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State
replied

Croatia

Alert created on: 11 Mar 2019

Wave of Lawsuits Against Journalists in Croatia

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ Non-state

CATEGORY  ▶ Harassment and intimidation of journalists

PARTNER: EFJ/IFJ

According to the Croatian Journalists' Association (CJA), there are more than 1,160 ongoing lawsuits against journalists and news outlets in the country. Many cases filed by politicians, public figures and corporations include the offence of 'shaming' which is still part of the Croatian Criminal Code. Most of the court cases involve compensation claims for alleged non material damages such as "mental anguish" or "tarnished reputation". On Saturday 2 March 2019, hundreds of journalists led by the CJA rallied in Zagreb to protest against this wave of lawsuits targeting the media. The protest was called after Croatian public broadcaster HRT itself filed 36 lawsuits against its own journalists and others, including CJA head Hrvoje Zovko and CJA branch in Public Service Media, who complained of censorship. "I urge HRT to engage in a constructive out-of-court dialogue with journalists and resolve the current disputes," reacted on 6 March the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media Harlem Désir. "It is commendable that the reconciliation process has started in some of the cases and this will hopefully result in the dropping of all charges against journalists."

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

-  [EFJ General Secretary interview on CJA website: "Gutiérrez: Situacija s tuzbama HRT-a je suluda"](#)
-  [EFJ statement: "Croatian journalists stage protest against abusive lawsuits"](#)
-  [DW news report: "Croatian journalists stage protest against censorship, legal attacks"](#)
-  [The New York Times news report: "Croatian Journalists Rally for Media Freedom in EU Country"](#)

STATE REPLIES



20 Mar 2019 | Response from the Croatian authorities

➔ Letter from the Permanent Representation of Croatia to the Council of Europe

FOLLOW-UPS



11 Mar 2019 | OSCE Representative concerned about numerous lawsuits against journalists in Croatia and disputes involving public service broadcaster HRT.

➔ Statement by Harlem Désir