeted by the new Montenegrin law, which requires it to prove ownership of land and other properties before 1918 in order to retain them. Protests supporting the Church were also held in **Serbia**, **Bosnia-Herzegovina** and **Kosovo**.

In **Ukraine**, demonstration events remained low, as many celebrated Orthodox Christmas on 7 January. In the Donbass region, fighting between Ukrainian government forces and separatist rebels continued at the same low levels as the week prior, with 168 armed clashes and 83 shelling incidents resulting in two reported fatalities.



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