

27

Aug

2019

▲ Lvl. 2

State replied

Bulgaria

n° 83/2019

Alert created on: 22 Jul 2019

Reporters Atanas Tchobanov and Asen Yordanov Subjected to Judicial Probe

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ State

CATEGORY  ▶ Harassment and intimidation of journalists

PARTNER: RSF, AEJ

In June 2019, the Bulgarian Prosecution Office opened an investigation on journalists Atanas Tchobanov and Asen Yordanov, who work for the independent news website Bivol. The timing and subject of the investigation suggest that it might come as a retaliatory measure in response to their reporting in March 2019 on a real estate scandal involving government officials, including Prosecutor-General Sotir Tzatsarov. Tchobanov and Yordanov are being accused of being themselves involved in a real-estate scandal. The investigation started after a report was published by the anti-corruption NGO BOETS. However, BOETS denied issuing such a report, and claimed it was falsified. Following the accusations against them, Tchobanov and Yordanov published documents that disproved these accusations. When they requested more details about the investigation and its justifications, the journalists received no response, even after Reporters Without Borders had filed similar requests. Reporter Without Borders is concerned that this investigation might be a measure of intimidation to deter journalists from reporting on the scandal the two journalists revealed.


UPDATES

09 Aug 2019: On 2 August 2019, as part of its investigation into the largest data breach in the country's history, Bulgaria's Special Prosecutor's Office issued a European Investigative Order (EIO) to France, where Atanas Tchobanov has a permanent address.

STATE REPLIES



27 Aug 2019 | Response from the Bulgarian authorities

 **Letter from the Permanent Representation of Bulgaria to the
Council of Europe**