On 27 July 2021, journalist Ergys Gjencaj from the News24 TV channel was tackled to the ground and detained for one hour as he tried to film a failed anti-drug operation by police near the Military Academy in Tirana. The police also roughly pushed Gjencaj’s colleague Klodiana Lala and prevented both from filming.

Videos from the scene show that the police had stopped a car belonging to a suspect and that the driver refused to unlock the doors of the vehicle. A News24 car bearing the TV channel’s logos then passed by the scene and stopped. Gjencaj and Lala got out the car to observe what was happening. At this point, the suspect drove away, narrowly avoiding running over police officers. The journalists then took out their mobile phones and began filming the events from a short distance away. Rather than pursuing the suspect, the police officers turned on the journalists: One ran up behind Gjencaj and grabbed his phone out of his hands; others approached and manhandled Gjencaj, who was ordered to lie on the ground face down. When Lala protested, a person in plain clothes who is believed to be a police officer can be seen roughly grabbing her by the arm and pushing her away. The police detained Gjencaj for around one hour afterward.

The Albanian Media Council (AMC) issued a statement expressing concern about the police’s behaviour: “It is inconceivable for a country aiming to join the EU that journalists are treated brutally simply because they are reporting from a scene – which is their mission and job.” The Union of Albanian Journalists also called for the perpetrators to be punished: “We condemn this act of violence and police brutality committed against a reporter,” the Union wrote on its Facebook page. The Tirana Prosecutor’s Office has announced the opening of an investigation.
Article by Exit News: "Albanian Police Assault, Detail and Prevent Journalist from Filming Operation"

Video of the events

Statement by the Albanian Media Council: "Declaration on the violence used against News24 journalists, Ergys Gjençaj and Klodiana Lala"

Article by Exit News: "Reporters Without Borders Condemn Police Attack on Journalist in Albania"

Article by Balkan Insight: "Albanian Police Filmed Mistreating TV News Journalists"

Article by Exit: News "Albanian Prosecution Announces It Is Investigating Police Attack on Journalists"