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Slovak Republic

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## Slovakia's Prime Minister Uses Offensive Language towards Journalists at a Press Conference

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ State

CATEGORY  ▶ Other acts having chilling effects on media freedom

**PARTNER: AEJ, CPJ, EFJ/IFJ, Index, RSF**

On 23 November 2016, Slovakia's Prime Minister Robert Fico, directed derogatory and insulting language towards journalists at a press conference, saying, "Some of you are dirty, anti-Slovak prostitutes...You don't inform, you fight with the government". The prime minister was responding to questions about allegations that his government may have broken fair public procurement rules in granting contracts related to the country's presidency of the EU, which runs from July 2016 to the end of the year. Media freedom organisations and associations of journalists described the verbal attack of the Prime Minister as a "dangerous precedent for continued denigration of the work of journalists in public, which could pose a threat to freedom of expression and of the press in Slovakia" and called on the Prime Minister to apologise "fully, publicly, and unequivocally" for his words and for any offence caused, and to pledge to show respect for the necessary work done by journalists and NGOs to inform the public in a democratic society.

### UPDATES

**07 Dec 2018:** On 13 November 2018, former prime minister Robert Fico warned journalists not to make too much of the heavy losses sustained by the ruling Smer-SD party in the 10 November municipal elections, saying that the party would get even with its media critics after it won the next round of parliamentary elections. In a video clip posted on his Facebook page, Fico - who stepped down as prime minister in March 2018 but continues to be the leader of Smer-SD - accused the media of conspiring to bring down the government by misinforming the public. Thousands took to the street on 16 November, demanding that Robert Fico stop public attacks on the media and civil society groups.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION



- ➔ Mapping Media Freedom report: "Slovakia: Former premier Fico threatens journalists in Facebook video clip"
- ➔ Article published on CNA website: "Crowds protest against former Slovak PM's attack on media"
- ➔ Article published by Index: "Slovakia: Prime Minister denigrates journalists at press conference"
- ➔ Article published by the Guardian: "Slovakia's PM calls journalists 'dirty anti-Slovak prostitutes'"
- ➔ Statement from the AEJ: "AEJ calls on Prime Minister Robert Fico to apologise for abusive slur against journalists"

## STATE REPLIES



09 Dec 2016 | Reply from the government of the Slovak Republic

- ➔ Letter from the Permanent Representation of the Slovak Republic to the Council of Europe

## RELEVANT COE INSTRUMENTS



29 Nov 2016 | Recommendation of the Committee of Ministers to member States on the protection of journalism and safety of journalists and other media actors adopted by the Committee of Ministers on 13 April 2016 at the 1253rd meeting of the Ministers' Deputies

- ➔ Read recommendation

29 Nov 2016 | Factsheet on the protection of one's reputation (Relevant case-law of the European Court of Human Rights & Other relevant Council of Europe instruments)

- ➔ Read fact sheet

### 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.

