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## Hungarian Journalist Júlia Halász Attacked and Violently Expelled from Fidesz's Public Meeting in Budapest

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ Non-state

CATEGORY  ▶ Attacks on physical safety and integrity of journalists

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

Júlia Halász, a reporter for the Hungarian 444.hu website, was violently expelled from a public forum organised by the ruling party Fidesz party held at Saint Imre (Saint Emeric) Secondary School in Budapest on 4 May 2017. Halász had started editing her report when she was approached by three men, believed to be bodyguards of the country's economy minister Mihály Varga and defence minister István Simicskó, who told her to leave claiming she could not film the event without registration. Halász later returned to the room and took some photos with her cell phone, but had to leave again to take a phone call in the corridor. She was followed by László Szabó, the Fidesz's deputy chief of staff in the district and the organiser of the meeting, who, according to the journalist, aggressively tried to take her out of the building when she finished her call. He accused her of filming the event and snatched her the cell phone which he refused to return and deleted photos from the telephone while pushing the journalist around and refusing to let her back in the room to retrieve her equipment. Halász started yelling for help, but László Szabó grabbed her by the arm and dragged her outside the building where he continued to threaten her and other Fidesz's supporters attacked her, as well.

The police was called by one school's employee but, upon their arrival, Szabó had left the venue by the back door and nobody at the Fidesz's event was willing to identify him as the man who had attacked Halász. The journalist said that Economy minister, Mihály Varga, later tried to mitigate the incident by promising that Ms. Halász's equipment would be returned and offering to make himself available to her for an exclusive interview.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

 [ABC News.report about the rally in support of Júlia Halász: "Rally in Hungary to support reporter claiming govt assault"](#)

 Report published on the Hungarian Free Press' website: "Fidesz politician physically assaults journalist at anti-Soros hate-fest "

## STATE REPLIES



**31 Jan 2019** | Reply from the Hungarian authorities (information from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade)

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