Police in Slovakia on 15 May 2018 seized a mobile phone belonging to prominent Czech investigative journalist Pavla Holcová during an eight-hour questioning in Bratislava. Holcová, the head of the Czech Centre for Investigative Journalism, had been summoned to Slovakia, ostensibly in order to provide information related to the February murder of Slovak journalist Ján Kuciak, with whom Holcová had collaborated to examine connections between the mafia and Slovak officials. However, police proceeded to question Holcová on matters not relevant to the murder investigation and that pertained to her journalistic work. Without prior warning, officials demanded access to her phone and eventually confiscated the device. Authorities did not offer a justification for the move.

**UPDATES**

01 Aug 2018: The Platform partners who submitted this alert acknowledge the reply of the Slovak authorities but consider that the Alert has not yet been satisfactorily resolved, given that certain grievances regarding the confiscation of the phone of Pavla Holcova and the conditions of her interrogation may not have received a full, adequate or appropriate response from the State authorities. Pavla Holcova considers that neither the police nor the prosecution have provided demonstrable proof that they did not decrypt her phone and access the contents. She contends that it is still not clear what happened to her phone between 15 May (the day it was seized) and 17 May (the day it was sealed). Pavla Holcova was only told by the authorities - after the return of the phone - that it was not needed any more. The Platform partners seek to follow, and potentially take a future position on, certain aspects of the case that are continuing to be dealt with or investigated. Firstly, we are following the decision of the Constitutional Court in relation to Pavla Holcova’s request that the national authorities invalidate the seizure order against her. Until the order is nullified, Platform partners believe that Ms Holcova could still be at potential risk of interference and harassment.
from the Slovak authorities, including the police or other state agencies. Invalidating such a seizure order would also send a positive signal that the actions of the relevant state authorities, which were acknowledged to have ‘exceeded the object of the investigation’, were unwarranted. What is more, until now the journalist has received no apology or offer of compensation which might be considered to be adequate redress for the unwarranted manner in which she was treated. In addition, it remains questionable to what extent the information on Ms Holcova's phone may or may not have been accessed by the Slovak police or other state agencies. Platform partners are led to believe that further tests are being conducted independently to ascertain this. The conclusions of these tests will allow the Platform partners to make a further assessment of the extent to which the national authorities' response was adequate. Given legal proceedings, and the time for testing, the Platform partners hope to provide a further position on the status of the alert without unnecessary delay.