

13

Sep
2016
▲ Lvl. 2

Resolved

Poland

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Polish Journalists Targeted in Police Wiretapping, Audit Reveals

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ State

CATEGORY  ▶ Other acts having chilling effects on media freedom

PARTNER: EFJ/IFJ

An internal investigation conducted by the Polish Bureau of Internal Affairs (BSW) has revealed police files containing recordings of conversations of around 80 individuals in the country, including several journalists. The recordings were made between mid-2014 and 2015 by units of the Polish police force. The revelation about the files followed an investigation ordered by the new head of the department of the Bureau of Internal Affairs (BSW), Zbigniew Maj, into the illegal recording of conversations between senior politicians. The investigation uncovered recordings of conversations about sensitive and controversial issues. The eavesdropping also targeted lawyers and journalists reporting on these matters, as well as their family members.

The investigation uncovered that two separate police units were engaged in the wiretapping that involved approximately 29 officers, seven of which are facing disciplinary measures.

RESOLVED

13 Sep 2016: According to the central district attorney in Warsaw, the surveillance of journalists in connection to the "tape scandal" did not take place and the preliminary investigation concluded with a refusal to open criminal proceedings, for lack of elements establishing an illicit act. 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.

UPDATES

18 Feb 2016: Reports from the central district attorney in Warsaw claim that the surveillance over journalists and their relatives from the "tape scandal" had apparently not taken place, counter to the internal police audit indications published earlier this year. In an official statement, Przemysław Nowak, the spokesperson for the district attorney, says: "The document submitted by the KGP [Police headquarters] does not hold up the suspicion of any

offence whatsoever, including...the overstepping of permissions by functionaries of the police of the bureau of internal affairs...It does not give grounds for renewed investigations". The head of the Polish police, Zbigniew Maj, had originally submitted the results of the audit to the Warsaw district attorney, who would decide whether to take up disciplinary procedures. Maj, who was appointed when the PiS party took power, has now stepped down from his post. Ryszard Walczuk, the former director of the BSW police, criticised the appointment of Maj due to previous allegations against him. In an interview with TVN news, Walczuk reported that his department had notified the ministry of internal affairs of an investigation into Maj from June 2015. The investigation, based on anonymous accusations, detail his alleged professional misconduct dating back years prior.

- ➔ **Information published on Index on Censorship Mapping Media Freedom website: "Poland: Audit finds secret police unit monitoring media from 2014 - 2015"**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- ➔ **News on the Index on Censorship website: "Poland: Audit finds secret police unit monitoring journalists"**
- ➔ **Statement from the Association of Polish Journalists (SDP) (in Polish): "CMWP SDP apeluje do ministra Mariusza Błaszczaka ws. doniesień medialnych o inwigilacji dziennikarzy"**
- ➔ **Press release from EFJ/IFJ: "Polish journalists wiretapped by secret police between 2014 and 2015 "**

STATE REPLIES



28 Jun 2016 | Reply from the Polish Government

- ➔ **Letter from the Permanent Representation of Poland to the Council of Europe**