Several journalists were obstructed in the exercise of their profession by the police on 12 September 2020, when Yellow Vests resumed their demonstrations in several French cities. In Paris, journalist Adrien Adcazz, who was filming a police intervention in a market for the online media HQ, was arrested and held in police custody for 22 hours. He was accused in particular of having concealed his face, even though wearing a mask was mandatory, following the COVID-19 pandemic protection measures. The prosecutor dismissed all charges against the journalist (concealment of face, grouping with the intent of committing violent acts, refusal to comply with a dispersal order). Journalist Julien Moreau, who was covering the demonstration for Radio Bip, was also arrested on his way to the scene. He was held in police custody for more than 15 hours. The police destroyed his protective equipment. Other journalists, including a team from Taranis News, were arrested, obstructed, or subjected to police violence. Taha Bouhafs filed a complaint after reporting on Twitter that he had been punched in the face by a police officer. French journalists' unions intervened on behalf of these journalists.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Article referring to those violations publishe on EFJ’s website: "UNESCO sounds the alarm on surge in attacks against journalists covering protests"
- Article published by "Reporterre": "Des journalistes empêchés de travailler pendant la manifestation des Gilets jaunes"
- Facebook post by Adrien Adcazz describing his custody conditions
- Press statement by journalist Julien Moreau
- Statement posted on Twitter by Journalists Union SNJ-CGT
- Statement by Radio Bip following the arrest of Julien Moreau
Sexist Graffiti Painted on the façade of «Pikara Magazine» headquarters

The editorial staff of the feminist online website «Pikara Magazine» found, on 14 September 2020, the façade of the magazine’s headquarters in Bilbao covered with sexist, defamatory and threatening graffiti. This is the fourth time this year that the editorial staff has recorded such damage. The media filed a complaint, pointing out that the first graffiti were signed by an extreme right-wing group. The Basque College of Journalists (CVP-KEE) and the Basque Association of Journalists (AVP-KEE) have condemned the new damages.

Additional Information

- Article by the Madrid Press Association: "Los periodistas vascos condenan el nuevo ataque contra la sede de Pikara Magazine"
- Article published by "Pikara Magazine": «Ok, Charos». Nuevas pintadas en la nueva normalidad

Journalist Elvis Hila Obstructed and Detained by Police in Albania

The journalist Elvis Hila was obstructed and detained by police in Albania on 11 September 2020. The police intervened during a demonstration against the government's policies.

Source of Threat: State

Category: Harassment and intimidation of journalists
On 17 June 2020, journalist Elvis Hila of the Report.TV news channel was obstructed and then briefly detained by local police as he was reporting on the demolition of what authorities say are illegally constructed buildings in Lezha, northern Albania. Hila was among a group of journalists documenting the demolitions supervised by the National Inspectorate of Protection of Territory (IKMT) on a local beach. At around 5pm, as he was filming a dispute between one of the property owners and the authorities, Hila was approached by the chief of Lezha Police, who asked for his ID. Despite clearly stating he was a journalist, the officer took the phone from his hands, shouting: “What journalist are you?” He was then arrested. Video footage shows him being led away by two police officers and detained inside a police vehicle, where he was held for 10 minutes. He was released after protests from other journalists at the scene. In a statement, Hila said: “My colleagues filmed the whole scene and asked for justification of my removal but no explanation was given.” According to the SafeJournalists Network, neither the Ministry of Interior nor the State Police commented on the incident or later explained why Hila had been detained. The journalist lodged a complaint and said he plans to seek legal recourse. The Internal Affairs and Complaints Service of the State Police has launched an investigation and took testimony from the journalist and police officers present at the scene. The Union of Albanian Journalists condemned “repeated cases of violence, blackmail and police threats against journalists and on-duty reporters” and said measures should be implemented to ensure such incidents do not happen again.
On 5 August 2020, at the conference of the ruling GERB party in Sofia, an unidentified man attacked journalist Polina Paunova, a correspondent for Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL), according to a video of the incident recorded by RFE/RL and Alternativata TV correspondent Genka Shikerova and posted on Facebook.

In the video, a masked man is seen approaching Paunova, manhandling her, grabbing her phone, and throwing it into the sky.

Shortly afterward, a man wearing a sticker from the party conference called Paunova "garbage," and said that she was not wanted, according to her employer.

Paunova and Shikerova, both told CPJ that people in the crowd threatened them and made clear that they were not welcome. Shikerova said that she felt helpless as no one standing around intervened.

Paunova filed a complaint with police. Shikerova told CPJ she was called by the police and gave witness testimony in the case.

Paunova said that she would not be deterred from doing her job.

CPJ e-mailed questions to the press department of the GERB party and to the Ministry of the Interior, which oversees the police, but did not receive any reply.
changes taking place in Saudi Arabia, where the authorities under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman claim to be implementing a reform process. He disappeared after entering the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, where according to the Washington Post he went “to complete routine paperwork”. Khashoggi was accompanied to the consulate by his fiancée, who was not allowed to go inside with him. He was also required to surrender his mobile phone on entering the building. As of 5 October, Khashoggi had not re-emerged from the building and there was no further word from him.

NEW 08 Sep 2020: On 7 September 2020, the Riyadh Criminal Court issued final verdicts in the case regarding the killing of Jamal Khashoggi, sentencing five defendants to the maximum sentence of 20 years in prison. Another person received a 10-year sentence, and two others were ordered to serve seven years in prison. The names of the defendants remain undisclosed. In December 2019, the Court had ruled that the killing was not premeditated, paving the way for Khashoggi’s heirs to pardon the killers and sparing them the death penalty. In a statement, Fahrettin Altun, Director of Communication at the Turkish Presidency said: "The final verdict that a Saudi court issued [today] regarding journalist Jamal Khashoggi’s execution inside the Kingdom's consulate in Istanbul fell short of meeting the expectations of Turkey and the international community", adding "We still don’t know what happened to Khashoggi's body, who wanted him dead or if there were local collaborators, which casts doubt on the credibility of the legal proceedings in KSA. We urge the Saudi authorities to cooperate with the ongoing murder investigation in Turkey."

03 Jul 2020: On 3 July 2020, the trial in absentia of 20 Saudi in connection with the killing of Jamal Khashoggi started in Istanbul. In March, the Istanbul prosecutor has indicted former deputy head of Saudi Arabia’s general intelligence, Ahmed al-Asiri, and former royal court adviser Saud al-Qahtani of instigating "premeditated murder with monstrous intent", and 18 other men on charges of carrying out the murder. If convicted, they face possible life sentences.

Article published by Al Jazeera: "Turkey trial of Saudi suspects in Jamal Khashoggi murder begins"

27 Dec 2019: On 23 December 2019, the Riyadh Criminal Court sentenced five individuals to death for "committing and directly participating in the murder of the victim", according to the public prosecution’s statement. Three others were handed prison sentences totalling 24 years for "covering up this crime and violating the law", while three were found not guilty. A total of 31 individuals were investigated over the killing of journalist Jamal Khashoggi and 21 of them were arrested. Eleven were eventually referred to trial at the Riyadh Criminal Court. The Turkish foreign ministry said the decision of the Saudi court "is far from meeting the expectations of both our country and the international community for enlightening all aspects of this murder and for the manifestation of justice."
14 Mar 2019: On 14 March 2019, the Committee to Protect Journalists in collaboration with 10 human rights and press freedom groups sent a letter to the House Foreign Affairs Committee aiming to urge congressional action in the pursuit of justice for murdered journalist Jamal Khashoggi.

22 Oct 2018: On 22 October 2018, Saudi Arabia admitted that the journalist was killed in the Saudi consulate on 2 October by a “rogue operation”, arrested 18 people involved in the operation and fired top security officials. On 23 October, Turkey’s President addressing the legislators from the Justice and Development Party, called the killing a political murder and stated that the Turkish intelligence and security institutions have sufficient evidence showing the murder was planned and that “pinning such a case on a handful of security and intelligence members will not be sufficient to satisfy the international community”.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Letter of the UN Secretary-General/UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression/UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary, or arbitrary execution/UN Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances

Mapping Media Freedom report: 'Turkey: Saudi journalist disappears during visit to Saudi consulate in Istanbul'

Bulgaria

Bulgarian Freelance Journalist Dimitar Kenarov Beaten and Detained by Police while Covering Protest

SOURCE OF THREAT  ▶ State

CATEGORY  ▶ Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

NO STATE REPLY YET

On the night of 2 September 2020, freelance journalist Dimitar Kenarov was arrested and allegedly kicked in the head by police officers during anti-corruption protests in Sofia, Bulgaria. The incident took place during a culmination of anti-government and anti-corruption protests in Bulgaria which escalated on 2 September. That night Kenarov was in the front line of the protests with other colleagues taking pictures when he was pushed by officers to a nearby wall. Although he had a camera and a PRESS sign clearly visible on his mask, he said he was detained and
dragged across the square to the stairs of the new Parliament building. “While reporting on the protests in Sofia today I was grabbed by the police, thrown on the ground and brutally kicked in the head,” he wrote on his Twitter profile, posting a picture with bruises on his face. He wrote on Facebook that during his detention he was ignored by the police, but kicked by at least two uniformed men, mostly in the head and face. In addition to injuries to his head and face, Kenarov’s camera was taken away, broken, and left on the ground while he was handcuffed and detained. During his detention, Kenarov said he showed his journalist card several times and explained to every law enforcement officer he had access to that he was a journalist. One of the officers took his card to show it to his supervisor. However, the card was returned and Kenarov remained in handcuffs. In the early hours of 3 September, he was moved to a police van, where, according to his account, he stayed for almost an hour, as all district police departments were full. Later he was transported to the Fifth Police Department in Sofia, where he was handed a warning report and released. Throughout his detention, Kenarov was not served with a detention order and was denied access to a lawyer.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- CPJ Alert: "Bulgarian riot police beat and pepper spray journalists covering demonstrations"
- Mapping Media Freedom (MMF) alert: "Bulgaria: Journalist Dimitar Kenarov detained and assaulted by police officers while covering Sofia protest"
- Dimitar Kenarov's Twitter post
- Kenarov's Facebook post
- AEJ statement : "AEJ-Bulgaria Condemns Police Violence Against Bulgarian Journalist"

FOLLOW-UPS

- 04 Sep 2020 | NEW | "Bulgaria must investigate police violence against journalists" says CoE Commissioner for Human Rights
  - Statement by Dunja Mijatović

FREELANCERS

Key information :

Dimitar Kenarov
Investigative journalist Jan Kuciak, who had been reporting on tax fraud, was shot dead at his home, news website Dennik N reported, citing the Interior Ministry. According to Dennik N, the murder took place in the journalist's house in the village of Veľká Mača 5 km east of the capital Bratislava, some time between 22 and 25 February 2018. Kuciak was shot in the chest and his fiancée was shot in the head. Kuciak worked for Slovak news website Aktuality.sk.

**NEW** 03 Sep 2020: On 3 September 2020, citing a lack of evidence, a Court in Pesinok acquitted businessman Marián Kočner who had been accused of masterminding the murder of Jan Kuciak and his fiancée. The judges also cleared co-defendant Alena Zsuzsová of involvement in the killings. A third defendant, Tomáš Szabó, who was accused of being at the murder scene and driving the getaway vehicle, was convicted and sentenced to 25 years in prison for his role. State prosecutors pledged to appeal the verdict acquitting the suspects.

**07 Apr 2020:** On 6 April 2020, the Specialised Criminal Court in Pezinok sentenced Miroslav Marček, a former soldier, to 23 years in prison for the killing of journalist Jan Kuciak and his fiancée. Marcek had admitted killing Kuciak and Martina Kusnirova.

**02 Jan 2020:** On 30 December 2019, a senate of the Specialised Criminal Court (STS) in Pezinok (Bratislava region) sentenced Zoltán Andruskó to 15 years in jail for the premeditated murder of investigative journalist Jan Kuciak. The verdict is final, as Zoltán Andruskó consented to a plea bargain. He is the only one of the five people charged in connection with the murder who has cooperated with the investigators. He confessed to having acted as the go-between passing the murder order from Alena Zsuzsová, a close collaborator of Marian Kočner, who faces charges of ordering the murder of Ján Kuciak, to the hitmen, Miroslav Marček and Tomáš Szabó.

**20 Dec 2019:** On 19 December 2019, the Special Criminal Court in Bratislava accepted the indictment of four suspects accused of ordering and carrying out the murder of Ján Kuciak.
and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová. The decision paves the way for trial to begin on 13 January 2020.

**21 Oct 2019:** On 21 October 2019, a Slovak prosecutor charged four persons in the murder of investigative journalist Jan Kuciak.

**Reuters dispatch:** "Slovak prosecutor charges four in murder of investigative journalist"

**14 Mar 2019:** On 8 March 2019, the prosecutor’s office formally charged businessman Marian Kočner with ordering the murder of Ján Kuciak and his fiancée Martina Kušnírová.

**01 Oct 2018:** On 27-28 September 2018, the Slovak police detained nine suspects in connection with the murder of the journalist and his fiancée. Four of them were later charged and put into police custody on the grounds that they might try to influence witnesses if freed on bail.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Letter of the UN Special Rapporteur on extrajudicial, summary or arbitrary executions/UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression
- RSF statement: "RSF appalled by investigative reporter’s murder in Slovakia"
- Report published on the Mapping Media Freedom platform: "Slovak investigative journalist killed at home"
- EFJ statement: "Slovakian investigative journalist Jan Kuciak and partner shot dead"
- CPJ statement: "Slovak investigative journalist, girlfriend found shot to death"
- Article 19 statement: "Slovakia: Murder of investigative journalist, Jan Kuciak, and his fiancée must be thoroughly investigated"
- Statement by Index on Censorship: "Murder of Slovak investigative journalist second in EU in less than 6 months"
- Statement by the AEJ Slovak Section about the murder of investigative journalist Jan Kuciak and his fiancee
- IPI statement: "IPI condemns murder of Slovak journalist and fiancée"
### STATE REPLIES

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### FOLLOW-UPS

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<tr>
<td>23 Aug 2019</td>
<td>On 22 August 2019, the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) evaluated the effectiveness of the existing framework to prevent corruption in central government and law enforcement agencies and published a series of recommendations aimed at strengthening transparency, integrity and accountability in public life.</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Evaluation Report on the Slovak Republic</td>
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<td>14 Mar 2019</td>
<td>OSCE Representative commends indictment against instigator of murders of journalist Ján Kuciak and Martina Kušnírová in Slovakia</td>
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<td>Statement by Harlem Désir</td>
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<td>22 Feb 2019</td>
<td>CoE Human Rights Commissioner encouraged by the various developments in the murder investigations, which so far have led to the</td>
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arrest of four persons suspected of being involved in the murders, and the possible identification of one person who may have ordered them. However, she calls for extreme vigilance to guarantee the independence of the investigation.

Statement by Dunja Mijatović

01 Oct 2018 | OSCE media freedom representative welcomes important progress in investigation of murders of Ján Kuciak and Martina Kušnírová in Slovakia.

Statement by Harlem Désir

16 Mar 2018 | Following his country visit in the Slovak Republic, the Commissioner calls for a prompt and effective investigation in the murder of journalist Ján Kuciak in order to identify and punish the perpetrators, but especially those who ordered the murders. He also calls for an urgent public discussion about media freedom.

Nils Muižnieks' statement following his visit to the Slovak Republic

02 Mar 2018 | OSCE media freedom representative calls for full and transparent investigation of journalist’s murder at meeting with Slovak Prime Minister Fico

Statement by Harlem Désir

01 Mar 2018 | PACE President condemns murder of investigative journalist in the Slovak Republic

Statement by Michele Nicoletti

26 Feb 2018 | OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media representative strongly condemns murder of investigative reporter Kuciak in Slovakia

Statement by Harlem Désir

26 Feb 2018 | "If death of investigative reporter Jan Kuciak is linked to his journalism, it would be an unprecedented attack on freedom of the press and democracy".

Tweet by Daniel Holtgen

26 Feb 2018 | Human Rights Commissioner: "I will raise the issue during upcoming visit to the country."

Tweet by Nils Muiznieks
On 6 December 2019, the Kuntsevo District Court in western Moscow gave a popular YouTube blogger and political science student Yegor Zhukov a three-year suspended sentence and barred him from managing websites for two years on charges of calling for extremism online.

Zhukov was arrested on 2 August 2019 and initially charged with mass unrest in connection with anti-government protests that took place in Moscow in summer 2019. The case was later closed because of a lack of evidence that riots took place. However, the prosecutors reclassified the case against him and accused Zhukov of inciting extremism and calling to depose the government by violent means on his YouTube channel. In September 2019, Zhukov was released under house arrest.

On 4 December 2019, the prosecutors asked the judge to sentence Zhukov to four years in prison. Zhukov pleaded not guilty, saying that he has never called for the use of violence. Zhukov's case is one of the few where the government backed away from harsh punishment of its critics due to a public outcry. The case was highly publicised and Zhukov's YouTube channel continued to draw attention with hundreds of thousands of views on his latest videos.

After the verdict, Zhukov told his supporters, speaking from the courthouse’s porch: “I am glad that I am free, but still what happened was absolutely unjust”. Moreover, Russia’s financial monitoring agency included the blogger in its list of terrorists and extremists, blocking his bank accounts.

NEW  03 Sep 2020: On 30 August 2020, Yegor Zhukov has been hospitalized after two unknown attackers beat him near his Moscow home. He has been working for the Ekho Moskvy station since he was banned by the state from having his own video channel online. According to Ekho Moskvy's editor-in-chief, Zhukov filed a complaint with police. Moscow police said on 31 August that a probe was launched into the attack.

Article by Deutsche Welle: "Russia's opposition blogger Yegor Zhukov severely injured in Moscow 'attack'"
20 May 2020: Yegor Zhukov has filed a complaint against his conviction with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), asking the Court to recognize violations of Article 6 (right to a fair trial), 10 (freedom of expression), and 18 (limitation on use of restrictions on rights) in combination with Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The complaint filed with the ECHR argues that Zhukov’s criminal prosecution and sentence were politically motivated and that he was punished for legitimate statements criticizing the government.

Additional Information:
- Article published by The Moscow Times.
- Article published on NYTimes.com.
- Yegor Zhukov's YouTube Channel

Key Information:
Yegor Zhukov
YouTube Blogger with over 5,000 subscribers

Freelancers:

Germany
n° 92/2020
Alert created on: 03 Aug 2020
State replied

Journalists Insulted and Harassed by Demonstrators in Berlin

SOURCE OF THREAT ➔ Non-state
CATEGORY ➔ Harassment and intimidation of journalists

Several journalists and press photographers were insulted and harassed by demonstrators participating in the demonstration against the Covid-19 pandemic protection measures on Saturday, 1 August 2020, in Berlin. A team from public television station ZDF had to interrupt its reporting under pressure from the demonstrators, as shown in the footage shot by journalist Dunja Hayali. On 3 August, the German Federation of Journalists (DJV) called on the authorities...
to take measures to ensure the protection of journalists covering demonstrations. The German journalists' union (dju in ver.di) denounced the inaction of the local police in Berlin.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Case report by Committee to Protect Journalists: "Demonstrators attack, obstruct journalists covering protests against COVID-19 lockdown in Germany"
- Statement by dju in ver.di: "Anti-Corona-Demo: ver.di zieht eine negative Bilanz"
- DJV statement: "Demos: Sicherheit verbessern"
- Dunja Hayali's footage (on Instagram)

**STATE REPLIES**

- 31 Aug 2020 | NEW Reply from the German authorities
  - Letter by the Permanent Representation of Germany to the Council of Europe (in German and English)

**Turkey**

- n° 99/2020
- Alert created on: 27 Aug 2020

**Several Attacks on Local Journalists and Journalists’ Associations**

**SOURCE OF THREAT** ▶ Non-state

**CATEGORY** ▶ Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

**NO STATE REPLY YET**

Local journalists and journalists’ associations have been recently subject of attacks in Antalya, Nevşehir and Bursa.

On 19 August 2020, Şaban Önen, the publisher of Karacabey Yörem newspaper in the city of Bursa, was assaulted in the municipality’s truck garage by two business owners – one of whom is reportedly a relative of Karacabey Mayor Ali Özkan of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) – and two other unidentified persons. Önen was taken to hospital for treatment. According to local media, the reason for the attack were reports on the mayor published by Karacabey Yörem. In an interview, Önen said he knew the assailters before and filed a complaint.

Another attack on local journalists took place on 25 August in Nevşehir, Central Anatolia. A
vehicle belonging to the Nevşehir Journalists Association was set on fire on by several people. Two suspects identified by the security footage were detained by the police. A criminal investigation was opened. Journalists' Federation of Turkey (TGF) Secretary General and Nevşehir Journalists Association Chair Bayram Ekici strongly condemned the attack.

On the same day, unknown individuals opened fire from a vehicle on the home of Yakup Kocabaş, the Gazipaşa correspondent for Dim Media, a local newspaper based in the Antalya province. Windows were shattered in the attack and, while Kocabaş was not at home, his spouse and children survived. Kocabaş said in an interview that the attack might be related to his journalistic work, as Dim Media reports on people who engage in illegal activities. He emphasized that he will not back down despite all this pressure. Police have started an investigation.

IPI Deputy Director Scott Griffen said in a statement: “What remains of independent local journalism in Turkey is already under tremendous political and financial pressure, and these recent attacks only add to a climate of intimidation. Local journalists are particularly vulnerable to retaliation from local powerful figures dissatisfied with the journalists’ work. Law enforcement authorities must diligently investigate all such attacks on journalists and hold all those responsible to account, including the masterminds.”

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Gazete Duvar article: "Ses Kocaeli gazetesine silahlı saldırl"  
- Bianet article: "Journalists attacked in Antalya and Nevşehir"  
- Bianet article: "Local journalist attacked in Bursa"  
- IPI Statement: "Series of attacks on local journalists in Turkey"
Journalists who demonstrated that an alleged report in the newspaper “Libero” on 7 August, according to which migrants had killed and eaten dogs belonging to a resident of Lampedusa, was not based on any proven facts. The journalists who exposed this false news, including Angela Caponnetto of Rai News 24 and Nello Scavo of the newspaper “Avvenire”, were also subjected to threats and insults on social networks. MP Walter Verini, Coordinator of the Italian Committee of the Anti-Mafia Parliamentary Commission for the Protection of Threatened Journalists, announced on 20 August that he will organise a hearing to follow up on the testimonies of threatened journalists and the FNSI.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- EFJ statement: "Threats against the president of Italian journalists"
- Reaction from the Italian Minister of the Interior: "Insulti e minacce a Giulietti. Viceministro Mauri: “Vergogna”. Centinaia i messaggi di solidarietà"
- News report in daily newspaper "Il Fatto Quotidiano": Minacce dall'estrema destra al presidente del sindacato giornalisti Beppe Giulietti: “Attacchi perché ha difeso chi parla di migranti”
- Statement from the NGO Articolo 21: "Minacce squadriste in rete contro il Presidente della Fnsi, Giulietti. Confermate da Verini le audizioni in Commissione Antimafia"

On 11 May 2020, the Prime Minister of Slovenia, Janez Janša, published a statement on the government's official website, in which he blames the journalists in general: "The professional group in western civilisation that first declared itself the seventh power, then the fourth (unelected) branch of power and finally the moral judge of political correctness, is increasingly difficult to recognise today as a force for good, for they are neither." Turning specifically to Slovenian media, Janša singles out the public broadcaster RTV Slovenija, referred to as a "media killer". He accuses the country's two main television channels to feed "an atmosphere of intolerance and hatred (...) created by a narrow circle of female editors with familial and capital ties to the pillars of the deep state".
The Slovenian Association of Journalists (DNS) issued a statement condemning such "an upgrade of systematic and increasingly deliberate attacks on the media and journalists".

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Statement by DNS (in Slovenian): "Basen – nova zvrst diskreditacije novinarjev"
- Report from the Slovenian Press Agency: "Prime minister makes the case for confrontation with the media"
- Statement by the Prime Minister (in Slovenian): "Vojna z mediji"

STATE REPLYES

- 25 Aug 2020 | NEW Reply from Slovenian authorities
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Slovenia to the Council of Europe

20 Aug 2020 | Lvl. 1

Serbian Journalist Jeton Ismaili’s Family Threatened during Break-In

Serbia

n° 96/2020 Alert created on: 20 Aug 2020

SOURCE OF THREAT » Unknown

CATEGORY » Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

NO STATE REPLY YET

At about 2 p.m. on 13 August 2020, in Veliki Trnovac, southern Serbia, two men broke into journalist Jeton Ismaili’s house and, finding only his wife and their three children home, shouted insults and death threats referring to the journalist and his family, and then fled, according to news reports and Ismaili, an editor for the Albanian-language news website FOLonline. The journalist’s family reported the attack to police, who arrived shortly thereafter and helped Ismaili’s wife, who suffered psychological trauma in the incident, according to SafeJournalists, a regional site that tracks attacks on journalists.

On 18 August, authorities filed criminal charges against a 76-year-old man and his 38-year-old son in connection with the attack, but did not release their names, according to SafeJournalists.

Ismaili told local news outlet Bujanovačke, where he also works as a contributor, that he assumed the attack was retaliation for an 7 August article he wrote about two COVID-19 related
CPJ emailed the Serbian Ministry of the Interior, which oversees the police, for comment, but did not receive any reply.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

 artikel: "Serbian journalist Jeton Ismaili’s family threatened during break-in"

**Slovenia**

**Director of the Government Communication Office Calls for Citizens to Publicly Denounce Media "Manipulators"**

**SOURCE OF THREAT** 🔄 State

**CATEGORY** 🔄 Harassment and intimidation of journalists

**NO STATE REPLY YET**

On 2 August 2020, Uroš Urbanija, the Acting Director of the Government Communication Office (UKOM) in Slovenia tweeted urging citizens to report and denounce any media or journalists in Slovenia who “obviously and shamelessly use manipulations” in their work to purposefully mislead people. The social media post suggested Twitter users should report such content by using the hashtag #stopmanipulations. Urbanija also urged the same action against judges in the country. He tweeted: "The Slovenian public must demand the same criteria for all media and the judiciary. And at the same time to reveal and publicly publish every media, every journalist, every judge who obviously and shamelessly uses manipulations. #stopmanipulations Only then will we get good media". Several media have criticised the post as an attempt to attack government critics and undermine public trust in the media. The comment also sparked concerns about an increase in pressure and online harassment against Slovenian journalists. It is the latest in a number of tweets by officials in the new SDS-led government over the last six months which have raised concerns over press freedom in the country. Urbanija later said he only meant that such reporting or comments by journalists should only be publicly addressed, analysed and discussed. In the days after his tweet, Urbanija used the hashtag on a number of occasions to denounce critical media and also retweeted articles or tweets from commentators and media outlets which accused the public broadcaster RTVS and other media of being “manipulators”. Similar language was also used by other high-ranking Slovenian officials such as Božo Predalič, Secretary General of the Government, who claimed on Twitter that POP TV were “manipulators”.

**PARTNER: IPI, Article 19**
On 17 August 2020, at about 1 a.m., in the town of Brovary, near Kyiv, unknown persons burned a car used by journalists working for the investigative programme “Schemes”, according to news reports and “Schemes” chief editor Natalie Sedletska. Property of Boris Mazur, a driver employed by the programme, the car was parked by the apartment building where Mazur lives and was empty at the time of the attack, Sedletska said. Mazur discovered the attack when the fire brigade arrived to extinguish the flames. Experts from the State Emergency Service also arrived at the scene and conducted a preliminary investigation, which concluded that the fire was a result of “a third-party ignition source,” according to news reports.

Later on that day, the police released a statement announcing a criminal investigation into “intentional destruction or damage of property”, without naming any suspects.

Sedletska told CPJ that she suspects the car burning was retaliation for the outlet’s journalistic work, but said she did not know who could be behind the incident. “Schemes”s investigative reporter Mykhailo Tkach recently published a series of investigations about high-ranking Ukrainian officials allegedly breaking quarantine rules, and an investigation into how Ukrainian authorities, including members of the presidential administration, allegedly violated road rules while using fake license plates. In July 2020, Tkach had received warnings from his sources that his work upset “high-ranking officials” and that they planned to surveil him, according to Sedletska.CPJ emailed Ukraine’s national police in Kyiv for comment, but did not receive any response.
On 5 June 2020, RTV Zenica journalist Sinan Gluhić was hit in the neck and face on his way to work by a politician of the Party of Democratic Activity (A-SDA), Sulejman Spahić, who also threatened the journalist to death. The attack was preceded by days of verbal threats and insults to Gluhic via telephone and social networks, especially Facebook. These incidents are believed to be connected to Gluhić’s posts on social media, on 31 May, about the delayed construction work on a local road.

The incident was reported to police and recorded, as well as threats Gluhic received in the previous period. A report has been submitted to the local prosecutor’s office in Zenica. Spahić has been charged with endangering public safety.

The Bosnian journalists’ association and the High Representative on Freedom of the Media for the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) condemned the attacks and called for a swift investigation.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- **Statement by the Regional Platform for advocating media freedom and journalists’ safety**: "SafeJournalists: BiH journalist Gluhic physically attacked by politician Spahic"

- **Zenica Info news article**: "Dostavljen izvještaj Tužilaštvu ZDK, Spahić osumnjičen za krivično djelo “Ugrožavanje sigurnosti”"

**STATE REPLIES**

NEW Reply from the Bosnian authorities
Following the denunciation of irregularities in the management of the Romanian public television station TVR by the Romanian journalists' union FAIR-Mediasind, TVR's management has instructed the law firm Zamfirescu Racoti & Partners to take legal action for defamation against the union and against the journalists of the daily newspaper "Libertatea". The union said TVR had allocated a public budget of 50,742 euros to the law firm to bring these legal actions. FAIR-Mediasind issued a statement on 28 July accusing the director of the TV station, Doina Gradea, of attempting to intimidate and harass the journalists' union.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Mediasind statement about the management of TVR: "Membri ai CA au solicitat Parlamentului revocarea șefei TVR deoarece “instituția nu-și mai îndeplinește misiunea publică”!"
- Statement from the journalists’ union Mediasind: "Administrația Gradea angajează, pe bani publici, o casă de avocatură pentru a se război cu MediaSind TVR și cu jurnaliștii de la cotidianul Libertatea!"
On 10 June 2020, Bojana Pavlović took photos of Danilo Vucic, son of Aleksandar Vucic, President of Serbia, sitting in a café with Aleksandar Vidojevic, who is currently on trial for participating in the demolition of a nightclub. As reported by the KRIK investigative journalism centre, Vidojevic has been allegedly identified by the police as a member of the Kavaci organised crime group. As Pavlović was leaving, three men stopped her stating they were police officer. She produced a journalist ID card, explaining that she was on duty, but was told to wait for the police patrol as she was likely to be detained.

The men requested her to delete the footage, which she did. She had already sent the photos to KRIK. Two men approached them, one of whom forcefully took her mobile phone out of her hands. The police didn’t react. Pavlović said that at one point she was surrounded by five men and she'd asked them to move away as she felt endangered and unsafe. Vidojevic, accompanied by another person, approached the group and the police left, leaving her alone with the four men. Vidojevic instructed the man to return the mobile phone, he did so and they left.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- KRIK report: "Novinarki KRIK-a oduzeli telefon dok je fotografisala Danila Vučića i Acu Rošavog"
- Report by the Regional Platform for advocating media freedom and journalists' safety: "IJAS -Urgently determine who intercepted and confiscated the equipment of the KRIK journalist"

**STATE REPLIES**

- **03 Aug 2020 | NEW** Reply of the Serbian authorities (Ministry of the Interior)
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Serbia to the Council of Europe
On 22 July 2020, a man called Svetlana Anokhina and threatened to kill her. Anokhina, a Dagestani journalist, is the chief editor of Daptar.ru, an independent site dedicated to women’s issues in the Caucasus. Anokhina believes that the threat may have been in response to her journalistic work.

She said that the timing of the call made her believe that it may have been about one specific article she edited on a controversial case. The article, published on Daptar.ru the day before the threat was made, alleged that Chechen and federal-level authorities failed to investigate the alleged murder of a Chechen woman by her husband.

On the day of its publication, Anokhina shared and discussed the story on her Facebook page, which counts more than 6,000 followers. Anokhina said a man called her on her mobile phone multiple times between 6-7 p.m. on 22 July, though the first three or four calls were dropped due to a poor connection. Anokhina said that on the next call, the man confirmed he was speaking to her. After that call dropped, Anokhina said she recorded the subsequent phone call on her phone. In the recording, the man said he was “given orders to take care of these feminists,” and that his relative was the “boss” at the Soviet district police station of the Dagestani capital Makhachkala. He is then heard introducing himself and saying that he will kill Anokhina. After hanging up, Anokhina said she looked up the phone number, and found that it was registered to a different name. Looking up that name, she found an Instagram account with photos featuring location tags in Dagestan and the neighboring republic of Chechnya. Anokhina said she sent this information to the number that called her, via messaging app. She said a man called back and denied that he was the man who initially called her and that he had threatened her life.

Anokhina previously received threats over her journalistic work. On 14 July 2020, she criticised Magomed Kurbandibirov, deputy imam of the Grand Mosque of Makhachkala, in posts on Facebook and Instagram after Kurbandibirov made statements in support of female circumcision in an interview with a Russian journalist. After that, Anokhina said she received several anonymous messages on her social media accounts insulting her and demanding her to “shut up”.

In 2018, she received tens of anonymous messages on social media from people threatening to “find her” and “put her into the ground” after she criticised Eldar Iraziev, an entertainer and
blogger formerly based in Dagestan, who had condemned an upcoming anime festival as “immoral”. According to Anokhina the 22 July 2020 phone call was the first time she received a direct death threat on the phone. “I am worried, because sooner or later these threats could be implemented,” she told CPJ. She said that the Instagram photos tagged in Chechnya made her concerned that the threat had a potential connection to the republic. “Any reasonable person would feel concerned when Chechnya is involved” Anokhina said.

Anokhina filed a complaint about the threatening call on the website of Dagestan’s Ministry of Internal Affairs. Gayana Garieva, head of the ministry's Department of Information and Public Relations, stated that the ministry received Anokhina’s complaint and is investigating the matter.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Svetlana Anokhina’s interview with Meduza: “‘Threats are a familiar thing for me’ Dagestani journalist Svetlana Anokhina on covering women’s issues in Russia's North Caucasus”
- CPJ Alert: "Journalist from Dagestan, Russia Threatened with Death in a Phone Call"

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**Russian Federation**

**Alert created on: 27 Jul 2020**

**Russian Journalist Dmitriy Nizovtsev Beaten by Unidentified Men**

**SOURCE OF THREAT** → Unknown

**CATEGORY** → Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

**NO STATE REPLY YET**

On 23 July 2020, three unidentified men attacked Dmitriy Nizovtsev, a correspondent for Shtab Navalnogo, a YouTube-based news outlet owned by opposition leader Aleksey Navalny, near the journalist’s house in the eastern city of Khabarovsk. Nizovtsev tweeted that the men hit him with their hands and then kicked him in the face when he fell to the ground, and he tweeted a photo of his bruised face. He wrote that he had been taken to the hospital and diagnosed with a facial bone fracture and that he planned to file a complaint with police. The assault took place after Nizovtsev livestreamed protests in Khabarovsk on Shtab Navalnogo earlier today. Nizovtsev wrote on Twitter that he called the police after the attack, but said they did not arrive.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- CPJ Alert: "Russian journalist Dmitriy Nizovtsev beaten by unidentified men"
Journalist Miroslava Byrns Threatened

SOURCE OF THREAT  ▶ Non-state
CATEGORY  ▶ Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

On 23 July 2020, journalist Miroslava Byrns received a threatening message following the publication of an article, with the threats of “you will see what will happen to you”. These threats were received on her personal Facebook account after she published a news story about a wedding organised in the town of Tetovo with about 200 people at a moment where gatherings are forbidden by law due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The journalist is working for the daily Slobodnen Pechat. She received a 24-hour police protection after having reported the threats to the police. Both the journalists' union (SSNM) and association (ZNM) in North Macedonia condemned the threats.

Additional Information

SSNM statement: "Осуда за нападите врз новинарката Бурнс, краяно време е нападите врз новинарите да се третираат по службена должност"

ZNM statement: "Strong condemnation of the threats against journalist Miroslava Byrns"

Belgian journalist Florence Hainaut has been the target of an online harassment campaign following the publication on 18 July 2020 of an opinion piece about wearing of the Islamic headscarf on the website of "Le Soir" newspaper. Dozens of insulting and defamatory comments targeting the journalist were posted on the social networks Facebook and Twitter. The Facebook profile Laplume Kalam, the collective page of an organisation that brands itself "The Observatory of Fundamentalisms in Brussels", posted messages accusing the journalist of "having links with..."
political Islam or anti-democratic fundamentalist movements" and of having fallen "into the arms of the Muslim Brotherhood". Florence Hainaut is considering legal action. She has consulted the Fem&L.A.W. collective for advice and guidance on this matter.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Article by Florence Hainaut explaining the 'numerical raid' she was subjected to: "La fabrique du raid"
- Screenshots of the defamatory messages published on Florence Hainaut's Facebook account
- Article by Florence Hainaut: «Cachez ce foulard...»

**FREELANCERS**

**Key information:**
Florence Hainaut

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**Ukraine**

**n° 86/2020**

**Alert created on: 24 Jul 2020**

**Ukrainian Journalist Katerina Sergatskova in Hiding amid Threats**

**SOURCE OF THREAT** → **Unknown**

**CATEGORY** 🔄 **Harassment and intimidation of journalists**

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**NO STATE REPLY YET**

**PARTNER: CPJ, Article 19, EFJ/IFJ, RPT, RSF**

On 11 July 2020, Roman Skrypin, a local journalist, posted on Facebook – where he has more than 130,000 followers – a photo of Katerina Sergatskova, chief editor of the news site Zaborona, along with her son, her son’s name, and a picture purporting to be her home.

The posts were later deleted. Before they were, commenters sent threats of death and violence against her, and accusations that she supported the Russia Federation. The photo of the journalist and her son was not deleted.

On 13 July, Sergatskova left her home in Kyiv and went into hiding, saying she feared for her life and the lives of her husband and two children, according to news reports.
Her lawyer filed a complaint with the Kyiv police. The police’s refusal to open an investigation prompted him to file a complaint with the central branch of the Ministry of Interior.

Since 2 July 2020, Zaborona has published several investigative reports about right-wing activists in Ukraine and their alleged ties with Ukrainian media.

In his 11 July Facebook post, Skrypin wrote that Sergatskova should “go away” and “raise your son in Volgograd”, Russia Federation. In other posts, Skrypin alleged that Sergatskova, who is originally from the Russia Federation, was a Russian spy. Skrypin said that he found the photos of Sergatskova from a publicly available source.

Sergatskova, who received Ukrainian citizenship in 2015, has worked in Ukraine for over 10 years, and reported from a conflict zone in the country’s east.

CPJ emailed Ukraine’s National Police in Kyiv for comment, but did not immediately receive any reply.
On 26 May 2020, Nikola Vučić, journalist at N1 television in Bosnia and Herzegovina, received death threats via social media after posting a comment on his Twitter account. Details of his life were also published in different media.

Reacting to the news on the self-declared “corona-free zone” in West Herzegovina Canton, Nikola Vučić, sarcastically asked on his Twitter account “if the ‘fascism-free zone’ would be declared soon”. The comment was followed by threats and calls for violence against him, including statements that Vučić, should end up “in Neretva river or put on a stake. He was labelled as “halal Serb”, and received numerous other insulting messages against him and his family. Vučić, has since closed his Twitter account while some media reported details of his life that bear no public interest.

BH Journalists Association condemned the threats of violence, hate speech and harassment of Vučić, and his family members. BHJA explicitly emphasised that calls for violence and death threats are criminal offences and that disagreement with one’s comment must by no means be
an excuse for such behaviour. It calls on the BiH authorities to act and protect Vučić, from further abuse and threats, and to investigate all incidents and sanction the perpetrators.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Regional Platform for advocating media freedom and journalists’ safety statement: "Threats against the lives and limbs of journalists, NikolaVučić"
- Radio Televizija BN news article: "Novinar Nikola Vučić na meti brutalnih napada"
- BH Novinari statement: "Condemnation of threats against Nikola Vučić, N1 TV journalist, for posting on Twitter"

**STATE REPLIES**

- 21 Jul 2020 | Reply from the Bosnian authorities
  - Information provided by the Bosnian authorities

**Romania**

- n° 66/2020
- Alert created on: 08 Jun 2020

**Lawsuits Filed against the Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism**

**SOURCE OF THREAT** ▶ Non-state

**CATEGORY** ▶ Harassment and intimidation of journalists

The Romanian Centre for Investigative Journalism (CRJI), which set up the investigative online magazine The Black Sea (www.theblacksea.eu), faces accruing fines and two protracted lawsuits, relating to stories published by the online magazine between 2016 and 2018. Back then, the investigative magazine took part in the European Investigative Collaborations (EIC) network’s “Football Leaks” project, producing a series of stories on the global football industry, which led to a number of criminal investigations and prosecutions worldwide, for crimes of money laundering, fraud and tax evasion.

Among these investigations there were reports of alleged political and criminal connections of one family – the Kazakh-Turkish Arif family, owners of a network of companies known collectively as Doyen, accused of being connected to a number of football deals. According to CRJI, Doyen and the Arif family were invited by the EIC network to respond to allegations before they were printed, but refused.
Two years after these reports were published, the Arifs and the Malta-based Doyen Sports Investment Limited filed two civil lawsuits against CRJI relating to the stories published by The Black Sea, claiming defamation on the basis of leaked or stolen company and personal documents. The first suit was filed in December 2018 and the second in November 2019. Both are pending.

The lawsuits were preceded by an 'emergency' gag order, filed in December 2018, which demanded the removal of all stories that mentioned the Arif family and the Doyen company. According to CRJI, neither they nor The Black Sea was informed of the gag order application at the time. It was granted by a Romanian judge in January 2019.

In July 2019, the judge imposed a fine on CRJI of RON 1000 (€200) for each day the stories remain online, so far accruing fines of over RON 300,000 (more than €60,000). The stories have not been removed and can be read here: https://theblacksea.eu/stories/?dossier=Football%20Leaks

According to CRJI, The Black Sea stories are the only ones resulting in lawsuits from the Arif family and Doyen, despite many of EIC network's partners publishing similar, and sometimes identical versions of the stories.

**UPDATES**

*02 Jul 2020:* On 23 June 2020, a Bucharest court ordered the Romanian Centre to pay a “definitive and enforceable” fine of 329,000 RON (€67,000) for not having removed the stories. The first hearing for the lawsuits was due to take place on 24 June 2020 in Bucharest, but at the request of the Arif family, it has been postponed until the end of July. This is the eighth time that the would-be first hearing has been postponed. Two postponements have been due to the coronavirus pandemic and a judges strike, and six have been at the request of the Arif family or due to their procedural requests.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Information regarding the status of the second lawsuit filed against the CRJI available on the Ministry of Justice website
- Information regarding the status of the first lawsuit filed against the CRJI available on the Ministry of Justice website
- The Football leaks stories published on The Black Sea website
- Article published by Malta Today: "'Football Leaks' firm Doyen fined €23,000 by MFSA"
A British journalist working in Albania for the web portal exit.al has been the target of a smear campaign following a statement given to Russia Today on 23 February 2019 related to the protests hitting the country.

Alice Taylor recently wrote about vote rigging, violence at protests and the government's links to organised crime and money laundering. Asked to comment about the state of corruption in Albania and the current developments in the country, Alice Taylor said to Russia Today that allegations of corruption can easily be documented with evidence showing links between the current government, organised crime, money laundering and drug trafficking. In her statement, she also questioned the fairness of the 2017 elections which confirmed Edi Rama as Prime Minister for a second term.

The next day, dozens of local portals started publishing photos accusing her to be linked to and paid by Russia, or that her portal is linked to the opposition party. Her partner was also targeted on social media platforms.

The journalist also informed that her residence permit was refused on 6 March after being approved some weeks before.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Article on JavaNews.al : "Investigimi/ Gazetarja që flet për Shqipërinë në televizionin rus, gruaja e truprojës së Bashës!"
On 7 January 2020, Kastriot Reçi, the owner of "Media plus-tv" was assassinated in Rrëshen (Mirditë), Albania. On the same day, the police issued a statement stating that "today at 11:05, in Rrëshen Mirditë, K.R was killed with a firearm in unclear circumstances. A team of investigators is working to identify the authors of this crime."

The ECPMF notes that, in their statement, the police did not mention the fact that the person who was assassinated is the owner of local media company. The ECPMF requests an immediate, thorough and independent investigation and that the perpetrators of this crime should be brought to justice.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Report published on exit.al news site: "Vritet pronari i një televizioni në Rrëshen"
The Albanian Media Council (AMC), an NGO comprised of journalists and media professionals, has accused Prime Minister Edi Rama of exploiting the emergency situation caused by the earthquake of 26 November 2019 and illegally shutting down online media by allegedly ordering the AKEP (Electronic and Postal Communications Authority) to block online news portals, including joqalbania.com. On 1 December 2019, the AMC posted a "Declaration of Concern About the Government Attitude Towards Media", stating that the authorities "cannot prohibit citizens or portals from denouncing the mismanagement of the situation (where it exists) and, furthermore, cannot block an entire portal for a single publication." According to Reporter.Al, Prime Minister Rama has "repeatedly expressed dissatisfaction with the media" when faced with difficult questions on the government's ability to effectively manage the aftermath of the earthquake. According to journalist Gjergj Erebara, Prime Minister Rama has used social media platforms on a number of occasions to put pressure on online portals, threatening closure. He tweeted on 28 November 2019: "This is the final warning for portals and information channels that under the conditions and within the legal framework of an Emergency Situation, I will be obliged to forcibly intervene with their closure to end this dramatic phase, if they continue with fake news that spread panic!" Another video message was shared on Facebook on 3 December 2019 where Prime Minister Rama addressed the general public, asking them to avoid watching the news on television and implored not to follow the online portals stating that the "so-called sources of information" create a "foul-smell of gloom and insecurity and confusion". While the AMC appeals to the media to show restraint in reporting unverified news, it also calls for the Government "not to copycat the notorious Erdogan case that used the post-coup situation to attack, arrest, shut down and hit critical media; to silence independent opinions; and to install the dictatorship of thought."

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Prime Minister Edi Rama Facebook post
- Article published by Reporter.al: "Tentativa e Ramës për cenzurë dështon ndërsa kryeministri akuzon mediat se kanë “nxirë situatën”" ["Rama's censorship bid fails as Prime Minister accuses media of 'worsening the situation'"]
Tanja Milevska, a Brussels correspondent for the North Macedonia news agency MIA, is facing online harassment, including threats of physical and sexual violence.

Since 11 July 2020, when she asked on Twitter whether Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán and the European People’s Party (EPP) in the European Parliament would recognise the 2019 constitutional change of the country's official name into “North Macedonia”, Milevska has received dozens of verbal abuses, hate speech, death and rape threats on social networks. Following these messages, trolls and active political figures have been fuelling threats for the past four days in the context of Macedonian parliamentary elections, to be held on 15 July.

Milevska reported the threats to the police both in Belgium and North Macedonia.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- **MIA news article**: "Journalists’ associations condemn threats against MIA correspondent"
- **EFJ statement**: "EFJ condemns death and rape threats against Brussels-based journalist Tanja Milevska"
Warsaw Publishing House Broken into and Vandalised

SOURCE OF THREAT: Unknown
CATEGORY: Harassment and intimidation of journalists

On 7 July 2020, unknown perpetrators broke into the headquarters of Maxmedia Publishing House in Warsaw, stole equipment and vandalised the walls. MaxMedia houses the “Fakty” Social Dialogue Magazine, VIP Magazine, Investment Market, and The Ambassador publications. The assailants broke the equipment, destroyed the server room, smashed furniture, and stole external hard drives from laptops and computers. A section of the wall at the reception was spray painted with a swastika. The message “Fakty TVN out” was painted nearby. It is believed that the perpetrators mistakenly targeted the office, believing it to be that of the major Polish television networks TVN, whose flagship news programme is called Fakty. The small "Fakty" Social Dialogue Magazine run by Maxmedia focuses on issues including economy, politics and social affairs, and has no link to TVN. The attack on the editorial office took place amidst a climate of hostility and verbal attacks on the media by politicians during the recent presidential election.

Additional Information

- Gazeta.pl article: "Zdemolowana redakcja magazynu "Fakty". "Skutek kampanii obozu rządzącego przeciwko mediom opozycyjnym" "
- Statement of the Helsinki Foundation for Human Rights
Between 1 May and 26 June 2020, US-based law firm Lambert Worldwide and UK-based law firm Atkins Thomson sent letters to Times of Malta, Malta Today, Malta Independent, Lovin Malta and The Shift News in relation to their reporting and journalistic enquiries on a wind farm deal in Montenegro and alleged connections between British-Azerbaijani entrepreneur Turab Musayev and Maltese business owner Yorgen Fenech, who is charged with complicity in the murder of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia.

On 1 May 2020, Lambert Worldwide send a “courtesy request” to Malta Today in relation to an article published on its website mentioning Mr. Musayev. It demanded that the media outlet remove the article or undertake actions such as “de-indexing the article, or perhaps, removing our client’s name from the article.” It further stated concern about the contents of the article and asserted that their client had suffered personally and professionally from its publication. However, the letter confirmed that “they are not permitted to reveal any details at this time,” and stated that “this letter does not constitute a notice of intent to take legal actions.”

On 29 May 2020, Times of Malta started to receive similar letters, after its journalist had sent questions to Mr. Musayev. Atkins Thomson wrote that: “not for the first time, we are concerned that you are in possession of confidential material and documentation, probably gathered illegally, and that you may unlawfully misuse the same.” The letter further stated that the lawyers will take all necessary steps to prevent defamation of their client. On 5 June 2020, Atkins Thomson contacted Times of Malta again, writing: “the fact that you still ask so many questions of our client proved beyond doubt that your research and information is wholly inadequate for your predetermined purposes,” and requesting Times of Malta to reveal its journalistic sources.

On 24 June 2020, Atkins Thomson sent another letter, contesting an opinion piece and news article published on Lovin Malta, and claiming that the articles were causing harm in London, where Mr. Musayev moved to in 2007 with his family. The lawyers requested Lovin Malta to withdraw the articles from its website and social media platforms, publish a retraction and apology, remove references to Mr. Musayev on Google and social media platforms, pay substantial compensation for the harm caused, and pay their client’s legal costs. On 26 June 2020, Atkins Thomson sent similar letters to Malta Today, Malta Independent and The Shift News, stating: “we have written to a number of publications and are taking legal action against others. We are currently considering your article. We will take all necessary action to protect and/or restore our client’s reputation if you publish any material that is defamatory of him.”

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- ECPMF report: "Malta: five media outlets threatened by lawyers of British-Azeri business owner"
- Article published by The Shift : "SLAPP threat from Azerbaijan – British national Turab Musayev"
On 7 July 2020, numerous actions against journalists and media workers were documented during anti-government protests that broke out in front of the Serbian National Assembly in Belgrade. Plain clothes officers tried to stop an N1 TV crew from recording police beating a protester in the park. Jelena Zorić, a reporter for N1, said that two police officers tried to push the crew away to stop them from recording the incident. Zorić was also teargassed as she reported live from the scene that night.

Milica Božinović, a journalist for the Nova.rs news portal, was hit on the buttocks by a riot police officer. Despite repeatedly identifying herself as a journalist, officers had demanded she leave the scene where a man had been injured and was calling out for help. One officer hit her as she refused to fully leave. The incident was live streamed by the journalist on the outlet’s Facebook channel.

Thousands of persons took to the streets to protest the way COVID-19 pandemic is being dealt with by the Government of Serbia. The unrest broke out after President Aleksandar Vučić announced that a weekend curfew would be re-imposed in order to curb a rise in COVID-19 infections. Clashes erupted later in the night and police fired tear gas to disperse the protesters.

On 8 July, during protests that broke out for the second night, more journalists and media workers were threatened and attacked. Beta news agency journalist Zikica Stevanovic was injured while reporting. Despite him showing his journalist's ID and saying that he was on duty, police officers started beating him with batons. Stevanovic was taken to hospital with injuries and cuts to his head and eyes. Cameramen for the same agency, Luka Pređa and Relja Pekić, were also slightly injured. Nova.rs journalist Marko Radonjić, who was reporting from the protest in Bulevar Kralja Aleksandra, was also beaten by the police despite having told them several times that he was a journalist on assignment. In addition, he was attacked verbally and threatened with arrest. Nova.rs journalists Milica Božinović and Natasa Latkovic were also attacked by police after identifying themselves as journalists. The police hit Božinović on the fingers with a baton, knocking her phone out of her hand.
On 8 July 2020, several journalists and media workers were attacked during anti-governments protests that broke out for the second night in Serbia. In Novi Sad, at around 7.30pm, protesters gathered in front of the building of the Radio-Television of Vojvodina (RTV) and broke the glass entrance door. In a separate incident, a RTS crew was attacked and the cameraman, Lazar Vukadinović was injured. The RTS team was covering the protest when some protesters saw the RTS microphone and attacked the crew. The camera was broken. In Nis, a journalist working for the Public Service Media Radio and Television (RTS) was insulted and attacked by protesters. The journalist and his cameraman, Ivan Stambolić was trying to join the RTS program live in Voždova Street, not far from the city center, when a group of protesters surrounded and insulted...
The demonstrators sprayed water at their camera and also ripped out the microphone and camera’s cables. The RTS journalist reported that Stambolić was hit in the head by a bottle or a can thrown by one of the protesters. Journalists from the Juzni Vesti newsroom, who were also reporting on the demonstrations, came to help the two RTS journalists.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- IPI statement: "Numerous journalists beaten and attacked covering Serbia protests"
- EFJ statement: "Serbia: violent attacks against journalists during two consecutive nights of protests"

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**Slovak Republic**

Slovak Investigative Journalist Peter Sabo Finds Bullet in His Mailbox

**SOURCE OF THREAT** → Unknown

**CATEGORY** → Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

On 25 June 2020, Peter Sabo, an investigative journalist with the Slovakian news website Aktuality.sk, found a pistol bullet in the mailbox of his Bratislava apartment. Aktuality is the media that investigative reporter Ján Kuciak worked for when he was shot and killed alongside his fiancée Martina Kušnírová in 2018. The editor-in-chief of Aktuality, Peter Bárdy, said he believes the cartridge was meant to intimidate Sabo and was likely related to his work investigating “sensitive topics”. Recently he had covered drug crime, the completion of a power plant, and cases involving the former Minister of Justice of the Slovak Republic, Gábor Gál. No other message or sign was left in the mailbox. This was the first threat issued against Sabo.

The journalist reported the incident to a local police station. The Minister of the Interior, Roman Mikulec, and Police President Milan Lučansk were also informed. An investigation has been opened and measures were taken to protect Sabo’s safety.

**PARTNER: IPI, Article 19, AEJ, EFJ/IFJ**

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- Editorial by Peter Bárdy on Aktuality.sk (in Slovakian): "Investigatívnemu reportérovi Aktuality.sk nechali v schránke náboj, ale nezastavia nás"
- Statement by International Press Institute (IPI) on behalf of Media Freedom Rapid Response (MFRR): "Slovak journalist continuing investigative work of Ján Kuciak receives bullet in mailbox"
On 14 April 2020, in Sarajevo, journalists and employees from Faktor.ba, a news web portal, were insulted by two women who entered the building without permission.

Faktor.ba journalists and editors were targeted for publishing an article about a car being set on fire and a shooting in the city of Vraca (Sarajevo).

In addition, the man mentioned in the article later called the editorial office asking for the removal of the article in question and threatened to come to the Faktor.ba newsroom with his lawyer.

The BH Journalists Association and the Free Media Help Line severely condemned these attacks and called for an urgent investigation by all relevant institutions from local and national authorities.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Statement by the Association of Journalists from Bosnia and Herzegovina (BH Novinari): "BH novinari: Osuda upada u redakciju Faktora i prijetnji upućenih novinarima ovog portala"

- Faktor.ba news article: "BH novinari o upadu u Faktor: Napadi na novinare, medije i slobodu izražavanja ne smiju se tolerisati"
On 1 June 2020, journalist Eugenija Carl, a reporter for public broadcaster RTV Slovenia, received an envelope mailed to her work address in the city of Koper, which contained a threatening letter and white powder, she wrote in a Facebook post and told CPJ. The anonymous letter called Carl insulting names and said that it hoped for her death, she told CPJ. She said that the powder gave her an allergic reaction, irritating her eyes and making her cough. Police and firefighters quarantined the TV station for several hours before determining that the substance was an irritant but was not life-threatening, her employer reported.

Carl said the letter referenced a defamation suit she and a colleague had filed against Prime Minister Janez Janša, who had referred to them as “retired prostitutes” in a 2016 tweet, according to news reports. On 21 May, Carl and her colleague won the lawsuit, and Janša was required to pay compensation of €6,000, according to those reports.

Carl told CPJ that she has previously received threats, insults, and harassment on social media by Janša’s supporters. She said that she and her colleague had received two similar letters with white powder in 2018.

On 3 March, Janša was reelected to his third term as Prime Minister. CPJ emailed questions to
the Prime Minister’s office and the press department of the Ministry of the Interior, which oversees the police, and but did not receive any replies.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **CPJ alert**: "Slovenian reporter Eugenija Carl receives threatening letter with white powder"

### STATE REPLIES

- **07 Jul 2020** | Reply from the Slovenian authorities
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Slovenia to the Council of Europe

### Russian Federation  

**n° 78/2020**  
**Alert created on: 02 Jul 2020**

**Attack on Russian Journalist David Frenkel Covering Constitutional Election**

**SOURCE OF THREAT**  
- State

**CATEGORY**  
- Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

**NO STATE REPLY YET**

Russian journalist David Frenkel from Mediazona was hospitalised with a broken shoulder on 30 June 2020 after he had been assaulted by a police officer and an election observer at a polling station in St Petersburg.

The journalist came to the polling station to investigate earlier reports that a member of the election committee had been unlawfully barred access to voting numbers. Frenkel stated the police officer pushed him out of the polling station, twisted his arm, and hit him. The election observer then stepped on his injured arm and broke it. The election observer, who is an ex-town councillor from “United Russia”, denied that the attack took place and said that the journalist fell and broke his arm himself.

Mediazona later quoted St. Petersburg police as saying that their officers didn't injure Frenkel and that the officers had removed him from the polling place "in a lawful manner."

The spokesperson of the President of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Peskov, and the Commissioner for Human Rights in Russia Tatyana Moskalkova called for an investigation on the attack on journalist.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
On 6 June 2020, a protest organised in Rome by extreme far right movements turned violent. The protesters were demonstrating their discontent about the measures adopted by the Italian government to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic. The confrontations started while a protester was being interviewed by some journalist crews, which sparked discontent from a group of the demonstrators. The brawl then extended against the journalists who were covering the rally and against the police. The protesters were chanting slogans comparing journalists to “terrorists” and launched rocks, bottles and firecrackers against the crews; a video-maker was injured after the pole of a flag hit him on the head.
On 27 June 2020, journalist Nurettin Civandag, editor-in-chief of Viyana TV, was hospitalised after being assaulted on the street by several people in the Austrian capital Vienna. Police spokesman Patrick Maierhofer stated that the assault occurred on Pernerstorfergasse at around 11 p.m., was carried out by “several unknown perpetrators”, and that Civandag was taken to hospital with bruises to his head and injuries to his teeth. According to the spokesman, Civandag told police his attackers were suspected Turkish youths. Because the act could be "politically motivated", the police informed the State Office for the Protection of the Constitution and Counter-Terrorism (LVT), who took over the investigation. The assault happened the day after Civandag had filmed an attack by ultranationalist Turkish groups on another group who had been commemorating the 1993 Sivas massacre in Turkey. That incident was one of several outbreaks of violence between Turkish and Kurdish groups in the city in the last week. Civandag's footage of the attack was published and shared widely online. Civandag said that, on 27 June, he had covered pro-Kurdish rallies that were supported by left-wing activists and was meeting a friend later that night when someone called his name on the street. Moments later, he was attacked by an unknown number of people who beat him, until passers-by stepped in to help. He believes it may have been in retaliation for the footage he had captured the day before, from which he said several people had been identified by police. It is not yet clear which group the suspects belong to. Police have not confirmed any further details. Civandag said he believes his attackers were members of ultranationalist Turkish groups.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Der Standard report: "Kurdischer Journalist nach Demo in Wien angegriffen und verletzt"
- Wien ORF report: "Journalist in Favoriten verletzt"
On 11 September 2019, journalist Tezehan Miralamli was outside Yasamal district court, where the case of opposition leader Ruslan Amirli was being heard. According to reports and to the video footage, several journalists were resisting police's attempts to remove them from outside the court when one police officer pushed Miralamli to the ground. Miralamli is a journalist with opposition newspaper Azadliq.

29 Jun 2020: On 19 June 2020, Tezehan Miralamli was convicted of hooliganism (article 221.1 of the criminal code) by a Baku court for allegedly hitting a blogger on 26 February. He was sentenced to wear an electronic bracelet and stay at home every night from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. for the next 12 months. He says his placing under constant police surveillance will obstruct his reporting by preventing him from covering night-time events or events outside Baku.

Press freedom organisations have voiced grave concern about the trial in Bulgaria's Specialised Criminal Court of media owner Ivo Prokopiev, after prosecutors announced at a 20 June 2020
hearing that they were calling for him to be sentenced to prison for between three and ten years in connection with his alleged role in the public sale of shares in an electricity distribution company in 2011. The charge brought against Prokopiev was that he had expressed his opinion in public about the privatisation as a representative of national employers in a consultative body set up to deliberate the terms of the sale. His defence lawyer, Daniela Dokovska, asserted that every member of that public body had the right to express their opinion without facing legal consequences. On 28 June, the Court found Prokopiev not guilty; but the prosecution has been allowed to appeal, so the threat of imprisonment has not yet been removed.

At the trial three defence witnesses were reportedly barred from giving evidence and the case was fast-tracked at short notice. Media watchdog organisations have warned that procedural violations in the conduct of the trial raised doubts about the independence of the judicial process, and that a conviction would have a significant chilling effect on the already severely threatened environment for free and independent media in Bulgaria.

Prokopiev publishes Capital Weekly and Dnevnik.bg, which are considered to be professional news outlets in an environment that is largely dominated by state-affiliated media.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Statement by the Association of European Journalists (AEJ): "AEJ expresses urgent concerns about threat of prison term against Bulgarian media owner for voicing 'opinions'"
- Statement by the European Centre for Press and Media Freedom (ECPMF): "Bulgarian media owner is threatened with prison term for expressing opinion"
- Grounds of the judgment published by Dnevnik.bg: "Присъдата следва да се основава на безспорни, неопровержими доказателства"

**Serbia**

On 21 June 2020, journalist Sasa Mikic was physically attacked while reporting from a polling station during the parliamentary election in Serbia. The attack happened at around 4 p.m. while Mikic, who normally works as a sports journalist, was on assignment at polling stations in...
Kikinda, a city in the autonomous province of Vojvodina. Mikic works at Dečiji Internet Radio, where he has been involved in training journalists, and is a long-time former employee at the public broadcaster Radio Television of Serbia. After presenting a journalistic ID and being admitted, Mikic had tried to speak to the president of the polling board about the turnout and other election matters. When he could not speak to the president, who was on the phone, he left. According to the journalist, as he was leaving he was approached by a group of unidentified individuals who threw something at him and started pushing him out of the building. Outside, a group of three men attacked Mikic from behind. The journalist said that two men held him down while a third hit him in the face. Police were called to the scene and Mikic was given medical assistance. He suffered cuts to is lower lip and other minor injuries. The attack was reported to the Serbian authorities. Mikic went to a police station to submit a statement. He said he was unable to identify the attackers and did not understand why he had been assaulted. He said he had the correct IDs, accreditations and permission to report from inside the polling station. The Association of Journalists of Serbia, the Independent Journalists Association of Serbia, and the SafeJournalists Network, a regional monitoring platform, condemned the attack.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- International Press Institute (IPI) statement: "IPI condemns beating of journalist and threats of violence during Serbian election"
- SafeJournalists Network statement: "Serbian journalist Mikic beaten up on election day"
- Association of Journalists of Serbia (UNS) statement: "УНС: Полиција да пронађе нападаче на Сашу Микића"

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**Hungary**  
*n* 53/2020  
Alert created on: 11 May 2020

**Threats of Legal Action against Cartoonist Gábor Pápai**

**SOURCE OF THREAT**  Non-state  
**CATEGORY**  Harassment and intimidation of journalists

László Toroczkai, leader of the Hungarian far-right political party Our Home Movement, and the ruling Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) have announced that they will sue cartoonist Gábor Pápai for alleged blasphemy. Pápai had published a cartoon in the opposition daily Népszava on 28 April 2020, representing Cecilia Müller (Chief Medical Officer at the National Centre for Public Health and member of the Government's "Coronavirus Task Force") at a press conference during which she faces Jesus crucified and says: "...His underlying condition caused..."
dependence". The sentence refers to previous statements by Cecília Müller who allegedly stated on several occasions that Covid-19 deceased were "predisposed" to die due to pre-existing pathologies. The cartoonist told Cartooning for Peace that he has been facing a campaign of threats and intimidation since the announcement of the lawsuits.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Cartooning For Peace Press Release: "Alert Hungaria: Gabor Papai"
- News report in Hungary Today: "KDNP to Launch Lawsuit for “Blasphemic” Caricature"
- Threats from László Toroczkai, published on his own blog (in Hungarian)
- Gábor Pápai’s explanations on his Facebook profile (in Hungarian)

**STATE REPLIES**

- 25 Jun 2020 | Reaction from the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade
  - Reaction from the Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade

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**United Kingdom**

**n° 52/2020** Alert created on: 11 May 2020

**Loyalist Threats against Journalists in Northern Ireland**

**SOURCE OF THREAT** ➤ Unknown

**CATEGORY** ➤ Harassment and intimidation of journalists

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has warned that threats from Loyalist paramilitaries have been made to an undisclosed number of journalists at the Belfast editorial offices of the Sunday Life and Sunday World newspapers. They include threats of imminent physical attacks and planned car bomb attacks. Both newspapers are owned by Independent News and Media (INM). The warnings came in the early hours of 8 May 2020. The PSNI is taking the threat seriously and officers have been in contact with the journalists concerned. It is understood the threats emanate from a breakaway Loyalist group, the South East Antrim Ulster Defence Association (UDA). The PSNI has confirmed they are “in receipt” of information that indicates a planned and co-ordinated campaign of intimidation.
The National Union of Journalists of Great Britain and Ireland has condemned the threats as "a vile attempt at intimidation".

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Statement from the National Union of Journalists of Great Britain and Ireland: "NUJ condemns vile threat to Northern Ireland newspapers"
- Post on Mapping Media Freedom (MMF): "Loyalists issue threats against Sunday Life and Sunday World journalists"
- NUJ campaign against threats to journalists :"Northern Ireland unites against threats to journalists"

**STATE REPLIES**

- 25 Jun 2020 | Reply from the United Kingdom authorities
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of the United Kingdom to the Council of Europe

**FOLLOW-UPS**

- 11 May 2020 | OSCE Media Freedom Representative condemns serious threats against journalists in Northern Ireland
  - Statement by Harlem Désir

**Belgium**

EUobserver under Threat of Legal Action in Belgium after Complaint was Dismissed in Luxembourg

**SOURCE OF THREAT** ▶ Non-state

**CATEGORY** ▶ Harassment and intimidation of journalists

**NO STATE REPLY YET**

On 6 December 2019, EUobserver published an article titled “Blood from stone: What did British PR firm do for Malta?” According to the investigation, Chelgate, a British public relations firm, had
assisted the government of Malta in a UK inquiry into "fake news". Maltese authorities had also hired Chelgate to defend the image of former Prime Minister Joseph Muscat in EU capitals during the investigation into the murder of Daphne Caruana Galizia. Chelgate had hired a private intelligence firm in Luxembourg, Sandstone SA, to compile a report on Caruana Galizia's killing. Excerpts from Sandstone's research into the matter, obtained by EUobserver, contained accusations that the President of the Russian Federation and the President of Azerbaijan had conspired to murder Caruana Galizia, using a Chechen assassin. Chelgate had also briefed European media about Caruana Galizia, promoting conspiracy theories about her.

On 10 December 2019, Sandstone sent a letter to EUobserver, requesting that journalistic sources and documentation be made public and the article be “corrected”. EUobserver offered a right of reply and were open to amending the article, but Sandstone didn’t agree on the suggested changes. Under threat of legal action, Sandstone requested proof in relation to the content of the article, alternatively the article to be taken down.

A week later, a press release was distributed on behalf of Sandstone SA, stating that the article was now the subject of legal proceedings in Luxembourg, where Sandstone is based. According to an article from the daily d'Lëtzebuerger Land, Sandstone filed a criminal complaint against EUobserver with the Luxembourg public prosecutor on 18 December 2019. On 7 May 2020, the public prosecutor rejected the case on the ground that it should be filed before civil courts. Around 12 May 2020, Sandstone’s lawyer, Laurent Ries, said to d’Lëtzebuerger Land’s journalists that his client now intended to sue EUobserver in Belgium.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Press release disseminated on Pressat: "Sandstone Luxembourg presses Criminal Charges against EUobserver"
- Article from EUobserver: "Blood from stone: What did British PR firm do for Malta?"

**Bulgaria** — n° 70/2020

**Investigative Journalist Dimiter Petzov Charged with Drug Possession Days after Filing a Freedom of Information Request**

**SOURCE OF THREAT** — State

**CATEGORY** — Harassment and intimidation of journalists
On 2 May 2020, police in the town of Silistra, in northeastern Bulgaria, pulled over Dimiter Petzov, a freelance investigative journalist, and searched his car. Petzov told the broadcaster Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty that the officers performed an “imitation of a search” and within one minute found a bag containing heroin, amphetamines, marijuana, and ecstasy, which Petzov said he had never seen before.

On 13 May, prosecutors in Silistra charged Petzov with drug possession, and a local court ordered him not to leave town without authorities’ permission, according to regional news website Balkan Insight. If convicted, he could face a prison sentence of up to five years, according to the Bulgarian criminal code.

The journalist stated that his arrest came after he submitted a freedom of information request on 28 April to the regional directorate of the Ministry of Interior in Silistra, seeking to reveal the identity of an anonymous donor who provided food and drinks to police officers guarding checkpoints in the city. He said he suspected that the arrest was an attempt to intimidate him.

On 11 May, the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior, which oversees the police, ordered an investigation into the circumstances of Petzov’s arrest.

Petzov publishes his reporting in regional outlets including the Silistra-News website, where he recently covered local politics and alleged government corruption in the town. He also writes reports and files freedom of information requests relating to local government issues for the Anti-Corruption Fund, an independent nongovernmental group.

In February, he reported to authorities that the local coordinator for the ruling GERB party threatened to “crush” him, but authorities refused to initiate proceedings against the coordinator. CPJ emailed the press office of the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior for comment, but did not receive any reply.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- CPJ Alert: "Bulgarian investigative journalist arrested for drug possession days after filing information request"

**FREELANCERS**

Key information:

Dimiter Petzov
Journalists were attacked and threatened while covering a far-right rally in London on 13 June 2020. Under the “Britain First” banner, a large group of people staged a counter-demonstration against the “Black Lives Matter” march in Parliament Square, right in front of the House of Commons. Throughout the rally, journalists and media workers were threatened and attacked. An Italian journalist and photographer, Corrado Amitrano, had his nose broken and was verbally attacked before police brought him to safety. He was treated for his injuries at St Thomas’s hospital. Another photographer was hit as protestors hurled barricades at the police, and three reporters had their mobile phones knocked out of their hand whilst they were filming. Some media outlets advised staff covering the protests not to engage or seek interviews with demonstrators because of the fear of more acts of violence. The National Union of Journalists, which counts Corrado amongst its members, issued a statement condemning the violence and called for those responsible to be identified and prosecuted.

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NO STATE REPLY YET

BBC news report: "London protests: Demonstrators clash with police"
National Union of Journalists’ statement: "NUJ condemns attacks on journalists”
French freelance journalist Inès Léraud is being prosecuted for defamation by business tycoon Jean Chéritel, CEO of the Chéritel group, following the publication, in March 2019, of her investigation entitled: "Hidden work, label fraud: the multiple abuses of a Breton agro-industrial group". The trial is due to take place on the 20th and 21st of January 2021.

Léraud’s investigation was published in BastaMag on 26 March 2019 and shed light on the alleged illegal practices of the Chéritel group, an important fruit and vegetable wholesaler in the Brittany region. She denounced, for example, the workers' working conditions and the CEO’s attempts at silencing critical voices.

Chéritel has been condemned several times by the courts and has prosecuted for defamation a regional newspaper, the daily Le Télégramme, in 2015, about the alleged illegal employment of Bulgarian workers by the group. The case is under appeal.

It is not the first time Léraud has been sued for defamation because of her work on the agri-food industry in Brittany. At the end of 2019, Christian Buson, a Breton agri-food business owner, launched a lawsuit against Léraud after she published an investigation in the form of a graphic novel, entitled “Green seaweed - the forbidden story” about the proliferation of seaweeds in Brittany. These seaweeds, which are toxic and have caused the death of several people and animals, proliferated notably because of the pesticides that the agri-food industry uses and discharges into the sea. The case was dropped a few days before the trial, which was scheduled on the 7th of January 2020.

In addition, in June 2019, Inès Léraud's project to translate her book into the Breton language was abandoned by the regional publishing house, which was allegedly under pressure to keep its regional subsidies from the Brittany Regional Council. More recently, the weekly French newspaper Le Canard Enchaîné revealed in March 2020, that Inès Léraud's planned appearance at the Book Fair in Quintin, a city in Brittany, was cancelled after an elected representative of the municipality intervened.

Inès Léraud is supported by a number of journalists’ organisations which qualified the legal actions against the journalist as SLAPPs (Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation) with the objective to intimidate and silence her. In May 2020, more than 240 journalists and organisations co-signed an open letter to denounce the attempts by agri-food industrialists and some politicians to muzzle the press. Another column published in the daily newspaper Libération voiced its support for the journalist and denounced these intimidatory actions as attacks on the freedom of information.
On 1 May 2020, a crew of seven media workers from German public service broadcaster ZDF was severely assaulted in Berlin.

The crew included a journalist, a cameraman, a camera assistant, three security guards, and comedian and cabaret artist Abdelkarim. According to reports, the team was heading back to their vehicles after shooting the satirical programme "heute-show" near protests against COVID-19 confinement rules when they were violently attacked by a group of around 15 hooded individuals. All media workers except Abdelkarim were severely injured and sent to hospital. They left hospital in the evening.

Four men and two women were arrested on that evening in connection with the attack. On 2 May 2020, the suspects were brought before a magistrate, who released them. According to a statement by the spokesperson for the Berlin Attorney-General, pressing grounds of suspicion or grounds for detention were insufficient, though the arrested persons had ties with left-motivated criminality. According to a spokesperson for the Federal Police, who quoted witness reports, the attackers arrived on the scene in a car and with bikes, and had planned the assault. The State Protection Office, that investigates politically motivated crimes, took over the investigation on 2 May 2020.

The chairman of the German Association of Journalists, Frank Überall, ZDF's programme
director and several media outlets and freedom of expression organisations condemned the attack.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Statement from the German Union of Journalists: "dju in ver.di verurteilt Angriff auf Team der ZDF „Heute-Show“"
- Statement from the German Association of Journalists (DJV): "ZDF-Team: Angriff auf die Pressefreiheit"
- ZDF's statement: "Team der ZDF - "heute-show" in Berlin angegriffen"
- Report published on the ZDF's website: "Angriff auf heute-show-Team: "Mit Totschlägern auf das Team los""

**STATE REPLIES**

- 15 Jun 2020 | Reply by the German authorities
  - Letter by the Permanent Representation of Germany to the Council of Europe (in German and English)

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**Bosnia and Herzegovina**

On 26 August 2018, two masked persons attacked BN TV correspondent, Vladimir Kovačević, in front of the building where he lives, in Banja Luka.

Kovačević was going home after reporting about the latest protest organised in Banja Luka by the group “Justice for David”, calling on the authorities to uncover the truth about the murder of a young student from Baanja Lulla. According to the journalist, the two unknown perpetrators were waiting for him and beat him up with metal rods. The journalist was seriously injured and was taken to the hospital in the evening.
The attack was reported to the police and an investigation has been launched.

### PROGRESS

**11 Jun 2019:** One of the assailants, Marko Čolić, has been charged with attempted murder and is currently on trial. Police are still looking for the second suspect, Nedeljko Đukić, and an international arrest warrant has been issued.

- Article published on BN TV website (in Bosnian): "Svjedoci o napadu na novinara BN TV"

### UPDATES

**11 Jun 2020:** In July 2019, the first instance court had sentenced Marko Colić to four years on charges of attempted murder on journalist Vladimir Kovačević. On 9 March 2020, the Supreme Court of the Republic of Srpska increased the sentence to 5 years in prison. The second suspect, Nedeljko Đukić, who surrendered to the police in November 2019, is being prosecuted. His trial started on 5 June 2020.

- Report by the Regional Platform for advocating media freedom and journalists’ safety: "Increased sentence to Marko Colić for attempting to murder BN television journalist"
- Article published on the news portal Nezavisne: "Kovačević na suđenju Đukiću: Tukli su me i kad sam pao"

**11 Sep 2018:** On 10 September 2018, police arrested a suspect over the attack on Vladimir Kovačević.

- Article published by Balkan Insight: "Republika Sprska police arrests suspect in-attack on journalist"

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Article from Balkan Insight: "Bosnian Journalist Covering Dragicevic Protests Attacked"
- Statement from the regional platform for advocating media freedom and journalists' safety: "Regional Platform: Attacks on journalists must stop!"

### FOLLOW-UPS
Dragan Bursac, a columnist for regional private broadcaster Al Jazeera Balkans (AJB), received a series of death threats via Facebook after publishing on 8 July 2017 a piece in which he condemned the gathering in the city of Banja Luka in support of Ratko Mladic. The piece, entitled: "Is Banja Luka Celebrating Srebrenica Genocide?", refers to Ratko Mladic, a former Bosnian Serb military leader accused of committing war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide by the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

As a result of numerous threats on social media, Bursac had to flee Banja Luka and, as regional broadcaster N1 reported, he is currently living in an undisclosed location in Bosnia. In the comment section of Bursac’s piece, which was published on AJB’s Facebook page, an unknown person nicknamed “Caruga Stanisavljevic” wrote that “a penalty shot has been issued” and that the journalist “should be careful”. The incident was reported to the police.
In a written reaction published on their website, the BH Journalists Association strongly condemned the threats, urging the police to conduct an efficient investigation.

**RESOLVED**

**11 Jun 2020:** Taking into consideration the outcome of the criminal proceeding against the author of the threats, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be “resolved”, concluding it is no longer an active threat to media freedom.

**UPDATES**

**11 Jun 2020:** In September 2019, the Banja Luka Basic Court ruled that A.B. committed the criminal offense of "Endangering security" under Article 150 paragraph 1 of the Criminal Code of Republika Srpska and imposed a fine of 600 BAM, which the accused was obliged to pay within five months after the verdict becomes final. The accused was also obliged to pay the costs of the proceedings in the amount of 150 BAM within 30 days after the verdict becomes final.

- Article published by BH Novinari: "BH Journalists: Threatening journalists online is a criminal offense"

**13 Oct 2017:** On 7 August 2017 Dragan Bursac was again the victim of death threats on social media. The police arrested a suspect and criminal charges were filed against him. On 13 October 2017 the preliminary hearing for this second case of threats began.

- EFJ statement: "Bosnia and Herzegovina: journalist Dragan Bursać receives death threats"
- Report from the Western Balkans Regional Platform for Advocating Media Freedom and Journalists’ Safety: "Journalist associations from the region welcome the arrest of a person who threatened journalist Dragan Bursac"

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Report on Mapping Media Freedom: "Bosnia and Herzegovina: Al Jazeera columnist flees following death threats"
On 1 March 2020, a group of protesters at the port of Thermi, on the island of Lesbos, attempted to block refugees traveling into the country from Turkey, and attacked journalists who were covering the refugees’ arrival, according to social media posts and news reports.

The protesters kicked and beat freelance photojournalist Michael Trammer, and threw his cameras into the water, the journalist tweeted. Trammer told CPJ via messaging app that he went to a local emergency room after the attack with injuries to his head, where he received stitches and an x-ray and was released.

The protesters kicked and beat freelance photographer Raphael Knipping, and hit him with his camera tripod, he wrote on Twitter. He wrote that Trammer was more seriously injured and that he was “ok.”

Protesters threw sticks at Der Spiegel reporter Giorgos Christides and chased his car while he was attempting to report on the refugees’ arrival, he wrote on Twitter, adding that the assailants built roadblocks to obstruct reporters and human rights workers. Julian Busch, a freelance photojournalist, posted a video on Twitter showing local residents throwing sticks at the car that he and freelance journalist Franziska Grillmeier were driving.

Trammer said he did not see any Greek police officers at the scene. Christides tweeted that police were “watching or non existent.”

CPJ emailed the press department of the Greek national police for comment but did not immediately receive a reply.

UPDATE

05 Mar 2020: On 2 March, journalist Quentin Warlop and his cameraman -working for the Belgian public broadcaster RTBF- were threatened and pushed by the protesters, while the journalists were live during a duplex with the TV5 Monde news broadcast.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CPJ alert: "Anti-refugee protesters attack journalists in Greece"
On 5 June 2020, journalist Metin Uca was sentenced to 14 months and 17 days in prison for “insulting a public officer in duty” in a tweet he posted about an election result forecast. The charges against him followed complaints by the state-owned Anadolu News Agency (AA) director Şenol Kazancı and deputy director Mustafa Öz�能, who are classified as “public officers”. They said the journalist had accused the government-controlled outlet of alleged election fraud. Uca had tweeted raising concerns about AA’s highly accurate forecast of the presidential and national elections results on the day of the vote, 24 June 2018. AA executives Kazancı and Öz�能 filed a criminal complaint against Uca for “insult”. In its ruling, the court said that Uca’s comments had overstepped freedom of expression. The court also said that sharing his views on a public social media platform was a reason for increase in the penalty.

State-run AA, founded in 1920, is under direct editorial control of the AKP government. The government also exerts powerful control over the country’s judicial system and courts.
FOLLOW-UPS

09 Jun 2020 | OSCE Media Freedom Representative concerned by prison sentences against two journalists in Turkey, urges authorities to respect freedom of expression

- Statement by Harlem Désir

Belgium n° 65/2020
Alert created on: 08 Jun 2020

**Journalist Jeremy Audouard Intimidated by Brussels Police while Filming an Arrest**

**SOURCE OF威胁** → State

**CATEGORY** → Harassment and intimidation of journalists

NO STATE REPLY YET

Journalist Jeremy Audouard was pushed and intimidated by a hooded officer of the Brussels police (PolBru) while filming an arrest on the fringes of the "Black Lives Matter" demonstration in Ixelles, in rue du Prince Royal, on 7 June 2020 at around 8.30 pm. The policeman tried several times to prevent the journalist, who was showing his press card, from filming the violent arrest of a protester lying on the ground by six policemen. On Monday, the Professional Journalists' Association filed a complaint against the policeman and reminded the Brussels police that journalists have the right to take and broadcast pictures of policemen intervening in a public space.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Reaction of the Professional Journalists' Association on its Twitter account
- Video of the violent arrest of a demonstrator by six police officers on Barbara Vangeel's Twitter account
- Video of the police intimidation on Jeremy Audouard's Twitter account
On 23 May 2020, a photojournalist from the Spanish newspaper “La Razón” was physically assaulted by two unknown individuals while reporting on the Vox party protests in Madrid against the Spanish government’s actions to contain the pandemic. The aggressors, who were shouting slogans against the press, pushed the journalist from behind while he was filming the protest. After the impact, strong enough to tear his shirt, the individuals also threw the journalist’s camera on the floor.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Article from La Sexta: "Un grupo de manifestantes agrede a un periodista mientras informaba de la protesta de Vox en Madrid"
- Article from La Razón: "La Razón condena la agresión a uno de sus reporteros gráficos durante la manifestación de Vox"

Ukrainian journalist Oleksandr Vlashchenko was assaulted on 30 November 2019, in the port city of Mykolaiv. Oleksandr Vlashchenko, who works for the web site Novosti N, was on his way home when an unknown assailant sprayed liquid in his eyes and then hit him several times in the face and on the head. He managed to reach his family who immediately called an ambulance and alerted the police. Vlashchenko had to be hospitalized and was diagnosed with concussion and injuries to his lower lip. He claimed the attack may have been motivated by his work. According to the editorial board of Novosti N, it is not the first time that Vlashchenko had been targeted for his journalistic work. In 2014, a group of unknown people had kidnapped him and threatened to kill him if he did not delete footage shot on the premises of the Mykolaiv Regional...
Council. Despite the police being provided with detailed information about the attacker, including photographs, no one has been arrested.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- RFE RL news article: "Ukrainian Journalist Attacked For Third Time In Seven Years"
- EFJ statement: "Ukraine: Journalist attacked by unknown assailant"
- NSJU statement: "Через розприсканий газ почав задихатися, якби не дружина й "швидка", то міг би вже й не жити", – Олександр Влащенко"

STATE REPLIES

- 05 Jun 2020 | Reply from the Government of Ukraine
  - Official position of Ukraine

United Kingdom

n° 64/2020

Alert created on: 03 Jun 2020

Journalist Amy Fenton Put under Police Protection due to Threats following Coverage of a Criminal Case

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ Non-state

CATEGORY ▶ Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

Amy Fenton is a journalist and chief reporter for The Mail in Barrow-in-Furness, a town in northwestern England. On 23 May 2020, The Mail published Fenton’s report about a young woman from the town who had been charged with lying about having been abused. The woman who was charged had reportedly alleged that she suffered for years at the hands of a gang of Asian men in towns across the north of England.

Fenton began receiving threats via social media and Whatsapp following the publication of her report. Some of those who threatened her, accused her of being “in” the rumoured Asian gang, although local police said that their year-long investigation found no evidence of the gang’s existence. In the last week of May, Fenton said she received “in excess of 100 death threats and threats of unlawful violence”, as well as “countless more”, which were reported to the police.
On the night of Sunday 24 May, Fenton was contacted by police and told that they believed there was a credible risk to her life, as well as that of her five-year-old child. The police had made the call after having assessed the dozens of threats Fenton had received in the previous days. Fenton and her daughter immediately left their home that night and have since been staying in a secret location, while under police protection.

This is not the first time that Fenton has received serious threats as a result of her reporting. In February, a man was jailed for 20 weeks for making a rape threat against Fenton after she covered a court case in which he was convicted of threatening to blow up a hospital.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- The Guardian report: "Barrow journalist hounded out of Cumbria for reporting court case"
- Report published on news portal PressGazette: "Local journalist 'put under police protection' after repeated threats"
- Report published on the news portal Prolific North: "NUJ demands end to threats against Newsquest's Cumbria reporter"

On 6 March 2020, Gennaro Del Giudice, editorial director of the online newsletter Cronaca Flegrea, was threatened while reporting on a shooting in Naples, Italy. Following his arrest and being handcuffed, a suspected member of the Camorra mafia said to the journalist that the raid on his home two years ago was commissioned by the group. “I’m watching what you’re writing. We keep you under control”, he added. Cronaca Flegrea has previously been targeted by the Camorra mafia because of its publications and investigations.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- FNSI statement : "Pozzuoli, cronista minacciato da un pregiudicato. Fnsi e Sugc al fianco del collega"
In the early hours of 22 April 2020, the car belonging to Fabio Buonafiglio, director of online Italian news platform AltrePagine.it, was set on fire near his house in the province of Corigliano. Buonafiglio, who has previously faced threats due to his work as a reporter, has for years published investigative stories about the operations of the 'Ndrangheta' organised crime group in the Calabria region. The fire broke out around 0.45 a.m. and required the fire brigade to extinguish the blaze. The car was completely destroyed. The fire also spread to a neighbour’s car parked close by and caused significant damage. Police have opened an investigation and are trying to identify suspects. The case is being treated as an act of intimidation. The Italian National Press Federation (FNSI) condemned the attack.
On Sunday 17 May 2020, in Montpellier, commissioned by Agence France Presse to cover the identity rally organised by the extreme right-wing group "Ligue du Midi", journalist Ysis Percq was targeted by activists while doing her job. The demonstration had been banned by the prefecture. Her phone was also stolen and she was threatened and physically intimidated. All the videos of the demonstration she recorded were erased. The journalist filed a complaint and was able to recover her phone after the perpetrator was arrested. The Montpellier public prosecutor's office announced the opening of an investigation. Several journalists' organisations have condemned the attack against the journalist and the passivity of the police towards the militants of the "Ligue du Midi".

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Joint statement by journalists’ organisations: "Menaces et intimidations envers la journaliste Ysis Percq par des militants de la Ligue du Midi : stop à la banalisation de l’extrême droite"
- France 3 report: "Montpellier : nouvelles violences de la Ligue du Midi lors d’une manifestation interdite"
- France Bleu report: "Manifestations à Montpellier : la police plus souple avec la Ligue du Midi qu’avec les gilets jaunes ?"
Around 10,000 posters have been stucked in the streets of Athens, Greece's capital, in the early hours of the 6 May 2020. The posters display the photos of journalists, their names and words such as “slanderers”, “shameful for 10 Euros”, “impostors”. Some of the posters are still visible today.

Three of the journalists are members of Journalists' Union of Athens Daily Newspapers (JUADN) and one is member of the Journalists’ Union of Macedonia and Thrace Daily Newspapers (ESIEMTH). According to JUADN, the journalists are targeted for their articles, reports and comments on Greek football.
On 22 May 2020, Vanja Stokić, editor-in-chief of the E-trafika news portal received a message on her Facebook profile stating that the sender would "decapitate" not only migrants, but also "all you soul caregivers who welcome them."

Stokić received the message after having published a photograph depicting her with two migrants on her profile, as she was covering a story on migration. She tried to report the threats to the Banja Luka police straight away, but was told to come back on 25 May 2020 - three days after the threats were made. Stokić said the same person repeated the threats and even left his phone number so she could pass it to the police.

"The policewoman on duty asked me why I came literally 'just for that'. Then she called the inspector and told me to come on Monday, then I would be received by an inspector who does not normally deal with that, but that the case will be forwarded to someone. I don't feel safe, I'm afraid, and they would wait two days to take my statement", says Stokić.

Additional threats and harassment messages were sent to Stokić and her friends. After a strong public reaction, the perpetrator was finally detained on 24 May 2020. He was released after questioning by the police and a report was filed with the prosecutor's office.

SafeJournalists.net partner, BH Journalists, strongly condemned the conduct of police officers and called for a swift investigation into this case.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Regional Platform for advocating media freedom and journalists' safety statement: "BiH: Police to act promptly when journalists are threatened"
- Vecernji news article: "Novinarka policiji prijavila prijetnje smrću, odgovorili su joj da dođe za tri dana"
On 3 March 2020, journalists and editors from Slidstvo.info, a Ukrainian member of the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), learnt their platform was being investigated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs as part of a criminal espionage probe. The basis for the investigation are Freedom of Information (FOI) requests sent by the outlet in December 2019 to 14 current and former Ukrainian politicians, state agencies and officials, asking for details about the meetings between United States and Ukrainian officials. Among those contacted was Oleksandr Dubinsky, a Member of the Parliament of Ukraine from the ruling Servant of the People party, who at a press conference in January 2020 alleged the FOI request was proof that Slidstvo journalists were involved in illegally spying on former United States Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch. After Dubinsky filed a criminal complaint against Slidstvo for violation of privacy, last week the Ministry of Internal Affairs announced it had accepted his material as part of an ongoing, wider police probe into alleged United States surveillance of its own embassy officials in Kiev. Slidstvo editor-in-chief said the probe was baseless and threatened source protection by opening the door to police raids and the seizure of journalistic materials. The editor said the Ministry of Internal Affairs may have included the FOI requests into the probe in retaliation for Slidstvo’s recent investigations into alleged bribery and misconduct within the Ukrainian police force in the handling of several high profile crimes, including the 2016 killing of journalist Pavel Sheremet. Slidstvo.info covers politics, crime and state bodies in Ukraine, for which it was awarded the Investigative Reporters and Editors Medal in 2017.

13 May 2020: On 13 May 2020, Slidstvo.info editor-in-chief Anna Babinets, who is also the regional editor of the OCCRP, was summoned for questioning by Ukraine’s national police as part of the pre-trial criminal investigation. The summons came more than two months after Slidstvo.Info learnt their platform was being investigated by the Ministry of Internal Affairs as part of a criminal espionage probe.

Additional Information:
- Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP) statement: "OCCRP Condemns Planned Interrogation of our Editor in Ukraine"
- CPJ's Alert: "Ukrainian investigative outlet Slidstvo.Info faces potential investigation for its reporting"
- IPI statement: "Ukraine investigative news platform hit with criminal probe"
On 18 May 2020, the Turkish Minister of the Interior Süleyman Soylu openly denigrated journalist Müyessel Yıldız, a columnist for Oda TV, on Twitter and accused her of having “terrorist” sympathies. The accusations stem from comments Yıldız made on Facebook about Soylu’s statement on an outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) military camp in the city of Kars that was taken over by Turkish forces. Yıldız had commented that news coming from the region about new casualties suggested the camp was not completely demolished. In his Tweet, Soylu replied: “Only you and the PKK would be sorry about this news... My sorrow is not about your affection for the PKK, but your collaboration with those shavettes who wear a so-called state shirt.” The PKK is considered a terrorist organisation in Turkey. In a statement made after Soylu's targeting, Yıldız explained that she assumes that this comment was meant to denigrate her alleged contacts and information sources in the Turkish security forces. The journalist also said that she fears for her physical well-being as, after Soylu's criticism, she has been targeted by a troll campaign.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Article published by Birgün: "Soylu, Odatv yazarı Müyesser Yıldız'ı hedef aldı"
- Müyessel Yıldız’s facebook statement: "Hedef Gösteren İçişleri Bakanı Olunca Can Güvenliğim İçin Hangi Kapıya Gideceğim?!
- Tweet by Interior Ministry Soylu
May 2020

Cartoonist Mahmoud Abbas Threatened with Death

SOURCE OF THREAT  Unknown
CATEGORY  Harassment and intimidation of journalists

PARTNER: EFJ/IFJ

On 20 April 2020, the cartoonist of Palestinian origin Mahmoud Abbas, based in Sweden, published a cartoon about the collapse of oil prices as the COVID-19 strongly impacted the oil industry.

The cartoon shows a person in a Gulf Arab dress running away from rolling barrels of oil. The caption says "Drop in oil prices". The cartoon quickly went viral on Twitter in Saudi Arabia as the character was identified by the audience as crown prince Mohammed Bin Salman.

The next day, Mahmoud Abbas received thousands of tweets and comments on social networks, including insults, hate speech and death threats towards him and his family. Some referred to him as a "terrorist". Personal information about his family and his location in Sweden was also shared.

A complaint was filed to the Swedish police.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Statement from EFJ: "Sweden: Cartoonist threatened with death after publishing cartoon"
- Article from the Middle East Eye: "Cartoon sparks bitter row over Saudi support for Palestinian cause"

STATE REPLEYS

19 May 2020  |  Reply from the Swedish authorities

- Information provided by the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the Council of Europe
On 8 April 2020, it was reported that officers from the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) had contacted a Northern Ireland journalist who works for "The Irish News" to inform them of a suspected plot to physically attack them in their own home.

The editor of "The Irish News" condemned the attempt to intimidate the journalist and said he was satisfied that it is being treated very seriously by police. He said that "The Irish News" staff would not be deterred from carrying out their journalistic duties.

This is the second recorded incident that threatens the safety of Northern Ireland journalists this year, following attempts to intimidate Leona O'Neill in February.
Lyra McKee, a leading young journalist, was murdered on 18 April 2019 in the Creggan area of Derry in Northern Ireland. Violent unrest had broken out when police carried out searches in the area. During the disturbances a man reportedly fired shots towards police officers, fatally wounding 29-year old Ms McKee who was standing near a police vehicle. The murder is being investigated as a terrorist incident.

11 Feb 2020: On 11 February 2020, four people have been arrested in Derry in connection with the murder of the journalist Lyra McKee.

07 Jun 2019: On 6 June 2019, the PSNI carried out further home searches, seizing items for examination. A man aged 46 was arrested and subsequently released without charge.

Article from The Irish Times: Man arrested in connection with murder of Lyra McKee released

10 May 2019: On 9 May 2019, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) carried out home searches under the Terrorism Act and arrested four men aged 15, 18, 38 and 51, saying the riots in the Creggan area were “orchestrated”. The teenagers were released without charges. On 11 May 2019, Christopher Gillen and Paul McIntyre went on trial in the Magistrates’ Court on charges of riot, petrol bomb offences and the arson of a hijacked vehicle. Both were denied bail.

Article published by The Guardian: "Lyra McKee death: four males arrested"

24 Apr 2019: On 23 April 2019, in a statement issued to the Irish News, an organisation called “New IRA” admitted that journalist McKee had been killed by one of its “volunteers” “while standing beside enemy forces”.

Article published by the BBC: "Lyra McKee: 'New IRA' admits killing of journalist"

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Article from the BBC: "Lyra McKee murder: Journalist shot dead during Derry rioting"

STATE REPLIES
Sajid Hussain Baloch, editor-in-chief of the online news magazine Balochistan Times, has been found dead near the Swedish city of Uppsala. His body was recovered from the river Fyris on 23 April 2020.

Police launched an investigation into his death. The 39-year-old journalist had fled Pakistan in 2012 after receiving death threats, and has been living in Sweden since 2017 where he had been granted political asylum. At the time of disappearance, he was preparing to welcome his wife and children to join him in Sweden, and had just collected the keys to a new apartment. He was last seen boarding a train on 2 March 2020. The alarm was raised by Ulrika Hyllert, chair of the Journalistförbundet journalists’ association.

According to a police spokesperson, the initial autopsy was inconclusive, but foul play could not be ruled out, and there were four possible lines of investigation: crime, illness, accident, or suicide. Press freedom organisations remain vigilant with regard to this case, since the Balochistan Times covers the troubled province of Baluchistan, south-west Pakistan, and...
Hussain Baloch had reported on forced disappearances and organised crime in his native country.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Report from Mapping Media Freedom: "Mystery of missing journalist found dead in Sweden"
- Article from BBC: "Sajid Hussain: Swedish police find body of missing Pakistani journalist"

**STATE REPLIES**

- 18 May 2020 | Reply from the Swedish authorities
  - Information provided by the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the Council of Europe

**Serbia n° 58/2020**

KRIK Targeted by a Smear Campaign after Investigation

**SOURCE OF THREAT** State

**CATEGORY** Harassment and intimidation of journalists

On 5 May 2020, the Crime and Corruption Reporting Network (KRIK) published a new investigative story entitled “Gangsters and Hooligans: Key Players in the Balkan Cocaine Wars”, focusing on the rivalry between two crime groups from Montenegro. The investigation reveals short profiles and past history of key clans' leaders and their connections to the police and politicians in the region. In particular, the son of Serbian President Vučić, Danilo Vučić, is mentioned for his acquaintance with a key member of a football hooligan group connected to one of the clans.

Following the publication of the investigation, Serbian political leaders and media accused journalists of lying, discrediting authorities and targeting the President’s son on behalf of the opposition. The daily Kurir qualified the investigation as “the most heinous attack aimed at criminalising and satanising the President’s son.” Maja Gojković, president of Serbia’s parliament, also released a statement condemning the story as politically motivated. Nebojša Stefanović, Minister of the Interior, told local media that KRIK had placed “a target on the forehead of Danilo
Vučić, directly endangering his life.”

KRIK journalists have received different kind of threats as a result of the smear campaign.

The Independent Journalists’ Association of Serbia (NUNS) condemned “the behavior of the highest state officials and calls on them to stop attacking and pressuring journalists and spinning and diverting public attention from important discoveries on some secondary topics.”

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- NUNS statement: "NUNS: Podrška koleginicama i kolegama u KRIK –u"
- N1 TV article: "KRIK under fire over picture of Serbian President’s son"
- KRIK article: "KRIK Investigation Sparks Uproar Among Serbian Officials"

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**Poland**

*n° 42/2020*  
Alert created on: 20 Apr 2020

**Polish Clothing Company LLP Files Lawsuit against two Polish Journalists for Newsweek Poland Article**

**SOURCE OF THREAT**  
Non-state

**CATEGORY**  
Harassment and intimidation of journalists

**PARTNER: Index, Article 19, EFJ/IFJ, IPI**

On 22 March 2020, Polish journalists Wojciech Cieśla and Julia Dauksza published a story in Newsweek Poland reporting that the clothing company LPP had sent several hundred thousand protective masks to their contractors in China to supply the factories sewing LPP clothes. LLP claim that this was to help the areas most affected by Covid-19. In the article, which was published online, Cieśla and Dauksza reported on how LPP’s actions had deprived ordinary people in Poland of access to masks during the Covid-19 crisis.

After publication, LPP declined the right to reply to the article but released a statement on the same day declaring the content to be untrue and misleading to the public. The statement was published in full on the Newsweek website. Cieśla and Dauksza’s response to LLP’s statement was published on the site at the same time.

On 14 April, LLP released a press statement announcing that it had filed a lawsuit District Court in Gdańsk for the protection of personal rights against the publisher of the Newsweek weekly - Ringier Axel Springer Polska, editor-in-chief of newsweek.pl - Aleksandra Karasińska and
authors of the publication - Wojciech Cieśla and Julia Dauksza. The statement says that "this is the result of the editorial team disseminating false statements and suggestions regarding actions taken by LPP related to the purchase of protective masks for people affected by the Covid-19 epidemic in China at the turn of January and February 2020." According to the press release, LLP are seeking damages of 3 million Polish złoty or nearly one million Euro.

Neither Newsweek nor Cieśla and Dauksza have been directly informed of the lawsuit and have no information about the lawsuit other than what is contained in LLP’s press release.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Article published by Newsweek Poland: "właściciel Reserved wykupił z rynku maski, w których walczy się z koronawirusem"
- Article published by Newsweek Poland: "Oświadczenie LPP odnośnie artykułu w Newsweek.pl"
- Article published by Newsweek Poland: "Odpowiedź autorów: LPP mija się z prawdą"
- LLP company statement: "LPP złożyło pozew o ochronę dóbr osobistych"

**STATE REPLIES**

- 12 May 2020 | Reply from the Polish authorities (Ministry of Justice)
  - Letter from the Permanent representation of Poland to the Council of Europe

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**Ukraine** n° 37/2020 Alert created on: 31 Mar 2020

**Journalist Tetiana Sivokon Attacked while Reporting on Sale of Protective Masks**

**SOURCE OF THREAT** ‣ Non-state

**CATEGORY** ‣ Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

On 24 March 2020, while shooting a story in the Khmelnitsky region about the sale of protective masks, TV channel NewsOne journalist Tetiana Sivokon was physically attacked by a shop owner.
Ukraine is experiencing a shortage of protective masks during the COVID-19 pandemic. While preparing a report on this topic, NewsOne TV crew was informed by locals that the owner of a drug store had several large boxes with such masks.

Sivokon explained: “We went to this shop, saw the announcement that masks are in stock. I politely introduced myself and asked if I could buy masks. Seeing the camera, the owner began to pull the masks pack from my hands. He said that masks are not for sale, that they are for employees only”.

“After I informed that I had called the police, the man walked around and attacked me from behind, started to wring my hand and twist my fingers to snatch the masks from my hands. He also damaged a microphone”, she added.

Doctors diagnosed the journalist with severely ligament damage and put a cast on her hand. The National Police of Ukraine recorded the injury and started an investigation into the incident.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- NewsOne report
- EFJ statement: "COVID-19: Ukrainian journalist attacked while investigating sale of protective masks"
- National Union of Journalists of Ukraine statement

**STATE REPLIES**

- 11 May 2020 | Reply from the Government of Ukraine
  - Official position of Ukraine

**Slovenia**

n° 44/2016  
Alert created on: 24 Mar 2016

**Former Prime Minister Publicly Insults Two Journalists**

**SOURCE OF THREAT**  
Non-state

**CATEGORY**  
Harassment and intimidation of journalists
On 21 March 2016, the former Prime Minister of Slovenia and current leader of the main opposition party (SDS), Janez Jansa, insulted on his personal Twitter account a journalist and an editor from TV Slovenija (TVS), the Slovenian public broadcaster. They had broadcasted a story on the increase of hate speech against refugees and migrants in the country, including within SDS. On 21 March, at 7:43 pm, Janez Jansa posted a tweet naming the two journalists and comparing them to “disused prostitutes for 30 and 35 euros”. The Slovene Association of Journalists (DNS) and TVS journalists strongly condemned this public attack.

**UPDATES**

**11 May 2020:** In a session held in February 2020, but communicated only in May 2020, the Supreme Court of Slovenia overturned the defamation ruling in the case of Janša vs Mojca Šetinc Pašek, a journalist and editor with TV Slovenija. The Court ruled that Janez Janša’s (who, in the meantime has become Prime Minister of Slovenia) tweet falls under the category of “highly protected political expression” and that freedom of political expression prevails. The Supreme Court dismissed the journalist’s claim for damages and ordered her to reimburse Janez Janša’s costs in the proceedings within 15 days. The journalist has announced she will take her case to the Constitutional Court, with the support of the Slovenian Journalists’ organisations. Given this ruling and the implications it may have on media freedom in Slovenia, the partner organisations decided to re-open this case on the Platform.

**28 Nov 2018:** On 23 November 2018, the court of Celje sentenced Janez Jansa to a three-month suspended jail sentence for insulting two female journalists. It also ruled that the politician must pay the costs of the proceedings stemming from the 2016 incident. Jansa’s lawyer has said he will appeal the ruling.

**AP dispatch: “Slovenia right-wing politician gets 3-month suspended jail”**

**13 Sep 2016:** On 1st April 2016, an urgent session was held by the Committee on Culture of the Slovenian National Assembly. It condemned verbal attacks as a form of political pressure on journalists and the media and proposed to the President of the National Assembly to adopt a Code of Ethics for the Members of the Parliament "with a view to rejecting verbal abuse and other forms of offensive behaviour". On 13 September 2016, the partner organisations of the Platform declared this case to be "resolved", concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.
Report published on the Mapping Media Freedom platform: "Slovenia: Former PM tweets sexist insults to journalists"

Statement of the Slovenian Association of Journalists and the TV Slovenija journalists (in Slovenian)

Mr. Jansa’s tweet

STATE REPLIES

29 Jun 2016 | Reply from the Republic of Slovenia

Letter from the Permanent Representation of Slovenia to the Council of Europe

FOLLOW-UPS

28 Nov 2018 | OSCE representative welcomes conviction of senior politician in Slovenia for Tweet calling two journalists "prostitutes" in relation to their reporting in 2016. The 3-month prison sentence suspended for 1 year of probation is a strong sign that such abuse should not be tolerated.

Tweet by Harlem Désir

Turkey | n° 51/2020 | Alert created on: 11 May 2020

Fox TV Banned from Broadcast, Anchor Fatih Portakal Faces Three-Year Imprisonment

SOURCE OF THREAT: State

CATEGORY: Harassment and intimidation of journalists

NO STATE REPLY YET

On 15 April 2020, the Radio and Television High Council (RTÜK) issued broadcast bans against Fox TV over anchor Fatih Portakal’s critical comments while reporting the state’s COVID-19 policies. RTÜK cited Portakal’s comments while reporting the news on 30 March, 31 March and 1 April on the issues of blocking opposition mayors’ donation campaigns, the politicisation of the Directorate of Religious Affairs and economic issues. Fox TV was also fined 3% of its advertisement revenue. According to RTÜK regulations, if Fox TV is fined again on the same
violations, RTÜK can cancel its license to broadcast completely. RTÜK additionally fined Fox TV for another day-time programme for allegedly spreading “fake news” while reporting citizens’ struggle to get bread during lockdown. Other lawsuits were launched simultaneously following President Erdoğan’s criminal complaint over a tweet Portakal posted on the government’s COVID-19 donation campaign. Also, an indictment was submitted upon complaint of the Banking Regulation and Supervision Agency (BDDK) for defying the law on banking, requesting Portakal’s imprisonment for up to three years.

FOLLOW-UPS

OSCE 11 May 2020 | OSCE Media Freedom Representative worried about media bans imposed by Turkey’s Radio and Television Supreme Council (RTÜK)

Statement by Harlem Désir

Turkey n° 50/2020 Alert created on: 10 May 2020
Criminal Complaint Filed against Journalist Ragıp Zarakolu

SOURCE OF THREAT ➔ State
CATEGORY ➔ Harassment and intimidation of journalists

A statement released by the Turkish Presidential Communications Directorate announced that “a criminal complaint has been filed by Communications Director Fahrettin Altun against Ragıp Zarakolu and Arti Media (Artı TV and Artı Gerçek) due to the article entitled 'There is no escape from ill fortune', which contains a threat of coup and capital punishment by putting the pictures of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and late Prime Minister Adnan Menderes side by side." The complaint submitted to the İstanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office by Altun's attorney has requested that a public case be brought against Zarakolu and Arti Media on the ground that they allegedly publicly committed an offense against the Constitutional order of the Republic of Turkey and President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. Accused of "being pro-coup", Ragıp Zarakolu, who lives in Sweden since 2013, has responded to the allegations in a written statement, noting that the content of the article is against coups, rather than being pro-coup as alleged: "It is simply inexplicable that the article is misinterpreted to such an extent. It is understood that the Presidential spokespersons did not read the article adequately."

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Statement from the Swedish Union of Journalists (SJF): "Turkiets förföljelse av journalister måste upphöra"
On 3 May 2020, in the Scottish capital Edinburgh, a jogger has yelled insults at STV reporter Laura Alderman, throwing water over her and her camera equipment. Alderman was filming on the street alongside the zoo, which is deserted by visitors during the COVID-19 lockdown. Her editor Steven Ladurantaye condemned the attack in the STV blog, saying no key worker deserves “vigilante justice” during lockdown. All journalists in Scotland are recognised as key workers and allowed to break curfews in order to do their job. Police are investigating the incident.

Additional Information

- Article from STV: "Editor’s note: no one deserves vigilante justice in lockdown"
- Article from The Scottish Sun: "STV reporter soaked with water by raging Edinburgh jogger for ‘taking up too much pavement’"
- Article from Edinburgh Evening News: "STV reporter deliberately soaked by passing jogger and threatened to be slapped"
Carlo Verdelli, Chief Editor of 'La Repubblica', has been put under police protection after receiving death threats from Nazi groups.

The measure was ordered by the Ministry of the Interior on 12 March 2020, following several threats including a death threat coming from a so-called "Nazi silent cell".

In a statement, the Board of the Federazione Nazionale Stampa Italiana (FNSI), an affiliate of both the European Federation of Journalists (EFJ) and the International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) FNSI said that: “The police protection of Carlo Verdelli illustrates the Italians' problem with Nazi fascism. We urge the Italian authorities to identify and prosecute the representatives of these groups who keep acting undisturbed in the wake of principles and ideals extraneous to the Constitution of the Republic and the democratic order”.

29 Apr 2020: On 17 April 2020, the journalist Carlo Verdelli received another death threat from an anonymous account on Twitter, which published a post with the announcement of death of Verdelli, set for 23 April 2020, and defined him as a "hater". The police is investigating into this incident. On 23 April, the same date set which the threats he received said he would be killed, Verdelli was dismissed from his role of editor-in-chief by the management of La Repubblica's editorial group. This decision was condemned by the founder of La Repubblica Eugenio Scalfari. Journalists of La Repubblica went on strike in protest of the decision on 24 April.

Report published by La Repubblica: "Nuova minaccia di morte a Verdelli. Il Cdr di Repubblica: "Massima vicinanza al direttore" "

Report published by La Repubblica: "Carlo Verdelli non è più il direttore di Repubblica, al suo posto Maurizio Molinari"

Report published by La Repubblica: "Sciopero dei giornalisti di Repubblica, il comunicato del Cdr"

09 Apr 2020: On 7 April 2020, Carlo Verdelli was victim of an additional death threat. The Wikipedia page of his profile was hacked, the date of his death was added to 23 April 2020 and the text of his biography was modified to the past tense to indicate his death. The page was then shared on an active Twitter page that promotes hate speech. According to some sources, the cyber-attack might emanate from a neo-Nazi group.
La Repubblica article: ‘Con Repubblica le istituzioni e i partiti: "Minacce indegne di un Paese civile"'

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- La Repubblica press release: "Carlo Verdelli sotto scorta, il premier Conte: "Solidarietà e vicinanza"
- FNSI Union statement: "Carlo Verdelli sotto scorta. Fnsi: «Perseguire i gruppi nazifascisti»"
- IFJ statement: "Italy: Chief Editor under police protection after receiving death threats from Neo-Nazi group"

**STATE REPLIES**

- 15 Apr 2020 | Reply from the Italian authorities
  - Communication of the Italian Ministry of Interior

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**Bulgaria**

Bulgarian Newspaper Editor Slavi Angelov Severely Beaten in Attack by Masked Men in Central Sofia

**SOURCE OF THREAT**

- **Unknown**

**CATEGORY**

- **Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists**

The editor in chief of the weekly newspaper “168 Hours”, Slavi Angelov, was severely beaten by two masked men who attacked him using metal bars outside his apartment building in central Sofia on the evening of Tuesday 17 March 2020. A third man was seen filming the assault on a mobile phone. Angelov is said to be in stable condition and receiving treatment in a nearby hospital. His injuries are not thought to be life-threatening. Local media quoted the journalist as saying that he had seen men wearing masks in the area but had not suspected an attack because many people now wear masks as a protection against the Covid-19 virus. Angelov’s laptop and other possessions that he was carrying were not stolen. A senior official of Bulgaria’s
Interior Ministry said on 18 March that a police investigation is being conducted on the assumption that the attack was related to his professional work. Angelov has reported and written extensively about the underworld of organised crime. AEJ Bulgaria said in a statement that the attack has again highlighted the risks of violent attack faced by all Bulgarian journalists. It called on the authorities to conduct a swift and effective investigation to ensure that all the perpetrators and instigators of this attack are brought to justice and duly punished.

**UPDATES**

1. **24 Apr 2020**: On 23 April 2020, arrests were made in a special operation that took place in Sofia in connection with the investigation over assault of Slavi Angelov. The operation was carried out by the Sofia Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior under the supervision of the Special Prosecutor’s Office. The next day charges were brought against three persons.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- **AEJ-Bulgaria statement**: "Виновните за нападението над журналиста Слави Ангелов трябва да бъдат разкрити и наказани"

- **AEJ-Bulgaria statement**: "Brutal Assault on Bulgarian Journalist Slavi Angelov: Perpetrators Must be Identified and Punished"

- Article published by Balkan Insight: "Bulgarian Investigative Journalist Attacked by Masked Men"

- Article published by the Sofia Globe: "Masked men assault Bulgarian media Editor-in-Chief in central Sofia"

**STATE REPLIES**

- **17 Apr 2020**: Reply from the Bulgarian authorities
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Bulgaria to the Council of Europe

**FOLLOW-UPS**

- **31 Mar 2020**: Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights calls for stronger commitment to increase media freedom in Bulgaria
  - Report on the visit to Bulgaria carried out by Dunja Mijatović in November 2019
On 13 April 2020, the President of the Republic of Chechnya, Ramzan Kadyrov, directed death threats at Novaya Gazeta’s journalist Elena Milashina. Kadyrov expressed these threats in relation to the publication in Novaya Gazeta of an article criticising human rights violations in Chechnya under the pretext of combating the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a speech held on 13 April, Kadyrov accused Milashina of writing “nonsense” and blamed the Federal Security Service for not silencing her, according to a transcript of his remarks published by Novaya Gazeta. Kadyrov also commented on the article in his Telegram account, as well as posting a video on Instagram accusing Novaya Gazeta and its journalist of being a puppet of the West. In the video, he states, among other things: “I've had enough! If you [the security services] want us to commit a crime and become a criminal, tell us! One of us will assume responsibility (...) He will spend some time in prison but will at some point be released. Don't try to make us criminals, murderers...”.

The speech was in response to Milashina’s 12 April report that quarantined Chechens had stopped reporting coronavirus symptoms for fear of being labeled “terrorists.” The General Prosecutor’s Office ordered on 15 April Novaya Gazeta to remove the article. The article has now been removed from the newspaper’s website. The General Prosecutor has not yet justified the claim that the article contains “fake news”.

It is not the first time Elena Milashina receives threats. On 6 February 2020, Elena Milashina and lawyer Marina Dubrovina were attacked and beaten by an organized mob in a hotel in Chechnya's capital Grozny. Investigation into this attack has been halted after technical evidence including CCTV information had "disappeared". No one has so far been held responsible for the attack.
PACE rapporteurs call on Russian authorities to protect journalist Elena Milashina as a matter of urgency.

Statement by Stefan Schennach, General Rapporteur on media freedom and the protection of journalists, and Frank Schwabe, rapporteur on “the continuing need to restore human rights and the rule of law in the North Caucasus”

Malta

Croatian Businessman Requests The Shift to Deposit €300,000 in Damages

On 17 March 2020, Kristijan Curavić, the executive director of the NGO Ocean Alliance, demanded that the online news portal The Shift deposits €300,000 into a bank account in compensation for damages he claims to have suffered as a result of articles exposing an alleged
The Shift had published a series of articles on a "White Flag" scheme, under which Ocean Alliance issued a "white flag" designation to a number of swimming areas in Malta that it certified as being litter-free. According to a letter sent on behalf of Ocean Alliance by a law firm located in Zagreb, Croatia, 15 articles contain insulting and untrue allegations. The letter provides the bank details into which the money should be deposited within 15 days. It also requests a public apology and correction of "all false allegations". The Shift refuted all claims made in the letter and replied saying documentary evidence was available to support its reports.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- News article published by The Shift: "Croatian behind White Flag scheme wants The Shift to pay him €300,000"

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**Ukraine**

**n° 4/2020**

**Alert created on: 17 Jan 2020**

**STATE REPLIES**

**15 Apr 2020**

**Lvl. 2**

**State replied**

**Ukraine**

**Arson Attack against Holos Sambirshchyny Newspaper**

**SOURCE OF THREAT** → Unknown

**CATEGORY** → Harassment and intimidation of journalists

On 19 December 2019, in L'viv region, the premises of the regional newspaper “Holos Sambirshchyny” (“Voice of Sambirschyny”) were burned following a fire that occurred overnight. When arriving to work, the staff saw broken doors and dense smoke. Most of the equipment and furnitures are destroyed. A safe, which contained statutory editorial documents was declared lost and found further away - locked with the documents inside.

The Ukrainian National Union of Journalists expressed solidarity with their colleagues and appealed to the leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the National Police to ensure an effective operational investigation of the case. The circumstances and causes of the fire are now being investigated by the police. The Police opened criminal proceedings under Part 3 of Art. 185 (theft) and Part 2 of Art. 194 (intentional destruction or damage to property) of the Criminal Code. The maximum sentence provided for in articles is between three and ten years' imprisonment.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Statement of the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine (in Ukrainian)
On 2 April 2020, the spokesperson of the Russian Ministry of Defence, General Igor Konashenkov, threatened the Italian journalist Jacopo Iacoboni, who has been investigating Russian support to tackle the coronavirus in the Italian region of Lombardia. In a series of articles published in the national newspaper La Stampa, Iacoboni cast doubts over whether Russian military presence in the city of Bergamo was solely for medical assistance, arguing that Russia’s assistance was really an intelligence and propaganda operation. In response to this article, Konashenkov posted on Facebook that Iacoboni and the newspaper La Stampa were triggering “Russia-phobia” and disseminating fake news, and threatening the journalist that: "Qui fodit foveam, incidet in eam: he who digs a pit, will fall into it".

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- La Stampa news article: "I ministri degli Esteri e della Difesa: “Inopportuno l’attacco del ministero degli Esteri russo contro La Stampa”
- La Repubblica news article: "Russia contro il giornalista de 'La Stampa' Jacopo Iacoboni. Esteri e Difesa: "Grazie per aiuti ma rispettare libertà di stampa"
- Article 19 statement: "Russia: Government official uses Facebook to threaten Italian journalist over coronavirus reports"
On 7 April 2020, Serbian news website Direktno.rs received a threatening email, which stated: “you should all be killed and destroyed”, signed by a certain “Srdjan Petrovic” although there is no indication about who this person is. The sender may have sent the email from abroad, according to the police. This email was sent after Serbian Prime Minister Ana Brnabić mentioned one of Direktno.rs’ publications and showed their website during a TV program. The publication was a letter written by Emir Asceric, former assistant of Novi Pazar Mayor, criticising the president’s visit to the town at a time of pandemic. Igor Velimirovic, Direktno.rs editor, reported the threat to the police, which launched an investigation. According to him, the PM public comments may have provoked the threat. The Serbian journalists' associations NUNS and UNS have condemned the threat.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Statement from the Western Balkan’s Regional Platform for Advocating Media Freedom and Journalists’ Safety: "Regional Platform: Serbia’s officials to refrain from targeting media"
- Danas news article: "Pretnja smrću redakciji portala Direktno.rs, policija traži vlasnika imajla"
- N1 news article: "WB platform for media freedom condemns threats to Serbia’s Direkto.rs website"

**Slovenia**

Slovenian investigative journalist Blaž Zgaga has been the target of a smear and hate campaign since 15 March 2020. The journalist has received several death threats from far-right groups. The harassment originates from a retweet by the government of a claim that the journalist is a "psychiatric patient who escaped quarantine" via the @KrizniStabRS account. The retweet also
mentioned that three other "psychiatric patients", including intellectual and poet Slavoj Zizek, were wanted as well.

The retweet was deleted from the @KrizniStabRS account a few hours later. However, Nova24TV, a Hungarian government-funded media outlet whose editor-in-chief, Aleš Hojs, was recently appointed Slovenia's Interior Minister, relayed its content. Nova24TV accused Blaž Zgaga, among others things, of questioning the measures taken by the government to respond to the health emergency and to inform the population about news related to COVID-19. These measures include the creation of a "crisis cell of the Republic of Slovenia" and the Twitter account @KrizniStabRS, where the retweet in question was posted. Previously, Blaž Zgaga had approached the authorities to ask for more information about the management of this "crisis cell".

An investigative journalist, Zgaga initiated many investigations which revealed corruption cases in the Balkans in the 2000s. His investigation into the Slovenian defence ministry's purchase of arms from a Finnish company led to the resignation of many public figures in Slovenia, including former prime minister and current head of government Janez Janša. Janša was convicted of corruption in 2014 and sentenced to two years in prison.
Abdurakhmanov posted a video following the attack, which has been taken down from YouTube but was reposted on Kavkazsky Uzel, where he questioned the assailant, who said he had come from Moscow at the orders of “Abdurakhman from [Chechen capital] Grozny,” and added that “they have my mother.”

The blogger’s neighbor, who spoke to the BBC's Russian service, said that Abdurakhmanov had a severe headache from a hammer blow, but did not look seriously injured. He was brought to a local hospital in an ambulance, the neighbor, who was not identified by name, told the BBC.

Abdurakhmanov is blogger whose two YouTube channels have more than 330,000 subscribers. He frequently posts criticism of Chechen authorities and of Ramzan Kadyrov, the head of the Russian-administered republic.

Abdurakhmanov has lived in exile since fleeing Chechnya in 2015, following threats from a Chechen official linked to Kadyrov, according to news reports. After Georgia refused his asylum claim, Abdurakhmanov moved to Poland, where his request for asylum was denied in 2018, according to news reports.

Both Vayfond and the blogger’s brother called the assault an assassination attempt.

On 30 January, the body of Imran Aliev, another Chechen blogger, was found in a hotel room in Lille, in northern France, with stab wounds in the throat and chest. CPJ was not able to determine whether Aliev's death was tied to his reporting. Abdurakhmanov said in a video that he believed he was the real target in the attack that killed Aliev.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- RSF thread on Twitter: "Chechen blogger Tumso Abdurakhmanov hospitalized and under police protection after his attack"
- CPJ alert: "Chechen blogger Tumso Abdurakhmanov assaulted"

### STATE REPLIES

- 18 Mar 2020 | Reply from the Swedish authorities
  - Information provided by the Permanent Representation of Sweden to the Council of Europe
Pipe Bomb Attack on Cyprus MC Digital Media News Agency Offices

A home-made pipe bomb exploded at the entrance of the offices of Cypriot news agency MC Digital Media in the early hours of Wednesday 4 March 2020. The network hosts local online news outlet Cyprustimes.com and other online sport, finance and show business titles. The outside of the building in the southern Cypriot port city of Limassol suffered extensive damage from the blast, which police said was caused by high power explosives. According to local media reports, the bomb went off at 2.10 am on Wednesday morning. No injuries were reported and police are currently investigating to establish whether the motive for the attack was related to news coverage.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- CPJ Alert: Bomb explodes at offices of Cyprus Times
- IPI statement: "IPI condemns bomb attack on Cyprus media agency offices"

STATE REPLIES

- 16 Mar 2020 | Reply from the Republic of Cyprus
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Cyprus to the Council of Europe

Slovak Columnist Charged with Criminal Defamation for Criticism of Priest

Slovak Republic n° 15/2020 Alert created on: 11 Feb 2020

SOURCE OF THREAT › State
CATEGORY › Harassment and intimidation of journalists
Slovak authorities brought criminal defamation charges against a newspaper opinion writer accused of offending religious believers. The opinion writer, Michal Havran, is accused of defaming the faith of Catholic believers through a 2018 article in which he mocked and sharply criticized a Catholic priest, Marian Kuffa, a well-known public figure who is known for his radical social views and links to the far-right People’s Party – Our Slovakia (L’SNS). The article, which strongly criticized the priest’s social and political influence, was published in the leading Slovak daily SME. Police investigators concluded that Havran’s article called for the suppression of religious people’s freedom of expression and “defames the expressions of their faith”, and charged him with defamation on account of religious belief under Article 423 of the Slovak Criminal Code. The charges carry a potential sentence of one to three years in prison. Havran is further charged with slander, which also carries a possible jail sentence in Slovakia.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- CPJ alert: "Slovak authorities file criminal defamation charges against columnist Michal Havran"
- IPI Statement: "Slovak opinion writer charged with ‘defaming’ religious believers"

STATE REPLIES

10 Mar 2020 | Reply from the Slovak authorities

Statement of the Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the Council of Europe

Turkey

Harassment of Russian Agency Journalists in Turkey

Source of Threat: State

Category: Harassment and intimidation of journalists

No state reply yet

On 1 March 2020, police detained three Turkish journalists, employees of Sputnik Türkiye in Ankara and the outlet’s chief Turkey editor in Istanbul, Mahir Boztepe. The arrests occurred after a group of protesters in Ankara attempted to break into the employees’ homes there; when the
employees contacted the police to file a criminal complaint, police detained them and also ordered Boztepe’s detention in Istanbul. The four Sputnik staffers were released the following day with no charges brought against them. When police arrested Boztepe, officers also searched Sputnik’s Istanbul office and copied journalists’ hard drives. According to the Turkish NGO Media and Law Studies Association, the police justified the detentions by citing article 302 of Turkish Criminal Code, a measure aimed at countering threats to the territorial integrity of the Turkish state. Turkish media reports suggest that these events followed the publication on the Sputnik agency’s website of an article entitled “The stolen province: why Turkey was given a corner of Syria by France 80 years ago”, about the southeastern Turkish city of Hatay.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Statement from the Russian Journalists’ and Media Workers’ Union (JMWU): "Sputnik Türkiye: Russian Journalists’ and Media Workers’ Union condemns the use of journalists for political purposes"
- Sputnik news report: "Interpellation de journalistes de Sputnik Turquie, «des actes de pure intimidation»"
- Statement from the Russian Union of Journalists (RUJ): ""Россия сегодня" обращается в ООН, ОБСЕ и ЮНЕСКО в связи с ситуацией вокруг Sputnik Турция"
- RT news report: "OSCE condemns harassment of Russian agency journalists in Turkey amid reported detention over ‘professional activity’"

**FOLLOW-UPS**

- Statement by Harlem Désir

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**Spain**

 nº 18/2020

**Spanish Journalist Raquel Guillán Assaulted While Reporting Live on TV**

**SOURCE OF THREAT**  
Non-state

**CATEGORY**  
Harassment and intimidation of journalists
On 22 February 2020, Raquel Guillán, a journalist of Radio Television Canarias (RTVC) was reporting live on the weather effects in Lanzarote when a man approached her and kissed her cheek. Raquel Guillán continued with the coverage despite what happened. On 23 February, the journalist reported the case to the police.

**28 Feb 2020:** On 28 February 2020, given the judgment by the Arrecife court on 25 February 2020, as reflected in the reply from the Spanish authorities, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be “resolved”, concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

**27 Feb 2020:** The perpetrator reportedly dropped his wallet while trying to escape. This made his identification possible, but as the journalist withheld his wallet, he pushed her and pulled her hair.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **EFJ statement:** "Spain: Journalist assaulted while reporting live on TV"

### STATE REPLIES

- **27 Feb 2020 | Reply from the Spanish authorities**
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Spain to the Council of Europe

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**Poland**  
n° 17/2020  
Alert created on: 19 Feb 2020

**Journalist Katarzyna Wlodkowska Faces Investigation Following Report on Assassination of Mayor**

**SOURCE OF THREAT**  
State
The District Prosecutor of Gdańsk has reportedly opened a criminal investigation against journalist Katarzyna Włodkowska under Article 241 of the Polish Criminal Code on the basis of articles she published alleging “unauthorised distribution of messages from a public trial before they were disclosed in court proceedings.” The offence carries a fine or a maximum prison term of two years.

The case concerns a series of articles by Włodkowska, published in January 2020 in Duży Format magazine and Gazeta Wyborcza, the main independent Polish daily. The articles probed the ongoing investigation of the murder of the mayor of Gdańsk, Pawel Adamowicz and the motives of the accused. The reports were based on anonymous interviews, including with sources close to the accused and law enforcement. The journalist claimed that the accused carefully planned and premeditated the assassination but that the prosecutor’s office had failed to fully investigate the motive for the killing. The article also highlighted deficiencies in the murder investigation and possible failures of the prison service and the police.

On 5 February 2020, the local news portal Gdanska Strefa Prestizu published a reply from a spokesperson of the District Prosecutor in Gdańsk to a request for comment on Włodkowska’s allegations, confirming that the prosecutor’s office was opening an investigation into the unauthorised distribution of messages from a public trial. The response was followed by a link to an earlier reply from the Regional Prosecutor to Włodkowska’s articles, in which the Regional Prosecutor had denied her findings, stating that the investigation had been conducted by experienced prosecutors in a correct, efficient and substantive manner, in accordance with applicable regulations, respecting the rights of all parties.

Włodkowska, who has not been notified in person that she is being under investigation, asked the District Prosecutor in her capacity as journalist what specific materials were being investigated. Over the phone, she was informed that several publications, not only by Włodkowska, were subject of the investigation, without any further details. It remains unclear if other journalists than Włodkowska are also under investigation.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Article in Gazeta Wyborcza about the opening of the investigation against the journalist: "Prokuratura straszy dziennikarkę "Wyborczej" za tekst o zabójcy Pawła Adamowicza"

- Press release of the regional prosecutor in Gdańsk concerning the information published in Katarzyna Włodkowska’s articles

### STATE REPLIES

- 27 Feb 2020 | Reply from the Polish authorities
Thomas Jacobi, a Journalist Working for La Croix and Deutsche Welle, Attacked in Athens by Far-Right Protesters

On 19 January 2020, Thomas Jacobi, a correspondent of the French La Croix and German broadcaster Deutsche Welle, was attacked by far-right protesters in Athens.

He was hit for over four minutes and was bleeding in the face, until police appeared. According to the journalist, he was attacked because the protesters recognized him. It was the second assault on Mr Jacobi, almost a year since members of the Golden Dawn party attacked him, along with two other journalists, also in Athens. The journalist filed a lawsuit.

The Greek government condemned the attack and promised swift investigation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- CPJ alert: "Far-right demonstrators assault reporter Thomas Jacobi in Greece"
- Press release by Deutsche Welle condemning the attack: "DW journalist attacked by right-wing extremists in Athens"

STATE REPLIES

- 27 Feb 2020 | Response from the Greek authorities (Ministry of Citizen’s Protection)
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Greece to the Council of Europe
- 11 Feb 2020 | Response from the Greek authorities (Ministry of Justice)
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Greece to the Council of Europe
FOLLOW-UPS

**23 Jan 2020** | Attack against journalist in Greece unacceptable, OSCE Media Freedom Representative urges full investigation

- Statement by Harlem Désir

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**United Kingdom** | n° 19/2020 | Alert created on: 27 Feb 2020

**BBC Journalist Lauren Moss Attacked Moments before Going Live**

- **SOURCE OF THREAT**: Non-state
- **CATEGORY**: Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

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**NO STATE REPLY YET**

Lauren Moss, BBC's South East political editor, was attacked by a member of the public just before going live on air on 19 February 2020. The news reporter posted on Twitter that she was preparing to broadcast from Brighton (England) when a man threw a cup of hot chocolate over her and used abusive language against the BBC. Lauren Moss and the cameraman were not hurt in the incident, but she said she was "shaken up and it could have been worse". The BBC confirmed that it reported the case to the Sussex Police, who said they are looking into the incident.

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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Express news article: "BBC reporter ‘hit with hot chocolate’ just before going on-air - police probe launched"
- EFJ statement: "UK: BBC news reporter attacked moments before going live on air"

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**Russian Federation** | n° 16/2020 | Alert created on: 11 Feb 2020

**Novaya Gazeta Journalist Assaulted in Chechnya**

- **SOURCE OF THREAT**: Unknown
- **CATEGORY**: Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists
Russian investigative journalist Yelena Milashina of the independent Russian newspaper Novaya Gazeta and her lawyer, Marina Dubrovina, were attacked in the Chechen capital Grozny. On Thursday, 6 February 2020, the pair, who were in Grozny to attend the trial of a local blogger, were assaulted by unknown assailants at the entrance of their hotel. The attackers continued to punch and kick them as they moved inside the hotel lobby. In a statement, Milashina stated she believes she was targeted because of her profession. In spring 2017, the award-winning journalist exposed the arrest, torture and murder of gay men in Chechnya. Milashina noted that she had been threatened by Chechen authorities because of her reporting in the past. Several Novaya Gazeta journalists have previously been targeted in the Russian Federation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- CPJ alert: "Russian journalist Elena Milashina attacked in Chechnya"
- IPI Statement: "IPI urges investigation in attack on Russian journalist in Chechnya"

FOLLOW-UPS

- 18 Feb 2020 | PACE Rapporteur on media freedom and the safety of journalists calls on Russian authorities to urgently investigate attack on journalist and lawyer in Chechnya.
  - Statement by Stefan Schennach
- 11 Feb 2020 | CoE Human Rights Commissioner declared that the Russian authorities must ensure the safety and security of Elena Milashina and Marina Dubrovina and carry out a prompt, independent and effective investigation and punish those responsible for organising and committing this offence.
  - Statement by Dunja Mijatović published on Facebook
- 11 Feb 2020 | Attack against journalist and lawyer in Grozny, Russia, extremely concerning, OSCE Media Freedom Representative urges full and thorough investigation.
  - Statement by Harlem Désir
Two students from the Higher School of Journalism (ESJ) were arrested by the police on 12 December 2019 during a demonstration against the pension reform in Lille. One was arrested in the late afternoon on Place de Béthune while photographing the arrest of several demonstrators. With a camera in his hand and safety glasses on his nose, he was thrown to the ground by several police officers, despite objections from his comrades. During a rally in front of the Lille police headquarters, where a group of people chanted "informing is not a crime", a second journalism student, who was about to take a picture, was dragged by arm by a police officer and then taken to the police premises by two officers.

The ESJ denounced the arrest of its students: "The evidence in our possession leads us to believe that they were arrested for taking pictures of police officers in action. The freedom to take pictures during demonstrations is a right. We defend this right for professional journalists and for future journalists. Attempts to restrict this right through intimidation or legislative amendments are not acceptable. We strongly condemn them. "Several journalists' unions, including the SNJ and the SNJ-CGT, also condemned the arrest of the students.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Statement by the Conference of Journalism Schools (CEJ).
- Article published by the daily "La Voix du Nord": "Réforme des retraites: deux étudiants de l'ESJ de Lille interpellés"
- Article published by L'Express: "Deux étudiants journalistes interpellés à Lille alors qu'ils couvraient les manifestations"
- Statement by the ESJ students
- Article published by the Huffington Post: "Deux étudiants de l'ESJ Lille interpellés en marge de la manif contre les retraites"
- Video of the second student's arrest
- Video of the first ESJ student's arrest

### STATE REPLIES

- State replied
On 7 December 2019, the Independent Union of Police Commissioners (Syndicat Indépendant des Commissaires de Police - SICP) posted a message on the social network Twitter naming five French journalists (David Dufresne, Taha Bouhafs, Gaspard Glanz, "The General" and Alexis Poulin) as "the main actors" in the "fight against National Police" in France. The listed journalists are labelled with insulting terms ("impostor", "liar", "harasser", "usurper", "hateful"). SICP accuses these journalists of "fuelling this hatred" and "enjoying this climate", after the door of an anti-crime brigade (BAC) officer's home was covered with slogans hostile to the police. Several representatives of the profession, including the European Federation of Journalists, denounced the intimidating and defamatory nature of the police union's message, which was widely shared on Twitter.
Mikhail Ignatyev, the head of the Russian republic of Chuvashia, during the Russia’s Press Day celebration on 18 January 2020, said that journalists who "criticize from morning to night" should be "wiped out" (the word he used was "mochit," a Russian underworld slang term notoriously used by the Russian President with reference to Chechen militants in 1999). Ignatyev accused critical journalists of causing "street protests" and of preventing the authorities from "seeing to the improvement of green spaces and public spaces and opening new industries."

Later Ignatyev stated that he had always had "correct relations with journalists who criticize objectively and compose their articles correctly" and apologised "as a kind-hearted person" to those he might have "upset" by his use of the term "wipe out," adding that he was referring to "people who claim to be journalists but have just one aim – to discredit the authorities by all means possible."

Reporters Without Borders called for his resignation for violating the Chuvash Republic’s constitution, which says its president must ‘protect the citizen’s freedom and human rights.

OSCE Representative for Freedom of the Media Harlem Desir also denounced the statement, saying that "such a declaration from a public official is unacceptable and may endanger journalists’ safety."

**RESOLVED**

**03 Feb 2020:** On 3 February 2020, following the dismissal of Mikhail Ignatyev, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be “resolved”, concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

**UPDATES**

**03 Feb 2020:** On 29 January 2020, President Putin dismissed Mikhail Ignatyev from office, a day after the governor was expelled from the United Russia party. The presidential decree cites "the loss of confidence" of the head of state as the motive for the dismissal.
For the OSCE Representative for Media Freedom "such a declaration from a public official is unacceptable and may endanger journalists’ safety."

Tweet by Harlem Désir

RSF statement : "Russian republic’s leader says critical journalists should be “wiped out” "

Journalists Meri Jordanovska, editor at A1on.mk, and Iskra Koroveshovska, editor at TV Alfa, received threats and insults online. The messages were sent during the second week of January 2020. They threatened Jordanovska to “create a funeral for her”, calling her "Sorospija" - which can be translated as "Soros whore" - and used other gender discrimination speech towards her. Iskra Koroveshovska reported she received similar threats and insults. The messages were sent by Emil Jakimovski, a former employee at the Central Registry. According to media reports, he was fired as soon as the journalists alerted about the threats.

The Association of Journalists of Macedonia called on the Ministry of Interior and the Public Prosecutor’s Office to immediately start an investigation and take all possible measures to quickly sanction these threats.

Statement from the Association of Journalists of Macedonia : "AJM: Punishment for the person who threatened the journalist Meri Jordanovska"
Serbian journalist Miodrag Sovilj has been the target of a storm of criticism by media and officials close to the government. The reason for this backlash was the hospitalisation of Serbia’s President Aleksandar Vučić for health reasons hours after he publicly confronted him with allegations of government corruption.

President Vučić was opening a children’s park on 15 November in Belgrade when N1 reporter questioned him over the alleged role of Interior Minister Nebojsa Stefanovic’s father in the suspect purchase of state-produced arms. An exchange of several minutes took place filmed by a camera. The journalist repeatedly asked the President whether he knows the document on his mobile phone - supposed to be the proof demonstrating the conflict of interest - while President Vučić asks him several times to read out the whole document, affirming he is not aware of the document’s existence and can’t read it. In the end, Vučić gave an evasive response and asked the anti-corruption agency to investigate.

Following this exchange, Miodrag Sovilj faced intimidation, threats and smear campaign. He was accused by officials and media of “provoking the President”, of being rude, offensive and disrespectful, having a “shameful behaviour” that led to the deterioration of Vučić’s health - an insinuation that was denied by the President himself afterwards. Photos of the journalist were taken from his student MySpace account and published to portray him as an alcoholic and drug addict.
During the G20 summit that took place in Hamburg on 7 and 8 July 2017, at least 32 journalists were stripped of their press accreditation. Among them, 9 journalists were deprived of the accreditation that they had initially been granted, and 23 journalists were placed on a no-access list for the G20 press centre.

On 7 July, the Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) confirmed on Twitter that, in accordance with the Federal Press Office, it had decided to reserve the right to withdraw in some cases accreditation from journalists. According to the Government Spokesperson Steffen Seibert, this decision was justified by “security reasons”. A photographer for the daily newspaper Weser Kurier had his press accreditation revoked “without any explanation”, the newspaper reported. Another photographer working for the same outlet was also stripped of his accreditation after taking pictures of the protests in Hamburg and “has not received any response as to the reason why, despite inquiring about it”, according to the same newspaper. The two main German journalist associations, DJV and dju in ver.di have contested these restrictions.

Furthermore, in the context of the summit, numerous journalists have been victims of police violence while covering the protests taking place in the city. Freelance journalist Flo Smith, who was on the scene on 7 July, has reported that he and his colleagues were insulted by police officers and hit with tear gas, despite the fact that they were identifiable by their cameras and press cards.

Newspaper Taz reported a dialogue between a police officer and a journalist during which the
journalist was subjected to threats and insults. Other journalists also reported being victim of attacks by protesters.

**02 Dec 2019**: On 20 November 2019, the Administrative Court at Berlin ruled in two cases (VG 27 K 516.17, 519.17) that the withdrawal of accreditation by the Federal Press Office had been unlawful, as such withdrawals were based on inaccurate facts and the legal provisions for such withdrawal were not met.

**Statement by the Berlin Administrative Court**

**20 Nov 2019**: On 17 November 2019, media reported that the Internal Investigation Service had identified 156 cases of misbehavior by policemen, which it had filed with the Hamburg Prosecutor’s Office. 103 of these cases had been closed by the Prosecutor’s Office for lack of evidence supporting criminal behaviour. One indictment against a policeman was issued on charges of physical assault against a plainclothes colleague.

**Article from Die Zeit (in German): “G20-Gipfel: Beweislage unklar”**

**22 Jul 2019**: In the summer of 2018, the Hamburg Public Prosecutor’s Office had opened 138 preliminary investigations, mostly for assault in the exercise of public authority, and the Internal Investigation Service at the Hamburg Administration of the Interior had 152 administrative investigations under way.

**Article published by the Huffington Post (in French): G20: « A Hambourg, la presse n’est plus en sécurité »**

**16 Aug 2017**: On 11 August 2017, eight journalists filed suit against the Federal Press Office before the Administrative Court at Berlin, to find that the deprivation of their accreditation was illegal.

**Statement from the German Journalists Union dju in ver.di (in German): G20-Akkreditierung: dju unterstützt Klagen**

**24 Jul 2017**: On 18 July 2017, the President of the Federal Criminal Office (BKA) replied to a letter sent by Deutscher Journalisten Verband, explaining the accreditation practice.

**Letter from the President of the BKA (in German)**

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**UPDATES**

- Statement by the Berlin Administrative Court
- Article from Die Zeit (in German): “G20-Gipfel: Beweislage unklar”
- Article published by the Huffington Post (in French): G20: « A Hambourg, la presse n’est plus en sécurité »
- Statement from the German Journalists Union dju in ver.di (in German): G20-Akkreditierung: dju unterstützt Klagen
- Letter from the President of the BKA (in German)

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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Journalist Flo Smith on being attacked in Hambourg (in French)
### Key information:

Flo Smith

A freelance journalist who was covering protests taking place in Hamburg on 7 July.

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**STATE REPLIES**

**Letter from the Federal Government to the Council of Europe**

06 Sep 2017 | Response by the German Federal Government

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**FREELANCERS**

**30 Dec 2019**

**Partners:** EFJ/IFJ, RPT

**Azerbaijan**

**n° 151/2019**

**Alert created on: 30 Dec 2019**

**Azerbaijan**

**Blogger Mehman Huseynov Beaten by Police**

**No state reply yet**

**Source of Threat:** State

**Category:** Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

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**NO STATE REPLY YET**

Late at night on 27 December, Mehman Huseynov, a blogger and journalist, was detained by a police squad in Baku a few minutes after he held a solo protest in front of the Ministry of Internal Affairs demanding the release of rapper Parviz Guluzade. Huseynov was severely beaten in the car by several police officers, and then left in a wasteland on the outskirts of the city. Just after the attack, Huseynov recorded a video in which he spoke about how he was beaten by six policemen, who "were very cruel, beat him, humiliated him, accused him of organizing the rally and threatened to do worse the next time." On 28 December, the OSCE Representative on
Freedom of the Media called on the authorities to conduct a swift and thorough investigation into this matter, and bring those responsible to justice.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Article in JAMnews: "Azerbaijani blogger says he was brutally beaten by police after rally for arrested rapper"
- Turan news report: "Blogger Mehman Huseynov Abducted and Beaten by Police"
- Video recorded just after the attack (on YouTube): "Mehman Hüseynov döyüldü - Onu zorlamaq istayibler?"

**FOLLOW-UPS**

- 31 Dec 2019 | OSCE media freedom representative reacts after attack on blogger
- Tweet from the OSCE media freedom representative

**FREELANCERS**

**Key information:**
Mehman Huseynov

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**Alert created on:** 14 Feb 2019

**Alert n°:** 19/2019

**Resolution Level:** 1

**Source of threat:** Unknown

**Category:** Harassment and intimidation of journalists

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Private-owned TV station N1 received a letter on 4 February 2019 threatening to kill the N1 journalists and their families and to blow up the office. It said: “Do you have families? You’re killing our children and grandchildren, and are unaware that if the destruction happens, your building will be the first to be blown up, and you may lose your dearest. That’s why we, the veterans, warn you not to play with anyone’s destiny because your fate is in our hands.”
The letter was signed "Belgrade Veterans of the 1999 war" (a Serbian war veteran association), but the representative denied any involvement. The Prosecutor's Office arrested a 70-year-old man from the town of Nova Pazova and ordered a 30-day detention. The death threats were issued after N1 journalists were labelled "anti-Serbs" and "traitors" by ruling party MPs for their reports about Kosovo.

**RESOLVED**

16 Dec 2019: On 16 December 2019, given the judgment by the Belgrade 3rd Criminal Court, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be "resolved", concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

**UPDATES**

08 Feb 2019: On 7 February 2019, the Belgrade 3rd Criminal Court found S.Ć., 70, guilty of endangering security, and sentenced him to 30 days in prison.

- Article from Radio Televizija Srbije (in Serbian): “Pritvor osumnjičenom za pretnje televiziji N1 i Jeremiću”

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Statement by the Committee to Protect Journalists
- Statement by the Western Balkan’s Regional Platform for Advocating Media Freedom and Journalists’ Safety

**STATE REPLIES**

02 Apr 2019 | Reply from the Serbian authorities

- Letter from the Serbian Permanent Representation to the Council of Europe

**FOLLOW-UPS**

02 Apr 2019 | On 29 March 2019, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Harlem Désir denounced threats against journalists of the N1 news channel in Serbia. In a letter sent on 27 March 2019 to the Prime Minister of Serbia, Ana Brnabić, the OSCE Representative expressed
his concern about the threats and pressure against the N1 news channel.

Statement by Harlem Désir

Stevan Dojčinović, an investigative journalist and editor-in-chief of KRIK (Crime and Corruption Reporting Network), working for the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project (OCCRP), was the target of several attacks, over the last months, in Serbian pro-governmental media, including the tabloid Informer. Dojčinović has been accused of collaborating with foreign secret services and there have been attempts to smear his reputation by publishing rumours about him cooperating with drug dealers and criminals. Civil Rights Defenders has condemned the attacks. “Particularly disturbing is the fact that the campaign was initiated by the act of current journalistic research and not an actual published story, which indicates that someone monitors the work of KRIK. This is an intolerable situation and must immediately stop”, said Goran Miletic, Programme Director for the Western Balkans at Civil Rights Defenders. The Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia (NUNS) also condemned the "lynch campaign conducted by Informer against the portal Krik.rs", and urged the Ministry of the Interior to investigate whether the information that Informer holds was received from the state authorities.

On 16 December 2019, given the judgment by the Belgrade Court of Appeal, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be “resolved”, concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

After being called "fake journalist", "Western spy", "mafia associate", "sadomasochist" and "terrorist", Stevan Dojčinović sued “Informer” and its editor Dragan Vucicevic. In May 2018, the Belgrade High Court ruled in his favour and fined “Informer” with RSD 130,000 (about € 1,105) for having violated his honour and reputation and RSD 20,000 (about € 170) for having violated his right to privacy. The judgment was upheld on appeal.
Article from “Krik” (in Serbian): “Potvrđena presuda „Informeru“ zbog neistina o uredniku KRIK-a”

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Statement from the Global Investigative Journalism Network (GIJN): “Attacks on Dojčinović and KRIK Must End”
- Statement published by Civil Rights Defenders: “Smear Campaigns Must Stop against Investigative Journalists in Serbia”
- Statement from the Independent Association of Journalists of Serbia (NUNS) (in Serbian)
- Article published on the website of the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project: “Serbian Newspaper Attacks OCCRP Partner”
- Article published on Osservatorio Balcani e Caucaso: “Serbia: control the media with the help of the media”
- Article published on Balkan Insight: “Serbian Tabloid Calls Independent Media ‘Foreign Mercenaries’”
- Article published on Balkan Insight: “Serbian Tabloid Accused of Risking Journalist’s Life”
- Article published on Balkan Insight: “Serbia’s Tabloid Attack Dog Serves Powerful Masters”

STATE REPLIES

- 21 Nov 2016 | Reply from the Republic of Serbia provided by the Ministry of the Interior
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Serbia to the Council of Europe

FOLLOW-UPS

- 23 Feb 2018 | Commissioner for Human Rights: ‘Concerted efforts needed to protect media freedoms in Serbia’
  - Excerpt from the Commissioner’s follow-up visit report carried out from 19 to 22 February 2018
Serbian journalist Danilo Masojevic and cameraman Vladeta Urosevic, both working for Prva TV, a Serbian commercial channel, were attacked on 17 April 2018 in Leskovac, Southern Serbia where they travelled to interview the mayor of Leskovac. They parked their vehicle in a side street when a man approached them to tell them it was not a parking spot. He verbally attacked them and blocked their vehicle with his car. When Urosevic and Masojevic proceeded to take the camera and other equipment out of their vehicle, the man physically assaulted Urosevic. The perpetrator was arrested by the police. According to Prva TV, the man was later identified as the owner of the building where the interview with the mayor was scheduled to take place. Urosevic was taken to the hospital and later release.

In a statement, the Western Balkan’s regional platform for advocating media freedom and journalists’ safety condemned the attack but welcome the swift reaction by the Serbian police that arrested the suspect shortly after the attack.

16 Dec 2019: On 16 December 2019, given the judgment issued by the Leskovac criminal court, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be “resolved”, concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

18 Jun 2018: On 13 June 2018, the Leskovac Criminal Court convicted M.J., 39, of criminal intimidation and sentenced him to six months in prison.

Julie Hainaut, a French Lyon-based freelancer who writes for Le Petit Bulletin, a newspaper about Lyon culture, found herself at the centre of an exceptionally violent online media storm last September after reporting that the owners of a bar had spoken approvingly about the colonial era. She received numerous insults and very serious threats, her home address was published online, and people waited for her in front of her home on two different occasions. She lodged 4 separate complaints to the police since then, but has received no feedback or follow-up to these complaints, even though it would be very simple to identify people or websites involved in these threats. The public prosecutor, when asked, was not aware of her case.

19 Dec 2019: On 17 December 2019, the Lyon criminal court sentenced an Internet user, who had disseminated an article insulting journalist Julie Hainaut, to a six-month suspended prison term. The court also ordered him to pay Hainaut €5,000 in damages and €2,000 in legal costs.

28 Nov 2019: On 19 November 2019, Sylvain C. appeared before the Lyon criminal court on charges of “public insults of a racial nature” over his sharing of a violent article from the
“DémocratieParticipative.biz” website targeting Julie Hainaut. The indictment requested one year of imprisonment. The judgment is due on 17 December 2019.

19 Nov 2018: On 18 October 2018, the Paris Public Prosecutor summoned telecommunications operators before the Paris court of first instance with a view to block the website “DemocratieParticipative.biz” that publishes hateful and violent content.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Article from "Le Monde" (in French): "Julie Hainaut, harcelée sur Internet par des néonazis, attend toujours justice"

18 Jul 2018 | Reply of the French authorities

Article published by Rue89Lyon: "Le cyberharcèlement est aussi violent qu'un coup de poing"

Article published by Liberation: "Cyberharcèlement envers une journaliste : le SNJ dénonce l'inactivité du gouvernement"

STATE REPLIES

18 Jul 2018 | Reply of the French authorities

Letter from the French Permanent Representation to the Council of Europe

FOLLOW-UPS

19 Dec 2019 | OSCE Media Freedom Representative welcomes the 6-month suspended sentence and the €5,000 fine handed down to a man responsible for harassing the journalist Julie Hainaut: "Online threats against female journalists are unbearable and have no place in society."

Tweet by Harlem Désir

FREELANCERS
On 14 September 2019, News Letter journalist Sam McBride published an analysis on the possibility of devolution returning to Northern Ireland by 21 October 2019 - the date on which abortion will be decriminalised unless devolution is restored - and concluded that was unlikely. In a 750-word post on his Facebook page, Ian Paisley MP responded to the piece by attacking McBride in a personal capacity, displaying a series of untrue allegations about the journalist, including allegations relating to his character and his schooling. Paisley accused McBride of trying to destroy the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), and used several offensive terms to describe the journalist. A DUP Councillor subsequently widened the attack to refer to McBride’s parents.

**16 Dec 2019:** On 16 December 2019, in view of the apology issued by Ian Paisley, which the journalist accepted, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be “resolved”, concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

**14 Oct 2019:** On 21 September 2019, by a message posted on his Facebook page, MP Ian Paisley issued an apology to Sam McBride, and had the earlier post containing the attack removed. McBride accepted the withdrawal of the accusations and considered the matter closed.

Article from News Letter: “Ian Paisley apologises for personal attack on Sam McBride”
### Article published by News Letter: "NUJ condemns MP’s attack on News Letter journalist Sam McBride".

### Italy

#### Alert created on: 27 Apr 2018

**Journalist Daniele Lupo slapped by former Minister**

- **SOURCE OF THREAT**: Non-state
- **CATEGORY**: Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

#### STATE REPLIES

**19 Dec 2019** | Reply from the Italian authorities (information provided by the Ministry of Interior)

#### UPDATES

- **05 Jun 2018**: Mario Landolfi, former Italian minister of Communications, apologised during a TV broadcast for having slapped the journalist.
- **Statement by Ossigeno per l’informazione**: "Rome: What do you think? Former minister responds with a blow"

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Video of the assault.**
On 6 December 2017 in the afternoon, the Italian far-right party Forza Nuova attacked the headquarters of left-wing newspaper La Repubblica and declared "war" against its publisher. Around twelve Forza Nuova supporters threw flares at the office of Repubblica, its publisher L'Espresso Group and the weekly magazine of the same name. They carried a banner which said “Boycott L'Espresso and Repubblica”. Nobody was reported injured.

The attack came after the paper and publisher had expressed support for a proposed legislation to accelerate citizenship for immigrants’ children born in Italy. As a response, Forza Nuova stated on its Facebook page that it was "declaring war" on La Repubblica and L'Espresso, accusing them of "carrying out a genocide of the Italian people" by supporting the citizenship legislation.

Interior Minister Minnitti visited La Repubblica on the same day in a show of solidarity and called the attack unacceptable.

The Federazione Nazionale Stampa Italiana (FNSI) has also publicly condemned the threats, calling on journalists to continue their work despite fascist groups' reaction, and urging an urgent response from the government and authorities, condemning fascist attacks and threats to journalists.
Italian journalist, writer and anti-fascist activist Enrico Nascimbeni was attacked by two men armed with a knife on 1st August 2018, in front of his apartment's door in Milan. The attackers clearly intended to hurt him in the face. The journalist, however, was hit in the arm, while trying to protect himself. One of the two men allegedly shouted "communist scum" before leaving. The victim, who had already received several threats by email and on social networks, has stated that he lodged a complaint.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- RAI report: "MILANO Colpito giornalista, "Violenza neofascista"
- Statement by the FNSI (Union of Italian journalists): "Aggredito a Milano lo scrittore e giornalista Enrico Nascimbeni. La solidarietà di Fnsi e Alg"

**STATE REPLIES**

- 19 Dec 2019 | Reply from the Italian authorities (information provided by the Ministry of Interior)
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Italy to the Council of Europe (in Italian and English)

**FOLLOW-UPS**

- 06 Aug 2018 | OSCE Representative for media freedom calls for swift and effective
Paolo Borrometi, a journalist known for investigative reporting of organised crime in Sicily, had documents and his computer hard-drive stolen when his residence in Rome was broken into in his absence by unknown intruders in the summer of this year. Information about the break-in was announced on August 20 by the president of the Sicilian region, where the journalist is well known as the editor of an online publication LaSpia and for his original reports in other media outlets. It is the latest in a series of acts of intimidation against Borrometi, who lives under police protection. He said no valuables had been taken in the break-in, only materials related to his anti-mafia reporting activities. Paolo Borrometi was forced to leave Sicily after receiving death threats in his home region, as well as being beaten up by hooded attackers in 2014 and having the front door of his family's apartment in Modica, in Ragusa province, set on fire in the same year. The press freedom organisation Ossigeno per l'Informazione reported that a suspect in that arson attack is currently on trial in Sicily. Mr Borrometi is one of about 20 journalists in Italy now under police protection because of threats related to their investigations into mafia crimes.
### Journalist Nadège Picard Targeted by Police Fire

**SOURCE OF THREAT**  
State

**CATEGORY**  
Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

On 16 November 2019, Nadège Picard, a journalist for Info line agency, was injured by police fire in Toulouse. At the time she was photographing a tear gas canister on the ground during demonstrations commemorating the anniversary of the "Yellow Vests" protests. Wearing a helmet bearing a "Press" badge and an armband with the same mention, the journalist was clearly identified and had shown her press card to a police officer shortly before the events. While no potential danger warranted intervention, she was hit simultaneously by a shot from a riot gun (LDB) and a shot from a grenade launcher. The medical report found a hematoma measuring 32 centimetres by 21 centimetres with two impacts on the thigh. The journalist referred the matter to the General Inspectorate of the National Police (IGPN) and the Defender of Rights. Within a year, the National Union of Journalists (SNJ) has reported nearly 200 cases of journalists molested, injured, intimidated and prevented from working by police, gendarmes or magistrates.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **Statement by the National Union of Journalists (SNJ):** "Police violence and press freedom violations: the Minister of the Interior must be held accountable".
- **Statement by the National Union of Journalists - Ile de France district:** "Les journalistes doivent pouvoir exercer leur métier en toute sérénité"
- **Tweet by Nadège Picard sharing her medical report**
- **Tweet by Nadège Picard displaying a picture from the hematoma caused by police shots**

### STATE REPLES

- Alert created on: 22 Nov 2019
- n° 138/2019
- France
- Journalist Nadège Picard Targeted by Police Fire
- SOURCE OF THREAT: State
- CATEGORY: Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists
- PARTNER: EFJ/IFJ
Mr. Höcke, AfD’s lead candidate in the state of Thuringia, walked out of an interview with journalist David Gebhard of the German state broadcaster (ZDF), threatening the journalist with ‘massive consequences’.

The politician had sat for an interview aired on 15 September 2019, in which he was asked about a comparison between his rhetoric and that of Adolf Hitler. During the interview, Mr. Höcke’s aide reportedly interrupted, asking the interview to be restarted on the grounds that the questions "had strongly emotionally affected" the politician. When his request was turned down, Mr. Höcke walked out, telling the journalist that he "may yet become a politically interesting person in this country".

16 Dec 2019: On 16 December 2019, given that no complaint was filed by journalist David Gebhard or his employer, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be “resolved”, concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Video of the interview published by ZDF
- Statement by the German Federation of Journalists (DJV) (in German): "Der Deutsche Journalisten-Verband protestiert gegen die Drohungen des thüringischen AfD-Landesvorsitzenden Björn Höcke gegen Journalisten des ZDF"
France

Front National Refuses to Grant Accreditations to Mediapart and Quotidien on the Occasion of the Party’s "Presidential Congress"

On 31 January 2017, the accreditation requests submitted by Mediapart, an online information website, and le Quotidien news show, broadcast by the television channel TMC, on the occasion of the "Presidential Congress" of Marine Le Pen, which were held in Lyon on 4 and 5 February 2017, were turned down by the Front National. The Front National regularly refuses access to its events to these two media, accusing them of "militant" coverage.

The Quotidien team was also prevented from doing its job on 1 February 2017, while Marine Le Pen was heading to the Salon des Entrepreneurs in Paris. The journalists were violently sidelined by security officers. The journalist Paul Larrouturou, who was accredited, had just asked a question to Marine Le Pen about accusations regarding fictitious jobs in the European Parliament targeting her party.

PARTNER: EFJ/IFJ, Index, RSF

RESOLVED

16 Dec 2019: On 16 December 2019, given that Paul Larrouturou, Mediapart or Quotidien did not follow-up on the case with the competent authorities, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be “resolved”, concluding that it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.
Partners: IPI

Seven Journalists Accused of Targeting a Deputy Commander-General

Turkey

No state reply yet

Alert created on: 24 Oct 2019

n° 133/2019

Source of threat: State

Category: Harassment and intimidation of journalists

Ömer Çelik, Çağdaş Kaplan, Hamza Gündüz, Selman Çiçek, A. Vahap Taş, İnan Kızılkaya, and Kemal Sancılı, all journalists and executives of the now-shuttered Dicle News Agency (DİHA) and daily Özgür Gündem, are being prosecuted under charges of “targeting a participant in anti-terror operations” for an article titled “Name of the siege: Flag 12, Person in charge: Musa Çitil” that was published in February 2016.

Musa Çitil, then Gendarmerie Commander of the Diyarbakır Province and now Deputy Commander-General, is the complainant in the case. Each defendant faces between one and
three years of imprisonment.

Kemal Sancılı, publisher of the now-closed daily Özgür Gündem, has remained in pre-trial detention since 3 January 2017. Though released in October 2017, he was detained again on 11 May 2018. Ömer Çelik, Çağdaş Kaplan and İnan Kızılkaya were also detained and face charges for their journalistic work at DİHA.

At the first hearing in trial on 3 October 2018, the defendants argued that informing the public and sharing news articles is not a crime, it’s a journalist’s job. They also stressed that Musa Çitil was a well-known figure in the region at the time and hence the allegation that he was “targeted” is baseless. The trial is currently pending.

18 Dec 2019: During the final hearing on 18 December 2019, all seven journalists were acquitted of the charges.

**UPDATES**

17 Dec 2019: A group of four government supporters attacked the offices of the online portal Hayeli.am, highly critical of the Armenian authorities, on 5 October 2019. They threw eggs and posted offensive posters at the entrance of the offices of the publication in Yerevan, the capital of the country.

The four suspects are all known as ardent supporters of Armenian Prime Minister and were protesting against a headline published by the news website the previous week, considered pro-Azerbaijani: “Aliyev’s belated but ‘strong’ response to Pashinian”. The article was about Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev’s public reaction to a statement on Nagorno-Karabakh made by Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian.

“They are lucky because their door is closed. We want to put all this stuff into their office”, said one of the perpetrators, and another one demanded that the media outlet should be closed.

The police launched an investigation into obstruction of the professional and legal work of
journalists, which is a criminal offence in Armenia. The four men were interrogated and released with a signature bond imposed as a measure of restraint.

The attack was condemned by all political parties represented in the Armenian parliament and by some members of the government.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- EFJ press release: "Armenia: Journalists’ union denounced attack on online portal Hayeli.am"

**STATE REPLIES**

- 17 Dec 2019 | Reply from the Armenian Republic authorities
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Armenia to the Council of Europe

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**Armenia**

**n° 36/2018**

**17 Dec 2019**

**State replied**

**Violence Against Reporters During 11 Days of Protests in Armenia**

**SOURCE OF THREAT** ➤ State

**CATEGORY** ➤ Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

Between 13 and 23 of April 2018, during the protests in Yerevan that led to the resignation of Prime Minister Serzh Sargsyan, several journalists were deliberately targeted by police. Alina Sargsyan, a reporter for the CivilNet.am news website, was hit by a police officer while she filmed police arresting demonstrators. Azatutyun TV producer Anatoly Egiazaryan was beaten by several policemen while filming a demonstration being dispersed.

Police damaged the cameras of the Factor.am reporter Vrezh Margaryan’s and Radio Azatutyun reporter Nayra Bulgadaryan, to prevent them from filming.

Tatul Hakobyan reporter for CivilNet.am was violently arrested while filming the attempted arrest of the protest movement’s main leader, Nikol Pashinyan. Public radio reporter Lianna Egiazaryan was injured by a stun grenade in similar circumstances. Ani Keshishyan of 168.am and Factor.am cameraman Hovhannes Sargsyan were injured by non-lethal weapons.
Ani Grigoryan of CivilNet.am, Arus Hakobiyan of Radio Azatutyun, Tehmine Yenokyan of Lragir.am and Artak Hulyan of Shant TV were attacked by plainclothes policemen.

On 19 April, Tirayr Muradyan, a reporter for the Sut.am news website, was badly beaten by plainclothes police officers. The next day, the police bundled him into a car to prevent him from covering a demonstration on a motorway near Yerevan.

Factor.am editor-in-chief Arevik Sahakyan, his cameraman, Gevorg Martirosyan and public radio reporter Vruyr Tadevosyan were beaten up by unidentified individuals in different parts of the capital. In some cases, policemen looked on without making any attempt to intervene.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Article published on Hetq: "Armenia’s Human Rights Defender Says the Work of Reporters Must be Fully Safeguarded"

**STATE REPLIES**

17 Dec 2019 | Reply from the Armenian Republic authorities

Letter from the Permanent Representation of Armenia to the Council of Europe (in French)

**Serbia**

Alert created on: 28 Dec 2018

Death threats against journalist Tatjana Vojtehovski and her daughter

Resolved

SOURCE OF THREAT ➔ Unknown

CATEGORY 📌 Harassment and intimidation of journalists

PARTNER: EFJ/IFJ, AEJ, Index, RSF

Following her coverage of anti-violence protests in Belgrade, Serbian journalist Tatjana Vojtehovski and her daughter have been targeted by death threats on Twitter, on 27 December 2018. The Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia (NUNS) reported the incidents to the authorities and Tatjana Vojtehovski submitted three criminal charges to the "High Tech Crime Division" of the Serbian police. Strongly condemning the anti-media rhetoric employed by Serbian government officials, several journalists' organisations from Serbia (including UNS and NUNS), Bosnia & Herzegovina, Montenegro, Croatia, Kosovo, and Macedonia called on the
competent authorities in Serbia to immediately take all legal measures against individuals who threatened Tatjana Vojtehovski and her daughter and all necessary measures to protect them. The Serbian ministry of Interior announced that the police, in cooperation with the Higher Public Prosecutor's Office in Belgrade, launched an investigation on this case.

**16 Dec 2019:** On 16 December 2019, given the judgment by the Belgrade Court of Appeal, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be “resolved”, concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

**14 Jan 2019:** In May 2018, the Belgrade Court of Appeal sentenced a Serbian citizen, Branko Tomic, to eight months of house arrest after he pleaded guilty to making death threats against Vojtehovski and her daughter on Twitter.

- Article from “BalkanInsight”: “Women journalists in the Balkans face online abuse on a daily basis”

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Mapping Media Freedom report: "Serbia: Journalist Tatjana Vojtehovski receives death and rape threats after voicing support for anti-government protests"
- Statement from the Journalists' Association of Serbia (UNS): "UNS: Kazniti odgovorne za pretnje Žaklini Cvetković Mladenović i Tatjani Vojtehovski"
- Statement from the Independent Journalists' Association of Serbia: "Nadležni organi da zaštite novinarku Tatjanu Vojtehovski"
- N1 news report: "MUP: Nakon pretnji Vojtehovski na Twiteru, pokrenuta istraga"

**STATE REPLIES**

- 23 Jan 2019 | Reply from the Serbian authorities (information from the Ministry of the Interior)
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Serbia to the Council of Europe
On 25 July 2019, Mikhail Romanov, a correspondent with the weekly “Yakutsk Vecherniy”, was found guilty by the City Court of Yakutsk in the Sakha Republic, Russian Federation, on charges of “abuse of freedom of information by publishing fake news that poses a threat to the public”, and fined 30,000 rubles (€408.15), according to news reports. Romanov intends to appeal the sentence.

It is the first time authorities charged a journalist under the provision in the administrative code that pertains to “fake news”, according to the Russian Union of Journalists, a local press freedom group. The charges stemmed from an April 2019 article by Romanov detailing claims that Federal Security Service agents had tortured academic and activist Anton Ammosov, in which Romanov referenced “Big Brother” from George Orwell’s dystopian novel “1984”, according to “The Moscow Times”. The Court ruled that Romanov’s article was “fake news” under section 9, paragraph 13.15 of the Administrative Code, “Kommersant” reported.

16 Dec 2019: A Vladivostok appeals court has cancelled the 30,000-ruble fine against Mikhail Romanov.
Belgian journalist Patrick Lefèbvre, a contributor to the daily "La Dernière Heure", was arbitrarily arrested in Charleroi on the night of 24 to 25 November 2018. While filming clashes following a demonstration, police arrested him on a public road. Patrick Lefèbvre was wearing an orange jacket bearing the mention "Press". His press card was clearly visible. "While I was filming the police assault, the reporter testified, they asked me to stand in front of them, on the side of the demonstrators. A policeman grabbed me from behind and claimed that I was a fake journalist in order to make a judicial arrest. I was locked in a cell without my shoes and without my belt until 7 am. I was then released without explanation and without even a hearing. Only one senior officer apologized'. On 29 November, the Belgian Association of Professional Journalists (AJP) sent a letter of protest to Prime Minister Charles Michel and Interior Minister Jan Jambon.

16 Dec 2019: On 16 December 2019, given that no complaint by journalist Patrick Lefebvre or his employer is being reported, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be "resolved", concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

15 Apr 2019: On 29 November 2018, Patrick Lefebvre stated he would file a complaint with the Standing Committee on Police Service Control (Comité P).

Article from DH (in French): Le reporter de la DH arrêté samedi soir à Charleroi va déposer plainte au Comité P

Article published by the daily "La Dernière Heure": "Un reporter de la DH accusé d’être un ‘faux journaliste’ arrêté à Charleroi"
Armin Wolf, a prominent anchor on the Austrian public broadcaster’s main evening news programme ZIB2, received a series of verbal attacks during and following an interview with a representative of Austria’s right-wing FPÖ party, which currently governs the country at the federal level in coalition with the centre-right People’s Party (ÖVP). In the interview, Wolf pressed the representative, MEP Harald Vilimsky, on recent scandals involving extremist statements by party members, including a poem on migration in which the FPÖ vice mayor of the town of Braunau compared people to rats. During the interview, after Wolf drew parallels between a poster by a youth wing of the party and Nazi-era imagery, Vilimsky warned Wolf that his line of questioning “will not remain without consequences” and accused the anchor of deliberately seeking to damage the party. Vilimsky later said he would fire Wolf were he ORF’s director. In the days that followed, FPÖ officials have repeatedly attacked Wolf, with one official, a Vienna city councilwoman, comparing Wolf to a judge on the Nazi-era People’s Court (Volksgerichtshof), which sentenced thousands of political opponents to death following show trials. In an interview on Sunday, the FPÖ-nominated chair of ORF’s board, Norbert Steger, said that if he were Wolf, “I would take a sabbatical, travel around the world on the taxpayers’ dime and reinvent myself”, leading observers to fear an attempt to remove Wolf. Wolf was named Austria’s journalist of the year in 2018.

16 Dec 2019: On 16 December 2019, in view of the statement by Gernot Blümel, Federal Minister of European Union, Art, Culture and Media, that “politics should not interfere in the employment of journalists, regardless of how questions or interviews are assessed”, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be “resolved”, concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

16 Jun 2019: On 12 May 2019, Harald Vilimsky said in an interview with ORF that, in the interview at stake, he had reacted emotionally as he found the line of questioning manipulative and unfair. Also, he hadn’t threatened Wolf himself, but had suggested the ORF to exercise its responsibility over Wolf’s behaviour.

Video of the interview with ORF (in German)
On 29 August 2019, in Chernihiv, in northern Ukraine, two unidentified individuals kicked and punched journalist and blogger Igor Stakh near his home and then fled the scene, according to local news reports and a statement by the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine, an independent trade group.
Stakh was brought to a local hospital where he received stitches for a wound on his chin, was treated for a concussion, and was released, according to those reports.

Stakh told the union that he witnessed the attackers leave in a car and noted the car’s license plate number, but said that local police told him that the license plate information was not important, according to the union statement.

The union and its affiliate in Chernihiv said in their statement that the attack was likely connected to Stakh’s reporting on local corruption, which he publishes on his Facebook page and YouTube channel.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- National Union of Journalists of Ukraine statement: "У Чернігові до струсу мозку побили відомого місцевого блогера та журналіста"

**STATE REPLIES**

- 16 Dec 2019 | Reply from the Ukrainian authorities
  - Official position of Ukraine

**FREELANCERS**

**Key information:**

Igor Stakh

A journalist and blogger based in Chernihiv in Northern Ukraine. He reports primarily on local corruption which he publishes on his Facebook page and YouTube channel.

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**France**

n° 66/2019

Alert created on: 06 Jun 2019

**Violent Attack Against France 3 Cameraman**

**SOURCE OF THREAT**  Non-state

**CATEGORY**  Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists
On 3 June 2019, a journalist working for the public broadcaster France 3 Normandie was attacked while filming in front of the mosque As-salam in Petit-Couronne, a city near Rouen. The cameraman was alone taking background footage of the mosque for a report on the imam who was facing trial the same day, when suddenly a man, followed by a group of around 20 men, asked him to stop filming. The journalist was hit, thrown on the ground and had his camera broken. He was then locked up in the compound of the mosque, until the police intervened. The journalist was in shock, slightly injured and given five days of medical leave.

One of the alleged assailant was arrested on 3 June and taken into custody. He was then charged with violent robbery in a group on 5 June and set under judicial supervision. According to media report, it would be the president of the association that manages the mosque.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Statement by CGT, CFDT Médias and SNJ of France 3 Normandie-Rouen (in French): "Agression d’un journaliste en Normandie : la presse de plus en plus malmenée"
- Article by RSF: "TV cameraman attacked while filming outside mosque in northern France"
- Article by France 3 Normandie (in French): "Agression d’un journaliste de France 3 Normandie près de Rouen, un homme mis en examen"

**STATE REPLIES**

- 16 Dec 2019 | Reply from the French authorities
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of France to the Council of Europe (in French)
Bellingcat journalists Michael Colborne and Oleksiy Kuzmenko have been harassed online, including with death threats, in connection with their reporting on far-right groups in Ukraine.

Mid-August 2019, a threatening video appeared on a far-right Telegram channel that promotes the Christchurch shooter’s manifesto. The video featured the photographs of Michael Colborne, Oleksiy Kuzmenko and fellow journalists Dmitry Gordon and Valerie Kipnis, being shot one by one with a firearm. It was posted with the following message: “This video is kind of an instruction manual on how to deal with our enemies.” Michael Colborne’s photograph showed him as he was beaten up while covering an anti-LGBT rally in Kyiv last November.

Early September, Oleksiy Kuzmenko received an anonymous e-mail containing a link to the video and death threats after he tweeted about a far-right festival held in Kyiv by the Azov movement. He received other insults and threats by various far-right groups.
threats from a local politician, in retaliation to his journalistic work. In a letter addressed to the Turkish President, 20 international media freedom organisations urged him to openly condemn the attacks on journalists and to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice.

**UPDATES**

**09 Dec 2019:** On 2 December 2019, İdris Özyol was found unconscious in the street in Antalya and rushed to hospital where he was diagnosed with a brain haemorrhage.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- **Joint letter to President Erdoğan:** "International groups condemn attacks against journalists"
- **Joint letter by 20 media freedom organisations:** 'Turkey: International organisations condemn recent attacks against journalists'

**FOLLOW-UPS**

**OSCE 11 Dec 2019** | Worried about reports that journalist İdris Özyol was found unconscious on the street, OSCE Media Freedom Representative hopes that the investigation will determine the cause of the accident.

- **Tweet by Harlem Désir**

**OSCE 17 May 2019** | OSCE Media Freedom Representative deplores physical attacks on journalists in Turkey, urges authorities to swiftly bring all responsible to justice.

- **Statement by Harlem Désir**

**France**

**Alert created on:** 11 Dec 2018

**Repeate Police Violence Against Journalists Covering Protests**

**SOURCE OF THREAT**  ➔ **State**

**CATEGORY**  ➔ **Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists**
On Saturday 8 December, many journalists covering the "Yellow Vest" protests in France were victims of police violence. About fifteen photographers and reporters were wounded by targeted flashball shots, grenades and stray bullets, even though they were clearly identifiable by their press armbands or holding a camera or a video camera. Two photographers from the daily newspaper "Le Parisien-Aujourd'hui en France" were "hit by flashguns on the Champs-Elysées in Paris, one on the nape of the neck and one on the knee", reports the newspaper. A journalist from the A2PRL audio news agency also reported that a police officer shot at her, while journalists from Explicite were targeted by flashguns. "The Sunday Journal" reported that one of his photographers was "hit twice by riot police in a scuffle between police and yellow vests" on the Champs-Elysees. According to AFP, one of their photographers in Le Puy-en-Velay was "lightly hit on the arm by a shot from a tear gas canister as he advanced completely on his own towards a police cordon". Several photographers working for the daily newspaper "Libération" have told similar stories and a Reuters news agency reporter was targeted in Bordeaux. From 8 am onwards the police removed and confiscated journalists' protective equipment (helmets, goggles and gas masks) even though they had their press cards. These confiscations were sometimes carried out under the threat of being placed in police custody. French journalists' unions have called on journalists to report incidents to the police disciplinary body, the Inspection générale de la Police nationale (IGPN). On Monday, they asked to be received urgently by the President of the Republic.

10 Dec 2019: On 5 December 2019, on the first day of strike against the pension reform, 25 journalists were subjected to police violence in several cities. In Bordeaux, freelance photographer Astrid Lag sustained a calf injury, and freelance photographer Lois Mugen was beaten. In Nantes, a "France Bleu" journalist was shot with rubber balls, and a colleague from the daily newspaper "Ouest France" was hit by a tear gas canister. In Paris, Mustafa Calcin, reporter for the Turkish agency "Anadolu", lost 90% of his vision after being injured in the face. Radio/web journalist Taha Bouhafs and his colleague of "Le Media" Serge Faubert were wounded by grenades. Journalist Gaspard Glanz was injured in the legs and his equipment was partially destroyed. Clearly identifiable by their work tools, the following video reporters were subjected to police violence: Tiphaine Blot, Yann L., Julien Lormier, Gaspard Charpentier, Corentin Fohlen, Martin Nodin, Patrice Nice, Emilie Royer, Tomas Statius, Valentine Zeler, Romain Boyer, Medi Donk, Sylvain Forêt, Nicolas de Poulpiquet and the photographer Bsaz.

Twitter thread by the "Reporters en colère" collective

29 Nov 2019: On 20 November 2019, a riot police (CRS) officer, filmed throwing a cobble towards protesters during a protest on 1 May 2019, went on trial in the Paris Criminal Court. The prosecution requested a three-month suspended prison sentence on charges of
"willful violence by a person holding public authority who did not lead to incapacity", punishable up to 3 years in prison and a €45,000 fine.

Article from Le Figaro (in French): "'Gilets jaunes': trois mois avec sursis requis contre le premier policier jugé pour violences"

22 Nov 2019: On 16 November 2019, during demonstrations commemorating the anniversary of the "Yellow Vests" protests, in Paris, the full face mask worn by photographer Julien Moreau was smashed by a grenade fragment or a rubber bullet, and RT France journalist Lucas Léger was hit in the head by a paving stone. On 19 November 2019, in Besançon, a Radio Bip/Média 25 reporter was summoned by the police and threatened with prosecution under the law aimed at strengthening and guaranteeing the maintenance of public order during demonstrations (known as "anti-hooligans" law), on the grounds that he wore a gas mask.

Statement by the National Union of Journalists (SNJ): "Police violence and press freedom violations: the Minister of the Interior must be held accountable".

Statement by the National Union of Journalists - Ile de France district: "Les journalistes doivent pouvoir exercer leur métier en toute sérénité"

12 Nov 2019: On 7 November 2019, the Paris prosecutor announced that two police officers were referred to criminal court for alleged violence during "yellow vests" protests. A total of 212 investigations had been entrusted to the IGPN, of which 146 were closed, 54 were closed without prosecution and 18 were under judicial investigation. According to the Ministry of Justice, 372 complaints against the police were registered throughout France, of which 109 were closed without prosecution and 29 were under judicial investigation.

Article from Le Point (in French): "Gilets jaunes: 2 policiers renvoyés en correctionnelle pour des violences"

20 Jun 2019: On 18 June 2019, RSF sent a note to Christophe Castaner, Minister of the Interior, containing 10 recommendations.

RSF note to the Ministry of the Interior (in French)

06 May 2019: On 3 May 2019, Christophe Deloire, Secretary-General of Reporters Without Borders (RSF), said after a meeting with the President of the Republic that he had pledged that "action will be taken in the face of police violence against the press at Yellow Vests protests". The Presidential Office confirmed, without giving further details, that Emmanuel Macron had assured during this interview "that he was following this very closely and that he would follow the file also in the near future". Journalist David Dufresne was awarded the Grand Prix des Assises des Journalisme at Tours for documenting 102 cases of assaults on journalists out of 795 allegations of "police violence" since the beginning of the "Yellow Vests" movement.
On 2 May 2019, in response to the persistence of incidents linked to the management of "Yellow Vests" demonstrations by the police, which continue to cause injuries among journalists covering the events, the SNJ, the SNJ-CGT and the CFDT-Journalists unions requested to be received by the Prime Minister and the President of the Republic to inform them about the profession's disapprobation, to call for clarification of these incidents and to obtain the implementation of measures necessary to contain them.

On 1 May 2019, more than 350 media, journalists, photographers, freelancers signed an open letter denouncing the police violence suffered by the profession since the start of the "yellow vests" movement.

On 18 April 2019, at the presentation of Reporters Without Borders' 2019 World Press Freedom Index, journalist David Dufresne presented his work on police violence against journalists during the yellow vest demonstrations. He recorded 62 cases of police violence against journalists.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Letter from the UN Working Group on arbitrary detention/UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression/UN Special Rapporteur on the rights to freedom of peaceful assembly and of association/UN Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders (in French)

Article by France Inter (in French): "Six mois après le début de la crise des "gilets jaunes", quel est le bilan d'Allo @Place_Beaувau ?"
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<td>23 Jan 2019</td>
<td>Reply from the French authorities</td>
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<td>Letter from the Permanent Representation of France to the Council of Europe</td>
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<td>26 Feb 2019</td>
<td>The Commissioner for Human Rights sends a Memorandum to the French Government</td>
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<td>Maintaining order and freedom of assembly in the context of the &quot;yellow vests&quot; movement in France</td>
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**Key information:**
- Mapping Media Freedom report: "France: Journalists assaulted by police during Gilets Jaunes protests"
- Tweet by press photographer Véronique de Viguerie (in French)
- Article by "Libération" (in French): "Manifs du 8 décembre : de nombreux journalistes visés et blessés par la police"
- Tweet by A2PRL journalist Boris Kharlamoff (in French)
- Article by "Journal du Dimanche" (in French): "Gilets jaunes : un photographe du JDD blessé sur les Champs-Élysées"
- Tweets by "Explicite" journalist Paul Conge (in French)
- Article by "Le Parisien" (in French): "Acte 4 des Gilets jaunes : deux photographes du Parisien blessés par des tirs de flash-ball"
- Video produced by the collective 'Reporters en colère'
- CPJ report: "Police, 'yellow vest' protesters both target journalists in France, Belgium"
Malta Independent journalist and blogger Daphne Caruana Galizia is having her bank accounts frozen with precautionary warrants for 47,460 EUR after a court upheld on 8 February 2017 a request by Maltese Economy Minister Chris Cardona and his consultant Joe Gerada to issue garnishee orders alongside four libel suits they have filed against her.

The journalist is sued for publishing on her blog an article reporting that both men visited a brothel in Velbert (Germany) while on government business. Cardona has denied the allegation.

According to media reports, the effect of the precautionary warrants on her assets means her bank accounts will remain frozen until the case is concluded and that could take many years.

In a statement published on her blog, Daphne Caruana Galizia denounced an attempt to gag the press. The Institute of Maltese Journalists called on the minister to reconsider his action, highlighting the exaggerated nature of the legal action.

10 Dec 2019: On 6 December 2019, Keith Schembri withdrew the two libel suits he had filed against Daphne Caruana Galizia over her articles about his Panama company. Businessman Yorgen Fenech, who was charged over his role in the murder Caruana Galizia, stated in court that Schembri had kept him regularly updated about the state of the investigation. The libel suit filed against Caruana Galizia by Prime Minister Joseph Muscat over her story that his wife owns the Panama company Egrant was adjourned at his request until March 2020.

13 Sep 2018: 34 libel proceedings remained open against Caruana Galizia after her assassination on 16 October 2017 and are pending before the domestic courts. Among them, one case brought by Malta's Prime Minister Joseph Muscat; two cases brought by
Minister for Tourism Konrad Mizzi; two cases brought by the Prime Minister's Chief of Staff Keith Schembri; one case brought by former Deputy Governor of the Central Bank Alfred Mifsud; one case brought by the head of Malta's 2015 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting task force Phyllis Muscat; and 19 cases brought by businessman Silvio Debono.

16 May 2018: A new revised Media and Defamation Bill enacted on 13 May 2018 decriminalises defamation. In addition to abolishing criminal libel, the Act removes references to offending “public morals or decency”, prevents plaintiffs from filing garnishee orders against journalists and only allows applicants to file one libel suit per story.

31 Mar 2017: On 11 March 2017 Silvio Debono, owner of real estate investment company DB Group, filed 19 libel cases against journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia. Galizia published a number of articles about Debono cutting a deal with Malta’s government to take over a large tract of public land in a high value coastal area on which he plans to build a Hard Rock Hotel and two towers of flats for sale. In her statement, Daphne Caruana Galizia said that the libel suits are all about the same subject, “taking advantage of the fact that the law allows them to sue for each comment, article or blog post even if the subject matter and the author are the same.” “The cases will drag through the courts, it will cost me around €8,000 merely to file my responses, and anybody else would have been intimidated into submission,” she added.

Blog entry by Daphne Caruana Galizia: "My statement sent to the media in response to that released by Silvio Debono’s outfit"

Article published by the Times of Malta: "Daphne Caruana Galizia slapped with 19 libel cases from db Group"

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- CPJ statement: "Court freezes Maltese blogger's bank accounts on libel accusations"
- Report published on the Mapping Media Freedom platform: "Malta: Four libel suits and warrant for assets freeze filed against blogger"
- Statement of the Institute of Maltese Journalists: "L-IĠM jinnota l-passi fil-Qorti fil-konfront ta' Daphne Caruana Galizia"
- Statement of the European Federation of Journalists: "Malta: Libel suits and warrants against Daphne Caruana Galizia"
**STATE REPLIES**

- **17 Nov 2017 | Response from the Maltese authorities**
  - Text of the new proposed Media and Defamation Bill (in Maltese and English)

- **16 Feb 2017 | Reply from the Government of Malta**
  - Letter of the Permanent Representation of Malta to the Council of Europe
  - Bill of the Media and Defamation Act 2017 (Maltese version followed by English version)

**FOLLOW-UPS**

- **19 Sep 2019 | CoE Human Rights Commissioner calls on Maltese authorities to withdraw posthumous defamation lawsuits against the family of Daphne Caruana Galizia and to amend legislation on defamation.**
  - Letter from Dunja Mijatović addressed to the Prime Minister of Malta
  - Reply of the authorities of Malta to the Commissioner’s letter

- **16 May 2018 | OSCE representative welcomes decriminalization of defamation in Malta, urges dismissal of civil defamation lawsuits against Caruana Galizia’s heirs**
  - Statement by Harlem Désir

- **16 Feb 2017 | OSCE Representative for Media Freedom urges authorities in Malta to protect independent journalists and free expression**
  - Statement from Dunja Mijatović

**FREELANCERS**
Daphne Caruana Galizia

Independent Journalist and Blogger, known for her reporting on corruption and the political situation in Malta. Her blog "Running Commentary" was one of the most visited websites in the country.

French authorities have arrested Belgian journalists Nicolas Lahaut and Adrien Heylen while covering a 'Yellow Vests' demonstration in Paris. The police immobilised the two journalists and several demonstrators for more than two hours. Nicolas Lahaut and Adrien Heylen showed their press cards to the police, who nevertheless refused to release them and imposed a fine of 135 euros for "participation in a prohibited demonstration".

Additional Information

- Article published by RTBF: "Journalistes belges verbalisés lors d'une manif de Gilets jaunes : 'Les policiers nous ont gardés plus de 2 heures' ."
- Facebook post by journalist Nicolas Lahaut

State Replies

- 04 Dec 2019 | Reply from the French authorities
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of France to the Council of Europe
In Grenoble, the premises of public service radio station France Bleu Isère were partially destroyed following a fire that occurred around 2:30 am on the night of 27 January 2019. According to the investigation’s initial findings, the fire is most likely a deliberate criminal act. Two fire starts were identified; the door of the service entrance was forced. No injuries were reported, but material damage is significant: the entire ground floor of the building was damaged and the editorial offices destroyed. The first floor premises were spared thanks to the rapid intervention of firefighters. Editor-in-chief Leopold Strajnic said there had been no threat against the radio. The editorial team was able to resume work on 28 January in the afternoon, on the premises of France 3 television in Grenoble.

**PARTNER: EFJ/IFJ, EBU**

**UPDATES**

29 Nov 2019: On 26 November 2019, the police invested squats and a shared flat in the Grenoble metropolitan area as part of the investigation into several arson attacks in 2017, 2018 and 2019. The gendarmerie conducted a similar operation in Roybon.

Article from France Bleu (in French): "Perquisitions à Grenoble et Roybon dans le cadre de l’enquête sur une série d’incendies volontaires"

30 Jan 2019: Responsibility for the arson attack that destroyed the premises of France Bleu Isère, on the night of 27 January, was claimed in a message published on 29 January on an anti-capitalist anarcho-libertarian website.

Article published on the website of France Bleu Isère : "Incendie à France Bleu Isère : l'acte revendiqué sur un site anarcho-libertaire"

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Article from Le Monde (in French): "Derrière l’incendie des locaux de France Bleu Isère, l’ombre des groupes anarchistes locaux"
Anti-Semitic Posters Stigmatizing Hungarian Journalists

No state reply yet

SOURCE OF THREAT → Unknown
CATEGORY → Harassment and intimidation of journalists

A smear anti-semitic campaign followed an Index journalist’s report of the opening ceremony of the Puskas Arena, the new FC DAC football stadium in Budapest on 15 November 2019. Index reporter Gábor Miklósi wrote in his report that he refused to stand when the unofficial anthem of FC DAC, "Without You", was sung by the whole crowd. The song has become very popular in Hungarian right-wing and far-right circles. As Gábor Miklósi explained, he gets up only for the Hungarian national anthem. On Wednesday 20 November, László Toroczkai, president of "Our Country Movement" (far right) organised a press conference in front of the Index Office, to blame...
Gábor Miklósi for his so-called "anti-Hungarian" behavior. In the wake of the party's intervention, Hungarian public service television conducted an 8.5-minute interview with Toroczkai on the subject in its morning show. Gábor Miklósi and another Index reporter, Andras Dezso, have been targeted for a week in the pro-governmental media and in far-right media. On 23 and 24 November, anti-semitic street posters depicting the two Index journalists popped up in Budapest. The posters showed the portraits of the two journalists in front of an Israeli flag with the mentions: "We, too, came from across the border!"; "'Constant squabbling, latent anti-Hungarian, treason". The action was strongly condemned by the National Association of Hungarian Journalists (MÚOSZ) and the US and Israeli embassies in Budapest.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Statement from the National Association of Hungarian Journalists (MÚOSZ): "A MÚOSZ az újságírókat megbélyegző gyűlöletplakátokról"
- Tweet from the US Embassy in Budapest
- 444.hu news report: "Ezeket a plakátokat tették ki Budapesten az Index újságíróiról"
- News report from the National Association of Hungarian Journalists (MÚOSZ): "Antiszemita plakátokon támadják az Index újságíróit"
- Tweet from the Israeli Embassy in Budapest
- Tweet from journalist Szabolcs Panyi showing the street posters
- 444.hu news report: "Valami végleg eltört a Nélküled miatt: a közmédia 8 perces interjút készített Toroczkai Lászlóval a „magyargyűlőlő” Indexről"
- 444.hu news report: "Toroczkai feljelenti az Indexet, mert szerinte a magyar nép ellen uszítanak"
- Hungarian Spectrum blog analysis of the far-right smear campaign: ""We are of the same blood," the prelude to virulent anti-semitic comments"

United Kingdom  n° 94/2019

Alert created on: 20 Aug 2019

Journalist Owen Jones Attacked by Four Men

SOURCE OF THREAT  ▶ Non-state

CATEGORY  ▶ Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists
Guardian journalist Owen Jones had been socialising with friends at a bar near King's Cross in London on the night of Saturday 17 August 2019. After leaving the bar at about 2am, a group of men approached him and his friends and began hitting Jones in the head from behind. According to reports, Jones fell to the ground after being kicked in the back by one of the men. The other attackers proceeded to kick him in the back and head. When his friends tried to intervene, they were also assaulted. London's Metropolitan police are investigating and reviewing CCTV footage of the attack but have so far made no arrests.

Jones said that in the last year he has repeatedly been the subject of abuse (including homophobic abuse), threats, and attempts to use physical violence. He said that he has also been the target of an increasing volume of death threats, with photos of him being posted online alongside threatening messages.

18 Nov 2019: On 6 November 2019, due to its serious nature, the case against three men accused of the assault of Owen Jones was transferred to Crown Court. It will be heard in Snaresbrook Crown Court on 4 December 2019.

Article from The Guardian: “Three charged over Owen Jones assault face crown court date”

30 Aug 2019: According to London Metropolitan police, three men aged 29, 34 and 39 were arrested in connection with the assault on Owen Jones on suspicion of violent disorder and assault occasioning actual bodily harm. Scotland Yard said they had been released on bail until late September and that a file had been passed to the Crown Prosecution Service.
conservative HDZ party, allegedly because of the journalist's writings about the MP. The threat was first made verbally in public in a café bar in the town of Virovitica, where Ivan Đakić declared that he planned to hire a hitman to physically assault Žada. The second threat was made on Đakić's Facebook wall. In several posts, Ivan Đakić accused the journalist of "writting nonsense, filthy and stupid things" about his father and that he was ready “to stay in prison for life if needed” for him. He also warned the journalist “to think it over”. Ivan Žada reported the threats and the County State Attorney started an investigation.

13 Nov 2019: On 6 November 2019, the Virovitica Municipal Court sentenced Ivan Zhada to a four-month suspended prison sentence with one year of probation for recording a telephone conversation with MP Josip Đakić and posting some of the conversation as a transcript on Facebook and on the Index.hr website.

Article from “Jutarnji Vijesti” (in Croatian): “Novinar Žada uvjetno osuđen zbog neovlaštenog snimanja i objavljivanja razgovora s Josipom Đakićem”

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

News article on Index.hr: "Novinar: Prijetio mi je sin HDZ-ovca Đakića, a onda mi je njegov otac psovao"

Statement from HND: "Otac i sin Đakić prijetili i psovali novinara"

STATE REPLIES

14 Jan 2019 | Response from the Croatian authorities

Letter from the Permanent Representation of Croatia to the Council of Europe

Spain

Twelve Journalists Victims of Violence on the Sidelines of Demonstrations in Catalonia

SOURCE OF THREAT: State

CATEGORY: Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists
Twelve journalists clearly identified as such were the target of police violence on 14 October 2019 in Catalonia, while covering the protests, following the conviction of nine pro-independence leaders to jail terms for secession attempt, in 2017. Most of these assaults were perpetrated by police officers, either by the "Mossos d'Esquadra", which are under the authority of the Catalan autonomous government, or by the National Police, which is under the authority of the Spanish Ministry of the Interior. The twelve journalists attacked were Elise Gazengel (digital media Contexto), Pol Pareja (eldiario.es), Jordi Mumbrú (daily "Ara"), Eudald Martínez (radio RAC 1), Albert Salamé and Oriol Izquierdo (Vilaweb.cat), Joan Giralt, Freddy Davies and Núria Gebellí ("La Directa" magazine), Pau Venteo (Catalunya Radio), Victor Asensio (Elprat TV), and a photo-reporter who prefers to remain anonymous. Eudald Martínez is the only victim who was not attacked by police officers: he was hit by a stone thrown by protesters. Most of the incidents occurred around Barcelona’s-El Prat airport.

The Federation of Journalists' Trade Unions (FESP), the Union of Journalists of Catalonia (SPC) and the FSC-CCOO journalists' group demand that an investigation be opened and that the responsibility for the attacks be established. They sent their petition to the Catalan Interior Minister, Miquel Buch, and to the Spanish Interior Minister, Fernando Grande-Marlaska.

**UPDATES**

**23 Oct 2019:** The number rises further to 59. On 17 October, extreme-right protesters also assaulted a Cuatro TV-crew. On 18 October, in Ronda de San Pere, police shot rubber at identified journalists, injuring an ACN journalist. Two Televisión Española (TVE) teams were assaulted. In Barcelona, a Context journalist suffered an asthma attack, caused by tear gas. El Mundo journalist Quico Sallés said he was hit in the leg by rubber shots before being beaten by five policemen. Photojournalist Juan Carlos Mohr claimed policemen hit him and the camera. Journalist Fermín Grodira reported he was insulted, pushed and beaten by policemen. Catalunya Ràdio journalist Arnau Maymó said he was hit by policemen who told him “You don’t know who we are”. El Nacional photojournalist Sergi Alcázar was beaten by a policeman. El Mon director Salvador Cot reported he was hit by National Police Force officers while taking photographs. Freelance journalist Guillem Andrés was beaten by policemen despite identifying himself as a journalist. Photojournalist Emili Puig was hit in the face by rubber bullet despite identifying himself. Cadena SER journalist Albert Prat reported she was hit on the legs despite identifying herself. An Euskal Telebista cameraman was taken to hospital, after policemen ignored his calls for help, for treatment of injuries caused by rubber bullet. AP journalists Emilio Morenati and Bernat Arnangué were hit by rubber shots. Vilaweb photojournalist Albert Salamé was injured in bright daylight. Photographer Paco Freire reported policemen assaulted him, hit and broke the camera, despite identifying himself and no protesters being at the scene. In Girona, Diari de Girona photojournalist David Aparicio was wounded by a rubber bullet, despite wearing a press vest. On 19 October, a TV3 cameraman was beaten by a protester in Barcelona. According to Mèdia.cat, the number of injured journalists is 65, but some remain to be identified.
18 Oct 2019: The number of journalists who were victims of violence while covering demonstrations rises to 37. On 15 October, in Tarragona, a protester pulled Canal Reus editor Ariadna Escoda’s hair. In Lleida, Catalan News Agency (ACN) journalist Laura Cortés was wounded in the leg. In Barcelona, eldiario.es photojournalist Sònia Calvó, freelance photojournalist Xavi Hurtado, El Món journalist Quico Sallés, three photographers who requested anonymity and a French reporter were hit by policemen. Photographer Mireia Comas was hit on her head by a bottle. Two journalists underwent medical treatment from tear gas. In Sabadell, an ACN editor was injured by thrown stones. On 16 October, La Directa journalist Sira Esclasans was hit by a rubber bullet. Ara photographer Cristina Calderer was injured by a thrown stone. An editor of the newspaper, Xavi Tedó, was reportedly beaten by policemen. Fotomovimento photographer Bru Aguiló said policemen broke his camera and hit him on the knee. Two La Mosca TV workers were hit by policemen and a third by a rubber bullet. Telemadrid reported attacks on two cameramen. In Girona, an ACN editor was hit by objects thrown at policemen. On 17 October, Telecinco TV crew members were attacked by extreme-right protesters, who broke the camera and insulted them. While staying in a group of identified journalists, El Periódico journalist Carles Márquez was hit by a rubber bullet shot from a police van.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Article published on Media.Cat: "Almenys onze periodistes lesionats durant les càrregues en les protestes per la sentència"
- Tweet by SPC union
- Tweet du journaliste Eudald Martinez
- Statement by FSC-CCOO union: "Media docena de periodistas heridos en las protestas de la sentencia del 'procés'"
- Statement by SPC Union: "Doce periodistas agredidos en las movilizaciones de ayer en Catalunya"

STATE REPLIES

- 08 Nov 2019 | Response from the Spanish authorities
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Spain to the Council of Europe
Response from the Spanish authorities

Letter from the Permanent Representation of Spain

FOLLOW-UPS

OSCE Representative for Media Freedom concerned by attacks against journalists during demonstrations in Spain, calls for protection of journalists covering protests.

Statement by Harlem Désir

Worried about a context of growing insecurity for journalists reporting on the situation in Catalonia in recent months, with attacks against journalists on the rise, CoE Human Rights Commissioner calls Spanish authorities to investigate all reported cases of attacks against journalists, and to take measures to guarantee the safety of all journalists during demonstrations.

Statement by Dunja Mijatović

Turkey

Medyascope.tv Correspondent Mehmet Çakmakçı Faces Terrorism-related Charges

No state reply yet

Source of threat: State

Category: Harassment and intimidation of journalists

Turkey

Medyascope.tv Correspondent Mehmet Çakmakçı Faces Terrorism-related Charges

No state reply yet

Source of threat: State

Category: Harassment and intimidation of journalists

PARTNER: IPI

Mehmet Çakmakçı, a correspondent for Medyascope tv, is facing charges of "membership of a terrorist organisation". The indictment against him quote his interviews, phone calls with sources and photos taken on duty as criminal evidence. Çakmakçı was arrested in Diyarbakır on 4 July 2018 in relation to these charges. On 18 October 2018, he was released from pre-trial detention on probation, and his trial is currently pending.

Italy

n° 5/2018

Alert created on: 23 Jan 2018
On 25 December 2017 Ukrainian journalist Anastasia Tovt, who works for online newspaper Strana.ua, was detained by the Roman police, subjected to a full-body search and then escorted to the airport. Her two phones and a laptop were also seized by the police. As of 23 January 2018 the equipment still has not been returned.

Tovt was on an editorial assignment to film a performance by feminist group Femen. The arrest happened during the performance, when activist Alisa Vinogradova stole the doll representing baby Jesus from the Vatican’s nativity scene. Vinogradova was arrested for injury to a public official, religious offenses, attempted theft and obscene acts in a public place. Tovt was also detained by the Roman police, allegedly as accessory to Vinogradova.

According to Tovt, several other foreign journalists also filmed the incident. Tovt believes her equipment was seized due to the footage she had filmed during an interview with Vinogradova the day before the performance. This is also why, she believes, she was detained by the police for 12 hours and subjected to a full-body search. The police reportedly didn’t take her press credentials into account. Tovt says no translation of documents was provided, and her rights to a phone call and to speak to a lawyer were denied.

After 12 hours of detention, Tovt was escorted back to the airport by the Roman police.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Article published by Strana.ua (in Russian)
- Video published by Strana.ua
- Report on the incident published by Strana.ua (in Russian)
- First report on the incident published by Strana.ua (in Russian)

**STATE REPLIES**

- 21 Oct 2019 | Reply from the Italian authorities
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Italy to the Council of Europe
A court in Istanbul ordered on August 16, 2016 the closure of Özgür Gündem newspaper for spreading alleged "propaganda on behalf of the outlawed terrorist organisation". Shortly after the announcement of the newspaper’s closure by authorities, police raided its office in Istanbul’s Beyoğlu district. During the police raid, the newspaper’s editor-in-chief Zana Kaya, journalists Günay Aksoy, Kemal Bozkurt, Reyhan Hacıoğlu, Önder Elaldı, Ender Önder, Sinan Balık, Fırat Yeşilçınar, İnan Kızılkaya, Özgür Paksoy, Zeki Erden, Elif Aydoğmuş, Bilir Kaya, Ersin Çaksu, Mesut Kaynar, Sevdiye Gürbüz, Amine Demirkiran, Bayram Balcı, Burcu Özkaya, Yılmaz Bozkurt, Gülfer Karataş, Gökhan Çetin, Hüseyin Gündüz and Aslı Erdoğan were taken in custody by the authorities. Media freedom organisations condemned the violence of the detentions.

Following the closure of Özgür Gündem, the authorities raided the next day (17 August) the house of Ragip Zarakolu, a journalist, writer and editor known for his publishing work on minority rights in Turkey. The writer was not home but his books about Armenian, Pontus and Assyrian genocides have been confiscated by the authorities. Houses of journalists Eren Keskin and Filiz Koçali have also been raided by the police for similar purpose.

The total number of staff members detained has risen to 24, P24 reported on 16 August.

18 Oct 2019: On 11 October 2019, Kemal Sancılı, the former publisher of daily Özgür Gündem, was released after completing a 3-year sentence he was given in a previous case. The court overseeing the Özgür Gündem trial had ruled on 10 April 2019 to release Sancılı pending trial but he remained behind bars due to a previous conviction from a case against Demokratik Ulus — a pro-Kurdish weekly that used to be published by the company that also published Özgür Gündem.

08 Mar 2018: On 6 March 2018, the 23rd High criminal court of Istanbul lifted the arrest warrant against Özgür Gündem advisory board member Ragıp Zarakolu on grounds that the court had been notified of his address of residence in Sweden where he now lives in exile. The trial was adjourned to 4th June.
31 Oct 2017: On the fifth hearing in the main trial of Özgür Gündem daily held on 31 October 2017, the Court decided to release the managing Editor İnan Kızılkaya pending trial. The Court also placed him under an international travel ban. The next hearing will be on 6 March 2018.

08 Sep 2017: On 7 September 2017, Aslı Erdoğan was given back her passport, after the travel ban imposed on her was lifted in June 2017.

28 Aug 2017: Eren Keskin, former editor-in-chief of the Özgür Gündem daily, was released on 25 August 2016 after being referred to a court by prosecutors. She was then placed under a travel ban.

29 Dec 2016: On 29 December 2016, Aslı Erdoğan was released and a travel ban was imposed on her pending trial. The hearing is set for 22 June 2017. Zana Kaya was also released.

14 Nov 2016: On 10 November 2016, a prosecutor in Istanbul asked for life sentences for nine journalists and executives from Özgür Gündem. All nine defendants in the case, author Aslı Erdoğan, linguist Necmiye Alpay, journalists Ragıp Zarakolu, Bilge Contepe, Filiz Koçali, editor-in-chief Bilir Kaya, the holder of the newspaper’s publication rights, Kemal Sancılı, the paper’s Responsible Managing Editor İnan Kızılkaya and lawyer and former co-editor-in-chief Eren Keskin, are charged with “membership in a terrorist organisation,” “damaging the unity of the state,” “conducting propaganda for a terrorist organisation” and “establishing an organisation for the purpose of committing crime.”

18 Oct 2016: On 23 August 2016, Özgür Gündem daily’s Editor-in-Chief Zana Kaya and Chief Editor İnan Kızılkaya were arrested on charge of being a member of an illegal organization. Kaya and Kızılkaya who denied the accusations have filed complaints against the police officers for having beaten them during their six-day detention.

22 Aug 2016: 23 staff members of Özgür Gündem Daily have been released, according to EFJ. Journalist Aslı Erdoğan is the only one to be kept in detention to date.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- P24 update : "Journalists in state of emergency - 10"
- EFJ: Kurdish daily shut down and journalists houses raided in Turkey
- News on Index' web site: "Turkey: Court orders closure of independent newspaper"
- CPJ: Turkish newspaper closed, journalists detained in police raid
Former Police President of Slovakia Tibor Gašpar has initiated a hate-filled communication campaign aimed at the editor-in-chief of Aktuality.sk Peter Bardy, journalist Monika Tódová from Dennik N and Jana Šimíčková from the weekly Plus 7. He is targeting journalists who have been covering the assassination of Ján Kuciak and Martina Kusnirova and alleged that Gašpar was involved.

The Slovak police are currently investigating the role of Gašpar on suspicion of unlawfully gathering information on journalists, including Ján Kuciak, who was murdered with his fiancée in February 2018. The police extracted information, including addresses and family connections, from this alleged surveillance operation.

On 6 September 2019, Gašpar published a Facebook post after Peter Bárdy and Martin Turček from Aktuality.sk suggested that his Facebook profile and web page were managed not by himself, but by PR professionals. Although Aktuality.sk provided evidence, Gašpar accused them in his Facebook status of "the biggest lies", of a bias against him, and of replacing journalistic ethics by "targeted propaganda". In his more recent Facebook status published on 12 September 2019, Gašpar suggests there is a conspiracy against him being led by George Soros's Open
Society Foundation and including Slovakia's "liberal media". He accused Aktuality.sk of being "an instrument of propaganda".

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- IPI statement: "Slovak news website targeted in smear campaign"
- ECPMF statement: "Smear campaign against Slovakia’s journalists by ex-Police Chief Gašpar’s needs to stop"
- Facebook post by Tibor Gašpar
- Facebook post by Tibor Gašpar

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**Ukraine**

n° 81/2019  
Alert created on: 16 Jul 2019

**TV Channel '112 Ukraine' Kyiv Office Targeted by a Grenade**

**SOURCE OF THREAT**  
Unknown

**CATEGORY**  
Harassment and intimidation of journalists

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On 13 July 2019, two unidentified persons targeted the office of the private TV channel '112 Ukraine' on Dehtiarivska street 21G, in Kyiv, using a grenade launcher. The attack happened at 3:27 a.m. and was recorded by three CCTV cameras installed outside the media building. The incident caused damage to the facade and nearby parked cars. Nobody was injured. At 3:40 a.m. local residents alerted the police who immediately started inspecting the area. A spent tube used to fire a rocket-propelled grenade was found. The press service of the national police qualified the incident as a "terrorist act". The Security Service of Ukraine has started an investigation.

Channel 112 had received a warning earlier this week after the TV had planned to broadcast the public premiere of the documentary "Revealing Ukraine". Some employees of '112 Ukraine' received messages with threats. The documentary was considered as "anti-Ukrainian narratives of Kremlin propaganda" by the Ministry of Information Policy. Channel 112 cancelled the broadcasting in order to avoid possible legal consequences and requested police protection, but the police didn't follow-up on the request, neither before the attack or after, according to the National Union of Journalists of Ukraine. '112 Ukraine' now strengthened its protection on its own.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- '112 Ukraine' News Article: "112 Ukraine TV channel in Kyiv came under fire of grenade launchers"
On 7 June 2019, Vadim Makaryuk, a cameraman for the 24th channel and Visti.News portal, was attacked with tear gas and beaten up by unidentified men, while filming a business-related dispute in the Barabashov marketplace in Kharkiv. The assailants took away the journalist’s camera and the memory card. Makaryuk spent more than a week in intensive care. He was still in hospital as of 9 July. Doctors diagnosed a hemorrhagic stroke and disrupted motor functions of the right arm and right leg as a result of the injuries. The police has opened criminal proceedings, under the charges of "obstruction of journalistic activities", "threat or violence against a journalist" and "hooliganism with the use of a weapon". Three suspects were placed under house arrest.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- [Index On Censorship Report: "Ukraine: Press freedom violations June 2019"](#)
On 30 July 2019, about a dozen men dressed in T-shirts with the inscription "Tradition and Order" broke into the press center of the Ukrinform news agency in Kyiv during a press conference of parliamentary candidates. They damaged the door to the press-hall and damaged the equipment and furniture. They pushed and hit Ukrinform staff members. They also threw eggs at, and poured water on, an independent candidate from the town of Pokrovsk in eastern Ukraine, Andrey Aksyonov, accusing him of being close to the Kremlin authorities. The other candidate, Serhiy Korshukov, from the European Solidarity party, was not attacked. The two candidates had been speaking about alleged vote-rigging in the recent parliamentary elections. Two media workers of Ukrinform's technical department and the head of the press center were injured. The whole event was broadcast live on the Ukrinform Youtube channel. Two attackers were taken to the police department for a questioning. Kiev police started a criminal investigation into the incident. The organisation "Tradition and Order" is classified as "radical nationalist" by Human
Rights Watch. It is known for its attacks on Ukrainian Roma, LGBT persons and human rights activists.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Tellerreport news report: "Police filed a case because of the attack on "Ukrinform""
- Ukrinform news report: "National Union of Journalists of Ukraine condemns attack on Ukrinform"
- Ukrinform video of the incident (the press conference and the attack)

### STATE REPLIES

- **11 Oct 2019** | Reply from the Government of Ukraine
  - Official position of Ukraine

### FOLLOW-UPS

- **02 Aug 2019** | OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media condemns attack on press center of Ukrinform news agency and calls on the authorities to fully investigate the incident.
  - Tweet by Harlem Désir

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**Italy**

### Italian Riot Police Beat La Repubblica Reporter Stefano Origone

**Alert created on: 27 May 2019**

**Source of Threat**: State  
**Category**: Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

On 23 May 2019, a group of riot police officers beat La Repubblica Reporter Stefano Origone with batons and kicked him while the journalist was covering clashes among demonstrators near a rally staged by far-right party CasaPound in Genoa, according to a video of the incident published by his employer, Italian daily La Repubblica, and as Origone recounted in a report published in the paper. Police officers beat Origone while he curled in the fetal position, breaking
two of his fingers and one of his ribs, according to his report in La Repubblica. He shouted that he was a journalist, but police only stopped beating him when one officer recognised him, Origone wrote.

In his report, Origone wrote that he remained hospitalised in Genoa with heavy bruising and head trauma.

Riot police began beating demonstrators after CasaPound supporters and opponents clashed near the party's rally, according to news reports.

"The journalist, Origone, was in the piazza to do his job in a peaceful manner as a reporter. I don't know how he could have been mistaken for a rioter," said Genoa's chief prosecutor, Francesco Cozzi, according to German international broadcaster Deutsche Welle. Italian prosecutors have opened an investigation into Origone's beating, according to the broadcaster. In an interview published by La Repubblica, Genoa Police Superintendent Vincenzo Ciarambino apologised for the officers' attack on the journalist.

STATE REPLIES

10 Oct 2019 | Reply from the Italian authorities

Information provided by the Italian Ministry of Interior (in Italian)

03 Oct 2019

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Football FansStormed Radio Sarajevo Newsroom and Forced Staff to Remove News Item

SOURCE OF THREAT Non-state

CATEGORY Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

NO STATE REPLY YET

A journalist of Radiosarajevo.ba was attacked and several journalists were threatened by a group of fans of the Football Club Sarajevo on the evening of 27 September 2019 in the capital. The incident happened after the Radio Sarajevo portal and other media reported about a football fan who was condemned to five years in prison in Belarus for drug possession. After breaking into the newsroom, a group of supporters of the football team came to the Radio Sarajevo editorial office where a radio reporter was taken hostage for more than two hours, under threat of killing him and his family, and asked to remove the article from the website. He was then forced to call
other editorial boards of portals and newspapers in Bosnia and Herzegovina asking them to delete the same article. The newsroom had received threats over the phone beforehand. That evening, two suspects were arrested and released with a ban on access to media outlets and journalists within 100 meters. Dozens of journalists gathered in Sarajevo on 30 September to demand an end to violence against journalists, urging the authorities to ensure their safety.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Alert published by the Western Balkan’s Regional Platform for Advocating Media Freedom and Journalists’ Safety: "Threats against the lives and limbs of journalists, Radio Sarajevo, Sarajevo"
- EFJ statement: "Bosnia and Herzegovina: harsh sanctions requested against Radio Sarajevo assailants"

**FOLLOW-UPS**

- 07 Oct 2019 | CoE Human Rights Commissioner welcomes the prompt reaction of the authorities in #Bosnia and Herzegovina who condemned the attacks against some Radio Sarajevo's journalists and reportedly arrested the perpetrators. 
  - Statement by Dunja Mijatović
- 03 Oct 2019 | OSCE Media Freedom Representative condemns attack on Radiosarajevo.ba, calls for better protection of journalists.
  - Statement by Harlem Désir

**Spain**

n° 118/2019

Alert created on: 03 Oct 2019

**Spanish Reporter Laila Jiménez Assaulted by Protesters during Catalonia Independence March**

SOURCE OF THREAT: Non-state

CATEGORY: Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

**NO STATE REPLY YET**

On 1 October 2019, journalist Laila Jiménez was assaulted by protesters in Barcelona, while she was broadcasting during a Catalan independence protest. Demonstrators pushed and shoved
Jiménez, a reporter for the Telecinco TV channel, and poured vodka over her head, as seen in video of the incident posted online by her employer. Demonstrators also shouted insults at Jiménez, who was forced to relocate her broadcast to avoid further harassment, according to news reports. Jiménez continued broadcasting after the incident and did not report any injuries, as seen in a Telecinco clip shared on Twitter.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Statement from the Spanish journalists' union FSC-CCOO: "Nuevo ataque a periodistas en una manifestación de cariz político"
- Video of the incident published by Telecinco

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**Police Prevent Photographer Alexandros Stamatiou from Covering the Evacuation of Migrants**

 Freelance press photographer Alexandros Stamatiou was briefly arrested by police on 23 September 2019 while covering the evacuation of migrants who had found refuge in an abandoned school in Athens' Exarchia district. An official of the daily newspaper "Efsyn" confirmed to the police that Alexandros Stamatiou was covering the event for the newspaper. Nevertheless, the police arrested the journalist, who was handcuffed, evacuated and charged with disturbing public order.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Article published on the news site TVXS: «Είμαι φωτορεπόρτερ με χειροπέδες στην Ελλάδα του 2019»
Alexandros Stamatiou

A freelance photographer who was arrested while covering the evacuation of migrants from an abandoned school.

Croatia

18 Sep 2019

Journalist Gordan Duhaček Fined for ‘Anti-Police’ Twitter Message

SOURCE OF THREAT: State

CATEGORY: Harassment and intimidation of journalists

Gordan Duhaček, a reporter for Index.hr, was arrested by Zagreb police at the airport when he was about to take an official flight on Monday 16 September 2019. Duhaček was eventually released and found guilty of insulting the police in two posts on his Twitter feed and was charged with a symbolic fine of 100 euros for one of the posts. The journalist denounces that he was sprayed with tear gas on the floor and that he was told in a police car that this was happening to him because he was resisting the system. Duhaček wrote on Twitter in 2018: "Not everyone will resist the system. ACAB!" (All Cops Are Bastards), in which he commented on an incident of excessive police violence at a Zadar night club. The second tweet was a satirical cover of the patriotic song "Vilo Velebit", in which he used the word 'shit' several times, in reference to news reports that Plitvice Lakes, one of the country's main tourist attractions and best known natural parks, regularly discharges local sewage into a nearby lake. The verdict of this last post will be delivered on Thursday. Duhaček has been prosecuted on the basis of an article of the Law on Offences against Public Order and Peace, a fact that represents a threat for the freedom of expression the country.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Statement from EFJ: "Croatia: Journalist arrested and fined for satirical tweets"
- Balkan Insight news report: "Croatian Journalist Fined for ‘Anti-Police’ Twitter Message"
- News report from N1: "Journalist detained over satirical tweets, highlighting pressures on free speech"
- Statement from CJA: "GORDAN DUHAČEK PRIVEDEN, PUŠTEN I KAŽNJEN ZBOG PJESMICE NA TWITTERU"
OSCE Media Freedom Representative raises serious concern about lawsuits and brief detention of journalist in Croatia.

Statement by Harlem Désir

The arrest and fine of Croatian journalist Gordan Duhacek for his posts on Twitter amount to pure intimidation of the press, says CoE Commissioner.

Tweet de Dunja Mijatović

FOLLOW-UPS

Call for Review of the Trial Process which Led to the Conviction of Macedonian Journalist Tomislav Kezarovski

Alert created on: 07 Apr 2015 n° 55/2015

North Macedonia

Call for Review of the Trial Process which Led to the Conviction of Macedonian Journalist Tomislav Kezarovski

SOURCE OF THREAT State

CATEGORY Harassment and intimidation of journalists

NO STATE REPLY YET

The Macedonian investigative journalist Tomislav Kezarovski was arrested in May 2013 for allegedly revealing the identity of a protected witness in an article published in 2008 in the magazine “Reporter 92”. Kezarovski's article allegedly revealed the identity of a protected witness, who later admitted to having testified against the defendants under duress. The witness had however not yet been given protection at the time the article was written and in 2013 admitted having given a false statement under pressure from the police. Kezarovski was sentenced in October 2013 to four and a half years in prison. Following international protests he was held under house arrest and returned home on 1 November 2013 after 172 days in detention. On 16 January 2015, the Skopje Court of Appeal reduced Kezarovski's to two years but upheld his conviction. The EFJ and the IFJ sent a joint letter to Macedonian Prime Minister, Mr. Nicola Gruevski, demanding the review of Kezarovski's trial process.

UPDATES

On 17 September 2019, the Skopje Court of First Instance ruled that the action brought by Kezharovsky to review his conviction was time-barred.

Statement by the Association of Journalists of Macedonia (AJM): "AJM Reacts to decision on Kezharovski"
On 12 September 2019, police in Saratov, in southwestern Russia, interrogated Aleksandr Nikishin, who hosts a talk show at the independent news website Svobondyye Novosti, for two and a half hours after raiding his apartment and confiscating cellphones, a hard drive, and a credit card, according to the journalist and Svobondyye Novosti editor-in-chief Mariya Aleksashina, who both spoke to CPJ over the phone, and news reports. The journalist said that the police did not file any charges against him, and said they have not returned the items they confiscated. Police spent five hours in Nikishin’s apartment and then interrogated him at the local office of the Investigative Committee, Aleksashina told CPJ. Nikishin told CPJ he was released from police custody after signing a non-disclosure agreement about the nature and content of the questions. Nikishin said his case was supervised by the the central office of the Investigative Committee in Moscow. The officer on duty at that office told CPJ via phone that he could not comment on the case, saying an investigation was underway. Valeriya Pavelko, who heads Svobondyye Novosti’s video department, which often features Nikishin’s program, told CPJ via
phone that the news outlet had no affiliation with any political party and was “absolutely
independent.”

Russian authorities have recently raided dozens of homes and offices of activists alleged to be
affiliated with Navalny and his Russia of the Future political party, according to news reports.

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13 Sep 2019

**Spain**

**n° 105/2019**

Alert created on: 13 Sep 2019

**Several Journalists Targeted while Covering Demonstrations**

**SOURCE OF THREAT**  ▶ **Non-state**

**CATEGORY**  ▶ **Harassment and intimidation of journalists**

**NO STATE REPLY YET**

On 11 September 2019, unidentified people intimidated and attacked journalists from TVE and
Antena 3 TV channels in front of the Catalan Parliament during a demonstration. The attack
happened during the afternoon and the evening and was aired by both TV channels (during and
after the incidents). Nobody needed medical care. The attackers threw objects, water and
damaged materials of TVE’s team, as well as intimidated both reporting teams from the two TV
stations, screaming, shouting and whistling out and on camera. During the last years, the tension
in the political debate between Catalonia and Spain has moved to the streets and journalists are
suffering the consequences. One of the pro-independence demonstrations -which congregated
300 people- became the scene of violence and altercations to members of the police and some
journalists who were reporting on the event.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- **Statement of the European Federation of Journalists:** "Spain: several journalists
targeted while reporting demonstrations"

- **Statement of the Spanish union FSC-CC.OO:** "Firme condena a la agresión sufrida por
un equipo de TVE en la Diada"

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04 Sep 2019

**Turkey**

**n° 103/2019**

Alert created on: 04 Sep 2019

**Journalist Levent Uysal Wounded in Shooting Attack**

**SOURCE OF THREAT**  ▶ **Unknown**

**CATEGORY**  ▶ **Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists**
On 29 August 2019, at around 1 a.m., journalist Levent Uysal was approached by two people on a motorbike who had been waiting outside his home. They were both wearing helmets and pretended to ask for directions. They shot at the journalist six times, hitting him in the leg. Levent Uysal was hospitalised after the attack. He has said that he believed he was targeted as a result of his work.

Levent Uysal was the owner of Yenigün, a recently closed local newspaper, in the northwestern city of Balıkesir. Uysal told Deutsche Welle that despite the attack and the economic issues he has faced, he would continue his journalistic work by broadcasting via the internet.

The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Harlem Désir, strongly condemned the shooting of Levent Uysal, expressing concern about the multiplication of violent incidents against journalists in Turkey. "This is the sixth grave attack since May this year in Turkey. More needs to be done to ensure that this deeply concerning trend is urgently reversed and that journalists are ensured a safe environment to work in".

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- RSF statement: "Journalist wounded in shooting attack in northwestern Turkey"
- Article published by Deutsche Welle: "Gazeteci Uysal: Haberlerim nedeniyle saldırıya uğradım"

**FOLLOW-UPS**

- 04 Sep 2019 | OSCE Media Freedom Representative strongly condemns shooting of journalist in Turkey, calls for thorough investigation
  - Statement by Harlem Désir

**Serbia**

- n° 112/2018
- Alert created on: 15 Oct 2018

**Journalist Zeljko Matorcevic Physically Attacked**

- SOURCE OF THREAT: Unknown
- CATEGORY: Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists
Zeljko Matorcevic was attacked on 9 October 2018 by an unidentified young man who first followed him, then suddenly hit him at the head, and when Matorcevic fell to the ground, continued to hit him. Matorcevic suffered serious body injuries: his cheekbone was broken and in the following days he would undergo a surgical procedure. Matorcevic is editor-in-chief of Žig Info portal.

**02 Sep 2019:** The Public Prosecutor’s Office dismissed the complaint against J.P., who was suspected of having attacked Željko Matorčević on 9 October 2018, finding no grounds for suspecting that J.P. had committed the criminal offense of physical assault, or any other criminal offense prosecuted ex officio.

**Article from N1 Info (in Serbian):** “Odbačena prijava protiv osumnjičenog za prebijanje urednika portala Žig info”

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Mapping Media Freedom report: "Serbia: Editor-in-chief of local news website sustains serious injuries in physical assault by unknown perpetrator"
- Statement by the Western Balkan’s Regional Platform for Advocating Media Freedom and Journalists' Safety: 'Police to find perpetrator on our colleague Matorcevic'

**STATE REPLIES**

- **09 Nov 2018 | Reply from the Serbian authorities**
  - Letter from the Serbian Permanent Representation to the Council of Europe

**FOLLOW-UPS**

- **15 Oct 2018 | OSCE Representative strongly condemns physical attack against Željko Matorčević.**
  - Tweet by Harlem Désir
On 28 August 2019, a TV N1 crew and TV channel Federalna correspondent Dejan Kozul were attacked while reporting ahead of the football Champions League game between Red Star and Young Boys in Belgrade, Serbia.

N1 journalists were shooting a news report about a war tank that Red Star fans had parked outside the Marakana stadium. While recording interviews, a group of persons yelled "spies", "thieves", "American mercenaries" at the journalists, and tried to break their camera and microphone. The same day, Federalna correspondent Dejan Kozul was about to shoot on the same topic, when a group of men questioned him about his work and citizenship, to which he replied he was making a report for the Sarajevo TV station.

In addition, the daily Danas was denied accreditation by the Red Star club management.
A report published on 30 July 2019 by the International Press Institute (IPI) in cooperation with the Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA) concludes that Turkey systematically uses criminal prosecution to target journalists and other persons who expressed criticism of the authorities and fails to guarantee their rights in court. This report aims to collect data on media freedom/freedom of expression cases with a view to documenting more accurately journalists’ trials.

The July 2019 Turkey Free Expression Trial Monitoring Report analyses the extent to which Turkish courts protect the fundamental rights of journalists and other persons who exercise their freedom of expression. It is based on data collected by MLSA covering 86 hearings held between 20 February and 31 May 2019, the majority of which involved journalists. The report found that 70% of the 492 defendants involved in the hearings were charged with terrorism-related offences. Yet despite the gravity of the charges, indictments cite insufficient and untenable evidence: In 81% of the cases monitored, the evidence (published articles, photographs or social media posts, etc.) related directly to the defendants’ professional occupation. Although the evidence did not support the charges, 40 defendants were held in pre-trial detention, 26 of them for longer than 12 months.

Moreover, the data on court proceedings show breaches of the right to a fair trial: In 20% of the cases the presiding judge, and in 33% of the cases a member of the judicial panel, changed during the proceedings; 47% of judicial deliberations did not take place in private, but were held in open court with prosecutors, defendants and the audience present; 52% of the hearings were adversely affected by material conditions in the courtroom.

The July 2019 Turkey Free Expression Trial Monitoring Report is part of comprehensive trial monitoring across Turkey that began in June 2018. The first report under the programme, published in January 2019, concluded that Turkish courts systematically ignored domestic and international standards set for securing the right to a fair trial. The July 2019 Report concludes that the Turkish judicial system, including courts at various instances, continues to violate fundamental rights to liberty, freedom of expression and fair trial guaranteed in the Turkish Constitution, the European Convention on Human Rights and related case-law.

On 4 October 2017, a car belonging to Zornitsa Akmanova, a reporter for the TV programme ‘Lords of the Air’, was set on fire in the central Bulgarian town Karlovo. The ‘Lords of the Air’ programme sets out to expose and confront cases of fraud and other dishonest business practices. On the following day, the owner of a local car garage, Plamen Dimitrov, was arrested in connection with the attack on Ms Akmanova’s car. Just a few hours before the arson, the local authorities had closed down Mr Dimitrov’s garage business. Police intervention was prompted by high-profile TV reports by Ms Akmanova alleging Mr Dimitrov’s involvement in a number of acts of fraud against clients. Ms Akmanova has stated that she had previously received several threats warning her to stop reporting on Mr Dimitrov’s activities.

On 9 October, Mr Dimitrov was released on bail after being charged on a single count of fraud against a client. No charges have been brought in connection with the burning of Ms Akmanova’s car or the threats she has received. Bulgarian media report that following a number of previous claims made by local people against Mr Dimitrov, three local prosecutors have dropped the investigations on account of his reported relationship with a senior official in the Karlovo municipality. Subsequently those cases were re-directed to the regional prosecutors in Plovdiv, Bulgaria’s second largest city, but prosecutors there have also declined to carry out investigations against the garage owner.

The destruction of Zornitsa Akmanova’s car follows threats and acts of violence against other journalists working for ‘Lords of the Air’. In the recent past another reporter for the programme, Eva Veselinova, was physically assaulted while filming an investigation into alleged fraudulent practices at a construction company. A third reporter, Dimitar Varbanov, received threats related to his investigations of the activities of a local businessman.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- EU Scoop report: ‘Bulgarian reporter’s car set on fire’
On 10 May 2018, investigative journalist Hristo Geshov was attacked and assaulted outside his home in the town of Cherven Bryag in northwestern Bulgaria, desant.net reports.

“I attribute this attack entirely to my investigative reporting and to the warnings I sent to the authorities about the management of finances by the Cherven Bryag municipal government,” Geshov wrote in a Facebook post a few hours after being punched in the stomach and back by an unidentified assailant. “Despite the pain and many bruises, I am sure that I will not abandon my work, and the attack against me is a sign that I am right,” he added.

Geshov writes for the regional investigative reporting website Za Istinata, works with the journalistic online platform “About the Truth” and hosts a programme called “On Target” that is available on YouTube.

He began being harassed after a series of articles about municipal government irregularities in Cherven Bryag in which he claimed, inter alia, that three municipal councillors were using European Union funds to renovate their homes.

Reporters Without Borders condemns the attack. “This attack is indicative of the degree to which investigative reporters are now being targeted by groups that want to silence them and impose terror,” said Pauline Adès-Mével, the head of RSF’s EU-Balkans desk. “We hail the swift reaction
of the police and medical services, but the Bulgarian authorities must also provide physical protection to journalists who, like Hristo Geshov, are the targets of threats of this kind.”

**05 Jun 2019:** On 14 May 2019, according to the statement of Hristo Geshov, the journalist was abducted by three unidentified individuals, who drove him in their car all night, until his report on the illegal water supply was removed from the Zov News website. On 14 May 2019, Zov News and Bivol announced that Geshov had disappeared. Maria Dimitrova, an editor-in-chief of Zov News said that Geshov's mother and sister had contacted her earlier that day saying they were unable to establish contact with the reporter. Dimitrova stated that she received a phone call early on 15 May from a man who did not identify himself, who asked that she remove the article and the video of Geshov's investigation on the alleged illegal water supply and sewage system in exchange for Geshov's release. On 15 May 2019 she removed the article from Zov News and the video from YouTube. Geshov has testified about the incident to the Bulgarian national police. CPJ could not independently verify the journalist's account of his abduction.

Article by CPJ: "Bulgarian reporter Hristo Geshov says he was briefly abducted; news outlets attack him"

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Report published on Mapping media freedom platform: "Bulgarian journalist: 'I attribute this attack entirely to my investigative reporting' "

RSF: Bulgarian investigative reporter attacked in provincial town

**STATE REPLIES**

27 Aug 2019 | Response from the Bulgarian authorities

Letter from the Permanent Representation of Bulgaria to the Council of Europe

05 Dec 2018 | Reply from the Bulgarian authorities

Letter from the Permanent Representation of Bulgaria to the Council of Europe
On 12 April 2019, at least two journalists were injured while covering clashes between police and protesters in Gabrovo, a town in central Bulgaria, according to local media reports. Veselin Tsvetanov, a reporter, and Daniel Stefanov, a cameraman, who both work for Bulgarian internet broadcaster Radio 999, reported that they had been hit by the police while they covered a demonstration, according to those media reports. Stefanov told Radio 999's affiliated TV station, TV 999, that he was hit by a police baton above his left eye and required four stitches, according to a transcript of the interview by Bulgarian news website dir.bg. Tsvetanov was also hit on the head but did not require medical attention, according to Stefanov. CPJ emailed questions to the press center of the Bulgarian Ministry of Interior, but did not immediately receive a response. The Gabrovo police chief resigned on 12 April after Prime Minister Boyko Borissov criticised the police for mishandling the protests, according to the Bulgarian News Agency, the country's public news agency.
In June 2019, the Bulgarian Prosecution Office opened an investigation on journalists Atanas Tchobanov and Asen Yordanov, who work for the independent news website Bivol. The timing and subject of the investigation suggest that it might come as a retaliatory measure in response to their reporting in March 2019 on a real estate scandal involving government officials, including Prosecutor-General Sotir Tzatsarov. Tchobanov and Yordanov are being accused of being themselves involved in a real-estate scandal. The investigation started after a report was published by the anti-corruption NGO BOETS. However, BOETS denied issuing such a report, and claimed it was falsified. Following the accusations against them, Tchobanov and Yordanov published documents that disproved these accusations. When they requested more details about the investigation and its justifications, the journalists received no response, even after Reporters Without Borders had filed similar requests. Reporter Without Borders is concerned that this investigation might be a measure of intimidation to deter journalists from reporting on the scandal the two journalists revealed.

09 Aug 2019: On 2 August 2019, as part of its investigation into the largest data breach in the country’s history, Bulgaria’s Special Prosecutor’s Office issued a European Investigative Order (EIO) to France, where Atanas Tchobanov has a permanent address.

27 Aug 2019 | Response from the Bulgarian authorities
Letter from the Permanent Representation of Bulgaria to the Council of Europe

Bulgaria n° 17/2016 Alert created on: 26 Jan 2016

Journalist Stoyan Tonchev Brutally Attacked
SOURCE OF THREAT Non-state
CATEGORY Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists
Stoyan Tonchev, a reporter for the news portal 'Hello Bulgaria', was assaulted and beaten with baseball bats on 14 January 2016 in his hometown Pomorie. The journalist, who was a candidate during the last local elections in Bulgaria, was left with serious head and skull injuries and is still under medical care. The assailants allegedly asked Tonchev if he was going to continue to write articles after this attack. The following day, the Bulgarian minister of Interior Affairs issued a statement announcing that two people had been detained in relation with this assault. The investigation is still in progress. Welcoming the swift reaction by the authorities Dunja Mijatović, the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, said: "I urge the authorities to thoroughly investigate the attack and bring the perpetrators to justice. There must be no impunity for attacks against journalists."

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Press release by CPJ: "Bulgarian journalist bludgeoned"
- Statement by AEJ in Bulgarian
- Statement by AEJ: "AEJ Bulgaria condemns the brutal beating of Stoyan Tonchev"
- Article published on NovaNews website (in Bulgarian)
- Article published on the Bulgarian Times website (in Bulgarian)

### STATE REPLIES

- **27 Aug 2019** | Response from the Bulgarian authorities  
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Bulgaria to the Council of Europe
- **27 Jun 2018** | Reply from the Government of Bulgaria  
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Bulgaria to the Council of Europe

### FOLLOW-UPS

- **OSCE 26 Jan 2016** | OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media condemns violent attack on journalist in Bulgaria, urges investigation  
  - Statement by Dunja Mijatović
On 30 July 2019, on the beach of Milano Marittima, Emilia Romagna, two officers of the official escort of the Italian Interior Minister, Matteo Salvini, tried to prevent freelance journalist Valerio Lo Muzio from filming a national police jet ski that had taken on board the Minister's son for a sea ride. One of the two officers intimidated and threatened the journalist, preventing him from approaching the scene. When questioned by the daily newspaper "La Repubblica" about the incident, the Ravenna Police Directorate explained that it had opened "an investigation into the possible misuse of administrative resources". The president of the Italian Order of Journalists, Carlo Verna, asked Minister Salvini to apologise to the threatened journalist. The president of the Italian Federation of Journalists (FNSI), Beppe Giulietti, has requested the formal identification of the agent who intimidated and threatened the journalist.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- "La Repubblica" news report: "Figlio di Salvini sulla moto d'acqua della Polizia: 'Da Salvini ancora nessuna scusa per l'intimidazione al giornalista' "
- Video of the incident on "La Repubblica" website: "Il figlio di Salvini al mare sulla moto d'acqua della polizia. E gli agenti vietano le riprese"

**STATE REPLIES**

- 22 Aug 2019 | Reply from the Italian authorities (Ministry of Interior)
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Italy to the Council of Europe (in Italian)

**FREELANCERS**

**Key information :**
On 4 July 2019, Zana Cimili, a correspondent for TV Channel N1 in Kosovo*, received death threats on social network, including against her daughter. The anonymous person said he had "a life desire to kill an Albanian, even an Albanian child," and he hoped "for a new war in Kosovo during which the Albanians will feel Serbian rage." On 6 July 2019, a Serbian national was arrested by Serbia’s police regarding this case, over “spreading of religious and national hatred and imperil safety”, N1 reported. A court placed the suspect under house arrest and banned him from using the Internet.

*All references to Kosovo, whether the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nation’s Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

26 Jul 2019: On 24 July 2019, the Special Prosecutor on High-Technology Crime filed an indictment with the Belgrade High Court against Nenad Vujatov, 33, on suspicion of threatening TV N1 journalist Zani Cimili via social media. A four-year prison sentence was requested.

Article from “Danas” (in Serbian): “TV N1: Optužnica protiv Nenada Vujatova zbog pretnji novinarki Zani Cimili”
After a critical comment on the German right wing party "Alternative für Deutschland" (AfD), investigative journalist Georg Restle became victim of online harassment culminating in a death threat received by letter. On 11 July 2019, Restle had described the AfD as the "parliamentary arm of a right-wing extremist movement" in a commentary at the news broadcast "Tagesthemen". He was referring to the "Identitäre Bewegung", an organisation recently classified as a "right-wing extremist movement" by the German Office for the Protection of the Constitution. In the statement, he demands the AfD to be classified as right-wing extremist, too. As a reaction to the commentary, Restle faced harsh criticism on social media and from the AfD itself. Party leader Jörg Meuthen called Restle an "enemy of democracy" and freedom of expression during a speech in Cottbus. His employer, the public service broadcaster "Westdeutscher Rundfunk" (WDR) has filed a criminal complaint.

19 Aug 2019: According to the WDR, the e-mail against Restle seems to originate from a sender who also threatened Henriette Reker, Mayor of Cologne, and Andreas Hollstein, Mayor of Altena. Investigations into 200 similar threats with right wing content, for which a man from Schleswig-Holstein is being suspected and was ordered pre-trial detention in April 2019, have been centralised in Berlin.

Article from Berliner Zeitung (in German): “Generalstaatsanwaltschaft ermittelt im Fall Georg Restle”
The journalist Nadia Daam is being subjected to a hate campaign on the internet following the broadcast of her programme on Europe 1 radio, on 1 November 2017. She denounced the sabotage by members of the platform Jeuxvideo.com's forum "Blabla 18-25" of a telephone line "anti-relou" (anti-bullies/harassers), which was opened to help female victims of street harassment. Nadia Daam described the forum as "a non-recyclable rubbish bin".

Since then, the journalist has been the victim of attacks on her electronic accounts, received insults of a pornographic nature, death threats, threats of rape, and hate speech on social networks. According to Europe 1, an individual also tried to break into her home in the middle of the night.

Europe 1 announced that it has filed a complaint at a police station in the 8th arrondissement of Paris for "threat of crime against persons".
**11 Jun 2019:** On 21 March 2019, the Rennes criminal court found a philosophy student guilty of threats of crime and sentenced him to five months in prison suspended and €2,500 in damages. Three other persons identified by the investigation remain to be tried.

Article from Le Monde (in French): "Prison avec sursis pour un étudiant qui avait harcelé la journaliste Nadia Daam"

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**13 Jul 2018:** On 6 July 2018, a third man who called upon the announcement of the judgment to "avenge our fallen brothers" was found guilty by the Bobigny Criminal Court of crime threats and death threats and sentenced to six months of suspended prison, 180 hours of community service, an obligation to find a job or training, and €5,000 in damages.

Article from Libération (in French): "Menaces sur Nadia Daam: la bassesse à la barre"

**06 Jul 2018:** On 3 July 2018, the Paris Criminal Court found two men guilty of crime threats and sentenced each to six months of suspended prison and €2,000 euros in damages.

Article from Le Monde (in French): "Deux hommes condamnés à de la prison avec sursis pour avoir menacé la journaliste Nadia Daam"

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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Report published on Mapping Media Freedom platform: "France: Journalist victim of harassment campaign"
- Campaign of support: "Soutien à notre chroniqueuse Nadia Daam, harcelée et menacée"
- Nadia Daam's chronicle on Europe 1

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**STATE REPLIES**

- 08 Aug 2019 | Reply from the French authorities
  - Letter from the French authorities to the Council of Europe
On 27 July 2019, Moscow police violently dispersed thousands of protesters who had taken to the streets in support of free and fair elections. Police used batons and fists to beat those who attended the protests; at least five journalists were reportedly injured in the crackdown. Evgeny Feldman, a photographer for Meduza, suffered a broken nose after a policeman hit and damaged his camera. Cameraman Alexandr Soloukhin also suffered a broken nose as a result of police violence. Balaram Ussov, editor of the student magazine DOKHA, was hospitalised for his injuries; he was reported to have suffered a hand injury after being pushed against a door and a head injury after being struck in the head by a police baton. Photographer Valery Tenevoy was reportedly detained at the protest before being taken to a police van where he was beaten. Reporter Elena Sheveleva of RBC was also reported to have been assaulted while covering the protests. Ilya Azar, a reporter with Novaya Gazeta, was detained at the protest despite presenting his press card to the police.

Police also targeted journalists who were reporting on the protests from their newsrooms. Police detained broadcast host, Vladimir Milov, after they broke into the studio of the Navalny Live channel, and Editor-in-chief, Aleksandra Perepelova, was presented with a summons for questioning after they broke into the TV channel “Rain”. Perepelova was summoned as a witness for under article 141 of the Criminal Code of the Russian Federation ("obstructing the work of election commissions").

On 3 August 2019, police arrested and detained more than 600 protesters and at least 14 reporting journalists, after about 1,500 people took to the streets of Moscow to protest the disqualification of several opposition candidates from local elections. Vladimir Romensky, a reporter with the broadcaster “Dozhd”, was arrested at Pushkin Square when he gave a branded microphone to his colleague, he said. Policemen searched his backpack and found his accreditation and editorial assignment. He was taken to a police van, released shortly afterwards, then arrested again and driven to a police station. Elena Vanina, a reporter with the business newspaper “Vedomosti”, was also arrested at Pushkin Square. She was driven to a police station. Nikita Pavlyuk-Pavlyuchenko, a reporter with “Snob Media”, was arrested at the protests, despite repeated attempts to show his accreditation documents. “Mediazona” reporter Anastasia Yasnitskaya said she was also briefly detained despite showing a press-card. Among other detainees were Dutch
journalist Joos Bosman, “MBH-Media” reporters Alexandra Semenova and Alexey Stepanov, and “Baza” reporter Petr Koronaev. According to the Russia Union of Journalists, Kirill Ataniyazov, Natalia Panferova, Arkady Dubnov, Anton Belitsky were also arrested, while the Journalists and Media Workers Union reported that Dmitry Dyomushkin of White News, and Aleksei Mashchenko were detained. All fourteen were released without charge.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

EFJ statement: "Russia: twelve journalists detained in Moscow demonstrations"

FOLLOW-UPS

07 Aug 2019 | The CoE Commissioner for Human Rights recommends that the Russian authorities ensure that human rights are respected in the context of policing of assemblies.

Statement by Dunja Mijatović

31 Jul 2019 | OSCE Representative expresses concern about obstruction to journalists’ activities at Moscow demonstration, calls for respect of media’s role during public events.

Statement by Harlem Désir

The Turkish Journalists’ Union (TGS), an IFJ/EFJ affiliate is taking legal action against the Foundation for Political Economic and Social Research (SETA), a pro-government organisation
which published a report containing information on journalists working for Turkish language services of international broadcasters, including the BBC and Deutsche Welle. According to media reports, TGS accused SETA of blacklisting journalists working for these media outlets, following the report entitled “Turkey extensions of international media organisations” on media coverage of major events in Turkey such as the 2016 failed coup. It detailed past employment and social media postings of journalists working for these media organisations. TGS added that it is joined in the lawsuit by journalists mentioned in the report. In the meantime, SETA claimed the report only focused on information about professional activities of those named therein.

**UPDATES**

01 Aug 2019: In July 2019, the Media and Law Studies Association (MLSA) filed a petition for an inquiry into the SETA report, demanding that the authors of the report be punished for “inciting the public to hatred and hostility,” “open incitement to commit a crime,” “unlawfully recording personal data,” and violating the “right to peace of mind”. According to the Ankara Chief Prosecutor’s Office’s response sent on 1st August 2019 to MLSA, the suspects’ actions fell under “the right to spread one’s opinions”. The prosecutor’s office also noted that the report lacked expressions that incited people to resort to violence against the journalists listed in it. It argued that as the information about the individual journalists named in the report was collected from online resources, it did neither violate the ban on recording personal data.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Joint NGO statement: "Turkish think-tank report escalates harassment of journalists"

**Greece**

Weekly Athens Voice Attacked by Anarchist Group

Alert created on: 10 Jul 2019

On 4 July 2019, the Greek weekly newspaper Athens Voice’s offices were attacked by the Rouvinokas anarchist group in the Greek capital. According to media reports, around 15 assailants used steel bars to smash furniture and equipment and threw black paint on the offices’ walls. None of the journalists was reported injured. The Rouvinokas anarchist group claimed
responsibility for the attack on the internet, saying it occurred following a controversial social media comment that appeared on the newspaper’s online edition regarding the death of an Armenian woman who died of injuries after trying to evade a possible inspection of her residence and work permit. Five years ago, an arson attack had extensively damaged Athens Voice offices.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Journalists’ Union of Athens Daily Newspapers Statement (in Greek): "Η ΕΣΗΕΑ καταδικάζει την επίθεση στα γραφεία της εφημερίδας «Athens Voice»"
- RSF Statement: "Anarchists ransack Athens weekly’s headquarters"
- Ekathimerini news article: "Gov’t says attack on Athens Voice offices ‘unjustifiable’"

**STATE REPLIES**

- 25 Jul 2019 | Reply from the Greek Authorities
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Greece to the Council of Europe

**France**

**French Journalists Victims of Phone Harassment**

On 16, 17, 18 June 2015, French journalists Pierre Haski, founder of the information website Rue89, Denis Sieffert, Director of the weekly magazine Politis, and Daniel Schneidermann, founder of the website Arrêt sur Images, were victims of a harassment campaign targeting their private lives. In all three cases, a hacker took control of their private telephone lines and made telephone calls to the police requesting their intervention at the homes of the targeted journalists on the basis of wholly fabricated personal dramatic incidents. According to the targeted journalists, the alleged perpetrator of those actions is the Zionist Franco-Israeli hacker Grégory Chelli, alias Ulcan, who lives in Ashdod, in Israel. A judicial inquiry is already underway concerning Ulcan who is suspected of having caused the premature death of Rue89 journalist Benoît Le Corre’s father, in August 2014. The father of Benoît Le Corre died as a result of a heart attack shortly after receiving a phone call informing him about the death of his son. The Paris
Prosecutor's office opened a preliminary inquiry into the attacks on Mr. Haski, Mr Sieffert and Mr Schneidermann. The IFJ and the EFJ call on authorities to open judicial proceedings against and to bring to an end the impunity apparently enjoyed by the perpetrator or perpetrators of those harassment operations.

**22 Jul 2019:** On 17 June 2019, the investigating judge at the Paris Court put Grégory Chelli on trial before the Court of Assize for “willful violence with premeditation resulting in unintended death”, “false” and “slanderous denunciations”, “repeated malicious phone calls”, "identity theft", and "death threats".

[Article from "Le Figaro" (in French): "Le hacker franco-israélien Ulcan risque les assises"]

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- National Union of Journalists press release (Syndicat national des journalistes) : 'Des journalistes pris pour cibles : le SNJ interpelle les autorités françaises'

- IFJ statement : 'Journalists targeted : The International Federation of Journalists (IFJ) supports the call from its French affiliates'

**STATE REPLIES**

- 07 Feb 2018 | Reply of the French authorities
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of France to the Council of Europe (in French only)

**RELEVANT COE INSTRUMENTS**

- 28 Jun 2018 | Factsheet on Harassment and Intimidation of Journalists
  - Overview of the ECHR case law and other relevant Council of Europe resources related to Harassment and Intimidation of journalists

**DISCLAIMER** This section presents a non-exhaustive selection of CoE instruments and ECHR case-law. This information is not a legal assessment of the alert and should not be treated or used as such.
On 14 May 2019 at about 2:30 a.m., flammable liquid placed under Mina Karamitrou's car exploded, while the car was parked outside the journalist's home in the northern Athens suburb of Papagou, according to local news reports. The car was destroyed but no one was injured, according to the reports. Karamitrou is a police reporter for CNN's Greek edition, according to her author page on the network's website. She also works for private broadcaster OPEN TV. Police have opened an investigation into the bombing, according to Greek news website Skai. CNN Greece condemned the attack in a statement, calling it "an attack on the entire journalistic world." Greek government spokesperson Dimitris Tzanakopoulos condemned the attack on Twitter, describing it as a "targeting" of freedom of the press, and saying that the perpetrators should be held to account. The Journalists’ Union of the Athens Daily Newspapers condemned the attack stating “violence, threats and blackmail will not force colleagues to shut their mouths.”
In April 2019, an Austrian court sentenced the Kyrgyzstani news website 24.kg to pay T&F Trade and Finance GmbH, a company quoted in an article on the breakdown of a business partnership in Kyrgyzstan, €40,000 in damages. T&F had argued that 24.kg’s qualification in the article of ‘pseudo investors’ was defamatory, but instead of pursuing legal action in Kyrgyzstan, T&F had relied on Article 1330 of the Austrian Civil Code to bring a civil law suit in Austria, where it is registered.

When publishing the article, the journalists acted in good faith, based on the evidence they had received, a spokesperson for 24.kg said. T&F’s version of events was subsequently published as well. Barbora Bukovska, Senior Director for Law and Policy at ARTICLE 19, denounced a case of ‘libel tourism”, a practice where wealthy plaintiffs use defamation laws in other jurisdictions to silence those who try to hold them to account elsewhere. She expressed concern that 24.kg is unlikely to get a fair trial in Austria on matters located in Kyrgyzstan and that the Austrian courts are being used to silence investigative journalism in Kyrgyzstan.

24.kg were without representation for the appeal hearing on 11 July 2019 at Vienna Commercial Court.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Article by 24.kg (in Russian): « Как кыргызстанцы превратились в австрийских певдоинвесторов »
- Article 19 Statement: “ARTICLE 19 urges Austrian court to halt ‘libel tourism’ case

RELEVANT COE INSTRUMENTS

12 Jul 2019 | Declaration of the Committee of Ministers

DISCLAIMER: This section presents a non-exhaustive selection of CoE instruments and ECHR case-law. This information is not a legal assessment of the alert and should not be treated or used as such.
On 11 June 2019, an unidentified man using an anonymous phone number called Diana Oncioiu, an investigative reporter at independent news websites Dela0 and Sa Fie Lumina, and threatened to kill her if she continued to write about the Romanian Orthodox Church, according to the reporter.

Oncioiu filed a criminal complaint with the Bucharest police after receiving the call. In an interview with the Romanian edition of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, a U.S. Congress-funded media outlet, Oncioiu said that the threat was likely related to her ongoing investigative work into allegations of pedophilia and other abuses at a theological seminary in Huși, a town in Eastern Romania.

Sa Fie Lumina confirmed that a threat had been made against one of its reporters and vowed to continue its investigative work into alleged sexual abuse at the seminary. Speaking with Romanian news website HotNews, Vasile Bănescu, a spokesperson for the Romanian Orthodox Church, rejected any association with the threats and said he hoped the perpetrator would be identified.

STATE REPLIES

11 Jul 2019 | Response from the Romanian authorities

Information provided by the Romanian authorities
On 29 June 2019, an Albanian journalist and cameraman from the TV channel News 24, Enver Doçi, was attacked by police officers while filming the arrest of demonstrators in Dibra (the city has been affected by suspicions of electoral fraud). The police beat his legs and one arm violently. During the attack, his phone was destroyed and confiscated by the police. Wounded, Enver Doçi was taken to a local hospital to receive immediate treatment. The President of the Republic, Ilir Meta, condemned the attack and asked the police to find the perpetrators. Following this statement, Senior Police Officials apologised and indicated that the confiscated phone had been returned to the journalist.

STATE REPLIES

09 Jul 2019 | Reply from the Albanian authorities

Statement by the State Police

On 4 May 2019, a passersby found investigative reporter Vadym Komarov in downtown Cherkasy, a city in eastern Ukraine, with severe head injuries and called an ambulance and the police, according to news reports. He was taken to a local hospital, and has been in a coma after undergoing brain surgery on the same day; his condition has been described as "grave," according to those reports. On the day of the attack, the Cherkasy police department issued a statement announcing that it had opened an investigation. On 5 May, the case was classified as attempted murder, according to news reports. Police did not specify whether they believed Komarov was targeted for his reporting. On 3 May, Komarov wrote on his Facebook page that he planned to publish information related to sports schools "in the coming days." The journalist's most recent work includes a report on protests in prisons for the independent Ukrainian news website Dzvin.

20 Jun 2019: On the night of 20 June 2019, the journalist, who remained in a coma since surgery following the attack on 4 May, died.
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- RSF press release

STATE REPLIES

- 27 Jun 2019 | Reply from the Government of Ukraine
  - Official position of Ukraine

FOLLOW-UPS

- 20 Jun 2019 | OSCE Media Representative deeply shocked by death of journalist Vadim Komarov in Ukraine, calls on authorities to bring perpetrators to justice
  - Statement by Harlem Désir

- 20 Jun 2019 | The Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights deeply saddened by the death of investigative journalist Vadym Komarov
  - Statement by the Commissioner for Human Rights on Twitter

- 09 May 2019 | OSCE Media Freedom Representative appalled by attempted murder of journalist in Cherkasy, Ukraine, calls for effective investigation.
  - Statement by Harlem Désir

FREELANCERS

Key information :

Vadym Komarov

Ukrainian independent journalist well known for his coverage of local corruption.
On 29 May 2019, Italian Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior Matteo Salvini published a video on Facebook in which he threatened journalist Roberto Saviano with the withdrawal of his police protection from mafia. Saviano has been under constant police protection since 2006, after he published the book "Gomorrah", denouncing the practices of the Camorra, the Neapolitan mafia.

In the video, Matteo Salvini sends a kiss to the camera, saying "A kiss to Saviano. I'm working on a revision of the criteria for the escorts that every day in Italy commit more than two thousand law enforcement workers." This is not the first time that Salvini has threatened Saviano to take away his police protection. In 2017, Matteo Salvini had already stated that he "assessed whether there was any risk" justifying the security measures for Saviano, "in order to see where the Italians' money was going."

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Article on RTBF website: "Le ministre italien Matteo Salvini menace le journaliste Roberto Saviano de lui retirer sa protection"
- News report from Wired.it: "Che pena Salvini che minaccia Saviano e gli manda "bacioni" intimidatori"
- Video message from Matteo Salvini on Facebook

**STATE REPLIES**

- 14 Jun 2019 | Response from the Italian authorities
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Italy to the Council of Europe
Croatian freelance journalist Željko Peratović, chief editor of 45lines.com website, was beaten up by three unidentified assailants at his home in Luka Pokupska, near Karlovac, on 28 May, 2015. The attack was condemned by the Croatian Journalists’ Association (HND), the EFJ and the IFJ, which demanded that the case be investigated as a criminal offence. Peratović, the winner of this year’s HND award for investigative journalism, believed the attack was prompted by his articles about the ongoing trial in Munich of Yugoslav-era senior security official Josip Perković.

11 Jun 2019: On 11 June 2019, considering that the perpetrators were sentenced, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be “resolved”, concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

15 Jan 2018: On 14 December 2017, the Municipal Criminal Court in Zagreb sentenced the three authors of the attack perpetrated on journalist Željko Peratović to respectively one year, three years, and three and a half years of imprisonment for heavy bodily harm, unlawful trespassing and property destruction.

16 Mar 2017: On 16 March 2017 the trial against Peratović’s three assailants began at the Zagreb Municipal Court.

05 Feb 2016: In February 2016 the Karlovac county prosecutor closed the murder attempt investigation for lack of evidence, and opened an investigation against the three attackers for attempted grievous bodily harm, home invasion and material damage. Feeling insecure in Croatia, Željko Peratović decided to move to Switzerland.

06 Aug 2015: Three people who allegedly physically attacked Croatian investigative journalist Željko Peratovic in May 2015 will be investigated for attempted murder.
Following his visit to Croatia, the Commissioner for human rights expresses his concern about the inadequate response by the authorities to the reported cases of physical attacks, death threats and intimidation against journalists.

**Statement of the Commissioner following his visit to Croatia**

**Key information:**

Željko Peratović

A freelance journalist and chief editor of 45lines.com and winner of the Croatian Journalist Association’s Award for Investigative Journalism in 2014.

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**German Photographers Chased and Assaulted by Neo-Nazis**

**SOURCE OF THREAT**: Non-state

**CATEGORY**: Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists
On 29 April 2018, two freelance photographers were injured after being chased through the Thuringian countryside by Neo-Nazis armed with baseball bats, knives, a wrench and teargas.

The pair were initially pursued by car, then on foot when they had to abandon their car on a country road. One of the photographers suffered an open wound to his head from being hit with a wrench and the other was stabbed in his thigh. The assailants smashed the car windows and slashed its tires before fleeing with the photographic equipment.

The photographers were taking images and video footage of the home of Thorsten Heise, Thuringian leader of the far-right party National Democratic Party (NPD). Anti-Fascist group ALI called Hiese’s home a networking point and training camp for violent Neo-Nazis in a statement on 30 April, regional daily Märkishe Allgemeine reported. In the previous week Heise hosted the “Shield and Sword” festival in Saxony attended by over 1,000 Neo-Nazis from Germany and neighbouring countries, in which police intervened numerous times as militants had done the Nazi salute and displaying signs of proscribed organisations.

Police are investigating charges of robbery and attempted homicide and conducted a raid on Heise’s home the same day. Police press spokesperson Fränze Töpfer said the suspects are known to the police.

**PROGRESS**

11 Jul 2019: On 21 February 2019, the alleged assailants, Mr Heise Junior and Mr Bruno, were heard by the Juvenile Chamber of the Mühlhausen District Court.

- Article by MDF (in German): “Zwei Männer wegen Angriffs auf Journalisten angeklagt”

**UPDATES**

22 Nov 2018: On 19 November 2018, the Public Prosecutor’s Office at Mühlhausen filed charges against a minor son of Mr. Heise and Mr. Gianluca Bruno, a member of the NDP's Lower Saxony Executive Board, for assault and assault with a weapon.

- Article published by Göttinger Tageblatt (in German): Ermittlungen zur Neonazi-Attacke von Fretterode abgeschlossen

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Mapping Media Freedom report: "Germany: Photographers chased and assaulted by Neo-Nazis"
On 9 November 2015, around ten journalists working for public channels France 2 Bordeaux and France 3 Aquitaine were attacked by residents while following members of the Bird Protection League (LPO) during an operation against chaffinch poaching in the Landes. The journalists, as well as members of the LPO, were insulted and assaulted. A photo journalist from France 2 Bordeaux was jostled; his camera was stolen and hidden in a home of one of the residents. Tires were punctured on vehicles owned by the two channels. The altercation, lasting about fifteen minutes, required police intervention, during which the camera was returned to the journalist. The National Union of Journalists (SNJ) confirmed that "France 2 correspondents filed a complaint against assaults and threats, illicit "confiscation" of the camera, as well as vehicle damage".

11 Jun 2019: On 11 June 2019, given the outcome of the legal proceedings, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be “resolved”, concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

14 May 2019: On 14 May 2019, the Court of Cassation dismissed the appeal on points of law against the judgment of the Court of Appeal by Jean-Marc and Patrick Dutouya, and ordered each of them to pay €500 in damages to the League for the Protection of Birds.

Article by Sciences et Avenir (in French): "Ortolan : nouveau rejet de pourvois en cassation de chasseurs"
On 5 July 2018, the Court of Appeal of Pau released Eric Dutouya and sentenced Jean-Marc Dutouya for gun violence to a fine of 800 €uros, half of which was suspended. Patrick Dutouya was fined 1,000 €uros, half of which was suspended. The Court of Appeal also condemned the Dutouya brothers to pay 223 €uros to France Télévision for the material damage suffered while reporting.

Article published by Ouest France
Several journalists, including from Die Frankfurter Allgemeinen Zeitung, der ARD-Tagesschau, Das Handelsblatt and Der Spiegel, who have been critical in their reporting about the German party Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), were refused accreditation to attend the conference organized by the European’s Parliament’s group of Europe of the Nations and Freedom (ENF) in Koblenz on 21 January. The meeting is to be attended by leaders of the Germany’s AfD, France’s National Front, Dutch Freedom Party as well as Italy’s Northern League.

The Deutscher Journalisten-Verband (DJV) requested fair accreditation for journalists who wish to attend the ENF conference in Koblenz. “When a political group of the European Parliament organises a conference, it is not a private meeting in the living room”, stated DJV-chair Frank Überall. “Parties, which are supposed to contribute to the political decision-making process, cannot exclude journalists from its meetings”. German public broadcaster ARD said that it may take legal action after it was refused access.

**Resolved**

**11 Jul 2019:** On 11 June 2019, given the reminder issued by the Federal Data Protection Officer, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be “resolved”, concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

**Updates**

**09 Apr 2019:** On 5 April 2019, the Press Conference of Rhineland-Palatinate filed a complaint against the Federal Data Protection Officer against the publication on the Internet of the press cards which the organisation had required, and which included private data.

- Report broadcast by ARD (in German)

**Additional Information**

- Article published on N-TV's website: "AfD sperrt Journalisten aus"
- Tweet from ARD German TV's program director, Volker Herres, announcing that the channel may take legal action against the accreditation refusal
- Article published by the Tagesspiegel: "Rechtspopulisten sperren Journalisten aus"
- EFJ press release: "German journalists refused accreditation to political conference"
- Deutscher Journalisten-Verband (German Journalists union) press release: "Faire Akkreditierung nötig"
A court in the city of Mersin sentenced journalist Arzu Yildiz to 20 months in prison and deprived her of her parental rights for breaching court confidentiality over footage she published on social media in May 2015. The footage was from a court hearing where four prosecutors were on trial for ordering a search of trucks belonging to Turkey's MIT intelligence agency as they travelled to Syria in 2014. The trial of the four prosecutors was held in a closed court, however Yildiz obtained the videos and posted the testimonies of the prosecutors on Youtube. The case will now be heard by the Appeal Court.

After her conviction Yıldız fled the country. She sought asylum in Canada for political persecution.

Alert created on: 20 May 2016

Turkey
n° 58/2016

NO STATE REPLY YET

PARTNER: Index

A court in the city of Mersin sentenced journalist Arzu Yildiz to 20 months in prison and deprived her of her parental rights for breaching court confidentiality over footage she published on social media in May 2015. The footage was from a court hearing where four prosecutors were on trial for ordering a search of trucks belonging to Turkey's MIT intelligence agency as they travelled to Syria in 2014. The trial of the four prosecutors was held in a closed court, however Yildiz obtained the videos and posted the testimonies of the prosecutors on Youtube. The case will now be heard by the Appeal Court.

11 Jun 2019: After her conviction Yildiz fled the country. She sought asylum in Canada for political persecution.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Article by Reuters: "Turkish journalist stripped of parental rights over court coverage: lawyer"

Report published on the Mapping Media Freedom Platform: "Turkey: Journalist given 20-month jail sentence, stripped of parental rights"

Bulgaria
n° 115/2017

11 Jun 2019

Threats from Politicians towards Bulgarian TV Journalist Viktor Nikolaev

No state reply yet

PARTNER: Index

Alert created on: 11 Oct 2017
Viktor Nikolaev, journalist at NOVA TV, was threatened by an MP for ruling party GERB, Anton Todorov, and Deputy Prime Minister Valeriy Simeonov during live broadcast of his TV morning show, on 6 October 2017. Todorov and Simeonov threatened the journalist that he would lose his job if he continued to ask inconvenient questions about the purchase of fighter aircraft for the Bulgarian Air Force. The threat immediately raised a wave of concern among journalists in Bulgaria. Both politicians consider this incident as misrepresentation of their words. However, the same day MP Todorov apologised in a Facebook post. He resigned from Parliament on 9 October. On the contrary, Simeonov considered the accusations as slander and asked Bulgarian National Radio, Bulgarian National TV and NOVA TV for an apology otherwise the case will be taken to court. According to him, the media organized a scandalous campaign against him. The Union of Bulgarian Journalists (UBJ) called on Simeonov to resign.

11 Jun 2019: To date, no lawsuit has been initiated by Mr Simeonov against the journalist. However, that threat was not publicly withdrawn and Mr Simeonov has made no public apology or acknowledgement that his outburst was considered to be intimidating and an abuse of his position as an elected politician.

Additional Information

Statement from the Union of Bulgarian Journalists: "Снежана Тодорова: Заплахите от властима към журналисти са заплахи за цялото общество"
prosecutor said she had suffered blows to the head and had died from suffocation. Bulgarian Interior Minister Mladen Marinov told journalists that the thirty year old journalist had also been raped. Her mobile phone, car keys, glasses and some of her clothes were also missing. The minister stated that no evidence had been found to suggest the killing was related to her work, and that officials were unaware of any information that she had been threatened. The OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media urged the Bulgarian authorities to investigate thoroughly to determine whether or not the attack was linked to her work. Bulgarian media voiced concern that Marinova may have been targeted on account of her recent TV appearances. They pointed out that on 30 September she had presented an investigative programme called ‘Detector’ on the private regional TV channel TVN, which featured interviews by another colleague with two well-known Bulgarian and Romanian journalists about their investigation into the alleged misappropriation of EU funds by politicians and businessmen. The owner of investigative journalism website Bivol.bg, Asen Yordanov, was cited by media as saying that the journalists who appeared on the TV programme were in danger because of their investigation into the issue, which has for some time been the focus of fierce controversy. Mr Yordanov suggested that Ms Marinova’s murder had been meant as a warning to other journalists. In October 2017, hundreds of Bulgarian journalists staged a public protest in Sofia after Deputy Prime Minister Valeri Simeonov and another senior politician threatened a TV journalist with dismissal for asking probing questions about sensitive political matters on air.

RESOLVED

11 Jun 2019: On 22 April 2019, a court in Bulgaria sentenced to 30 years in prison a man found guilty of killing journalist Victoria Marinova. According to the judgment the crime was not related to her profession. On 11 June 2019, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be “resolved”, concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

UPDATES

23 Apr 2019: On 22 April 2019, a court in Bulgaria has sentenced to 30 years in prison a man found guilty of killing journalist Victoria Marinova.

Article published by RFE/RL: "Bulgarian Sentenced To 30 Years In Prison For Rape, Murder Of Journalist"

11 Oct 2018: On 10 October 2018, police in Germany have detained a man in connection with the rape and killing of Viktoria Marinova.

Article published by RFE/RL: 'Germany Detains Suspect In Brutal Slaying Of Bulgarian Journalist'
25 Oct 2018 | Reply from the Bulgarian authorities

Letter from the Permanent Representation of Bulgaria to the Council of Europe

FOLLOW-UPS

12 Oct 2018 | OSCE media freedom representative welcomes progress in investigation of killing of Bulgarian journalist, urges full and thorough investigation.

Statement by Harlem Désir

09 Oct 2018 | Co-rapporteurs of the PACE for post-monitoring dialogue with Bulgaria appalled by the murder of the journalist Viktoria Marinova urge the Bulgarian authorities to thoroughly investigate her murder and abuse immediately.

Statement by Mr Frank Schwabe and Zsolt Nemeth

08 Oct 2018 | CoE Secretary General calls on the Bulgarian authorities to rapidly conduct a thorough investigation of the horrific killing of investigative reporter Viktoria Marinova.

Tweet by Thorbjørn Jagland

08 Oct 2018 | CoE Human Rights Commissioner calls on the authorities to urgently and fully investigate this horrendous crime and ensure that those responsible, including the masterminds, are held accountable.
OSCE Representative shocked by murder of Bulgarian journalist, calls for justice and thorough investigation.

Statement by Dunja Mijatović

Statement by Harlem Désir

Spain n° 123/2016 Alert created on: 06 Dec 2016

Judge Attempts to Censor "Footballleaks" Inquiry

SOURCE OF THREAT → State
CATEGORY → Harassment and intimidation of journalists

PARTNER: EFJ/IFJ, AEJ, Index, RSF

Madrid Judge Arturo Zamarriego has sought the cooperation of justice systems across Europe in his request to prohibit any publications about the international journalistic inquiry named "Footballleaks" concerning severe tax evasion in professional football. The request targets the twelve media outlets which are members of the European Investigative Collaborations (EIC) consortium.

After seven months of investigation and having analysed 18.6 million documents, journalists from the German daily newspaper "Der Spiegel" and their colleagues from the European Investigative Collaborations consortium (of which "El Mundo" is a member), uncovered the widest tax evasion scandal in the history of European professional football, publishing it in their editions of 2nd December 2016.

The daily newspaper "El Mundo" announced Judge Arturo Zamarriego’s decision to ban the publishing of the results of the Footballleaks inquiry, going as far as threatening the director of the newspaper, Pedro G. Cuartango, with a five year prison sentence. Judicial proceedings were initiated on 29th November 2016 by the law firm Senn Ferrero Asociados Sport & Entertainment, which is known for having advised many stars such as Cristiano Ronaldo on fiscal matters. “El Mundo” refused to give in to pressure by lodging a complaint and by publishing, as planned, the first part of the inquiry on 3rd December 2016.

On the 5th December, it was revealed that the request for a ban on publishing was not only applicable to "El Mundo" but to all of the media partners of the consortium. The judge considers that the revelations of the consortium constitute an invasion of the private nature of the communications of the complainants (article 197.1 of the Spanish criminal code). Zamarriego has suggested that the information about personal and fiscal data used by the consortium may have
been acquired through illegal means, which the consortium denies. The judge ordered “the prohibition of the publication of confidential data of a personal, financial or legal nature […] of the clients of Senn Ferrero”.

**RESOLVED**

**11 Jun 2019:** In February 2018, the judge dismissed the charges against Pedro García Cuartango, Antonio Fernández-Galiano and three editors of 'El Mundo' for publishing the 'Football Leaks' after the parties had "reached an out-of-court settlement".

**UPDATES**

**26 Apr 2017:** On 26 April 2017, Judge Zamarriego allowed law firm Senn Ferrero to file proceedings against the director of El Mundo Pedro García Cuartango, the president of Unidad Editorial, Antonio Fernández Galiano and three news editors - Javier Sánchez, Paula Guisado and Quico Alsedo. They are being charged with disclosure of company secrets and disobedience against authority.

- Article published by El Mundo (in Spanish)
- Press release by the Madrid Press Association condemning the lawsuit (in Spanish)

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Article published on the El Mundo website (in Spanish) : "Judge Zamarriego prohibits any news stories about Football Leaks across Europe"
- Article published on the El Mundo website (in Spanish): "Judge forbids El Mundo from publishing about Football Leaks investigation"
- Press Release from EFJ (in French): "Spain - Judge attempts to censor #Footballleaks inquiry"
- Press Release from IFJ (in Spanish): "Judge attempts to censor Footballleaks inquiry"

**FOLLOW-UPS**

- OSCE 06 Dec 2016 | OSCE Representative for Freedom of the Media says in a statement: "Court ruling in Spain ordering El Mundo newspaper not to publish story is a threat to investigative journalism"
- Statement of OSCE Representative of Freedom of the Media
The Greek journalist Vangelis Braoudakis was dismissed on 30 November 2018 by the management of the daily "Ethnos", under the pressure of supporters of the football club PAOK, who publicly claimed his dismissal. On 5 October, Radio FM in Thessaloniki devoted two hours of broadcasting to the violent recriminations of the supporters of the PAOK football club against journalist Vangelis Broudakis, accused of being "an enemy of the club". His dismissal was explicitly claimed on the air. The harassment campaign continued on social networks. "Ethnos" ended up dismissing the journalist. The Journalists' Union of the Athens Daily Newspapers (JUADN-ESIEA) denounced "this illegal and abusive dismissal", condemning the incessant maneuvers of intimidation of supporters towards journalists.

11 Jun 2019: On 11 June 2019, given that no case had been filed by the journalist, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be "resolved", concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Rapport Mapping Media Freedom (en anglais) : "Greece: Sports journalist fired after pressure from football club supporters"
- Article by To10.gr (in Greek): "Η ΕΣΗΕΑ καταγγέλλει την απόλυση του Βαγγέλη Μπραουδάκη από την εφημερίδα «Έθνος»"
- Statement by ESIEA union (in Greek): “Ορθή επανάληψη: Η ΕΣΗΕΑ καταγγέλλει την απόλυση του συναδέλφου Βαγγέλη Μπραουδάκη από την εφημερίδα «Έθνος»"

STATE REPLIES

23 Jan 2019 | Reply from the Greek authorities
A photojournalist of Klix.ba online news portal and several reporters of Al Jazeera Balkans TV were physically assaulted during army veteran protest in Sarajevo, on 26 July 2018. The photojournalist was approached by a protester and attacked with a metal rod after refusing to stop taking photographs. Reporters from Al Jazeera intervened in order to protect the photojournalist, but were attacked by other protesters.

Police has arrested the attacker, who was filmed assaulting the journalists and stating "it is not over". She will be prosecuted under the criminal law.

On 27 July, the editorial office of Klix.ba received an anonymous phone call of a man stating: "Yesterday, you escaped but this will not be the case again. We will find your reporters on the streets and chop their heads off". The case was reported to the local police.

**RESOLVED**

**11 Jun 2019**: On 13 December 2018, the Municipal Court in Sarajevo endorsed the Prosecutor's submissions and found Emila Hamzić and Suad Lelo guilty of violent behaviour. On 11 June 2019, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be "resolved", concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.
OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media condemns physical attack against two reporters of klix.ba & AJBalkans.

11 Jun 2019: On 22 March 2019, Zadar Municipal Court found Jakov Surać guilty of committing the attack on Hrvoje Bajlo and threatening to kill the journalist. He was given a 10-month suspended sentence, which will be enforced if Surać commits a similar offence within a three-year period. Both sides announced that they will appeal the decision.
On 11 October 2017, index.hr portal journalist Drago Miljuš was standing at the public facility outside police lines covering the police intervention at the Obojena svijetlost beach in Split (Croatia). The intervention was related to a suicide bomber who, unfortunately, came through with his intention. One of the policemen present started driving Miljuš off, first verbally and then by pushing him away. The policeman threw Miljuš mobile phone into the sea. He was joined by a special police force officer who hit the journalist in the head, knocking him down and splitting his lips. After the incident, Miljuš requested medical assistance at the hospital where his lips were stitched. Split police department announced that it has opened an investigation into this incident and will inform the public about its findings.
11 Jun 2019: Both police officers have been suspended and an internal disciplinary action has been initiated. Additionally, criminal charges were filed against the officers for causing physical injury and damaging property.

18 Nov 2017: Following the attack on Miljuš, the Parliamentary Committee for Information, Informatisation and the Media requested a report on the incident from the Ministry of the Interior. On 18 November 2017 the Committee received the report, which stated that both police officers had been suspended and an internal disciplinary action had been initiated. Additionally, criminal charges were filed against the officers for causing physical injury and damaging property, respectively.

Article published by the Croatian Journalists` Association: "Police filed charges against policemen who attacked Drago Miljuš, Index.hr journalist"
On 29 October 2017, Croatian public television (HRT) reporter Maja Sever received a death threat via Facebook following the broadcast of her report about refugees from Nigeria. The private Facebook message contained abusive racial language, stating that “if you want to live with N***ers, go live in England, France or USA, but do not promote that Freemason’s multicultural politics in Croatia.” The message ended by mentioning execution, warning the journalist that “the day when you will be killed is coming soon,” according to the Croatian Association of Journalists. Maja Sever said that the message was sent by a Croat living in Belgium.

11 Jun 2019: The police were able to quickly arrest the author of the dead threats who is now awaiting trial.

Article by Deutsche Welle: "Journalists in Croatia facing death threats"

On 8 March 2017, Elvi Fundo, director of Citynews.al online portal and Radio Best, was beaten up by unidentified assailants near the train station in Tirana. He was later sent to the hospital. He declared to Balkan Insight, the news portal of Balkan Investigative Reporting Network: “Two individuals attacked me near my office at 10.30 am, causing injuries (...) I don’t believe it’s a political attack but the work of criminals financed by corrupt media clans tied to drug-trafficking.” Albanian politicians, including the Prime minister Edi Rama, as well as the Audiovisual Media
Authority (AMA) and OSCE representative on Freedom of the Media, Dunja Mijatović, condemned the attack.

11 Jun 2019: On 23 August 2017, the court imposed a 30-day prison sentence for Ilir Kouni for attacking journalist Elvi Fundo. Police are still looking for the other aggressor.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Article published by Balkan Insight: “Albania Journalist Links Assault to Drug Traffickers”
- CPJ report: "Journalist severely beaten, hospitalized in Albania"
- Statement from the EFJ: “Albanian journalist Elvi Fundo attacked in Tirana“
- Incident report published on the Mapping Media Freedom Platform: "Albania: Investigative journalist severely assaulted in Tirana"

STATE REPLIES

14 Mar 2017 | Response of the Albanian authorities
- Letter from the Permanent Representation of Albania to the Council of Europe

FOLLOW-UPS

10 Mar 2017 | OSCE media freedom representative condemns beating of journalist in Albania, urges quick investigation
- Statement from Dunja Mijatović
Journalist Eduard Ilnica was assaulted on Gjollesha street around 22.00 on 9 May, 2016 and claims the perpetrator was President of the Kastrioti football club, Alban Vogli, Panorama Sport reports. The football president allegedly tried to force the journalist into his car. Ilnica was hospitalised shortly after. “The suspect attempted to forced him into his car and assault him due to a news piece that he [the journalist] had written in a local newspaper,” police said, according to Balkan Insight. The incident took place after Ilnica reported on the violence that occurred during a local football match in Peshkopi. Ilnica told Panorama Sport that he does not know what prompted the attack, but he believes it's connected to his critical stance against the Kastriotit club. Vogli was arrested as a suspect by the police of Tirana. OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Dunja Mijatović condemned an attack on journalist Eduard Ilnica in Tirana Monday night, and called on the authorities in Albania to carry out a swift and thorough investigation into the incident. “I condemn this attack; violence against journalists must not be tolerated,” Mijatović said. “I welcome the swift response by the police and hope that the investigation will yield results and bring all perpetrators to justice.” “Our staff denounce this cowardly act and call on state structures to do justice as soon as possible,” Telesport said, according to Balkan Insight. “It is a shame that a sports journalist has been beaten up for doing his job.”

11 Jun 2019: In May 2016, the journalist withdrew his complaint being unsure about the identity of his aggressor. The alleged assailant (Alban Vogli), was released after one month's detention. On 11 June 2019, the partner organisations to the Platform declared this case to be “resolved”, concluding it was no longer an active threat to media freedom.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Report published on the Mapping Media Freedom platform: "Sports journalist assaulted by president of football club"
- Article published by Gazeta Mapo (in Albanian): "Gazetari Ilnica: Më rrahu presidenti i ‘Kastriotit’, Alban Vogli"

STATE REPLIES

- 18 May 2016 | Reply from the Government of Albania
  - Letter from the Albanian authorities
On 2 April 2019, Valentino Gonzato, an Italian reporter with the daily newspaper Il Giornale di Vicenza, was assaulted by a group of seven people while reporting in Fornaci Park in Vicenza, a city in Northern Italy, according to his employer. The group threatened the reporter, spat on him, and punched and kicked him, according to Il Giornale di Vicenza; members of the group also stole his phone. The paper reported that Gonzato suffered injuries and was taken to a local emergency room. It did not specify the extent of his injuries. According to regional news website Il Gazettino, police intervened in the assault and arrested seven people. The police also recovered Gonzato's phone, the website reported. CPJ emailed questions about the investigation to the local police in Vicenza but did not receive a reply. CPJ's emailed request for comment to Il Giornale di Vicenza also did not receive a response. According to Il Giornale di Vicenza, Gonzato was documenting the presence of drug dealers and tent encampments in the park when he was attacked.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Article by Il Gazettino (in Italian): "Giornalista aggredito e rapinato a Parco Fornaci: fermati sette stranieri"
- Information published by CPJ: "Italian journalist assaulted, robbed while reporting in park"
Between 20 and 25 May 2019, there have been three individual attacks against journalists in cities of Ankara, Adana and Antalya. On 20 May, Ergin Çevik, chief editor of the local news website, Güney Haberci in Antalya, was attacked by three assailants after he reported on corruption allegations in the municipality of Kundu district. The attackers first went to his office asking for his whereabouts, reportedly saying they were bringing "greetings from Kundu". Çevik said that the group found him in a restaurant later and asked “Are you the journalist Ergin?” before assaulting him. On 24 May, another local journalist and the founder of Egemen newspaper in Adana province, Hakan Denizli, was shot in the leg by an unknown gunman in the morning in front of his house. According to local reports, Denizli had previously been targeted and assaulted several times because of his work. Denizli’s health is reported to be stable. The most recent attack took place in Ankara, targeting Oda TV columnist and commentator Sabahattin Önkibar on 25 May. Önkibar was stopped by two cars while he was on his way home and beaten up by a group of individuals. Prior to the attack, Önkibar had reportedly commented on television about the mayoral re-election in Istanbul, criticizing ruling AKP-MHP coalition. Four suspects in the attack were taken into custody by police but released on bail on 27 May. On 28 May, the MHP filed a criminal complaint against Önkibar for “constantly insulting MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli whether in his columns or his speeches”. MHP leader Devlet Bahçeli earlier published a list of journalists on a paid advert in newspapers, targeting journalists for their critiques of MHP in the run-up to national elections in June 2018. Önkibar’s name was among the listed names.
Russian Federation  n° 65/2019

Russian Video Blogger Vadim Kharchenko
Attacked, Injured in Krasnodar

SOURCE OF THREAT  Unknown
CATEGORY  Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

NO STATE REPLY YET

On 1st June 2019, unknown assailants attacked Krasnodar-based Kharchenko, founder of the YouTube channel "Lichnoe Mneniye" ("Personal Opinion"), after he went to meet a potential source, according to a video account posted by Kharchenko on his channel and Russian media reports. Kharchenko claimed in the video that two men shot at him several times, "probably from a non-lethal weapon"—such as a pellet gun or a rubber-bullet gun—hitting him in the abdomen. He also said the assailants hit him in the head and stabbed him several times, including in his right hand and arm. He alleged that the attack was related to the posts on his YouTube channel.

On his YouTube channel, Kharchenko reports and comments on protests and conducts investigations into alleged police abuse of power to his more than 175,000 subscribers.

According to the video blogger’s account and media reports, the attack took place after Kharchenko went to a meeting with a police informant who had promised to deliver evidence that a regional police department in Krasnodar was falsifying criminal cases. Kharchenko said that he was on his way home after the informant had not showed up when somebody fired at him from behind at a distance of about five meters. He ran at one of the assailants, who attacked him with a knife. After exchanging several blows and stabbing and hitting Kharchenko, the attackers ran from the scene. Kharchenko found a ride to the hospital where he underwent treatment for his injuries, he said in the video.

The officer on duty in the Karasun department of the Ministry of Interior in Krasnodar told CPJ over the phone that he would not provide any information on the incident to parties other than Kharchenko himself.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

RSF statement: "Well-known blogger attacked in southwestern Russia"
Vadim Kharchenko

A Russian video blogger who reports and comments on protests and conducts investigations into alleged police abuse to his 175,000 YouTube subscribers on his account 'Lichnoe Mnenie' (Personal Opinion).

04 Jun 2019

Albania

Albania: Journalists and Photographers Injured by Police During Anti-Government Protests

SOURCE OF THREAT › State

CATEGORY 🔄 Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

PARTNER: CPJ, ECPMF, RSF

On 13 April 2019, Albanian police fired tear gas into a crowd during a demonstration in the capital, Tirana, affecting several journalists, according to news reports and video footage of the protest. Eliza Gjediku, a reporter for local TV station Tema TV, was incapacitated by the tear gas and was sent to a local hospital for treatment, according to her employer. The Associated Press reported that "a few journalists" were affected by tear gas. Arben Dajci, a freelance photographer, was hit on the head by a metal baton that he alleged was swung by a police officer, according to local English-language news website Exit. On the night of the protest, Exit published a photo of Dajci with a head injury allegedly caused by police. CPJ's emailed questions to the director of communications of the Albanian government did not immediately receive a response. Protests have been ongoing in Albania since mid-February, with the opposition demanding that the current government resign and hold early parliamentary elections, according to the AP.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

🔥 Article published by Exit: "Journalists and Photographers Injured by Albanian Police During Anti-Government Protest"

🔥 Article published by AP News: "Albanian opposition clashes with police in anti-govt protest"
Information published by CPJ: “Journalists injured during anti-government protest in Albania”

STATE REPLIES

04 Jun 2019 | Reply from the Albanian authorities

Message from the Permanent Representation of Albania to the Council of Europe

FREELANCERS

Key information:
Arben Dajci
Freelance Photographer, hit on the head with a metal baton that allegedly was swung by a Police Officer.

03 Jun 2019 | Reply from the Albanian authorities

Message from the Permanent Representation of Albania to the Council of Europe

FREELANCERS

Key information:
Arben Dajci
Freelance Photographer, hit on the head with a metal baton that allegedly was swung by a Police Officer.

Serbia n° 140/2018 Alert created on: 14 Dec 2018

Investigative Journalist Milan Jovanović Attacked with Molotov Cocktail

SOURCE OF THREAT Unknown
CATEGORY Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

On 12 December 2018, the house of Milan Jovanović, an investigative journalist for the independent news website Žig Info, was set ablaze at 3:30 am in Vrčin when a Molotov cocktail was thrown through his garage window and unidentified persons fired shots at his front door to prevent the family from leaving the house, local and regional media reported. Mr Jovanović and his wife were able to escape through the back window and watched as their entire property, including a car, burned down. Jovanovic was not injured, but he claimed that the fire occurred because of his articles targeting the mafia in the municipality of Grocka, 20 km from Belgrade. The journalist reported on the “suddenly acquired property” of the head of the local Grocka municipality, as well as alleging corruption in the construction of sewage systems, after which local authorities cut down his water supply. Following the attack, he has filed several complaints to the police and written two letters to Serbian President Aleksander Vučić asking him to intervene and ensure he can work without fear of reprisal. Žig Info editor Zeljko Matorcevic said

PARTNER: EFJ/IFJ, CPJ, Index, RSF
Jovanović received threats in July, after their reports on alleged misconduct in the municipality were published, according to the report.

**03 Jun 2019:** On 24 May 2019, the former head of the Grocka municipality, Dragoljub Simonovic, who was arrested and spent 30 days in remand custody, went on trial before a Belgrade court along with three other persons. Simonovic was charged with ordering the arson attack on Jovanovic’s home. The prosecution requested the maximum penalty of eight years of imprisonment.

- Article from “SafeJournalists”: “Trial opens into arson attack on journalist’s home”

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**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Mapping Media Freedom report: "Serbia: Investigative journalist Milan Jovanovic’s home torched after reports on local authority corruption"
- N1 report: "Serbian president condemns attack on journalist"
- Article published on Cenzolovka: "Pokušaj ubistva novinara Milana Jovanovića: Spaljena kuća, pucano na ulazna vrata"
- CPJ report: "Serbian investigative journalist targeted with arson attack"

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**STATE REPLIES**

- 20 Feb 2019 | Reply from the Serbian authorities (information from the Ministry of Interior)
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Serbia to the Council of Europe

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**Bosnia and Herzegovina**

- Alert created on: 24 May 2019
- n° 59/2019
- **Level 2**
- Non-state

**Source of Threat:** Non-state

**Security Guard Damages Journalist's Camera in Bosnia and Herzegovina**
On 14 May 2019, in Šijače, Bosnia and Herzegovina, a private security guard damaged the camera of Ademir Mešanović, a cameraman working for local public broadcaster RTV TK, according to a report by the broadcaster. The guard grabbed Mešanović’s camera and threw it in the mud, damaging the camera and preventing Mešanović from continuing his reporting, while the journalist was documenting the eviction of families from their properties near the state-owned Kreka coal mine, RTV TK reported. The guard worked for a private company hired by the Bosnia and Herzegovina national mining authority to carry out the evictions, a representative of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Journalists Association, an independent advocacy organization, told CPJ via email. A security guard told Mešanović that there was "no need" for the journalist to film there because local authorities would issue an official statement about the evictions, and that journalists were banned from the area, according to the journalists association representative. Osman Bleković, the director of the Kreka mining company, apologized for the attack in a letter sent to the journalists association and RTV TK, which CPJ reviewed.

Local police have started an investigation into the incident, a representative from SafeJournalists.net, a regional press freedom organization, told CPJ via email.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- **CPJ statement:** "Security guard damages journalist's camera in Bosnia and Herzegovina"
- **News report from rtvtk.ba:** "Incident na radnom zadatku u Šikuljama: Napad na kamermana RTV TK"

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**No state reply yet**

**PARTNER: CPJ, EFJ/IFJ**

On 31 July 2018, the Public Prosecutor's Office in Ankara filed criminal charges against reporter and editor Sener Levent and journalist Ali Osman of Cyprus daily newspaper "Afrika" over criticism of Turkey military operations in Syria and Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. The journalists have been informed by the police officers in Northern Cyprus. The first case is filed...
over the publication concerning the Turkish military operation in Afrin, comparing it to Turkish occupation of Cyprus, published on January 2018. The second case is filed over an article of Levent, "Zorba the Cypriot", criticising the Turkish government, published on February 2018.

17 May 2019: On 16 May 2019, a Northern Cypriot court acquitted Afrika newspaper’s Editor-in-Chief Şener Levent, Director Ali Osman Dabak on charges of “defaming a foreign politician”. The Court neither found grounds to constitute the prosecutor’s claims of “damaging relations between Northern Cyprus and Turkey”, ruling that the articles and cartoons in dispute fall within the scope of freedom of expression.

Report by YeniDüzen: "Afrika gazetesi davasında beraat kararı"

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Cyprus Mail news report: "Union urges government to protect Turkish Cypriot journos, as Ankara tightens grip on the north"
- Statement of the Union of Cyprus Journalists: "Σ. Λεβέντ και Α. Οσμάν να προστατευθούν από την μήνιν της Άγκυρας"
- IPI statement: "Northern Cypriot journalists targeted by Turkish authorities"
- Iefimerida news report: "Στο εδώλιο στην Άγκυρα η τουρκοκυπριακή εφημερίδα «Αφρίκα» για την «τουρκική εισβολή στην Αφρίν»"
- Evrensel news report: "Κιβριστιάδος Ν. Λεβέντ και Α. Οσμάν να προστατευθούν από την μήνιν της Άγκυρας"

FOLLOW-UPS

06 Aug 2018 | Legal charges initiated by Turkey against Turkish Cypriot journalists Şener Levent and Ali Osman should be dropped, urges OSCE Representative

Statement by Harlem Désir
On 10 May 2019, in Ankara, Turkish journalist Yavuz Selim Demirağ was violently attacked by a group of unidentified men armed with baseball bats. The assault took place after the journalist, a critic of President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, appeared on a TV show in the evening. He was immediately sent to the hospital with a broken nose and brain trauma, according to his newspaper Yeniçağ. Six persons allegedly involved in the attack were arrested and then freed a day later on the grounds that the journalist's injuries were not life-threatening.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Press release by RSF: "Attackers freed after beating Turkish columnist with baseball bats"
- Report by AP News: "Turkish opposition journalist hospitalized following attack"
- Statement by EFJ/IFJ: "Turkey: Journalist critical of the government severely beaten-up"

**FOLLOW-UPS**

- OSCE 17 May 2019 | OSCE Media Freedom Representative deplores physical attacks on journalists in Turkey, urges authorities to swiftly bring all responsible to justice
  - Statement by Harlem Désir
Cumhuriyet journalist Canan Coşkun faces more than 23 years in prison on charges of “insulting public officials over their duties” for her report alleging that top judicial officials were able to buy discounted residences from a public real estate company.

Daily Cumhuriyet reporter Canan Coşkun reported claims that a lottery to select homebuyers for a housing project in Istanbul’s Başakşehir neighborhood was rigged to favour members of a group of judges and prosecutors with ties to the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP).

### Updates

**14 May 2019:** Canan Coşkun was arrested on 10 May 2019 over the unpaid fine of TL 12,600 that she was given for “insulting public official”. On 11 May 2019, Canan Coşkun was brought to Istanbul Courthouse after spending one night in police custody. She was released after the fine was paid.

**27 Jan 2017:** On 26 January 2017, Istanbul 2nd penal Court of first instance fined journalist Canan Coşkun to 12,600 TL for her report on judges and prosecutors becoming homeowners at a discount rate.

- Article published by Bianet: "Penalty for Journalist Coşkun for ‘Defaming Civil Servant’"

### Additional Information

- Interview of Canan Coşkun by the International Press Institute: 'Q&A with Turkish journalist Canan Coşkun. Reporter faces 23 years in prison for report on judiciary officials’ land deals'
- Solidarity campaign in support of Canan Coşkun launched by the Dutch Union of Journalists (in Dutch): 'Oproep solidariteitsmail Cumhuriyet-journaliste Canan Coşkun'

### State Replies

- **12 Jan 2016 |** Response from the Turkish Government
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Turkey to the Council of Europe

### Follow-Ups
The Venice Commission recommends that Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code (Degrading Turkish Nation, State of Turkish Republic, the Organs and Institutions of the State) be redrafted and further amended with the aim of making all the notions used in it clear and specific. Application of this provision should also be limited to statements inciting to violence and hatred.

Venice Commission opinion 831/2015 on articles 216, 299, 301 and 314 of the Penal Code of Turkey

A group of at least five police officers assaulted and then arrested Timur Hadjibekov, a freelance photojournalist who works under the name George Markov, and arrested Oleg Nasonov, a photojournalist with St. Petersburg-based online news outlet Dva Stula, while they were covering a May Day march in St. Petersburg on 1 May 2019, according to Nasonov and Hadjibekov, who spoke with CPJ, and local media reports.

Police officers approached Hadjibekov and Nasonov, who were near the demonstrations which included several political parties and activists shouting anti-Putin slogans; Hadjibekov identified himself as a journalist, and police then punched him in his ribs and head and arrested him, he told CPJ. Nasonov told CPJ that police grabbed him and threw him to the ground before arresting him. Hadjibekov said that the officers took him to a police station without giving any reason for his arrest, and held him there for about two hours. He was then taken to a hospital to receive treatment for his injuries, he told CPJ.

Officers told Nasonov he was under arrest for disobeying a police officer, and held him at a police station for about four hours, he told CPJ. When he was released, officers said that he was charged with violating public order, and will be required to appear in court, he said. According to the Russian administrative code, he could be fined between 10,000 and 20,000 rubles ($152 to $305) if found guilty.
Hadjibekov said he intends to file an official complaint against the St. Petersburg police. Nasonov told CPJ that he plans to submit his case to the European Court of Human Rights.

### FREELANCERS

**Key information:**

Timur Hadjibekov

A freelance photojournalist who often works under the name George Markov.

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**Azerbaijan**

**Azerbaijani Journalist Sevinc Osmanqizi Faces Harassment, Threats to Leak Intimate Photos**

**SOURCE OF THREAT** ➤ Non-state

**CATEGORY** ➤ Harassment and intimidation of journalists

**PARTNER:** CPJ, Index, RSF

On 7 April 2019, pro-government broadcaster Real TV in Azerbaijan aired a segment, which CPJ has reviewed, which included audio from a private conversation between online TV journalist Sevinc Osmanqizi, who lives in the United States, and another journalist who lives in Europe. During the broadcast, a Real TV anchor accused Osmanqizi of engaging in activities against the state of Azerbaijan. Osmanqizi hosts an online TV program, "Osmanqizi TV," which discusses political issues in Azerbaijan and has featured figures from Azerbaijan's political opposition. She told CPJ that the leaked conversation took place in early April via Facebook's audio calling feature, and she did not know how Real TV obtained a recording of the conversation.

On 21 April 2019, Real TV aired another segment, which CPJ reviewed, during which an anchor threatened to release intimate photos of the journalist in seven days unless she ceased her online TV program and issued an apology. As of May 7, Osmanqizi has continued to broadcast her program, according to a CPJ review of her YouTube page.

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**Turkey**

**Journalist Pelin Ünker Sentenced to Jail for Writing on "Paradise Papers"**

**SOURCE OF THREAT** ➤ State

**PARTNER:** CPJ, Index, RSF

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On 8 January, 2019, a court in Istanbul sentenced journalist Pelin Ünker to 13 months and 15 days in prison, along with an additional fine. The sentence, along with a fine of 8,600 Turkish lira (€1,370) was imposed for "insulting and slandering a public official." Ünker's report appeared in Turkey's secular, left-leaning Cumhuriyet newspaper, for which she no longer works. Former Turkish Prime minister Binali Yıldırım and his two sons sued Ünker in November 2017 over a report about his sons' alleged ties to five offshore companies in Malta. Pelin Ünker, a member of the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) was found guilty of “defamation and insult” for writing about companies in Malta owned by Binali Yıldırım and his sons. The journalist was not immediately jailed and is still able to appeal which is what she will do pointing out that the Yıldırım family had admitted that articles about their Maltese businesses were accurate. Binali Yıldırım is currently the speaker of the Turkish Parliament and is set to run as candidate for mayor of Istanbul for the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP).

On 6 May 2019, the Istanbul Criminal Chamber of the Regional Court of Justice (Appeals Court) dropped the prison sentence against Turkish journalist Pelin Ünker on the grounds that the complaint was barred by Turkey's statute of limitations. It upheld the fine.

**UPDATES**

**07 May 2019:** On 6 May 2019, the Istanbul Criminal Chamber of the Regional Court of Justice (Appeals Court) dropped the prison sentence against Turkish journalist Pelin Ünker on the grounds that the complaint was barred by Turkey’s statute of limitations. It upheld the fine.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Mapping Media Freedom report "Turkey: Prime minister sues media outlets over Paradise Papers reports - Pelin Ünker sentenced"
- RSF statement: "Turkish “Paradise Papers” reporter sentenced to 13 months in prison"
- DW report : "Turkish court hands jail term to DW reporter Pelin Unker"
- The Guardian report : "Journalist Pelin Ünker sentenced to jail in Turkey over Paradise Papers investigation"
Lidija Valtner, a reporter for the Serbian daily Danas, was filming an altercation between supporters of Vučić’s Serbian Progressive Party (SNS) and a protester during the President's inauguration on 31 May 2017, in Belgrade, when she was attacked by two Progressive Party supporters. One tried to grab her phone in order to prevent her from filming and, when she tried to defend herself, the two men seized her and forcibly took her away to a neighbouring park, 50 meters away.

In an interview with RSF, Valtner expressed dismay that two plainclothes police officers watched this attack without coming to her help.

Force was also used to prevent journalists with Vice, Radio Belgrade and the Cenzovska and Insajder websites from reporting or filming the demonstrations.

14 May 2018: On 23 April 2018, having questioned Slobodan Stojkovic, Filip Gojkovic and Marko Vukicevic, as well as Lidija Valtner, the Public Prosecutor’s Office rejected the journalist’s complaint, finding no basis for a suspicion that the criminal offense of endangering security or any other criminal offense for which prosecution is undertaken ex officio had been committed.

Article from “Krik” (in Serbian): “Detalji tužilaštva o slučaju napada na inauguraciji”

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Statement by EFJ : "Serbia: Journalists verbally and physically attacked during President’s inauguration "

Report from RSF "Reporters attacked during new Serbian president’s inauguration"

Article published by Insajder"Several attacks on journalists during President Vucic’s inauguration"
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### Intimidation Campaign against NUNS (Independent Journalists Association of Serbia)

**SOURCE OF THREAT**  
Unknown

**CATEGORY**  
Harassment and intimidation of journalists

On two separate occasions (04/02/2018 and 05/02/2018), the Belgrade office of the Independent Journalists Association of Serbia (NUNS or IJAS) has been the target of insults and intimidation with a printed flyer describing IJAS as an "Unhappy Association of Enemies of Serbia". The flyers were glued into the glass entrance of the House of Journalists where the head office of the Independent Journalists Association of Serbia is located.
Independent Journalists Association of Serbia is located. It is suspected to be a professionally organised hate campaign because the flyers were printed in color, on quality paper, and probably in a larger circulation, in order to be distributed in other public places. The incidents were reported to the police and to the prosecutor's office which immediately started gathering evidence.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Report published by the Regional Platform for advocating media freedom and journalists’ safety: "Once again IJAS is a target of insults and intimidation"

### STATE REPLIES

- **25 Apr 2019** | Reply from the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Serbia to the Council of Europe

- **12 Apr 2018** | Reply from the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia
  - Letter from the Permanent Representation of Serbia to the Council of Europe

### FOLLOW-UPS

- **23 Feb 2018** | Commissioner for Human Rights: ‘Concerted efforts needed to protect media freedoms in Serbia’
  - Excerpt from the Commissioner’s report on his follow-up visit carried out from 19 to 22 February 2018

- **07 Feb 2018** | Labelling NUNS as the enemy of State can severely endanger safety of journalists and the work of this journalists’ association in Serbia, says OSCE Media Freedom representative who expects this incident to be swiftly investigated.
  - Tweet by Harlem Désir
The French journalists unions SNJ, SNJ-CGT and CFDT Journalistes denounce the multiplication of attacks on journalists during the "Yellow Vest" protests in several French cities. Since 17 November 2018, the insults or threats by some "yellow vests" against journalists have become commonplace during demonstrations and on social networks. Several journalists were also victims of physical assaults. TV news outlets had to take special measures to protect their reporters. On Saturday, 24 November, uninhibited violence was unleashed against several television crews who were covering the demonstrations. In Besançon, on 17 November, journalists from the BIP community radio were subjected to racist insults. One of them was hit in the face. Suffering from a broken bone, he filed a complaint. In Montpellier, on 18 November, several television reporters were attacked by dozens of protesters. Protesters spat in the face of a freelance journalist who collaborates with several television channels, including BFM TV. In Toulouse, on 24 November, the BFM TV and CNews teams were called "collaborators", and were also the target of spitting and threats. These journalists escaped an attempted lynching, on the Capitol Square, conducted by a hundred people, without the intervention of police. In Béziers, on 24 November, journalists from the regional public channel France 3 Occitanie were severely assaulted. A group of about 300 'yellow vests' also attacked the office of newspaper Midi Libre. A journalist was beaten and the door handle of the local newspaper agency was broken when protesters attempted to break into the premises. Five journalists from CNEWS and BFMTV lodged complaints on grounds of "aggravated violence", "death threats" and "attempted gang assault" following protests held on 24 and 25 November.

07 Jun 2019: On 5 June 2019, the Rouen Criminal Court sentenced five men aged 18 to 59 to six months in prison on charges of "severe assault" against an officer tasked to protect the LCI journalists at the 12 January 2019 protests. The assailants were also ordered to pay him €3,000 in compensation for the damage suffered by a broken nose. Due to the lack of evidence, only two men were convicted of the assault of the journalists.

Article from Le Figaro (in French): "Six mois ferme pour l'agression de journalistes et agents de sécurité à Rouen"

13 May 2019: On 10 May 2019, the Toulouse Criminal Court found Guillaume H., aged 29, guilty of beating and threatening journalist Jean-Luc Thomas at the 24 November 2018 protest. He was sentenced to five months in prison suspended on charges of "severe assault", €1,600 in damages for the journalist and €1 in damages for CNews. He was also
banned from attending demonstrations and forced to undergo treatment for two years of probation.

Article from Le Parisien (in French): "Agression d’un journaliste durant l’acte 2 des Gilets jaunes: cinq mois de prison avec sursis"

15 Jan 2019: On 12 January 2019, several journalists were heckled or assaulted while covering "yellow vests" demonstrations in France. On the night of Friday 11 to Saturday 12 January, about thirty “yellow vests” blocked the Valenciennes storage house of the regional daily newspaper "La Voix du Nord", preventing the distribution of 20,000 newspapers on Saturday morning. About fifty "yellow vests", some hooded, blocked the printing center of the regional newspaper "Yonne Républicaine" in Auxerre. They gathered in front of the printing center shortly before midnight, preventing the delivery trucks from leaving. The blockade hindered distribution of some editions of "Le Journal du Centre" and "La République du Centre" regional dailies. Near Angouleme, the regional daily "La Charente libre" could be published only thanks to police protection. About 70 “yellow vests” had gathered in front of the newspaper headquarters. They tried to block the distribution of the daily newspaper, accused of being "a pack of hacks on the government's payroll". On Saturday in Rouen, a security guard who accompanied two journalists from the LCI news channel was beaten while on the ground. His nose got broken. A complaint was filed. In Paris, a team of LCI journalists was also attacked by some demonstrators and a journalist was thrown to the ground before the intervention of other protesters intervened to protect her. In Toulon, two video journalists working for the Agence France Presse (AFP) received threats while filming clashes before eventually taking shelter in a restaurant. In Marseille, a video journalist from public TV channel France 3 and two photographers were insulted and prevented from working. In Toulouse, a journalist from the regional daily "La dépêche du Midi", insulted and threatened with rape by hooded "yellow vests", filed a complaint on Sunday 13 January. Sheltered in her car, she heard protesters shout "We'll get you out and rape you," reported on Twitter Lionel Laparade, one of the newspaper editors in chief. In Pau, a freelance journalist from the local media "C L'Info Pau", Franck Paillanave, was hit while reporting live. "Yellow vests" surrounded, showered him with insults, and then beat him. He said on Sunday that he would also file a complaint.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Joint statement co-signed by EFJ: "Non, la presse ne doit pas être un bouc émissaire!"

CPJ report: "Police, 'yellow vest' protesters both target journalists in France, Belgium"
### STATE REPLIES

**15 Feb 2019** | Reply from the French authorities (in French)

- **Letter from the Permanent Representation of France to the Council of Europe**

### FOLLOW-UPS

**26 Feb 2019** | The Commissioner for Human Rights sends a Memorandum to the French Government

- **Maintaining order and freedom of assembly in the context of the "yellow vests" movement in France**

**28 Nov 2018** | Recent attacks against journalists while covering protests are unacceptable. Journalists must be able to work, and inform the citizens on public demonstrations, safely.

- **Tweet by Harlem Désir**

### FREELANCERS

**Key information:**

Franck Paillanave

A freelance journalist from the local media "C L'Info Pau"

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**Blood Feud Declared By Official Against Blogger Tumso Abdurakhmanov**
A popular Russian blogger, Tumso Abdurakhmanov, was called “an enemy to me and my brothers” by the Speaker of Chechen parliament, Magomed Daudov. Daudov, a close ally of the Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov, declared a blood feud against Abdurakhmanov after the blogger published a video on his popular YouTube channel, calling Akhmat Kadyrov “a traitor” of the Chechen people. Abdurakhmanov believes that the blood feud declared against him is nothing less than a death threat. On 12 March, in his Instagram Live broadcast, Daudov vowed to track down Abdurakhmanov and retaliate, using the Chechen term for "blood feud." Daudov’s recording was translated into Russian and reported on the same day by several Russian news outlets. Abdurakhmanov fled Chechnya in 2015 after the Chechen authorities accused Abdurakhmanov of having links with the "Islamic State" (IS), banned in Russia by the court. A criminal case was initiated against him under the article of "participation in illegal armed formations (IAFs) outside the country". Abdurakhmanov is presently hiding in Poland facing deportation. Despite strong opposition from human rights activists, Abdurakhmanov's first asylum application was rejected. He's currently awaiting the decision on his second application. Kremlin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said he was unaware of the threat made by Daudov and that there is "no such thing" as blood feuds in Russian law.
Tumso Abdurakhmanov

A Chechen video blogger known to be critical of the Chechen authorities. His YouTube channel focuses on human rights violations and endemic corruption in Chechen.