Romania’s political crisis clears the road for the fascist AUR

Andrei Tudora
13 July 2026

Romania’s ruling establishment is engulfed in an escalating political crisis. As democratic forms of rule are breaking down internationally and fascist forces are being elevated from the United States to Italy, the oligarchic regime constructed in Romania by the former Stalinist bureaucracy is struggling to maintain its democratic façade.

The grand coalition government headed by Prime Minister Ilie Bolojan fell on May 5 after a no-confidence motion supported by the post-Stalinist Social Democratic Party (PSD) and the fascist Alliance for the Union of Romanians (AUR). President Nicu?or Dan has since failed to assemble a majority for what he calls a “pro-Western” government. His latest nominee, former National Liberal Party politician Adrian Ve?tea, failed to win confirmation in parliament on June 22.

Dan had sought to use Ve?tea’s nomination to weaken Bolojan’s control of the National Liberal Party (PNL) and construct a firmer political pole around the presidency. Instead, Bolojan consolidated his leadership of the PNL and remains caretaker prime minister.

Dan wants to avoid early elections, which could produce an electoral collapse of the former coalition partners. Calls for his impeachment, first advanced by AUR, have now been taken up by sections of the PNL.

The crisis was precipitated by the PSD’s withdrawal from the coalition. During its ten months in office, the Bolojan government-imposed measures amounting to a massive redistribution of wealth from the working class to the financial oligarchy in order to sustain Romania’s ballooning debt and finance military rearmament.

The PSD now rails against “a government that establishes the impoverishment of the population as state policy.” This rhetoric is fraudulent. The party has governed with the PNL since 2021 and was a principal architect of the tax increases, wage cuts and attacks on public services it now denounces.

The PSD’s exit was undoubtedly informed by fears of a social explosion, which its allies in the trade union bureaucracy have worked to delay and suppress.

In reality, all the main parties, including the fascist opposition, agree on the fundamental programme of the ruling class. They support the “necessary” measures to reduce the deficit, mass public-sector layoffs and the Europe-wide rearmament programme.

The principal fault lines concern Romania’s strategic orientation as the imperialist powers fan the flames of a global war for the redivision of the world. One faction seeks the closest possible alignment with the European powers and their war against Russia. Another is orienting toward the Trump administration and the international network of fascist forces associated with the MAGA movement.

The roots of the present crisis lie in the presidential election of late 2024. C?lin Georgescu, a figure previously little known outside the state bureaucracy and far-right circles, unexpectedly won the first round.

His elevation resulted from deepening inequality, the cost-of-living crisis and job destruction, which placed mounting pressure on millions of Romanian workers abroad who support relatives at home. Politically disenfranchised, many registered a protest vote for Georgescu or AUR.

These were also the only major political forces permitted a wide platform from which to express anything construed as opposition to the war in Ukraine. Any questioning of the demand for the “military defeat of Russia” is denounced by the media as “Russian propaganda.” AUR and Georgescu exploited this suppression of antiwar sentiment to channel social anger into reactionary nationalism, religious obscurantism and support for Trump.

Although Georgescu was immediately presented as a product of Russian “hybrid warfare,” his campaign was openly embraced by the MAGA movement. Elon Musk and Steve Bannon promoted his cause, while US Vice President JD Vance used the Munich Security Conference to denounce the annulment of the election. Both Georgescu and AUR maintain extensive connections with MAGA politicians and businessmen.

Georgescu and AUR are part of an international phenomenon: the elevation by the ruling class of fascist forces in preparation for confrontation with the rising struggles of the working class.

Attempts to portray them merely as a “sovereigntist wing of capital,” opposed to a “transnational wing,” sow dangerous political confusion. Both factions defend capitalist property, austerity, militarism and the suppression of the working class. The pseudo-left’s refusal to characterise AUR as fascist is

© World Socialist Web Site

bound up with its orientation to the trade union bureaucracy and the remnants of Stalinism, which form an important political reservoir for the far right.

Georgescu and AUR also have documented connections to sections of the security services.

One of Georgescu's closest associates is Hora?iu Potra, a millionaire former French Foreign Legion fighter and head of a private military company. Potra recruited former and allegedly serving members of the Romanian armed forces and security agencies for mercenary operations in Africa.

Following the annulment of the election, Potra and several armed associates were detained while travelling toward Bucharest. Prosecutors alleged that they intended to provoke violent confrontations at pro-Georgescu demonstrations and create the conditions for favourable sections of the state to overturn the court decision and clear Georgescu's road to power.

The alleged operation recalled the attempts by Trump in 2021 and Bolsonaro's supporters in 2023 to overturn election results through fascist mobilisation.

Equally revealing has been the response of the Romanian authorities. Despite being accused of complicity in actions against the constitutional order, Georgescu has largely remained free and continued to plot openly. His court appearances have been transformed into political rallies. Before the no-confidence vote, he met AUR leader George Simion in the Romanian National Library. AUR then proposed Georgescu as a possible prime minister and adopted his call for a "government of national reconciliation."

From President Dan to the pseudo-left, the establishment is lulling the working class about the acute danger of an AUR-Georgescu takeover.

AUR has deliberately cultivated an image as an heir to the interwar fascists of the Iron Guard, one of the most criminal organisations in European history. At the same time, it functions as a parliamentary front groomed for public respectability. Behind it, from smaller far-right organisations to paramilitary networks, stands more than a century of the Romanian bourgeoisie's fear and hatred of the working class.

The prospect of an AUR government is now routinely presented as inevitable. The unstated reality is that ever less separates the outright fascists from the mainstream establishment.

Dan exemplifies this process. He built his image as a respectable politician of the "centre" and won the 2025 election largely because of mass opposition to Simion. But as a self-described conservative, he has increasingly sent signals to the far right.

In December, he decorated Second World War veteran Ion Vasile Banu and praised him for having fought "with dedication for the liberation of Bessarabia." This referred to Banu's participation in Nazi Germany and Marshal Ion Antonescu's war of extermination against the Soviet Union. Banu served in the 13th Infantry Division, which participated in atrocities against the civilian population, including the Odessa massacre.

Dan's alliance with Moldovan President Maia Sandu has also normalised discussion of a "union" between Romania and Moldova. Such a move would mean the absorption of a sovereign country by a NATO member despite broad opposition among Moldovan workers. It would have explosive implications for Russian-speaking regions and Transnistria and could become a direct pretext for war with Russia.

Dan, supported by the PSD, has attempted to persuade the Trump administration to shift its backing away from AUR through lobbying contracts, participation in Trump's fraudulent "Board of Peace" and unconditional support for Washington's Middle East policy.

Bolojan, supported by most of the PNL and the USR, a pro-EU center party, favours more complete alignment with the European powers and regards any weakening of the focus on war against Russia as a threat to the interests of Romanian capitalism.

The conflict is not between a democratic, "pro-European" camp and a fascist, "pro-Russian" one. It is a struggle between reactionary factions of the capitalist oligarchy over which imperialist alliance offers the greatest opportunities.

The European ruling elite has no fundamental objection to fascism. Its concern is whether AUR can be integrated into the institutions of the EU and NATO and made to support the war against Russia, the persecution of refugees, military rearmament and the destruction of social rights.

The danger posed by AUR cannot be fought through support for Dan, the PSD, the PNL or the USR. These forces created the social devastation on which the fascists feed, suppressed opposition to war and nationalism and are now adopting ever more openly the programme and historical symbols of the far right.

The struggle against fascism is inseparable from the struggle against austerity, militarism and war. It requires the independent political mobilisation of the Romanian working class, united with workers throughout Europe and internationally, on the basis of a socialist and internationalist programme.

To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact

© World Socialist Web Site