

Romanians support suspended president

by UPI

BUCHAREST, Romania - Romanian President Traian Basescu, suspended by parliament for abuse of power, is hoping a public referendum will keep him in power, reports said Monday.

About 10,000 people gathered in downtown Bucharest Sunday evening to support Basescu, who expressed hope he will win the people's confidence in a referendum May 19, Serbia's RTS radio-television reported.

The rally was the third in support of Basescu. The first was held in Bucharest on Thursday when Basescu was suspended, and the second in Brasov on Friday.

Romania's constitutional court confirmed his suspension Friday.

Opposition leaders have accused Basescu, 55, of trying to take more power than the constitution gives the president. Basescu's long-lasting disagreements with Prime Minister Calin Popescu-Tariceanu reportedly slowed judiciary and economic reforms.

Senate Speaker Nicolae Vacaroiu, a leader of the opposition leftist Social Democrats, is to become interim president under the country's constitution.

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