

Igor Luksic, Prime Minister
Dusko Markovic, Min of Justice
Veselin Veljovic, Police
Directorate, Gov of Montenegro

Stockholm 8th March 2012

Dear Sirs,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the attack on Olivera Lakic, investigative reporter at the daily "Vijesti". Lakic was physically assaulted when she opened the door to her apartment building, at 21:30 on 7th March 2012. A man approached and hit her in the head 5-6 times. Lakic could leave the hospital after two days. The perpetrator escaped.

In February 2011 Olivera Lakic reported on illegal labelling of tobacco products in the city of Mojkovac. Both she and her family received threats. Two men, Slavko Music and Marko Piper, are currently on trial for this.

On 1 September 2007, Zeljko Ivanovic, one of Vijesti's founders, was physically attacked. Although the perpetrators were found, the masterminds remain at large. On 24 September 2010 Ivanovic and other journalists of "Vijesti" received death threats by mail.

On 5 August 2009 Mihailo Jovovic, editor of Vijesti, and Boris Pejovic, a photojournalist, were physically attacked by the mayor of Podgorica and his son while documenting their alleged illegal parking in town. The mayor's son threatened the journalist with a gun. In July and August 2011, four clearly marked cars belonging to Vijesti were set ablaze in three separate attacks. The perpetrators have not been found.

These and similar attacks and threats do not only jeopardize the safety of the persons attacked, but also the basic preconditions for a free and democratic society. Decisive and effective efforts in protecting journalists and human rights defenders are not a moral but a legal obligation.

I urge you to take immediate action to ensure that the attacks and threats are properly investigated, prosecuted and sanctioned. Also, I call for your clear and unambiguous condemnation. Only a firm and clear stand from the state authorities may prevent such criminal acts from occurring again and create an environment in which journalists can work free from pressure.

Yours sincerely,



Robert Hårdh
Executive Director

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