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State replied

Albania

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Journalist Elvis Hila Obstructed and Detained by Police in Albania

SOURCE OF THREAT ▶ State

CATEGORY  ▶ Harassment and intimidation of journalists

PARTNER: IPI, ECPMF, EFJ/IFJ, RSF

On 17 June 2020, journalist Elvis Hila of the Report.TV news channel was obstructed and then briefly detained by local police as he was reporting on the demolition of what authorities say are illegally constructed buildings in Lezha, northern Albania. Hila was among a group of journalists documenting the demolitions supervised by the National Inspectorate of Protection of Territory (IKMT) on a local beach. At around 5pm, as he was filming a dispute between one of the property owners and the authorities, Hila was approached by the chief of Lezha Police, who asked for his ID. Despite clearly stating he was a journalist, the officer took the phone from his hands, shouting: "What journalist are you?" He was then arrested. Video footage shows him being led away by two police officers and detained inside a police vehicle, where he was held for 10 minutes. He was released after protests from other journalists at the scene. In a statement, Hila said: "My colleagues filmed the whole scene and asked for justification of my removal but no explanation was given." According to the SafeJournalists Network, neither the Ministry of Interior nor the State Police commented on the incident or later explained why Hila had been detained. The journalist lodged a complaint and said he plans to seek legal recourse. The Internal Affairs and Complaints Service of the State Police has launched an investigation and took testimony from the journalist and police officers present at the scene. The Union of Albanian Journalists condemned "repeated cases of violence, blackmail and police threats against journalists and on-duty reporters" and said measures should be implemented to ensure such incidents do not happen again.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

-  [Article from Reporter.al \(in Albanian\): "Ndalimi i gazetarit Elvis Hila nga policia, SHÇBA nis hetimet"](#)
-  [Article from Exit Albania: "State Police stop journalist from filming and delete footage of state demolition of coastal properties"](#)

 **Statement from SafeJournalists Network: "Albanian journalist Hila detained by the police"**

STATE REPLIES



11 Sep 2020 | Reply from the Albanian authorities

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